

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Historic Architectural Review Board and Planning and Zoning Board Special Meeting September 20, 2022

The Planning and Zoning Board and Historic Architecture Review Board met for a Workshop Session Tuesday, September 20, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Catherine Duncan and the following were present:

1. Roll Call:

Historic Architectural Review Board

Catharine Duncan – Chairperson
Gaere MacDonald – Vice Chairperson
Jon Benoit
Paul Weaver (arrived at 1:05p.m., left at 4:05p.m.)
Brad Beach

Planning and Zoning Board

Mike Davis, Vice Chairperson
Jon De Preter
Sarah Ryan (left at 3:55p.m.)
Carl Blow
Charles Pappas
Christina Griggs (left at 2:05p.m.)

City Staff:

Amy Skinner, Director, Planning & Building Department
Julie Courtney, Historic Preservation Officer
Candice Seymour, Historic Preservation Planner
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney
Elyse Wiemann, Recording Secretary

2. General Public hearings for Items Not on the Agenda

(None)

3. Modification and approval of Agenda

Ms. Duncan announced item five, 22-24 Cathedral Place, had been withdrawn by the property owner.

MOTION

Mr. Blow **MOVED** to **APPROVE** the modification to the agenda. The motion was **SECONDED** by Mr. DePreter.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: Blow, DePreter, Griggs, Pappas, Ryan, Davis, Beach, Benoit, MacDonald, Duncan

NAYES: NONE

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation (AGHP) Update

a) Review the draft update of the AGHP with consultants, Bender & Associates Architects (Bert Bender, Principal Architect and Jonathan Lammers, Historian)

Ms. Duncan welcomed the two consultants, Bert Bender and Jonathan Lammers and

advised they would be helping them through the process.

Ms. Skinner noted the AGHP was in the process of being updated and they appreciated the Boards' thoughts and effort. She hoped this would be a beneficial discussion and hoped it would identify any issues that needed to be addressed.

Bert Bender, Consultant, President of Bender and Associates, introduced the topic and provided an overview of other projects they were involved in.

Jonathan Lammers, Consultant and Historian discussed the updates and changes to the AGHP. He noted the guidelines were last updated in 2011 but there had not been a comprehensive update since 1997. He asked for the Boards to take a broad look at the guidelines and then they would be able to narrow them down. He said these guidelines would only be in effect in the HP Districts downtown.

Mr. Lammers provided an overview:

- Internal and External Links
- Resources (paint colors, historical society, City Code etc.)
- Provided a learn more section regarding Mitigation or National Park Service
- Updated graphics throughout
- Provided more acceptable and compatible designs
- Added more historical images
- Provided designs of masonry buildings
- Architectural materials and features
- Included information needed for applicants to provide to staff
- Store Fronts
- Storm Preparedness and Flood Mitigation
- Updated Architectural Styles

He said a main change was having the architectural styles in the rear of the book; however, it flowed similarly to the old document. He pointed out the document

was organized clearly, and color coded to be more user friendly.

Mr. Lammers asked for feedback to help refine the document as this was not the final draft.

Board discussion:

- In favor of how the document was organized and formatted
- Noted it was a leap forward by having a digital copy
- Encouraged by the illustration examples that had been provided
- Questioned if the document addressed neighborhoods that were not in the HP district

Consultants response:

- Thought that would be settled between staff and HARB
- Felt the National Register Districts were important; however, the document did not have a policy recommendation for those districts

Ms. Skinner advised no policy decision had been made on how this would or would not affect the National Register Districts. She said the original document focused on the Spanish Colonial style and over the years in the historic districts there were other styles mixed in. She said there needed to be better descriptions and guidance on how to address the other styles within the historic districts. She said the National Register Districts had other styles and as work was done, there was a reference document available for the different styles.

Board discussion:

- Document was excellent and more user friendly
- Asked if there was a GIS map with style information of the homes that was interactive

Ms. Courtney noted GIS mapping was linked to the Florida Master Site file surveys, but it did not include every building in the City as the entire City had not been surveyed.

Mr. Lammers said architectural styles were applied in retrospect. He said St. Augustine's best collection of buildings were ones that did not have a style as those did not match anything in the guidelines. He said these buildings were a response to the place and materials that were available.

Mr. Bender added these were the City's guidelines and they were there to help develop them into what the Board wanted.

Board discussed:

- Should define the scope of the AGHP as it was the document that addressed demolition and partial demolition
- Should include a workflow on how to proceed and should have 'if then' questions
- Felt whole scale demolition should be one category and partial demolition should be a separate category

Ms. Lopez noted this was more of an encyclopedia of architecture as a reference document. She said that staff would be able to work on the regulatory side which could be linked to the AGHP and since regulatory statutes changed over time, those could be updated by staff.

Mr. Benoit noted the AGHP was more of a reference tool or resource with not a lot of policy information.

Ms. Lopez said the regulatory component would change and partial demolition was a big change for the City; whereas, the consultants were more able to assist with the reference document.

