

A meeting of the Historic District Review Board was held on **July 10, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Chuck Symes, board members Bill Allison and Katherine Pringle, and David Prichard and Heather Spade, city staff. John Dickerson 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 Symes called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

### **MINUTES**

**Chairman Symes made a motion, second by Mr. Allison, to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2019 HDRB meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.**

### **REVIEW OF FULL BOARD PROJECTS**

#### **708 NEW STREET, PIN R120 004 000 499A 0000**

#### **Alterations**

Applicant: Beekman Webb (19-11 HRB.1)

*The applicant is requesting approval for exterior alterations to this structure.*

The HDRB gave conceptual approval for a new one-car garage, tree removal, and a lot recombination, Ms. Spade said. She described the approvals the applicant is seeking.

One of the property owners has a permanent disability, Ms. Spade said. They also own the Robert Smalls house across the street and plan to use this house as guest quarters, a home office, and a place to store exercise equipment.

Ms. Spade reviewed staff comments:

- Removing the side steps on the front porch leaves it inaccessible.
- Staff recommends that the proposed side porch balusters stay consistent with the existing balusters on the front porch.
- Staff also wants to know if the applicant is still planning to construct the 1-car garage, which was granted conceptual approval in January 2019.
- The proposal doesn't show a deck around the pool. Ms. Spade asked if there would be one, and Mr. Webb said no.
- Staff recommends that the applicant use Chapter 14 of the Historic Preservation Manual as a guideline for proposed landscape improvements.
- Laurel oaks can be removed without a permit.
- Ms. Spade asked how the applicant is planning to improve the pervious driveway. Mr. Webb said sand-laid brick.

Mr. Webb said the garage was to happen when a neighbor sold some property, but they couldn't, so the garage can't be done.

Mr. Webb said he has "25 pictures of historic houses with masonry steps"; there are more historic houses with those kind of steps than with wooden steps. He doesn't "know how Milner decided wood was more appropriate than masonry" for steps. There are three sets of steps on the house now, he said, and two of them are masonry. The homeowners would like the new stairs to be masonry, too, which is why Mr. Webb said he applied for them.

Mr. Webb said the homeowners want to remove the front porch steps because they "half-block the driveway," and if he turned them to face the street, there's so little space that "you would step into the street." The front porch is not a good place to have a set of steps on this house, he said, so they want "to put a garden path along there," leading "to the side of the house," which would become the main entrance to the house. If there are steps on the front porch, Mr. Webb said, it would seem like the front entrance, when the homeowners want to encourage people to come to the side entrance.

The lace brick is something the owners would like because there is a lace brick wall all the way around the Robert Smalls house, which they also own, Mr. Webb said. It needs to be replaced, anyway, he said, and the brick piers are still good; they would like lace brick infill with stucco piers. He showed a picture of a house on Craven Street that also has this.

Mr. Webb said to put in a handicapped ramp, he needs to enlarge the porch a little, and the ramp would go in the rear where it would not be seen.

**Heather Seifert**, Historic Beaufort Foundation, read the Preservation Committee's comments. They prefer that the front steps are not removed completely, but are moved in line with the entry door. Per the Milner guidelines, the committee suggested the brick steps be replaced with wood, and that there be appropriate infill at the foundation piers, she said.

**Maxine Lutz** said she understands the problem of the stairs at the front porch, but to remove them altogether "presents a false narrative of the historic building." She would like to see there still be access to the front porch.

Mr. Allison said he thinks there are other solutions for the front step. The porch could be extended to the south and have a landing where the steps are currently, for example. He agrees that it is confusing if there are no steps to the front porch. Mr. Webb said part of the reason for this is that the steps "now are pretty much into the driveway." The steps extend about 6'.

Mr. Allison said it looks like there is about 20' to the property line. Mr. Webb said it's really about 5'. The stairs don't appear to be intruding into the driveway, Mr. Allison said. He thinks it would be easier to divert the driveway than to eliminate the stairs. Mr. Webb said the homeowners would like to make the side entrance the main entrance to the house.

Ms. Pringle said the steps there now look like, if they were rebuilt, they wouldn't be as lengthy. They look like the treads are bigger than they would have to be, she said, and that would "reduce the intrusion."

Mr. Webb said most treads are 11", which is "close to a foot."

