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Board stops effort to turn mansion into youth home

By [P.J. LASSEK](#)

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The Board of Adjustment denied on Tuesday a request by a California-based Christian group that wanted to convert a north Tulsa mansion into a home for troubled youths.

Evangelist Maxine Bronner wanted to turn the Springer Mansion, also called the Fairview Mansion, into a home for 12 "neglected and abandoned" boys ages 5 to 17.

"I'm here to only help. I want to share with children that don't have homes," Bronner said.

"There is a great need here," she said. "I'm not going to house criminals. These are small kids."

Bronner's attorney, John Moody, declined to comment after the meeting on whether Bronner would appeal the denial in court. In a meeting filled with proponents and opponents, Bronner said she does not want to tear the neighborhood down.

She said she purchased the mansion for \$750,000 with the intent to donate it to Out Reach Mission, her nonprofit organization.

"The property I have is private and a beautiful piece of property," she said. "All I'm asking my neighbors is to work with me. Let us give kids a home. Let us pick them



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up. My heart is for the kids."



The mansion, at 585 W. Fairview St., is bordered by the L.L Tisdale Expressway, the former Osage Hills apartments and a few single-family residences. It is surrounded by the neighborhoods of Country Club Square, Brady Heights, Owen Park and Irving.

"This neighborhood was on the edge and is crawling its way back up," board member Norma Turnbo said. "This neighborhood is fighting to stay there. When you say this wouldn't hurt, I think it would be injurious to the neighborhood."

The board received a petition bearing 127 signatures from neighbors opposing the home.

Moody said approving the application would be the right thing to do.

Allowing the home for youths would show it's a stable piece of property with a large financial commitment, he said.

For 46 of the past 51 years, the mansion has been used for non-single family purposes, he said. The Salvation Army, Shriners and the Faith Christian Fellowship International Church used the home for social service purposes, Moody said. From 1988 to 1993, the property was owned by a local architect who restored it into a showcase mansion.

Although board members and opponents praise Bronner for her efforts, all argued that the area is saturated with social service entities.

The Special Residential Facilities Task Force, of which Turnbo is a member, favors increasing the spacing requirement for such centers to one-half mile from one-quarter mile.

"There is a good reason for the recommendation," Turnbo said. "I don't want to say 'not in my backyard,' but I think it has been the middle class and lower economic people that have carried the brunt of this problem."

By P.J. LASSEK

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