A meeting of the Historic District Review Board was held on **December 9, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Joel Newman, board members Chuck Symes, Barbara Laurie, and John Dickerson, and planning staff Lauren Kelly. Quinn Peitz was absent

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.

MINUTES
Mr. Symes made a motion, seconded by Ms. Laurie, to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2015 Historic District Review Board meeting. Mr. Dickerson said **Erica Dickerson**'s name had been misspelled as "Erika." **The motion to approve as amended passed unanimously.**

1100 Boundary Street, Identified as District R120, Tax Map 4, Parcel 68
Alterations and additions
Applicant: The FWA Group for Bridges Preparatory School (HR15-41)
The applicant wishes to add a two-story addition in front of their current building and a minor addition on the interior elevation of the existing building.

Chairman Newman said that the applicants had new material to show the board. **Dale Strecker**, FWA Group, said the revisions to the elevations are similar to what was originally submitted; the changes are mainly site-related and civil, he said. The plan was revised to give them an area that allows them to do underground drainage, and only the corridor crosses it, which allows easier changes if necessary.

Among the benefits of this change, Mr. Strecker said, in the previous elevations, the Boundary Street entry was a concern. Those had "the same element on Boundary, but with the entry off to the side." With the connecting corridor, the element has been shifted to that location and the entry doors moved. The other components are "pretty much the same." The brick is similar to that which is on the end of the building now, with a brick face and hardie plank siding above that.

Mr. Strecker said they are looking for conceptual approval and input from the board, knowing they will be coming back, so they didn't show windows on the elevation because they are trying to "maximize instructional wall space," but they can do that if necessary.

Mr. Symes said the previous elevation had an entry with blank walls; they had rotated that element, he said, which worked better. There are windows on the Church Street elevation.

Barry Taylor, FWA Group, said this helps get cars out of the pick-up and drop-off queue better. He showed a gathering space for the kids so people can be at the furthest point as they come to pick up their kids.

Chairman Newman said at Beaufort Elementary, pick-up and drop-off was a disaster, but it was fixed with the installation of multiple lanes. **Marty Miley** said they are still working with their traffic engineer. At the new Montessori School, pick-up and drop-off wasn't resolved, and both mornings and afternoons were a disaster. Mr. Miley said they plan to avoid that, but they need to put some things in place first.

Mr. Strecker said this revision looks like what the board was given in their packet. Chairman Newman said he had looked at an early iteration of the plan, when there was no street address, and "it was a monolith," but this version addresses that "mile-long building," so he is pleased. Mr. Miley said they have taken into consideration the comments the Historic District Review Board had made. Chairman Newman said before they were right on the edge of the sidewalk, and he wanted to know if there was an opportunity for landscaping to soften that edge. Mr. Strecker said the sidewalk doesn't show on the plan. Chairman Newman said it does, and there's green to the front of the building; he asked if there's opportunity for streetscape. Mr. Strecker said there's some, but they are building it to the build-to line, which is 7'–12'.

Mr. Symes said it looks like it's right up on the sidewalk. Chairman Newman said DOT probably wouldn't allow planting between the curb and the sidewalk. Ms. Kelly said they are trying to overcome the DOT's strictures, so "I wouldn't throw it out the window right now." Mr. Miley indicated some areas where they could plant. Chairman Newman said that modulation is different. Mr. Miley said they had learned yesterday that a tree in the upper corner "was planted by someone significant," and they need to try to save it. It's a 30-year-old oak.

Mr. Symes asked who has "authority over the trees staying or not." Ms. Kelly said **Liza Hill** had given input on the trees. There are provisions in the ordinance for mitigation, but one of the trees is in the middle of the building footprint. This tree under discussion could be worked around. Mr. Strecker said, in earlier plans, they had tried to save it, but it is tight for parking and drainage. Mr. Symes said he wants to know who makes that decision, so the applicants don't have to redesign if the HDRB approves it but the trees are someone else's purview. Mr. Taylor said they were only seeking the board's preliminary opinion.

Chairman Newman said those building an institutional building should have more leeway than someone building a residence. This is a long-term civic endeavor, and if they are able to mitigate, that seems reasonable. Mr. Miley said the tree under discussion might have health issues, so they have contacted an arborist to come assess it and give a formal report. They want to save it if possible. Ms. Kelly said there is fungus, which might indicate it's hollow inside. Mr. Taylor said the tree is 68".

Mr. Dickerson said there are a lot of doors; for ingress, how will they deal with safety? Mr. Strecker indicated the main door for student drop off and visitors. Mr. Miley said the others are locked off, and people who need to get in have card readers. They automatically lock during school hours. Mr. Dickerson asked how long it would take to clear the building in an emergency. Mr. Taylor said 3–5 minutes is the goal, and there are protocols for that at the Office of School Facilities. Mr. Strecker said the building code has a 250' maximum for a door to the exterior or a stair to it.