Mr. Allison asked how close the current accessory building is to the property line. Mr. Webb said 10', and the homeowner would like to "move it to 5', which is the setback there," so it "centers better on the driveway, as you look up the driveway." Mr. Allison said centering the driveway seems to be "is what's driving the space that you have between the driveway and the [inaudible]." He doesn't see a hardship here, and he thinks having the stairs to the front porch is important. Chairman Symes agreed and said he's okay with the stairs on the front or the side of the porch. He said switching the "real entrance" to the house from the front to the side doesn't seem appropriate, since it's changing what has historically been the main entrance to the house. The homeowners' guests would soon learn to come in the side door, not the front door, Chairman Symes said.

Mr. Webb asked if they would support putting the steps straight out to the street. There was general agreement with this.

Ms. Pringle asked Mr. Webb if he would expand the porch if he had to rebuild it, and Mr. Webb said he would.

Chairman Symes said his preference is wooden stairs, but the board agreed brick is okay.

**Ms. Pringle made a motion to approve the application as submitted with the exception of needing steps to come to the side or the front of the front porch. Mr. Allison seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**1402 KING STREET, PIN R120 004 000 0665 0000**

**Addition & remodel**

Applicant: Johan Niemand, JHN-Residential Building Design (19-13 HRB.1)

*The applicant is requesting approval for new construction of a garage/carport.*

Ms. Spade said this is a noncontributing structure. She read from the staff report about the changes that the applicant is proposing to make.

The structure has been used as an office space, Ms. Spade said; on February 14, 2018, the HDRB gave final approval for a similar project at this location, contingent on the applicant installing 3 equal bays on a proposed porch. Since then, the plans have been updated because the building is under new ownership, she said.

Ms. Spade said the applicant has not met the front setback requirement for a detached garage, which must be a minimum of 20' from the front façade.

Mr. Niemand said the project came to the HDRB a year ago. The biggest difference in this application is that he is trying to "keep the exterior changes as small as possible," he said. The covered entry and the stoop at the back are the other changes, he said, as well as an interior remodel.

The carport is a conundrum, Mr. Niemand said, and there's no "wiggle room to put it anywhere." He thinks he might be off by a foot or so. They can't achieve the appropriate distance off of the front façade because of space, but there's not another place to put a carport, he said.

Chairman Symes asked why a garage/carport is proposed. The applicant wants the ability to have storage in the garage and to have a carport for everyday use, Mr. Niemand said. Ms. Pringle asked which the applicant wants more. Mr. Niemand said the homeowner wants "a combination." **Rob Johnston**, the homeowner, said he is "completely flexible."

Ms. Pringle said the windows on the garage are divided lites, and the windows on the house don't have mullions that she can see. Mr. Niemand said he could make the windows match.

Ms. Seifert said HBF's Preservation Committee didn't receive this application, so they feel it would be inappropriate to comment on it.

There was no public comment. Chairman Symes said he'd like to see all the windows on the garage be the same, rather than having the two high windows on the west side.

Chairman Symes said he thinks it "would look better if it were all a garage or all a carport." Mr. Allison said when his firm designs these, they separate the garage and carport roofs. He has seen many of these garage/carport combinations, and they don't bother him. Mr. Niemand said what Mr. Allison suggested "would break up the bulkiness." Ms. Pringle said she's okay with that.

Mr. Allison said there is not a lot that could be done about the setback issues because of the "funky lot." **David Prichard** said the board could issue a design exception if the circumstances merit it, but they would need to meet again about it because there needs to be public notice that the HDRB is doing a design exception. The board is able to issue

an exception up to 35%, he said. Mr. Allison and Chairman Symes said they don't think this project meets that amount.

Mr. Johnston said he likes the high windows on the garage because of security. If there has to be another meeting for a design exception, he would suggest that instead he “forgo the carport” for now and come back for it later. The demolition on the interior has started, and he’d like to move forward on this project. Chairman Symes said the applicant would need to have a meeting with either the HDRB or the ZBOA, but everything but the garage could be approved today.

**Chairman Symes made a motion to approve the application as submitted, minus the carport/garage. Mr. Allison seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**RESIDENCES OF THE BEAUFORT INN, 214 SCOTT STREET / 812 PORT REPUBLIC STREET, PIN R120 004 000 0984 & 0926 0000**

**New Construction**

Applicant: Beaufort Inn, LLC (19-12 HRB.1).

*The applicant is requesting approval for new construction of a residential building.*

Chairman Symes described what the board’s purview is with this application and described the process for public comment after the presentations.

