

A meeting of the Historic District Review Board was held on **March 13, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Chuck Symes, board members John Dickerson, Quinn Peitz, and Katherine Pringle, and David Prichard, city staff. Board member Bill Allison 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

Mr. Dickerson made a motion, second by Mr. Peitz to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2019 HDRB meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.

Chairman Symes made a motion, second by Ms. Pringle, to move the project at 708 Hamilton Street to the first place on the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

708 HAMILTON STREET, PIN R120 004 000 0566 0000

Alterations & additions

Applicant: Johan Niemand, JHN Residential Building Design (19-04 HRB.2)

The applicant is requesting approval for the addition of a master bedroom suite alteration of the kitchen, screened porch, and bathroom, and extension of the den.

Johan Niemand said he's presenting "a different scheme" than was presented at the February 13 HDRB meeting. The current submission has been "pared down" to the kitchen remodel addition and a master bedroom suite addition, "with some story space in between," he said. The plan for the addition is under the 50% requirement at 47.04%, he said, so it is "within the limits of what we can do." On the second floor, Mr. Niemand said, there is an existing screen porch addition that will be enclosed and repurposed as a bathroom. The homeowners need a bedroom on the first floor, he said, and this plan also adds to the kitchen space a little.

Mr. Peitz asked about the building "to the left" of this structure. Mr. Niemand said it is "a separate unit." There is also another building that looks like it's on this lot, with the address 404 Hancock, and it is a rental. The total square footage of this house will be 2,600 square feet, he said. Mr. Niemand told Mr. Peitz that this lot technically has 3 dwelling units on it. Mr. Peitz asked if the other two units were grandfathered in, and Chairman Symes said they were. The one Mr. Peitz had noted to the left used to be a dwelling unit, Mr. Niemand said, and the owner's brother lived there at one time, but no one lives there now; someone does live in the 404 Hancock house.

Mr. Prichard said, "You can expand as long as you are not violating the zoning code" in any zoning district (e.g., as long as the expansion does not violate the setbacks). Mr. Peitz said he wanted to be sure that the primary residence plus two additional dwelling units wouldn't violate the zoning. Mr. Prichard said what Mr. Niemand has proposed does not violate the zoning.

Heather Seifert, Historic Beaufort Foundation, said the Preservation Committee had the following comments and questions:

1. How does the new addition relate to the existing historic property? Is there a harmonious "hyphen" between the old and the new? She read from the Secretary of the Interior standards about this.
2. On the rear (west) elevation, there is an existing sleeping porch, which it appears the applicant is proposing to remove or enclose, Ms. Seifert said. This sleeping porch is a feature noted on the National Register of Historic Places data sheet; the Milner guidelines address enclosing visible porches as "inappropriate," she said. If a rear porch must be enclosed, there are guidelines, which Ms. Seifert read, pertaining to "transparent . . . not opaque" enclosures.
3. On the east elevation, the Preservation Committee suggested a row of 3 windows, not 4; on the west elevation, the committee suggested removing the transom over the first floor window, Ms. Seifert said.
4. Based on the checklist for the HDRB's preliminary review, HBF would also like to see the required "drawings for the existing conditions of all 4 elevations," Ms. Seifert said, and a color version of at least one elevation, noting proposed materials and colors.

Mr. Peitz asked how HBF would suggest changing the 4 windows that face the front. Ms. Seifert said on the east elevation, 4 windows are evenly placed, and the Preservation Committee discussed having 2 pairs of 2 windows, or 3 windows with "the weight on the left or right." She said if this application moves forward, the committee "would like to see a set of 3" windows. Because the existing second floor windows are 2 pairs of 2, they decided a set of 3 windows would be historically accurate without mimicking those on the second floor. Ms. Seifert told Mr. Dickerson the comments she'd shared were "simply recommendations."

Mr. Peitz said he didn't see a rear elevation on any submittals. Mr. Niemand pointed it out. Mr. Prichard said he'd see if he had it in the digital submittal. Chairman Symes said it was there.

