



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 01/08/2024

REQUESTER: CAMERON & SARAH BREWER

PRESENTER: ANAIS STARR, PLANNER I

ITEM TITLE: (HD 23-44) CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS REQUEST FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 425 S LAHOMA AVENUE FOR AN ADDITION ON THE REAR OF THE STRUCTURE.

Property Location 425 S Lahoma

Chautauqua Historic District

Applicant/Owner Sarah & Cameron Brewer

Request (HD 23-44) Consideration of approval, rejection, amendment, and/or postponement of the Certificate of Appropriateness request for the property located at 425 S Lahoma Avenue for an addition on the rear of the structure.

Property History

Historical Information

2004 Chautauqua Historic District Nomination Survey Information:

425 S Lahoma Ave. 1925. Bungalow/Craftsman. This contributing, two-story, weatherboard single dwelling has an asphalt-covered, front-gabled roof and a concrete foundation. The wood windows are one-over-one hung with metal. The wood windows are one-over-one hung with metal storms and the wood door is glazed paneled with a glazed slab storm door. The entry porch has an asymmetrical gable roof supported by wood columns and a turned wood spindle balustrade. Decorative details include triangular knee braces, exposed rafters, double and triple windows and asphalt-covered, shed awnings on the windows. To the rear is a single car, weatherboard garage with a front-gabled, asphalt-covered roof and overhead door. In front of the garage is a wood carport.

Sanborn Map Information

The principal structure is indicated on the 1944 Sanborn map without the current addition, indicating construction post-1944. For Commissioners reference, staff has attached both the 1944 Sanborn Map and 2021 City of Norman aerial of the lot.

Previous Actions

The following Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) requests for this property have been approved for this property:

April 10, 2017 - A COA by Administrative Bypass was granted for the replacement of a wood-clad window with a wood window.

November 1, 2021 - A COA was granted for installation of solar panels visible from the front right-of-way.

December 2, 2023 – A feedback session for a proposed rear addition with the Commission prior to submitting for the request for a COA.

Description

The applicants wish to add a main bedroom and bathroom suite to the first floor of the existing house while retaining the rear-facing kitchen windows and a large tree in the backyard. The proposed design addresses these concerns by bumping out the addition from the south elevation of the existing house. This will allow for adequate internal programming space as well. It should be noted that the south wall of the addition will still setback five feet from the south property line as required by zoning regulations. The applicants are requesting a 436 square foot rear addition with a similar design and massing as the principal structure. Additionally, proposed materials will be the same materials as seen in the original house, including wood siding, custom made true-divided-lite wood windows and doors as well as matching composite shingles for the roof.

Reference - Historic District Ordinance

429.3.1(g): To safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving and regulating historic district structures in such a way that maintains or restores their historic integrity while allowing modern day uses and conveniences for their residents. (0-0910-12).

429.3.3(c): Changes to rear elevations do require a COA; however the rear elevation of a historic structure is considered a secondary elevation and is therefore regulated to a lower standard to allow flexibility for additions or other modern day appurtenances. (0-0910-12).

Reference - Preservation Guidelines

3.12 Guidelines for Windows in Additions

A review by the Historic District Commission will use the following criteria for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA):

.12 Additions. For construction of additions, choose windows that match the original structure. While single-pane, true divided light, wood frame windows are the most desirable choice for new construction in historic districts, double-pane glass wood windows with interior and exterior applied muntins and shadow bars between the panes are permitted. Aluminum cladding of wooden windows is permissible for use in additions. Vinyl or vinyl-clad windows are prohibited.

3.14 Guidelines for Doors in Additions

A review by the Historic District Commission will use the following criteria for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA):

.11 Additions. For construction of additions, choose doors that match the original structure. Aluminum-clad wood doors are permissible for use in additions that are not visible from the front right-of-way. Fiberglass doors can be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.4 Guidelines for Additions

A review by the Historic District Commission will use the following criteria for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA):

.1 Make Additions Compatible. Additions shall be compatible with the historic building in size, scale, mass, materials, proportions and the pattern of windows and doors to solid walls.

.2 Locate Addition Inconspicuously. Locate a new addition on an inconspicuous façade of the historic building, usually the rear one. Additions that alter the front façade are generally considered inappropriate for a historic structure.

.3 Limit Size and Scale. The footprint of the addition shall not exceed 50% of the footprint of the existing structure or 750 square feet, whichever is greater. Exterior dimensions of the addition shall not exceed the exterior dimensions of the existing structure, including height, width, and depth. An addition which does not increase the footprint of the existing structure may be allowed to increase roof height and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

.4 Preserve the Site. Design new additions so that the overall character of the site, character-defining site features, and trees, are retained.

.5 Avoid Detracting From Principal Building. It is not appropriate to construct an addition if it will detract from the overall historic character of the principal building and the site, or if it will require the removal of a significant building element or site feature. Construct new additions so that character-defining features of the historic buildings are not destroyed, damaged, or obscured.

Staff Comments

The proposed addition meets the *Guidelines* for compatibility with the historic principal structure and surrounding District in regards to size, scale, mass, materials, and proportions as well as the pattern of windows and doors to solid walls.

The 436 square foot rear addition is less than the 750 square feet allowed by the *Guidelines*. Though the addition does not exceed the height, width, or depth of the principal structure it will be visible from the front streetscape since it will “bump out” from the south side of the house. However, this does allow for the retention of the existing kitchen windows and preserves a large tree in the backyard.

While the *Guidelines* state that new additions should be located on an inconspicuous location, usually the rear, they do not specifically provide direction regarding side additions. For many years the Commission had usually enforced a “no visibility from the front” on proposed new additions. However, in November of 2021, the Commission after much debate, approved a side addition visible from the front right-of-way for the property located at 506 S. Lahoma Avenue. In that case, due to the awkward internal programming of the existing non-original addition, the architect found the best solution was to expand an addition to the south of the main house. This would allow for a main bedroom and bathroom on the ground floor while not requiring an extensive re-structuring for the first floor of the existing house. The addition was approved by a 5-2 vote by the Commission. The Commissioners voting for the request found it approvable given the circumstances which included the difficulty with existing internal programming of the house. The Commissioners noted that the addition was attached to a non-original addition and was setback far from the front thereby reducing visibility. Additionally, Commissioners pointed out that the proposed addition was appropriate massing for the house. The Commissioners voting against approval of the request voiced concerns regarding the visibility of the addition from the front right-of-way which the *Guidelines* seemed not appropriate.

Similar circumstances exist with this proposed addition as existed with the addition approved for 506 S. Lahoma Avenue. However, the Commission would need to determine whether the proposed addition in this case meets the *Preservation Guidelines* and whether or not such work is compatible with this historic structure and the District as a whole.

Commission Action

Consideration of approval, rejection, amendment, and/or postponement of (HD 23-44) the Certificate of Appropriateness request for the property located at 425 S. Lahoma Avenue for an addition to the rear of the structure.