Ms. Spade described the proposed project: The new building would be three stories high at the property line, increasing to 4 stories in the lot’s interior. The applicant’s original project was a hotel, and it received preliminary approval at the July 2017 HDRB meeting, she said, but the applicant is now requesting approval for a residential building.

Context adjacent to the property is varied, Ms. Spade said, and she described what is around it.

**Dick Stewart** said he’d discuss the building’s mass and scale. At HBF’s Preservation Committee meeting, the building had been compared to the Home Suites 2 building that was recently built on Boundary Street, he said, so he provided a handout comparing his planned building’s façade that one and others that are in the Historic District. He showed the building that the Best Western hotel had replaced and said the new building wouldn’t be as large as that one had been.

**Kirsten Reed**, project architect, said each bay is about 14’6”. They considered the urban context and “were very sympathetic to maintaining that urban fabric, as opposed to, by [the] letter of the law, keeping the building at exactly a [certain] number of feet,” she said.

Chairman Symes said staff commented that building sizes shouldn't exceed 160' on any

frontage, but the Port Republic frontage seems to be over that. Mr. Stewart said, “When we were doing this work and planning this, we are looking at a revision, not a replacement application for a building that had mass and scale previously approved,” which is “valid for two years [and] has not expired.” He said, “Our position is that there [are] lots of buildings longer than that in the district. That rule came into place right about the same time [as] the process of that approval, but that approval is still valid for another couple weeks.” They feel this question “has already been adjudicated,” Mr. Stewart said, and “we only heard about this when we got this report.”

Mr. Allison said another “zoning or code issue” is that “the fourth-story height has to be 15’ from the front line of the building,” and he “couldn’t tell where the fourth story was, as far as dimensions,” and the applicant didn’t provide “dimension drawings.” Ms. Reed said she could give him a printed copy of “the fourth-level plan,” where “I believe we have that noted.” She said the setback requirements were met.

Ms. Pringle said the setbacks of “the porches and the arcade, especially along Port Republic, are dependent on Scott Streets being taken over by the city,” and she asked if that has happened. She was told it has. Chairman Symes asked if SCDOT has “okayed the city taking over those streets, and the city is okay with having the colonnades over the sidewalks.” Mr. Stewart described “the context,” saying that the sidewalks (e.g., Port Republic and Scott Streets) are narrow and “can be crowded,” so “we agreed to . . . widen that sidewalk by putting a portion of the sidewalk on our property, and in exchange for that, we’re coming out across the colonnade to provide shelter to people walking down the sidewalks.” He said the intent was to “provide a wider pedestrian experience in that part of town.”

Chairman Symes asked about the old tabby wall behind the proposed building. Mr. Stewart said they propose to shield the wall during construction, but they haven’t talked to the owner about stabilizing it, so they don’t know how he feels. Ms. Pringle said some of the property owners on Bay Street are worried about the structural impact of driving pilings to construct this building. Mr. Stewart said they haven’t talked to him about that. He would bring in an engineering firm, photograph any damage, and correct it if necessary, but they don’t anticipate driving any pilings, he said.

Chairman Symes said that in the original application, a nearby owner had expressed concern about flooding. Mr. Stewart said they would take the water coming off the building and into the existing storm drains. He has a concern that along Scott Street, there was an inlet to the stormwater system that had eroded 8 to 10 years ago and that has been paved over, but it needs to be reopened.

Ms. Pringle asked if the architect was privy to the documents telling what could be done and not done, and Ms. Reed said yes.

Chairman Symes said a 3-story building was approved in the previous application. Mr.

Stewart said yes, and this building's fourth story is set back 15'. There are different requirements for residential apartments than a hotel, he said; they needed the partial floor to "make it economically feasible."

Chairman Symes asked about the plan for parking. Mr. Stewart said there about 1.7 spaces per apartment; four spaces are committed for condos above Blackstone's.

Ms. Pringle said on the 2017 submittal, there was a streetscape, and she asked if the architect has done that for this submittal to show the building's proposed height in context. Mr. Stewart said they had been asked about that. Of the three lots across Port Republic from this building, the corner lot is a vacant property. Under current zoning, a building on it would be a minimum of 2 stories and a maximum of 3 stories with a setback. The space where the bagel shop is was meant to be a temporary building 20+ years ago, he said; they'd have to build at least two stories to be compliant.

Mr. Stewart said he had asked the architect to reflect the buildings that would be in the surrounding spaces if they were redeveloped. He pointed out the buildings and discussed their histories. "Designing a building around things that are non-conforming seemed to be a bit iffy," he said, but we could certainly look at those elevations if they're available."

