



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: October 5, 2026

REQUESTER: Barrett Williamson, Architect

PRESENTER: Anais Starr, Planner II/Historic Preservation Officer

ITEM TITLE: (HD 26-23) CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS REQUEST FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 443 CHAUTAUQUA AVENUE FOR THE FOLLOWING MODIFICATIONS: A) INSTALLATION OF A RAILING ON AN EXTERIOR BASEMENT ACCESS ON THE NORTH ELEVATION; B) INSTALLATION OF A CABANA IN THE REAR YARD (Both of these items were postponed from the August 31, 2026 meeting).

BACKGROUND

Historical Information

2004 Chautauqua Historic District Nomination Survey Information:

443 Chautauqua Ave. Ca. 1924. Bungalow/Craftsman. This noncontributing, one-story, composition board single dwelling has an asphalt-covered, cross-gabled roof and a concrete block foundation. The wood windows are decorative, nine-over-one, hung with metal storms. The wood door is paneled. The partial porch has been fully enclosed, leaving only a single support on the resulting entry porch. Other exterior features include a painted brick exterior chimney and a front wheelchair ramp. Decorative details include double windows, decorative wood shutters, gable returns and clipped gables. To the rear is a single car, composition board garage with a front-gabled, asphalt-covered roof and a glazed paneled overhead door. The house is noncontributing due to a loss of integrity.

Sanborn Insurance Maps

The 1944 Sanborn Insurance Map shows the principal structure in its current location. An accessory structure that straddles the south property line is shown on the 1925 and 1944 Sanborn Insurance Maps, which indicates the current garage structure was constructed after 1944.

Previous Action

April 2, 2012 – A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) was approved for removal of enclosed front porch and recreation of new porch.

August 31, 2012 – A Certificate of Appropriateness was approved for a) relocation of the front porch; b) relocation of the front door with the amendment that the door will be a wood door; c) the addition of dormers; d) the removal and relocation of windows on the north elevation; e)

removal of windows on the east elevation and replacement with doors; f) removal of secondary chimney; g) installation of an exterior basement stairwell without the railing; h) relocation of sidewalk with the amendment of 4' width; i) replacement of existing siding on the garage. The request for a six-foot fence and gate in the side yards was withdrawn, and the applicant indicated that it would be submitted as a four-foot fence request through the Administrative Bypass process. The requests for a railing around the basement access and the cabana were postponed to allow for revisions.

Overall Project Description

At the August 31, 2026, Commission meeting, the applicant, Barrett Williamson, the property owner's architect, proposed and was approved for several renovations to the property, as listed in the Previous Actions section of this report. As noted, the request for the railing around the edge of the basement access and the request for a cabana were postponed to allow for the submission of revised drawings. At the August 31, 2026 meeting, Commissioners expressed concern about the railing design because it will have limited visibility from the front right-of-way. The Commission also stated that the cabana materials and size were a concern because they may not be compatible with the principal structure on the property or the surrounding historic structures in the district. They also requested that the applicant consider drainage solutions to address the concerns expressed by the neighbors located behind this property. For both requests, the Commissioner requested additional dimensions be provided on the revised drawings.

The applicant has submitted revised drawings with a new railing design and new materials for the cabana, along with additional dimensions on the drawings.

REQUESTS

A) Installation of a railing on an exterior basement access on the north elevation.

Project Description

The applicant has been approved to install an exterior basement stairwell, but as indicated under the Overall Project Description of this report, the Commissioners requested a revision to the railing design around the basement opening. The safety railing is proposed along the edge of the basement opening and will have visibility from the front right-of-way. The revised railing will be a metal ornamental design, as shown in the revised drawings.

Reference - Historic District Ordinance

36-535.a.2.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.

36.535.c.3: Reviewing non-contributing structures. Non-contributing structures should be controlled only to the degree necessary to make them compatible with the general atmosphere of any district with regard to exterior alteration, additions, signs, site work, and related activities.

Reference - Preservation Guidelines

3.12 Guidelines for Entrances, Porches, And Balconies

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

.3 Handrails. Installation of handrails required by building code may be approvable by Administrative Bypass. Handrails must meet adopted City building codes and be of a simple design that is compatible with the house in material and scale. Wood or metal are acceptable materials for handrails on historic structures.

4.1 & .2 Standards and Guidelines for Decks

4.1 Standards for Decks for Administrative Bypass:

The following items can receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) through the Administrative Bypass process if they meet the criteria listed. If they do not meet the criteria, the application will be forwarded to the Historic District Commission for a full review.

.1 Decks under 300 Square Feet

- a. Less than 300 square feet in total area. Located behind the structure and not visible from the front right-of-way. Corner lots have two front rights-of-way.
- b. Constructed in a way that makes no permanent changes to the historic structure. Built of compatible wood, wood composite or smooth cement board with functional elements made of metal elements. Synthetic materials such as plastic and vinyl are prohibited.
- c. Decks with roofs or walls will be forwarded as a porch or balcony request for a full review by the Historic District Commission.

4.2 Guidelines for Decks

A full review by the Historic District Commission will take the following criteria into consideration before issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA):

.1 Protect Historic Structure. Locate and construct decks so that the historic fabric of the primary structure and its character-defining features and details are not damaged or obscured. Install decks so that they are structurally self-supporting and may be removed in the future without damage to the historic structure.