Mr. Dickerson said they have a beautiful Boundary Street entrance, architecturally, but "inside, there's a tiny little space." Mr. Miley said they had to create that because of water on the backside of the property. Mr. Dickerson suggested, "You might want to pull that one wall back a bit." Mr. Miley said they tried to center the pipe so they have 4' – 5' on either side. Mr. Strecker said the hallways are 8' wide. There's a firewall between the walls of the building, which are considered to be two separate buildings per the building and fire codes. They're using glass to get in as much light as they can from both sides. Chairman Newman said the pipe goes underneath, "so the joints fall . . . 3'–4' outside of where the doors are on either side," so "you're outside" if they need to dig it up and repair it. Ms. Kelly said this is a pretty common element in this type of building in urban areas.

Mr. Symes said that he thinks the Boundary Street elevation is beautiful. Windows are not a big issue for him. He is agnostic about the roof structure – a whole one vs. what was designed – and the cupola on the entry. Mr. Strecker said they could go either way; they were repeating it because it's on the existing building. Mr. Miley said they could take it off and save money. Mr. Strecker said staff has suggested a full roof on the other building; they have shown it this way because the width of the building means the roof could get high. Also, all the mechanical equipment will be on the roof because of site constraints, and that will mask it.

Chairman Newman said Beaufort Elementary has the same roof scheme, and it's "that (high) or less." They don't want to lose that space, he said, and you can't tell the difference between that and "a real roof." Mr. Strecker said it reads as a roof. Mr. Taylor said they don't have the equipment, so they don't know how big it will need to be, but some equipment could be 9'. Chairman Newman said it helps the streetscape for it not to go any higher. Ms. Kelly said staff had commented that it's not a characteristic detail, in the Historic District, particularly, to have this kind of "partial mansard roof." Chairman Newman said he feels Beaufort Elementary is a very handsome building and a good-looking civic structure in a very public location.

Mr. Symes said the roof doesn't bother him; once they figure out what goes there, if they can lower the pitch, "that would be fantastic." Mr. Dickerson said in regard to the size of the equipment, at Tabby Place, they were required to have a large HVAC system, and they had looked at the cost of one big HVAC unit or many smaller ones; it had "netted out the same," so Bridges might want the latter, so they have

redundancy, and that would also lessen the size and scope of the equipment. Mr. Miley said they're not at that point yet.

Chairman Newman said he was trying to visualize the roof overhang at Beaufort Elementary, so Ms. Kelly brought it up online. Ms. Kelly said where the Bridges elevation is a one-story form at the street and goes back into two stories, "the roofs (are) at the same plane at the edge," so "the roof hangs over, and then has to wrap and turn back around." To avoid this, she said, they could pull it in a foot or two, "so the roof can terminate into the side of the building."

Chairman Newman said he was surprised that there was more offset in the elevation than in the plan. He feels the shallow overhang looks good at Beaufort Elementary, when they looked at the picture of it. Chairman Newman said the pitch could be reduced; the physical wall of the school could go up. It might look more appealing, even if it raises the eave, whereas now it is "a little thin . . . for a big-scale building."

Mr. Strecker said the height limit on Boundary Street is 35', and the central entry element goes higher. Chairman Newman said that could come down. They are "trying to telegraph the original big thing," but it doesn't need to be as tall as what is on either side. He said they could think of scooting it down and broadening it out. Ms. Kelly said the height is "to the average mean roof height, so you have room."

About the windows, Mr. Strecker said they have 4" hardie trim on the jambs and head and 6" at the sill. Mr. Symes said they had approved a less expensive "picture frame" on windows on a building on Boundary Street, and they shouldn't have done it, he feels. Ms. Kelly said, "a lot of times you see a 6" header," which "can look pretty nice" with "wide banks of windows."

Ms. Laurie asked about traffic flow: it's currently "cumbersome . . . over several blocks," she said. Building capacity is 621, Mr. Taylor said. It's designed for kindergarten through 8th grade now. There are two other remote sites. Most of those kids would be reincorporated into this building when it's built. Right now, there are about 370 students. Ms. Laurie asked where the outside activity would occur. Mr. Miley said the Washington Street Park, and there's a little internal playground for the kindergarten and first grade.

Ms. Laurie said as an educator, a downtown resident, and a Beaufort citizen, she is concerned that this major facility, which was designed for recreation, is no longer there, so the Beaufort population has no recreational outlets; the Greene Street Gym is also gone. Problems arise in part because children "don't have a creative activity place." Mr. Miley said they are out of the Greene Street Gym at 3:00 p.m., and he thinks PALS has activities there after that. The Boys and Girls Club has their activities at the 1100 Boundary Street property, too. If the general population has a different perception, Mr. Miley said, Bridges needs to let the public know that this is still the case.

