

CHAPTER THREE: CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The City of Beaufort is well recognized as a place of cultural and historic value in South Carolina and the United States. The cultural reality of present day Beaufort is that of a place richly entwined with the history of the development of the United States as well as richly endowed with local cultural traditions. The historic nature of Beaufort provides a context for residents of the City and visitors as well to understand the place, its development and its origins. The City of Beaufort, numerous organizations, families and individuals have worked and continue to work for the preservation, maintenance and promotion of Beaufort's historic assets. Documentation of these efforts are found in numerous studies, reports, plans and guidelines pertaining to the City's historic and cultural resources. As the extensiveness of these efforts cannot be duplicated in this comprehensive plan, what follows is a general indication of what has been completed in the past and some implications for Beaufort's cultural and historic resources in the future.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Beaufort County Above-Ground Historic Resources Survey of Beaufort County, South Carolina, completed in April 1998, is the most current and most comprehensive study of historic and architectural resources not only in the City of Beaufort but also the Town of Port Royal and unincorporated Beaufort County. The impetus behind this study was a desire to provide an understanding of the locations, types and significance of the cultural resources that may be affected in the course of the rapid development of the Beaufort County area. In addition to a researched historic overview of Beaufort County and its municipalities, the survey includes data on some 1,468 sites, with 820 of these sites being within the City of Beaufort. Each surveyed site was given a site number, located on tax maps, photographed, and studied to record data such as the estimated date of construction, general condition of structures, and historic integrity. Through cooperation with the Beaufort County Geographic Information System (GIS) these data have been recorded digitally within the County GIS system and are accessible through this system.

Based on the survey and analysis of data, the survey has included a series of recommendations pertinent to historic and cultural resources. These recommendations include specific recommendations for properties that should be considered for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and other recommendations related to planning, research and documentation needs in the study area. These recommendations which apply to the City of Beaufort are as follows:

Recommendation 1: Local Landmark and Historic District Designation

It is recommended that Beaufort County establish a system of designating local historic districts and landmarks. Such districts and landmarks should include properties already listed on the NRHP, or determined eligible, as well as communities, districts, and individual properties that are not eligible for the NRHP but which are significant within the context of Beaufort County's local history.

Within the City of Beaufort, there are three areas and one landmark for potential local historic designation:

1. The area between the existing National Historic Landmark District and Ribault Road.
2. The Ribault Road corridor.
3. Neighborhoods to the west of Ribault Road.
4. The Woods Memorial Bridge.

Recommendation 2: Organizational Advocacy and Education

Numerous historic societies and organizations are active in Beaufort and Beaufort County including the Beaufort Open Land Trust, the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society, the Beaufort Museum, the Coastal Discovery Museum of Hilton Head Island, the Historic Beaufort Foundation, the Historic Port Royal Foundation, and Penn Center. These organizations are active in the areas of advocacy and education, however it is recommended that by forming a consortium of the existing groups, to be staffed by the County government for a startup period, there could be a more comprehensive and effective response to issues of historical and cultural significance in the County.

Recommendation 3: Pigeon Point Review

The Pigeon Point area in the City of Beaufort contains mostly buildings which are not of sufficient age to be considered by the National Register but which document an important part of Beaufort's post World War II development. It is recommended that a more comprehensive inventory and evaluation of the Pigeon Point area be conducted in the near future.

Recommendation 4: Reevaluation of the Beaufort National Historic Landmark District

The Beaufort National Historic Landmark District has, since its initiation, undergone sufficient change to warrant a new evaluation. A current and more fully developed understanding of this district's history and significance should be a major priority for community preservation and planning.

Recommendation 5: Documentation of Beaufort's African-American Community

Very little documentation exists concerning the contribution of African-Americans to the Beaufort National Historic Landmark district.

Recommendation 6: Tabby Resources

It is recommended that there be undertaken a systematic identification, documentation and conservation of Beaufort County's tabby in preparation of a multiple properties submission to the NRHP.

Recommendation 7: Mid-20th Century Buildings

It is recommended that steps be taken to document and evaluate the significance and contribution that surviving resources from the period 1935 to 1950 make to historic character.

Recommendation 8: Archaeological Resources

The City of Beaufort and other municipalities should promote professional archeological investigation of properties within their jurisdictions that are subject to pending development. These municipalities should consider the adoption of an archaeological preservation similar to that of Beaufort County.

NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC BUILDINGS

In addition to the City of Beaufort's National Historic Landmark district, there are several individual buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Individual listings on the National Register in the City of Beaufort include the following:

- The William Barnwell House, 501 King Street, Beaufort
- The Tabby Manse, 1211 Bay Street, Beaufort
- The John Mark Verdier House, 801 Bay Street, Beaufort
- The Anchorage, 1103 Bay Street, Beaufort
- The John A. Cuthbert House, 1203 Bay Street, Beaufort
- The Barnwell-Gough House, 705 Washington Street, Beaufort

As well as properties on the National Register of Historic Places, there is one property in the City of Beaufort, The TwoSuns Inn (Keyserling Home) at 1705 Bay Street, which is listed on the U.S. Department of the Interior Certified Historic Structures.