Mr. Peitz said he supports what HBF said about the front elevation, where he felt there was "a bunching up of the windows." He likes "the idea of the spacing," which he said there is room for. Mr. Peitz supports breaking up the 4 windows on the addition with more space between them, as there is on the main structure.

Ms. Pringle said on the main part of the house, "the windows aren't equal." She asked

the group what they thought. Mr. Niemand said he assumes that if he does 3 windows, they would “be ganged together with equal space between them.” The chimney is in front of that elevation, he said, so “the negative space to the right is negated by the chimney”; therefore, he would probably eliminate the far right window, which would probably give the balance they are looking for.

Chairman Symes said he supports the gang of 3 windows. On the west side, the kitchen window has a transom, but a guideline says they are not supported in the Historic District. He wondered if the owner would support a larger window without a transom. Mr. Niemand said the homeowner has said they would “just forgo the transom.”

Chairman Symes said on the west side elevation, they had discussed leaving in the 2 dashed-in windows. Mr. Niemand said they would stay; that’s “a remnant of the overdraw.”

Chairman Symes asked if the sleeping porch on the second floor is original to the house. Mr. Niemand said he thinks it might have been an addition at some point, but he doesn’t know. Chairman Symes agreed that the porch was probably an addition to the original house.

Mr. Dickerson said the sleeping porch appears to have been an addition, but he doesn’t know that for certain. Treating it like it’s original is a problem for him, he said, because changing the porch is part of the homeowners’ purpose in doing the renovation.

Mr. Dickerson asked for a review of the issues and discussion about them. Chairman Symes said the following:

- On the windows on the addition, the board is okay with a gang of 3.
- On the west elevation, the transom over the kitchen window should be removed.
- The 2 dotted-on second floor windows will remain.
- In regard to HBF’s request for elevations and proposed colors and materials, the latter will come in future submissions, but Chairman Symes doesn’t think it’s appropriate to ask the applicant to bring those elevations now because Mr. Niemand “did a pretty good job” in his submission, and the board has to do a better job of getting applicants to submit all of the required materials for review.

Ms. Seifert said the applicant needs to “describe the transition between the old and the new,” so that in some form, there is a distinction made between them. Mr. Niemand described “a demarcation point” that he had put in and said he is trying to do that “wherever there’s a new section.” Chairman Symes said he thinks that will be identifiable.

On the sleeping porch, Ms. Seifert said, the Secretary of the Interior discusses additions and says they should be retained and preserved. If the porch is an addition, it is

“definitely an older addition,” she said, not a recent one. Chairman Symes asked how the board feels about enclosing the sleeping porch. Mr. Niemand said it would be a bathroom for the upstairs bedroom, because there are no bathroom suite. The board agreed that they are okay with enclosing it.

Mr. Prichard asked if there were any concerns with the phasing, because it’s being done in 2 phases. The board members agreed that they are not concerned about that. Mr. Niemand said the second phase would begin 3 to 6 months after the first phase; as soon as the first phase is done, they would move forward with permitting the second phase. Mr. Dickerson asked that the period between the end of the first phase and the start of the second phase not last for more than a year. Mr. Niemand agreed to that.

There was a discussion about the duration of permits. Chairman Symes said the board’s approvals are for 5 years.

Mr. Peitz made a motion for approval with the following conditions: On the east elevation, a 3-window configuration is approved; on the west elevation, the transom would be eliminated and two windows on second floor would be retained; the screen porch enclosure would be retained; there is not to be more than one year between the two phases. Ms. Pringle seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: 504 PRINCE STREET – MAJOR DEMOLITION

Conway Ivy, 501 King Street, said this is one of the smallest lots in The Point. He knows there was flooding, but he opposes the house’s demolition if a larger structure would replace it because of “the impact on mass and scale.”

