

July 16, 2026

Norman Board of Adjustment
c/o Planning and Community Development Department
225 N. Webster Avenue
Norman, Oklahoma 73069

FILED IN THE OFFICE
OF THE CITY CLERK
ON 07/17/26-RW

Re: Written Protest of Variance Request for 434 Chautauqua Avenue

Dear Members of the Norman Board of Adjustment:

We are the owners and residents of 712 Juniper Lane and are submitting this letter in formal opposition to the requested variance for the proposed accessory dwelling unit/accessory building at 434 Chautauqua Avenue.

Although we have broader concerns about the rapid proliferation of accessory dwelling units within Norman's historic neighborhoods, our objection in this matter is directed specifically toward the proposed placement of this structure and the substantial reduction of the required side-yard setback.

The applicant is requesting a variance of 2 feet, 8½ inches from the required 5-foot side-yard setback. If granted, the structure would be located only approximately 2 feet, 3½ inches from the property line. This is not a minor adjustment. It would eliminate more than half of the required separation between the proposed building and the neighboring property.

Setback requirements serve an important purpose in a densely developed historic neighborhood. They help preserve adequate separation between buildings, access for maintenance, privacy, light and open space, drainage, and the established spatial relationship between primary homes and accessory structures.

A variance should be reserved for circumstances in which unique conditions of the property create an unnecessary hardship and prevent the owner from making reasonable use of the land. Based upon the information provided in the notice and location map, we have not been shown any peculiar condition of this property that

makes compliance with the 5-foot setback impossible. The materials do not explain why the structure cannot be shifted, reduced in size, or redesigned to comply with the existing requirement.

A preference for a larger structure or a particular placement is not the same as a hardship inherent to the property. Granting an exception for design convenience would confer an advantage that neighboring property owners who comply with the required setbacks do not receive.

We are also concerned about the cumulative effect of repeatedly relaxing development standards within the historic district. The character of this neighborhood is not defined solely by the appearance of its front façades. It also depends upon the scale and spacing of structures, the openness of rear yards, and the traditionally subordinate relationship between primary homes and secondary buildings. Those characteristics can be lost gradually, one oversized or poorly placed structure at a time.

We respectfully request that the Board deny this variance because the information provided does not demonstrate:

- A property-specific hardship requiring the encroachment;
- That the requested variance is the minimum relief necessary;
- That reasonable, code-compliant alternatives have been exhausted; or
- That placing the structure this close to the property line would be compatible with the surrounding historic neighborhood.

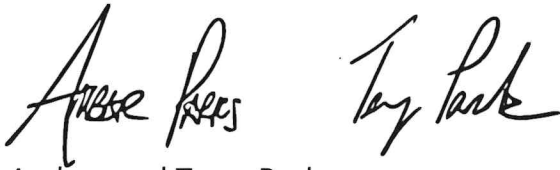
Should the Board not deny the request, we ask that the matter at least be continued until neighboring residents and the Board have been provided with the complete site plan and building elevations, including the structure's height, total square footage, window and balcony placement, drainage plan, mature-tree impacts, access arrangements, status of Historic District Commission review, and an explanation of the code-compliant alternatives that were considered.

Historic-district regulations and ordinary setback requirements have little meaning if they are routinely relaxed to accommodate the maximum possible development

of individual properties. We ask the Board to uphold the existing 5-foot setback and require the proposed structure to be redesigned or relocated accordingly.

Thank you for considering our concerns and for protecting the integrity and livability of Norman's historic neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Amber Parks and Terry Parks. The signature for Amber Parks is on the left, and the signature for Terry Parks is on the right.

Amber and Terry Parks

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Norman, Oklahoma 73069

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