



Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Indian Trail Meeting Hall
June 7, 2023
4:00 p.m.

Members Present: Charles Drew, Rick Pukenas, Josh Cline McGee, Alexis-Gore Graves, Bonnie Bray, Bonner Herring, and Jim McKee

Members Absent: Joanne Wesson and Tal West

Staff Present: Travis Henley, Director of Development Services
Maureen Meehan, City Planner
Tanya Shannon, Deputy Clerk

Board of Aldermen: Robert Carroll
Liaison:

- A. Chairman Charles Drew called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.
- B. The Invocation was given by Chairman Charles Drew.
- C. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Drew.
- D. Ms. Pukenas Motioned to approve the Agenda and was seconded by Mr. Herring.
Unanimous vote; Motion carried.
- E. A Motion was made to approve the May 23, 2023, Special Meeting Minutes by Mr. McGee and was seconded by Mr. Pukenas. ***Unanimous vote; Motion carried.***
- F. **Public Comment:** Ms. Pat Kirkman said that she was grateful that the Board of Aldermen has consented to hire a Historic Planner.
- G. **Old Business:**
 - 1. **Review of Design Guidelines**

Foundations

Director Henley gave an overview of the foundation standards used for Beaufort. The statement read that many such foundation enclosures did not include enough vents, causing a moisture build-up beneath the structure that often led to termite infestations or rot. When repairing or restoring foundations, there should be as much ventilation as possible to prevent future termite and moisture damage.

There was a discussion on guideline 6.6.2: Retain and preserve existing historic materials wherever possible rather than replace them. For repairs or rebuilding, select new brick, mortar, ballast stones, and other materials to match the historical materials as closely as possible in all respects. Mr. Herring questioned the difficulty of finding bricks that are compatible. Mr. McKee said that there are places

where these types of materials can be found. He said that in Salisbury, NC, there is a place called “Old Carolina Brick Company” where older brick with lime can be found. It was suggested to include in the application a list of known places where these compatible materials can be found.

Paint and Exterior Colors

Mr. Henley gave a review of the characteristics of paint colors in the Beaufort Historic District. A building’s color is often its most recognizable visual characteristic and serves as the finishing touch of the rehabilitation or restoration project. Paint serves to protect a wooden or metal surface from deterioration and rotting.

Doors and roofs are an often-overlooked component of the overall color scheme of a historic house. Wood shingles are either painted the same or different color than the rest of the siding or are stained. Porch ceilings were often painted light or sky blue, while porch floors were typically grey. Decorative elements such as brackets, cornices, and finials were usually painted in the same color as the rest of the trim rather than being “picked out” in another color. Tin roofs were often painted dark green, rust, gray, or black.

Paint colors play a crucial role in defining not only the individual building but the character of the historic district as a whole. The harmonious visual effect achieved by a block or streetscape of historic houses painted in a palette of appropriate colors can be easily marred by a single building painted in a modern color scheme or other colors not in use at the time the building was constructed.

Mr. McGee stated that he thinks Beaufort has done a good job of defining the paint schemes for renovating or repairing homes. He agreed with the concept of keeping the color similar and appropriate to the surrounding historical character. Chairman Drew reiterated that perhaps the Board could allow the applicant to repaint with the same or similar color but obtain permission from the Board if a complete color scheme was requested.

Accessibility and Life Safety Guidelines

City Planner Meehan continued with the review of Beaufort’s design guidelines. Director Henley reminded everyone that these guidelines might be a little outdated and would potentially need to be revised.

Mr. McGee reiterated that with renovations for older historic homes, the building codes that were used at the time the house was built would be the same standards used for compliance. He said that the new building codes have more stringent guidelines. He said there is a key sentence in the guidelines that states an important piece of civil rights legislation. It is separate from the building code but includes provisions to eliminate physical barriers to “places of public accommodation for the disabled.” Religious organizations, private clubs, and private residences are not included in the legislation and can be exempt. Mr. McGee said that the building code would allow for ramps. Ms. Bray asked if a Certificate of Appropriateness would have to be issued prior. Planner Meehan said that would be an administrative decision. Director Henley pointed out that the Christmas House was an example of a ramp built that blends in with the historic structure.

Historic Storefront

Director Henley went over Beaufort’s standards for Historic Storefronts. He said that going through the characteristics of the downtown commercial buildings where the primary feature is the storefront with display window and the entrance door. In Beaufort, most examples usually feature central

entrance stores often recessed flanked by large display windows, with a brick facade and one or two stories. The Beaufort language talks more about the upper stories with decorative brick detailing with double hung sash windows, which there are some in this area, and brick facades. Director Henley said that the Board would have to go through the City Business District to take inventory. Then before rehabilitation occurs, there will be documentation that will serve a vital purpose during the planning stages of storefront rehabilitation. Historic photographs, including postcards, and advertisements, provide valuable information on the historic appearance of a building's facade, its paint colors, and its evolution over time. It is not necessary to return to its original appearance.

Mr. McGee questioned putting aluminum storefronts on older buildings. He would like to make sure they are not bright iodized aluminum but something that blends into the character of Southport. He proposed language that would encourage people to use muted tones or colors that blend into the building, as opposed to just raw aluminum. Mr. Henley said that could be done and added to the guidelines if it was the consensus of the Board. Mr. Henley said that these are things that should be discussed and reviewed. There was discussion on why the storefronts got away from the aluminum storefronts. Mr. McKee said he thought it might be because there was a revolution to get back to the original facade to see the original stonework and what was underneath.

