

A meeting of the Historic District Review Board was held on March 14, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Joel Newman, Board members Bill Chambers, Mike Rainey, Inez Neal, Erica Dickerson, and Donna Alley.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d) as amended, all local media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Newman called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING: 1203 PRINCE STREET – MAJOR DEMOLITION OF STRUCTURE

Chairman Newman opened this public hearing. Ms. Alley said that the applicants were present. The structure is a contributing resource and is in the Conservation District. They applied in 2009 to apply for demolition, but it was tabled for further assessment and possible stabilization. The City of Beaufort and the building official have determined the property is unsafe and unfit. The planning staff is recommending demolition for this property because it is a threat to public safety, Ms. Alley said. There was no public comment and Chairman Newman closed the public hearing.

REVIEW OF FULL BOARD PROJECTS

1203 Prince Street – Major Demolition of Structure, Final Review.

Applicant: Faye Bostick for Carrie B. Smalls and Mabel Washington (HR12-04)

Ms. Dickerson made a motion to concur with staff to demolish the structure. The motion failed for lack of a second. Ms. Bostick said that she has given approval to demolish, but since then a buyer has come to her, and he thinks the structure can be renovated. **Mr. Rainey made a motion that the project be deferred until the owner obtains more information. Ms. Neal seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

1207 Bay Street – Fence, Final Review.

Applicant: Southern Fence for Catherine Scarborough (HR12-11)

Ms. Alley said the property is listed as a contributing resource. The applicant wants to include aluminum fencing; Ms. Alley felt the HDRB should examine the matter of using aluminum rather than wrought iron.

Trevor Wester of Southern Fence said the back of 1207 Bay Street is the main entrance to the driveway, and the owner, Ms. Scarborough, wants two panels of fence and a gate with a gate operator on it. He said he has several examples of aluminum in use in the Historic District. He showed the board pictures of other examples and the drawings which include a brick column. He said the aluminum material is similar to what is in use at City Hall.

Mr. Rainey said it sets a precedent that he feels the board would regret in the long-term. The

material had not been approved in the examples Mr. Wester showed, Mr. Rainey said. The Department of the Interior says “pretty emphatically that this material cannot be used in national historic districts.” Historic Beaufort Foundation “was up in arms about it at the time,” Mr. Rainey said.

Mr. Wester said wrought iron is difficult to maintain and outdated. Aluminum is a new precedent, he said. The new materials issue, Chairman Newman said, comes up in regard to materials that are approvable in a specific context. With a historic house, “holding the line on the character and quality of materials which has more weight than matters of maintenance.” This is a different context than new construction; Historic District houses are held to a different standard.

Mr. Chambers said 500 Port Republic Street is all wrought iron. Other HDRB members gave further examples of wrought iron fencing in the Historic District. Chairman Newman said maintenance is part and parcel of having this type of home.

Mr. Rainey said wood picket, brick, or wrought iron are other alternatives. Mr. Wester asked about powder-coated steel, which would look similar to the aluminum. Mr. Wester showed another example of a wooden privacy fence in the Historic District and asked if that would be approved. Ms. Alley said it would be a rear fence, but it would have to come in a particular set back. Mr. Rainey said it’s a streetscape, not a rear fence. Mr. Rainey said personally he’d rather see a picket or something with some see-through. Mr. Wester said the owner is concerned about her security; people come in her yard and picnic, so that’s the primary reason she wants this type of fence.

Jay Weidner said he represents the Preservation Committee of the Historic Beaufort Foundation. He discussed a wrought iron fence that doesn’t need yearly painting to prevent rusting. **Mr. Rainey moved for denial of the application as presented; Ms. Neal seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

507 Washington Street – Alterations, Additions, Conceptual Review.

Applicant: Allison Ramsey Architects, Inc. for Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hussey (HR12-06)

Ms. Alley said the property is listed in the survey as a contributing resource. The applicant is also proposing site changes and the installation of a patio on the east side. Some variances for setbacks may be required, Ms. Alley said. Ms. Alley pointed out the applicable Milner guidelines.

Chairman Newman said the presentation seemed complete. **Cooter Ramsey** said the presentation is to seek the board’s advice and recommendations as to whether they are going down the right path. The addition is more modern, he said, but it “sympathetic” to the overall design of the house. They would do the addition to the back and then do the driveway in the back so that they can have more garden in front. The Husseys want to gain the ability to access their yard.

Ms. Dickerson said it's a beautiful addition, and this would focus it on the yard. She thinks it would improve Washington Street by adding the garden and moving the parking. Mr. Ramsey said they are working on a complete landscaping plan which they will bring back to the HDRB. Mrs. Hussey said the hedges would be gone, and whether there's a fence there is to be determined.