.2 Deck Locations. Front decks are prohibited. Rear decks shall be inset from the rear corners to eliminate visibility from the front right-of-way. Decks on corner properties will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

.3 Deck Design Shall Reflect Building Design. Design decks and their associated railings and steps to reflect the materials, scale, and proportions of the building.

.4 Align Deck with First Floor Level. Decks shall be no higher than the building's first-floor level. Visually tie the deck to the building by screening with compatible foundation materials such as skirt boards, lattice, or dense evergreen foundation plantings.

.5 Preserve Significant Building Elements. Preserve significant building and site elements and new deck installations are not to obscure or remove significant building or site elements.

.6 Decks May Not Detract from Overall Character. It is not appropriate to introduce a deck if it will detract from the overall historic character of the building or the site.

Considerations/Issues

There are no specific guidelines regarding basement access and the associated safety railing. However, the Standards and Guidelines for Decks can provide some guidance for the review of the installation of exterior features to a structure. The Standards and Guidelines for Decks indicate that the introduction of a new feature should not detract from a historic structure. Furthermore, the Guidelines state that any new feature should reflect the building design. The proposed metal ornamental has been approved for fences in the historic districts.

The Commission needs to determine whether the installation of the submitted safety railing around the basement access on the north façade is appropriate and compatible with this non-contributing structure as well as the surrounding Chautauqua Historic District.

Commission Action

Consideration of approval, rejection, amendment, and/or postponement of (HD 26-23) the Certificate of Appropriateness request for 443 Chautauqua Avenue for the following: a) installation of a railing on an exterior basement access on the north elevation.

b) Installation of a cabana in the rear yard.

Project Description

The applicant proposes a 355-square-foot cabana in the rear yard. The cabana will be 24' wide by 14'8" in depth and will be composed of wood. After feedback from last month's Historic District Commission meeting, the applicant has removed the stone accents from the columns. Additionally, the applicant has provided drawings with additional dimensions as requested. Finally, the applicant is proposing guttering to help address drainage concerns.

Reference - Historic District Ordinance

36-535.a.2.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.

36.535.c.3: Reviewing non-contributing structures. Non-contributing structures should be controlled only to the degree necessary to make them compatible with the general atmosphere of any district with regard to exterior alteration, additions, signs, site work, and related activities.

Reference - Preservation Guidelines

2.7 Guidelines for Secondary Structures

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

.1 Secondary structures. Secondary structures are accessory structures with a footprint of 400 square feet or greater and/or taller than one-story, examples of secondary structures are garage apartments, studios, workshops and cabanas.

.6 Make New Construction Compatible. Secondary accessory structures are to be compatible with the principal structure and surrounding district and in no case overwhelm the principal structure. Construction of secondary accessory structures will utilize the following criteria for new construction:

a. Match in design, style, and material to the principal historic structure and the surrounding historic neighborhood.

b. Compatible with the principal historic structure and/or the district in regard to materials, size, scale, height, form, massing, proportions, spacing and size of window and door openings, window to wall proportions and traditional setbacks seen in the neighborhood.

.7 Size of New Secondary Structures. New secondary accessory structures are to be subservient to the principal structure in no case will the secondary structure be taller, wider or

deeper than the principal structure. The size of a secondary structure is limited to 575 square feet or 50% of the principal structure footprint. The cumulative of square footages for all accessory structures and garages on the lot, shall be no greater than the footprint of the principal structure.

.8 Location and Setbacks of Secondary Structures. New secondary structures are to maintain traditional locations and setbacks seen in the neighborhood. Locations are to be in the rear yard, with limited or no visibility from front right-of-way, unless there is historical indications of a different location. Corner lots are considered to have two front elevations.

.10 Materials. Select materials and finishes for proposed new buildings that are found in historic buildings in the district in terms of composition, scale, pattern, detail, texture, and finish. Acceptable materials include brick and stone masonry, stucco and wood. Cement fiberboard will be considered on a case-by-case basis for those structures located behind the back elevation of the principal structure but with limited visibility from the front right-of-way. Metal and vinyl exterior materials are prohibited.

.11 Avoid False Historical Appearance. New secondary accessory structures are to be compatible with the style, age and character of the principal structure and district without creating a false historical appearance. New structures are to be of their own time and differentiated from the historic structure while maintaining compatibility with the principal structure and the character of the neighborhood.

Considerations/Issues

The Preservation Guidelines state that garden structures with roofs are to be reviewed using the Guidelines for Secondary Structures. The Guidelines state that secondary structures are to be compatible in design with the principal structure and the surrounding district. The maximum size allowed by the Guidelines for Secondary Structures is 575 square feet or 50% of the structure, whichever is greater. Lastly, the Guidelines state that the secondary structure must be located in the rear yard with limited to no visibility from the front streetscape.

The proposed 355-square-foot wood cabana meets the Guidelines for materials and location and is under the maximum size allowed for secondary structures.

The Commission would need to determine whether the installation of a wood cabana in the rear yard, as submitted, meets the Preservation Guidelines and if the proposed work is compatible with this structure and the surrounding Chautauqua Historic District.

Commission Action

Consideration of approval, rejection, amendment, and/or postponement of (HD 26-23) the Certificate of Appropriateness request for 443 Chautauqua Avenue for the following: b) installation of a cabana in the rear yard.