Mr. Dickerson asked how high the water came up. Mr. Ivy said on his house, the flooding was 8” high, and in the garage, it was 12.” On this house, the water mark was right about at the first floor, he said, based on his observation of the rear of the house. Chairman Symes said at a nearby church, the water came up to about 2’.

This property is higher than the majority of Mr. Ivy’s property, he said.

Ms. Seifert said HBF’s Preservation Committee does not support the demolition, based on the Beaufort Code, page 4-F, which says that contributing buildings should not be demolished to create infill opportunities, and this is a contributing structure. She also quoted the Milner guidelines, which say demolition should only be considered if the structure is “a threat to public safety.”

Jeff Peth said he thinks the HDRB members were able to get into the structure. Mr. Peitz said he was outside it but noticed that the lights are still on. Mr. Peth said the floodwaters came over the floor and buckled it. He thinks the water came up to the bottom of the front window in a photo that the board could see. It is in “really bad shape structurally” and aesthetically, he said, except in the front view of the house. The

cost to repair it significantly would probably be as much as it would be to tear it down and build a new house there, Mr. Peth said.

Mr. Peitz asked what the zoning would allow to be built there to replace this structure if it's demolished. Mr. Prichard said by right, a replacement structure there could go to 3 stories.

Mr. Peth said the footprint for a new structure could be the same as it is now, or if the board decided it should be 2 stories, that would be okay, and it could have a somewhat smaller footprint. The house across the street from it was built 3 years ago, he said, when the original house was struck by lightning and burned. That house is now 4.5' – 5' above ground level, and a new structure on this property would be similar to that, Mr. Peth said, at about 4'.

Mr. Ivy said on the current map, it's 13' above the flood plain. This is very close to the street, and that diminishes the impact of raising it. Assuming 4' or 5' off the ground, "the economics of building a new house" would extend the new height, so that is "a big concern," he said.

Mr. Ivy said if it were replaced with new construction, "it would change the nature of the neighborhood."

Maxine Lutz said she questions the demolition of this cottage. Information in the HDRB's packet indicates that the top of the bottom floor is 9' above the ground, she said. Mr. Prichard said that's the house across the street from this one.

Ms. Lutz said she has seen many houses in worse condition than this one "come back" with renovation and "be viable again"; HBF has restored several structures that had to be raised a few feet to avoid flooding concerns. She shares Mr. Ivy's concern about what would go on the property if it's demolished: with a new structure, the allowed setbacks would mean an even smaller footprint, so "that means it has to go up," Ms. Lutz said. She concluded that she feels the house is not in a condition to require demolition.

REVIEW OF FULL BOARD PROJECTS

504 PRINCE STREET, PIN R120 004 000 0642 0000

Major demolition

Applicant: Construction Partners, LLC (19-05 HRB.1)

The applicant is requesting approval for demolition of this structure.

Chairman Symes asked for HBF comments. Ms. Seifert said there are no specific plans for replacing this building, which she believes was purchased as a speculative property. They need to look at it this house as it stands, she said. Ms. Lutz said she recalls times when HDRB would not allow demolition without knowing what was going to be put in the place of the demolished structure.

Mr. Peth said the only thing that encroaches into the setback is the HVAC stand, and they have discussed rectifying this, whether there is a renovation, or a new structure is built.

Mr. Peth said someone put on “a bad addition . . . 30 or 40 years ago.” Mr. Peitz said he went to the property and saw the pumps that were used to drain it. Mr. Peth asked, if the house is restored, how the owners could be protected from further flooding in the future.

Chairman Symes asked if Mr. Peth is seeking demolition in order to build a new house in its place. Mr. Peth said yes, or to resell the property, and someone else could build another house in its place.

Ms. Pringle asked if the board could approve this if it goes against a section of the Beaufort Code, from which she read. Mr. Dickerson said it is a “very clearly defined guideline” that this structure should not be demolished.