Mr. Weidner said HBF's Preservation Committee had reviewed the plans and the proposed east elevation shows plainly which the original portion of the house is. There's an existing addition, and he confirmed with Mr. Ramsey when that was put on the house. He feels it blends well with the front of the house. This addition, the committee felt, "is twice as busy visually" than the front of the house; the palladium window is inappropriate, he added. There probably was one on the north side of the house at one time. The committee suggested "taking the footprint of the existing addition and extending it out."

Mr. Weidner said old Beaufort architecture has "a minimum of rectangles." He said there's too much visual action. The front seems simpler visually than the rear, Mr. Weidner added. Too many architectural elements in a small space make the house seem "busy."

Mr. Rainey said his problems with it are that "it rambles across the back," is a nearly 100% addition from a façade standpoint, and looks "Spring Island" rather than Historic District. He agreed with Mr. Weidner that they should extend the existing addition, eliminating the connector and the palladium window.

Mr. Chambers said the orientation to view the east garden is attractive. He suggested the architect should make the connector "a more transparent element." Mr. Chambers said it looks like a glass pavilion to view the garden, and if that's the element, Mr. Chambers feels Mr. Rainey would have fewer issues with it. Chairman Newman said it feels like it's not quite disconnected, or connected, where it feels "too apart" from the house. He agrees on the palladium window, he said, but it's a detail that's used for specific things and is too special for what it's used for here. The addition seems too refined, Chairman Newman said. Houses in Beaufort don't have that much detail, and this "looks too fine," he reiterated. The gable roof on the main mass "looks too much like a temple." Chairman Newman likes that the porch comes down to the ground as piers. It gives "a really pleasant" lightness to the house that he thinks shouldn't be changed. The concept of an addition is a good one, Chairman Newman said the board feels, "but this is conceptually not quite there as to how you do that." He feels the addition should feel either more separate or more integral to the main structure.

Ms. Dickerson said simplifying the connector would be a good step. In regard to the roofline, if it were changed, plus possibly "opening up the bottom" it might be closer to what Chairman Newman is asking for. Chairman Newman said they could tweak the architecture or come up with a solution that is more part of the overall circulation of the house. He re-emphasized that it seems disconnected to him.

Mr. Ramsey said the point was to have a more removed pavilion feel and the transparent

connector would be a good idea and will eliminate the “caboose” feeling Mr. Rainey had referred to. He doesn't like the idea of a two-story addition. Chairman Newman said the existing part of the house, including the addition, has three roof masses, and this design would make it four roof masses, which is too much for such a small addition. Mr. Ramsey said they put the water table on to make it different from the existing house, which Mr. Ramsey doesn't like as much. He likes the idea of relating more to the idea of the house; the same goes with window styles to show that it's a modern addition, not a copy. They can soften all of these elements more, he said.

Mr. Chambers said there are three stairwells in almost the same location; one is inside, not outside. He commented that if there are three, maybe one could be cleaned up to have less mass in the yard. Mr. Ramsey said they have a basement, and they don't need the multiple connections, but there may be a caretaker or a renter in the future in that basement. That's intended to allow them maximum flexibility in the future.

Mrs. Hussey asked if they could have some other window in place of the palladium, and the board agreed that they could. She said they just want a window, and it doesn't need to be palladium.

There followed a general discussion of possibilities for casements.

302 Carteret Street – Alterations, Additions, Minor Demolition, Preliminary Review.

Applicant: Dwight Garret (HR12-09)

Ms. Alley said this is the old City Hall, where Lowcountry Produce Market and Café is now. The applicants want to construct a brick knee wall, planters, seating, and a pergola to create an outdoor eating space. They will use real timber stained black like the trim on the building. It will be hard to match the brick that is on the building, they said, without clearly showing that it's been added. It will be a living pergola with vines coming out of the planters, **Dwight Garret** said. The platform will be the cement that is there, but it will be stained and saw cut.

Chairman Newman asked if the space slopes. Mr. Garrett said yes, but it's quite slight, not drastic. There will be shading from the summer heat. There will be irrigation of the planter.

Mr. Weidner said Historic Beaufort Foundation thinks the concept is “a terrific idea.” He asked the height from the ground to the lowest level of the structure that goes across the entire thing. Mr. Garrett indicated it to Chairman Newman and said it's 10 – 11' to the top. Chairman Newman said many pergolas are planted, and they hang down and can be in people's faces, so he suggested hanging plants that won't be in people's faces. **Chuck Ferguson** said the loading dock is quite high.