Ms. Laurie said she had lived next to this property all her life. She applauds what Bridges is doing educationally, and has no objection to this expansion, but she "wanted to make those comments for a different reason."

Ms. Kelly said in regard to the site, there are things that need to be worked out with parking and onsite circulation. The board, SCDOT, and the city also have to approve this and the effect on surrounding neighborhoods. Doing something with the streetscape around the building is encouraged – e.g., sidewalks around the site and loading zones.

The Design Review Board typically reviews projects of this scale, Ms. Kelly said. "Head-in parking facing public rights-of-way is not generally encouraged"; diagonal or parallel parking "is more friendly" to the streetscape and the residential area. Mr. Miley said that will "completely change." In regard to the details, widths are off, spaces are too big, etc., Ms. Kelly said. Mr. Miley replied that it would be done, but "when we ran into the drainage issue, we started scrambling."

Mr. Dickerson provided the example of Publix's use of underground water retention. Mr. Miley said they will use some underground water retention, but they "don't have enough area to do it all underground." Mr. Dickerson described where they could do it. Mr. Miley said that because of the tree and the amount of area they have left, they were told there was no way.

Ms. Laurie asked the projected date for students. Mr. Miley said April 2016 is the deadline for bids, and they would like students in by April 2017.

Ms. Laurie asked about the impact of construction on the neighborhood, and Mr. Miley said that there would be noise and traffic; the contractor will have to figure out how to mitigate those things. Ms. Kelly said if waivers to a noise ordinance are needed, that goes to city council. All adjacent property owners may not be notified of the construction and noise, but this is a "unique situation," so she said she would note that. She thinks it would be good PR for Bridges to have a neighborhood meeting and to send out fliers.

Ms. Laurie clarified that most of the students are brought in (i.e., not from immediately adjacent neighborhoods, where they could walk to school). Mr. Miley said that's correct; charter schools get no money for transportation or facilities. Chairman Newman said this partly occurs because admission is based on an open lottery system, in which it doesn't matter where the students live. Mr. Miley said once a class is full of those who have applied, it goes to a lottery.

Ms. Kelly said they have discussed ways to amend the traffic, such as whether the charter could be amended to let students who live within walking distance get two slots in the lottery. Mr. Miley said they have discussed that, but he doesn't know where they are with that.

Mr. Dickerson said there are nearby vacant lots. He asked if there was opportunity to buy them and make them into parking lots. Mr. Miley said most of those lots are residential and would be tough to rezone. Mr. Dickerson said he means lots across the street. Mr. Miley said that could be considered. Mr. Taylor said that the school has 2 buses, and those could be a remote pick-up and drop-off spot. They are looking at that to alleviate car traffic. Mr. Miley said they have to solve parking before they work on pick-up and drop-off.

Ms. Kelly said the board could make a recommendation; staff had recommended conceptual approval of the site plan, which means the building's general placement, size, mass, and scale. **Mr. Symes made a motion to recommend the submitted plan for conceptual approval, based on staff and board comments and the discussion. Mr. Dickerson seconded. The motion passed 3–0; Ms. Laurie abstained from voting.**

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Dickerson brought up a proposed article in the form-based code, in which short-term rentals would only be permitted in the Old Commons and Bluff neighborhoods if they were redeveloped in conjunction with Bailey Bill approval, which is meant to provide incentive to redevelop. He asked if this matter had come before city council. Ms. Kelly said the board could discuss it, but "that is more for the code committee," to whom staff had made that recommendation. "It's kind of a thought to spur further comments on that subject," she said. Mr. Dickerson said he feels that proposal would "restrict property rights in those areas and stifle investment." Chairman Newman said there's a procedure for people to make comments for the committee to consider: Mr. Dickerson should send his comment to Ms. Kelly, so that the committee will see it when they get to that topic in the review.

Mr. Symes asked whose responsibility it is to enforce the 30-days-or-more-only rentals in The Point. Ms. Kelly said the business license department does that, and they did "a pretty good audit." Mr. Symes said there might be an infraction. Ms. Kelly said there's a property that is adjacent to Carteret Street in The Point, but it is not zoned TBR – The Point; all rentals in The Point zoning must be for 30 days or more. Chairman Newman asked why. Mr. Symes said that's what The Point residents had decided they wanted. Ms. Kelly said it took 18 months for the short-term rental ordinance to be adopted, and excluding The Point was a way to get it passed.

Ms. Kelly introduced Mr. Dickerson, who had served on the Design Review Board for 5 years.

There being no further business to come before the board, **Mr. Symes made a motion, second by Ms. Laurie, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously**, and the meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.