POTENTIAL NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The Beaufort County Above Ground Historic Resources Survey has indicated a number of properties and areas in the City of Beaufort which have potential for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A survey of these properties has been reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. The SHPO found that approximately 30 properties in Beaufort County which are not listed meet the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and 11 additional properties warrant further investigation. Within the City of Beaufort, the Wood-Lawn Subdivision and the Beaufort National Cemetery may be eligible for the National Register.

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

The City of Beaufort has a successful history of historic preservation as evidenced by the National Historic Landmark status of the historic downtown. This is a result of a combination of the fortune of Beaufort to avoid the detrimental effects of such historical events as the Civil War as well as the establishment of current regulatory and advocacy protection measures. Leaders in the efforts to promote historic preservation in Beaufort include the City of Beaufort, the Historic Beaufort Foundation and the Open Land Trust among others.

The City of Beaufort has used several measures of design review and control as tools for ensuring the preservation of historic Beaufort. From the National Historic Landmark District, established in 1972, the City has designated the Historic Beaufort District covering the same area as a defined area of overlay zoning within which the City has the authority to review all project plans. The Board of Architectural Review (BOAR) is the appointed board that was established in the Beaufort Zoning Ordinance to take responsibility for reviewing all applications for building permits related to construction, alteration or demolition within the Historic Beaufort District. The BOAR uses the Beaufort Preservation Manual of 1979 and the ensuing Beaufort Preservation Manual Supplement of 1990 as guides for its review of projects.

As it had been the practice of the BOAR to review projects in a portion of the Historic Beaufort District while not reviewing those in the Northwest Quadrant of the district, a separate overlay district, the Beaufort Conservation Overlay District, has been created to respond to the conditions of the Northwest Quadrant by enforcing a less exhaustive review. Currently, design guidelines for the Northwest Quadrant are being prepared which will serve as the guide for BOAR review of projects in that area.

CULTURAL AND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN BEAUFORT

The City of Beaufort offers many amenities which attract tourists during all seasons of the year. There are two chief attractions of Beaufort which complement each other, the character and charm of Beaufort's National Landmark Historic district and the natural environment of Beaufort's lowcountry coastal location. Prominent among Beaufort's historic resources are the remarkable residential district known as the Point and the historic corridor of Bay Street which includes museums, restaurants, shops, and many fine houses which are privately occupied or in commercial use. Tours of Historic Beaufort are commonly offered, including horse-drawn carriage tours, and numerous Bed and Breakfast Inns and hotels are available for overnight stays.

Beaufort also has several museums displaying a wide array of historic artifacts significant to the development of the City, Beaufort County and the Lowcountry.

The Beaufort Museum: 713 Craven Street

Featuring exhibits on the history of Beaufort and the Lowcountry, the Beaufort Museum is

located in the historic Arsenal building which dates from 1798.

The Verdier House: 801 Bay Street

In one of the most prominent of Beaufort's residences built by merchant John Mark Verdier around 1805, tours are offered to view the preserved Federal style architecture and furnishings.

Fort Lyttleton: a pre-Revolutionary fort in Beaufort

North Street Aquarium: 608 North Street

A local marine life aquarium and the only public aquarium in South Carolina.

Regularly scheduled events and festivals in the City of Beaufort and surrounding areas include the Daffodil Daze Festival in March, the Military Appreciation Fun Day at the Naval Hospital in April, the Annual Farmers Market and Gullah Festival in May, the Beaufort County Water Festival in July, the Historic Beaufort Fall Festival of Houses and History, Main Street Winefest and Shrimp Festival in October, and the Main Street's Night on the Town in December.

GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

This section presents a listing of statements of goals, policies and strategies which have been developed in relation to the Cultural and Historic Resources element of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals are designed to be general in scope, allowing for multiple targeted policy statements to follow each goal. Policies serve to articulate the means by which goals will be achieved. Strategies are evolved from policies and are the mechanisms through which policies can be implemented.

CITY OF BEAUFORT CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

GOAL 1: A Nationally Recognized Historic District that is Maintained as the Heart of Beaufort and is a Source of Pride to Residents.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES:

1.A: Preserve the General Character and Quality of the Historic District.

Land Use Planning and Zoning must give special attention to preserving the Historic District and protecting it from disruptive change. Limits should be set on each type of land use within the district in order to preserve a healthy mixture of uses.