New Construction and Additions

Director Henley explained that property owners, builders, and architects need to consider several design factors before they initiate plans for new construction or make substantial additions to an existing contributing building in the historic district. He went over the basic principles that Beaufort uses. Mr. Henley said that regarding height in Southport, there are a few blocks that are uniform. The height varies, but this would be something to consider when reviewing new construction. Mr. McKee said that there would be more uniformity with the width versus the height in Southport. Mr. Henley said that buildings in the commercial areas of the historic district generally share a common front and side setback. Commercial buildings generally are set directly on property lines. The character of the surrounding neighborhood should set the range of setbacks allowed for new construction. Buildings in the commercial areas of the historic district generally share a common front and side setback. Commercial buildings generally are set directly on property lines. The character of the surrounding neighborhood should set the range of setbacks allowed for new construction. The appropriate residential plan in which all the buildings are generally built to the same line.

Alderman Carroll stated that there needs to be some guidelines on new construction that provide appropriateness to the historic character. He explained that building a two-story house on pilings is not appropriate in some areas that are not designated in flood zones. He said there should be ways to limit that. He understands that parking is a challenge and there will be a need for an open or closed garage, and there should be consideration for circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. McGee suggested language for setbacks that stated the primary facade has to be parallel to the front setback unless adjacent properties differ. He said this would streamline the flow.

Mr. Henley said that in Beaufort's guidelines, door, and window openings in the historic district often share similar sizes, spacing, and shapes. The size, style, shape, and distribution of door and window openings in new construction should respect those of their neighbors. Repeated elements on neighboring buildings are common throughout the historic district. These may include wide roof eaves, parapets in commercial areas, wrap-around porches, or the use of shingle siding. New construction in the historic districts should utilize these strong, shared streetscape elements in blocks where they appear.

New construction in the commercial areas of the historic district creates its own special set of considerations. New commercial construction must be compatible with the historic character of the adjacent buildings rather than just mimic their architectural style. The factors of setback, sitting, scale, volume, proportion, materials, and detail important in residential construction are especially important in a commercial area where buildings are more closely spaced. Special attention must be paid to the horizontal and vertical articulation of the newly designed building and to whether or not it is compatible with the rhythm of windows, doors, and bays established elsewhere on the block.

Director Henley said the guidelines for off-street parking stated to avoid the use of extensive paved areas such as patios, terraces, and multicar driveways in place of front lawns, and limit paved areas in front yards to walks and well-scale driveways. Paving Materials shall be in character with the surrounding residential property district. He said Southport's language would need to be reviewed and discussed more.

The Guidelines for Building Height/Scale was presented by Director Henley. Mr. Herring confirmed that Southport's maximum height requirements are 40' in residential and 30' in CDD and BD. Mr. Herring asked what would happen if there was a proposal for new construction in a flood zone in the CDB or BD. Mr. Henley said that there is a carve-out in the ordinance that will provide an exemption for a 40' maximum height. Mr. Henley reiterated that the central business district zoning and the business district zoning are both 30 feet. Not just the Historic District but the entire Howe Street corridor all the way out to the stoplight at highway commercial is at 40", and all the residential districts are at 40'. There was a discussion on the height limit requirements for the Historic District and keeping the same limits that are designated in the UDO or setting separate standards. But if the UDO requirements change, will the Historic District standards need to change as well. It was the consensus of the Board to discuss the height requirements at the next meetings.

Mr. McGee commented on Article 6.2.10, which stated: "The HPC may allow the replacement of existing substitute siding with new substitute siding (such as cement fiber siding) if the proposed replacement will be more in keeping with the original appearance of the structure. Substitute siding with a simulated wood grain will not be permitted". He suggested changing the language to the-plastic composite WPC, which has all the properties of wood, but it's got plastic in it rather than just a composite, and then taking out the cement composite. He suggested just putting in such as wood plastic composite (WPC or appropriate options provided by the HPC). Mr. McGee also commented on Article 6.4.8 and questioned how the Board feels about metal storm doors. He said he is not in favor of this but would like more feedback from the Board. Mr. McKee said that he is not a big fan of them either, but he said they are very protective thru hurricanes and high winds, and if they are painted to blend in with the character. Mr. McGee said he may be a little biased because of his architectural background. Mr. Herring said that, essentially, it is an esthetical appearance. It was the consensus that the Board felt like the materials didn't matter as much as the appearance of the structure and that it blended with the historic nature of the City.

Ms. Bray questioned screen doors and considered if this was appropriate for the Historic District. Director Henley said that he would flag the topic on doors for more discussion. It was noted that many years ago, most of the City had screen doors to vent and keep cool. Historically this was common.

I. **New Business:** None

J. **Other Business:**

A Special Meeting was called for the HPC on June 20th at 1:00 p.m.

K. Announcements:

Chairman Drew reminded everyone that the regular Historic Preservation Commission would be on July 5th at 4:00 p.m.

There was no further business. A Motion was made by Mr. Pukenas to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Mr. McKee. ***Unanimous vote; Motion carried.***

Adjournment: 5:42 p.m.

Chairman, Charles Drew

Deputy Clerk, Tanya Shannon