Mr. Prichard said the issue is the historic value of the home versus the need to demolish. He thinks what will go in there is irrelevant because if it were non-conforming, it would come back to the HDRB. The elevation is 6’ for this property, and the base flood elevation is 13’ based on the property across the street, so the base floor would have to be 14’. He feels the issue at hand should be whether the historic nature of this house is too great to warrant its demolition.

Chairman Symes said he’s torn because he knows the house is in bad shape because he went inside it. Mr. Peitz said he wasn’t able to go inside. He looked in when he walked around the property, but he asked if he and all of the board members need to walk *through* the house to make a decision about its demolition.

Mr. Peitz said he agrees with staff: it’s a contributing structure, so it’s now “down to the condition of the building,” but he can’t vote until he sees the condition inside of it. Mr. Dickerson said he hasn’t gone inside, either. Chairman Symes suggested a motion to table this until all board members could walk through the house.

Mr. Dickerson said significant structural damage is a reason to demolish the building, but he is not a structural engineer, so he can’t determine if there is enough damage to allow it to be torn down, so he asked if a structural engineer could make that determination about this property. Mr. Peitz agreed, saying that would also put staff in a position to make a firmer recommendation. Chairman Symes said an item on the checklist is a written report from an engineer on the structural condition of the building.

Mr. Peitz made a motion to table the application, to request a structural engineering report, and for the board members to gain access to the inside of the house. Ms.

Pringle seconded the motion.

Mr. Peth asked about the 6' elevation. Mr. Prichard said it runs through the center of the house, so it's about 6' for the lot. Mr. Peth said they would have to go up 8' to get to 14', which he thinks would "look like an exposed basement wall." Chairman Symes said a renovated house would not have to be raised. Mr. Dickerson said if a renovation meets or exceeds 50% of the value of the property, you "have to bring forward current code."

Ms. Lutz asked if staff could also provide what the setbacks need to be in a new building and in the current building. Mr. Ivy asked if there is "another rule about the amount of money you're spending on the structure" to bring a grandfathered building up to code. Mr. Dickerson said staff could bring the specific information to the next meeting about "what it is 50% of." **The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Symes said he personally wouldn't mind demolition, but the board has guidelines to follow, so even if a house is only *listed* as contributing but "isn't really contributing," the HDRB has to follow those guidelines. Mr. Peitz said for a demolition, "we need to get our facts straight," so they need all of the information that's been discussed. He would also like a staff recommendation on this matter. Mr. Prichard said he'd give one if he's "qualified to do so."

Mr. Peth said the structural engineer would have to cut out a portion of the floor because the clearance under it is so low.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Dickerson said a house at the corner of Charles and Craven Streets was relocated to Congress and Newcastle Streets, and he asked that the board review the minutes about that project because he recalls that there was an agreement that if the house were moved, it would be completed within a specific timeframe, but it is still "up on blocks." If the timeframe has been exceeded, he said, the board would need to discuss that. Chairman Symes said he would look for the appropriate minutes.

Chairman Symes said a renovation at 407 West Street came to the HDRB, and the board tried to determine if one door in the front of the house was original. During the meeting, the homeowners said they wouldn't change the door to a window, as they had proposed. Since then, Chairman Symes said, the construction person has indicated that the homeowner is again interested in putting in a window there if it can be ascertained that the door is *not* original. He asked is the board is willing to allow him to go in the house when it's opened up to look at the door's framing to determine if it's original. The board agreed that they are okay with Chairman Symes doing that.

Ms. Seifert asked how they make changes to a certificate of appropriateness. Chairman Symes said that's a legitimate point; there would have to be a letter associated with

that. Mr. Dickerson said they are not at the point of authorizing a change, just gathering facts. Mr. Prichard said when they discover that information, an updated certificate of appropriateness would be provided. Chairman Symes said he'd look at it, and HBF representatives or Ms. Lutz could come, too.

There being no further business to come before the board, **Mr. Dickerson made a motion, second by Mr. Peitz, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously,** and the meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.