Mr. Weidner suggested that, on the brick work, it would be nice if the brick extended the way it does on the brick wall around the National Cemetery. **Mr. Chambers made a motion to approve the application, seconded by Ms. Dickerson. The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Newman said he is more concerned about things hanging too high, unlike Mr. Weidner, and he feels the space should seem “more intimate,” so there is height latitude. Chairman Newman said there are limitations, but even 8’ is quite high as an open covering. There was a discussion of maintaining the plants on the pergola.

825 Bay Street – Alterations, Additions, Minor Demolition, Preliminary Review.

Applicant: Bill Chambers for Jeff Bisger (HR12-08)

Ms. Alley said the building is the former Lipsitz Department Store. Its proposed use is commercial on the main level with apartments on the second. Full restoration of the exterior is proposed, including removal of the aluminum siding and restoration or repair of the wood clapboard siding. Windows will be repaired or replaced to match the existing historic windows, and all openings currently covered by aluminum siding will be restored. Demolition will include removal of a single-story north elevation addition on West Street, a CMU north elevation addition constructed in the 1940s or 1950s, and a small single-story north elevation addition on West Street. Parking will be installed in the rear for the 6 apartments and for deliveries to the commercial spaces. Awnings are proposed to be installed over the north elevation doors.

Mr. Chambers said this project will go before archives and history and the Historic Beaufort Foundation for easements, so there will be a lot of input as they move forward. The inside is intact, Mr. Chambers said. The demolition of the CMU walls is a main point. It has a different brick base that they would like to demolish. On the north side, they want to gravel the site with no parking striping.

On the north elevation, Mr. Chambers said, there are existing window openings; on the second floor, there are windows that will be restored. On the lower level, they may find more as they demolish. Preliminarily, they have to investigate, so they will be coming back to the HDRB 2-3 times. On the west elevation, they propose new windows on the ground floor based on old photos, to bring in more light on the end unit. Everything else on that side will be restored.

On the south / Bay Street façade, Mr. Chambers said, the owner wants to remove existing aluminum track awnings and re-façade the lower level “to a period of significance.” The windows will be fully replaced with wood windows. Only 2 are useable in the whole building. All aluminum will be removed. Mechanical systems will probably be in the roof. A skylight will be restored. They need to get a demolition permit, do some discovery, and keep coming back to the HDRB.

Chairman Newman described a seminar about awnings conducted by Main Street Beaufort and said the seminar leader would be a good person to consult. He had interesting examples about restoring the main level to the period at which it was changed.

Mr. Weidner said Historic Beaufort Foundation thinks it’s “a terrific project,” and they like what’s been presented.

Mr. Rainey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dickerson, for preliminary approval for the application. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Chambers abstaining.

505 East Street – New Construction, Final Review.

Applicant: Bill Chambers for Dr. & Mrs. Jagar (HR12-10)

Ms. Alley said this is the third review and the drawings have been revised. Mr. Chambers said they are proposing basically the same work as in the last submission, except this time the house is being moved forward to the street to gain a rear screen porch on the east side of the building and not lose a tree. Ms. Alley said if the house is moved, it may change a lot of things, and **Libby Anderson** and a building official would have to approve it. Mr. Chambers said they are “anticipating this as new construction.” Mr. Chambers said he will present the carriage house for the HDRB’s review. Mr. Chambers said the grid pattern of the windows is 2 over 2, and the owner would prefer 6 over 6, so he’s asking for that revision to the application.

Michael Whitehead is the Jagars' neighbor, and he said if the house is moved, it has to be up to FEMA rules. Chairman Newman said that they are, and Mr. Whitehead said he was satisfied.

Mr. Rainey made a motion for approval of the application as submitted; Ms. Neal seconded. **The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Chambers abstaining.**

Mr. Chambers showed drawings and options for the carriage house to the board. Mr. Chambers said he was asking for direction. Mr. Rainey said he felt one has a Caribbean look which is not in keeping with the neighborhood. Chairman Newman said the simple gable seems like a more successful approach.

Mr. Chambers said the owner wants to know if it’s appropriate to put a cupola on the kitchen form. Mr. Rainey said it looked “busy,” and Chairman Newman said it “seemed out of character.” Mr. Chambers agreed a dormer might be better.

MINUTES

Mr. Rainey made a motion, second by Mr. Chambers to accept the minutes for the meeting of January 11, 2012. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Dickerson made a motion, second by Ms. Neal to accept the minutes for the meeting of February 8, 2012. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Rainey said he wanted to talk about the streetlights that are proposed for downtown. At the last meeting, Mr. Rainey said he had proposed that the lights be brought to HDRB for approval. Ms. Alley said Ms. Anderson had said that they would hold off until they decide what they are going to do. Mr. Rainey said something so significant shouldn’t be done in the Historic District without coming to the HDRB for its approval. There are two of the streetlights on

Carteret already, Ms. Alley said. Mr. Rainey said he finds them “fake.”

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:23 p.m.