As the manager of a National Historic Landmark District, Beaufort should work to ensure that its Historic District meets or exceeds the high standards for preservation in this area.

Issues pertaining to Historic Preservation should be given equal weight in the City's budget as issues pertaining to tree preservation and parks.

1.B: Protect the Historic District from the Damaging Effects of Through Traffic.

The knowledge that through traffic on Carteret Street and other streets in the Historic District damages historic structures should be considered as a top factor in any transportation planning decisions. A study should be conducted in cooperation with Beaufort County and the South Carolina DOT to determine what volume and type of traffic should be on such streets and to make recommendations for speed limit reductions and traffic calming improvements to major downtown streets. Future transportation plans should target reducing traffic in downtown Beaufort.

Speed limit reductions and traffic calming improvements are recommended for Ribaut Road as it is more heavily used as an alternate route to Carteret Street. Long range transportation plans should not include Ribaut Road as a major route for heavy truck traffic.

1.C: Enhance the Historic District with Improvements to Historic District Entrance Points.

Consider special signage and landscape improvements to areas that may serve as formal entrances to the historic district.

Consider special street signs within the historic district that will distinguish areas within the district from those without.

1.D: Encourage the Renovation of Buildings in the Historic District.

Study ways to assist individuals and businesses who would like to restore houses or commercial buildings in the historic district. Support the use of financial incentives for private restoration work as well as special assistance from the Board of Architectural Review for sensitive rehabilitation projects.

Consider adopting a vacant and abandoned buildings ordinance which would allow longstanding vacant properties to be condemned by the City and sold to private or non-profit developers for rehabilitation.

Identify funding for the rehabilitation of low and moderate income housing within the Historic District.

Seek to promote the interests of property owners who renovate and maintain historic buildings and houses.

Include in public policy that local and county government should seek to use rehabilitated buildings and to promote the use of rehabilitated buildings among businesses and organizations in the City.

The City should consider rehabilitating the old City jail for office use.

1.E: Preserve the Vistas which add to the Character and Quality of the Historic District.

The City should continue to cooperate with the Beaufort Open Land Trust to acquire properties and/or easements for the purpose of preserving vistas.

Within a Coordinated Public Utilities Plan, the City should place emphasis on future measures of improving the Historic Districts visual quality such as underground utilities and appropriate tree removal and replacement.

The historic character and quality of the Woods Memorial Bridge is important to the City of Beaufort and the historic district. The City should insist that any upgrade of this bridge be sensitive to the historic environment and seek to improve the function of the bridge without

compromising its aesthetics.

1.F: The Board of Architectural Review (BOAR) should be Re-evaluated to Determine how it may Operate more Smoothly in the Development and Redevelopment Climate of the Historic District.

A revision of the ordinance chartering the BOAR should be strongly considered.

The City should support the BOAR as a regulating body by enforcement the regulations enacted by the BOAR.

1.G: The Northwest Quadrant should receive Special Consideration as an area of the Historic District that is Endangered.

In addition to the Design Guidelines currently being prepared for the Northwest Quadrant, a plan should be developed for the comprehensive revitalization of the district. Such a plan should deal with the issues of affordable housing and historic preservation, sense of community and awareness of historic value, gentrification and declining ownership among black residents, the neighborhood's status concerning the National Historic Landmark District, and the problem of heirs rights as a hindrance to redevelopment.

GOAL 2: Continue to Enhance the Status of Beaufort as a High Quality Destination for Tourism with Genuine History, Community Beauty, and Character.

2.A: Protect the Integrity of Historic Areas from Excessive Encroachment of Tourists.

Work with the Beaufort Welcome Center and other tourism-related agencies to prepare a shared strategic plan for tourism in Beaufort.

Continue efforts to monitor and regulate the activity of tour buses in the historic district and adjacent areas. Explore similar regulations for the historic commercial district as have been enacted for the point concerning the size of buses that are allowed to tour the area.

Complete a parking study and transportation shuttle study for downtown. Encourage tourists and tour organizers to utilize designated parking areas and shuttle services.

2.B: Develop New Cultural Facilities that will Expand Cultural Opportunities for Residents and Tourists.

Any proposal for a new tourist attraction should be examined for compatibility with the existing character of the community and existing tourist attractions. The primary focus of tourism in the City of Beaufort is natural and historic resources.

The potential to develop a Coastal Environment Center/Botanical Gardens or other cultural or

environmental center should be studied. Such a facility could add an attraction to tourists and take pressure away from the downtown historic district.

The City should promote the development of an amphitheater or other outdoor performance facility capable of holding special concerts and festival events in a prominent location.

2.C: Increase the Number of Cultural Events that Celebrate Beaufort's Heritage and Culture.

Work with the Arts Council of Beaufort County and regional cultural organizations to promote more high-quality cultural events for residents and tourists.