Ms. Pringle said if the board looked at the proposal "without the worst-case scenario masses," they could see better how the proposed building would actually look. Mr. Stewart said he was trying to reflect how his building would "look in the context of what's coming." It's surrounded by non-conforming buildings, he said.

Ms. Reed showed a drawing of the front elevations of existing buildings.

Ms. Seifert indicated the proposed structure and pointed out buildings to put it in context now. Based on Milner guidelines, the Secretary of the Interior standards, the Civic Master Plan, and the Beaufort Code, the Preservation Committee concluded the proposed structure doesn't meet the criteria for infill construction. The mass and scale must be reduced to make the building more compatible with its surroundings, Ms. Seifert said. The Historic District "has a distinct rhythm of mass and scale," she said, and buildings like this one shouldn't deviate from that but should "complement . . . the district." Further, the building should "strengthen" the district's characteristics and "not mimic historic details," Ms. Seifert said.

Materials should be compatible with the surrounding architecture, Ms. Seifert said, and the application should adhere to the requirements of the HDRB application form, including showing the building "in the context of the entire streetscape." The height, mass, scale, and "absolute size" of the building would "destroy downtown Beaufort," she said, and "most likely throw into question our integrity as a National Historic Landmark District. She concluded that HBF "cannot support this application."

Mr. Stewart said he had discussed this building with HBF's Preservation Committee twice. After the first meeting, they made changes to reduce the roof elevation, change the center element, reduce the mass of the columns to make a lighter imprint on the sidewalk, and delete some porches, he said. After the second meeting, he got a letter from HBF that he said didn't include a lot of the comments Ms. Seifert had just made.

Mr. Stewart said he had "worked on the Civic Master Plan," and he knows the city has frequently said that it wants to see more people living downtown. He described his renovation of the Saltus building and said he "strongly" disagrees that there are problems with this proposed building meeting the city code.

Mr. Stewart said what he is "willing to do." He doesn't agree that the proposed building is "at odds with the rhythm of the Historic District." He said they are willing to "work with someone," but in HBF's letter, he feels they are "firebombing everything," which is "unfortunate." Mr. Stewart said he didn't get the information he needed from HBF in order to be able to respond appropriately today.

Chairman Symes reiterated what public comments would be helpful to the board.

**Peggy Simmer**, 914 Port Republic, said her houses is about the only residence in this area. She asked if this building is on the same footprint as the hotel that was previously approved. Mr. Stewart described where this building would be. Ms. Simmer asked if it was taller than the building that was approved, and Mr. Stewart said it is "slightly taller" and described his preference for the sloped roof. Ms. Simmer asked how this building compares to the parking garage that was approved. Mr. Stewart pointed out where the parking garage was approved to go and said the garage was three stories.

**Dennis Harvey**, Duke Street, asked Mr. Stewart if the building would have columns over the sidewalk. Mr. Stewart said yes. Mr. Harvey said he thinks that's a "terrible idea." Ms. Pringle asked if, when the public is commenting, if a rebuttal should occur after each comment. Chairman Symes said the public could make comments, and Mr. Stewart could choose to rebut them at the end of that comment period.

Mr. Harvey said he doesn't like the idea of the columns over the sidewalk, even if the sidewalks are wider and more comfortable, because this building is "sitting on the street." He added that he feels it doesn't fit in the Historic District.

**Tom McMahon**, 1009 Scott Street, said the idea of that type of sidewalk is "like a plaza." He likes the way the sidewalks are in the Historic District now, so he also prefers that this not occur.

Ms. Lutz said someone who couldn't be at the meeting asked her to have the board discuss the interaction of a parking "garage on the first floor with the public realm," and if "we want a parking garage right at our street level." Also, she wanted to "re-

emphasize” that it is “so false” to show the surrounding “buildings as redeveloped,” when no one knows what buildings might go on those sites, and if developers would “push [them] to the limits.” The HDRB shouldn't make a decision based on this building being “so much smaller than what *could* go there,” she said. Ms. Lutz asked if DOT has “given the city the sidewalks” and whether the city has taken over the streets, which she has heard city council say repeatedly they do not want to do.

**Mary Ellen McManus**, King Street, asked what the construction material would be used on the apartments and what the color of the façade is. Ms. Reed said the parking level would primarily be concrete to support the building above it. The enclosed parking makes it a “more public plaza,” which makes the site more attractive than what is currently there, she said; “you won’t be able to see the cars” as you can now. Above the parking, there are three stories, and Ms. Reed anticipates using metal stud or wood framing; there are several options. They are looking at brick on the first floor, she said, and the second and third floors would likely be lap siding.

Mr. McMahan asked, with the addition of “37 new households,” if sections of Scott and West Streets might change from being one-way. Chairman Symes said this is beyond the board’s purview, and he doesn't know of any requests for traffic studies.

Mr. Stewart indicated the streets in the area and said the site is two blocks from Charles Street.

Ms. McManus asked how much the apartments would rent for. Chairman Symes said that’s an interesting question, but the board doesn’t have purview over that.

Ms. Seifert said she understands that at some point, every surface parking lot will be built on. She asked Ms. Spade to show a projection of a rendering for Port Republic Street from the Civic Master Plan, then pointed out what would fit in there that is “within the rhythm of the district,” as was provided by the City of Beaufort.

Mr. Stewart shared a story about Jean Ribaut Square/Beaufort Town Center, which his company owns, and the parks that were created there. He said they were told that they weren’t able to build a park where they wanted to in the parking lot of Jean Ribaut Square because of what “the picture” showed. The picture Ms. Seifert had shown from the Civic Master Plan is an “idealized” version of “New Urbanist planning,” Mr. Stewart said, when what the City of Beaufort wants is more people living downtown. That picture is inconsistent with economic reality, he said.

Ms. Pringle asked the height of the building that was approved in 2017. Mr. Stewart said he doesn’t know, but the planned building is taller.

Mr. Allison said he’s concerned with the legal issue of building the arcade over the public street; the Beaufort Code says there’s a limit of 100’ in width. He said he is “not adamant about lengths,” but in comparing this building to the original design, the

original was broken up better, which is “causing some of the angst.” That design addressed the corner of Port Republic and Scott Streets very well, which this design doesn’t, Mr. Allison said. He thinks this design is “going backwards” from the original, and he would “like to see dimensioning.”

Also, Mr. Allison said, he saw “a whole lot of different materials” in the proposal. The original design was simpler, and he thinks simplifying this design would “help a lot.” He suggested improving specific details, making it “less busy,” and “differentiating the façade.”

Ms. Pringle agreed about the details but said her “biggest concern” is “the fact that this building compromises the district.” It is “too large and too much.” She read the Beaufort Code, the Civic Master Plan, and other materials, and she doesn't feel she can support any of it. Ms. Pringle said she “totally agree(s)” with what Ms. Seifert said.

Mr. Allison said it’s not necessarily the board’s responsibility to determine the building’s size. If it’s broken up more, he thinks it could be done “more sensitively.” Ms. Pringle said she isn’t saying that Mr. Stewart should not do it, but HBF requested a re-design, and she agrees with that. Mr. Allison said some of the elements that were in the original design “could be helpful.”

Chairman Symes said he feels Mr. Stewart is in a bind. While he is not arguing against constructing a building here, this proposed building is “way too big,” in his opinion. He’d prefer two stories with a third story set back. He is concerned with “160’ versus 178’ on one side.” Chairman Symes thinks this is “a zoning issue that needs to be resolved,” so he doesn’t think the HDRB has the authority to “approve anything like that”; it would be the ZBOA’s responsibility to say, “the building can be [178].”

Chairman Symes said he agrees that simple construction is good, and he feels Mr. Allison’s suggestions for breaking the building up are good. “Fronting on Port Republic starts to help that breaking up,” he said, and “maybe even just breaking the roof line up will help it, too.”

Chairman Symes said he supported the colonnades in 2017 “and having it come over onto the sidewalk,” though that seems like “New Orleans, to some extent” to him. He walked around the site today, he said, and standing at the corner of Scott and Port Republic Streets, he realized “these colonnades are going to come right up to the edge, and Port Republic right there is about 15’ wide,” so in his opinion, the proposed building’s height would be “too big of a mass” to be “right up on a street that’s only 15’ wide.”

Mr. Stewart said he would withdraw the application and proceed with the project that had previously received preliminary approval.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Symes said he would no longer be serving on the board beginning with next month's HDRB meeting. The bylaws say that the board chair can stay on if the city council approves it, but that has not occurred, he said. There have been lawsuits because of people staying on boards too long, Chairman Symes said.

There being no further business to come before the board, **Chairman Symes made a motion, second by Mr. Allison, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously**, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:43 p.m.