Board discussion:

- Felt the whole City should use the document but it should be noted the AGHP would focus on the HP Districts
- In the section explaining 'who should use the document' that would be the place explaining the demolition
- HARB had authority over the HP Districts and demolition over the whole City
- Felt the need to have a section for demolition separately
- Concerned with how water would affect the City
- Questioned sign font styles

Mr. Lammers advised the City wanted to regulate signs in the historic area. He said some fonts were a mixture of fonts from the historic 16th century and others were recent but looked old. He noted he made a list based off the signs and the approved fonts.

Mr. DePreter asked if it was a discretion from HARB to approve the signs.

Ms. Skinner replied when a sign permit was submitted, there were preapproved guidelines the applicant had to meet. She said if the sign did not meet the preapproved guidelines, it would go before HARB.

Mr. DePreter asked if the Hardy Board versus the Wood Clap Siding was a recommendation or was a hard recommendation for no wood.

Mr. Lammers said HARB had stressed historic authenticity and there were limited instances when Hardy Board would be approved. He said the statement in the AGHP notes it could be presented to HARB but that did not mean it would be approved.

Mr. DePreter suggested another material for signs as it would last longer.

Mr. Bender noted the guidelines were not 100% at the moment but assured the Board it would be.

Board discussion:

- Color coordination provided in separate sections
- Felt the HP Districts needed to be delineated better on the map as it was difficult to see and note the street dividing the districts
- Felt photos were wonderful and made a difference in providing a sense of what St. Augustine was in the past

Mr. Lammers noted when printed, the colors would be to the outside. He said they had hired graphics company and would advise them not to overlap the colors.

Ms. Courtney suggested using the preapproved colors for paint since they did not want to use modern colors.

Discussion continued:

- Suggested having a more interactive version with a QR code rather than online and paper as that could be more accessible
- Throughout the entire document it noted to replace 'in kind' except for asbestos shingles which was not in continuity
- Government had ruled that asbestos shingles were no longer allowed; however, there were companies that produced replicas
- Should understand that materials might not always be available
- City could update the links in the document every three years when the Building Code changed
- Should clarify a Florida Product approval number or a letter from a Certified Engineer was required to use a product
- The more graphics the better
- Asked if part three: Guidelines for additions and new construction

referenced residential or commercial construction or both

Mr. Lammers said it was following the conventions of the old document to include both. He asked if there was anything specific that needed to be clarified.

Mr. Beach felt clarification on which section applied since there was a section specifically regarding commercial buildings.

Mr. Lammers said some principles would apply to both commercial and residential.

Board Discussed:

- Asked why signs were combined with the commercial building section
- Felt it should be a separate section perhaps make a miscellaneous section
- Post-1821 construction did not have a lot of information other than general responses to the building and architectural building features
- Should have more measurables for the Post-1821 designs
- Was more information for pre-1821 styles
- Height from floor to floor and height of doors should be addressed because that was an important piece and should be discussed
- Page 61 would be a good place for Post 1821 graphics
- A lot had to do with context around the building and thought HARB would have to make a decision
- Historic buildings changed with the use and how they were addressed
- Buildings could be twelve feet without a landing according to the Florida Building Code
- Designer should provide a proposal and the Board could make the decision if it were appropriate
- Page 75 provided great examples of constructed buildings that were compatible but differentiated

- Point of where the thirty-five feet was measured should be addressed
- All homes shown were at grade level but needed to provide some that were built to code
- Zoning code defined how to measure the height which was one floor above the main flood elevation
- Should demonstrate how the building would tie into the streetscape
- Part two focused more on the resiliency issues
- Audience reviewing the material were builders and architects but thought it was great to include the general public
- HP districts had many significant post WW2 buildings reconstructed buildings and Civil Rights buildings and asked for clarification on how to handle those
- Questioned what area was covered and felt that needed to be clearly stated
- HP District and National Register Districts should be distinguished
- Examples provided were outside the HP districts
- Chapter six was the most important with new information regarding Flood and Storm Mitigation
- HARB needed measurables as a guideline
- Should know the height to make a building safe from flooding
- Thought elevating buildings at all was a threat to St. Augustine, but needed to accept this reality
- What would happen to Colonial buildings that were unable to be raised
- Had suggestions that could be provided but thought this was a great start

Mr. Bender said there were ways to address height of buildings, an option could be to raise the grade of the lot and cover it with a panel by the street. He said the height could be reduced by what was done underneath it. He said there were other examples from other locations that could help St. Augustine.

Mr. Lammers agreed St. Augustine was vulnerable, and this would need to be done incrementally, and raising buildings should be done in the best way possible to preserve what made St. Augustine special.

Ms. Courtney advised there was stand-alone documentation available, which could be used to lift historic and non-historic homes. She said there was one for historic design guidelines regarding coquina structures, and a Resilience Heritage Study, which was an overview about maintaining the historic properties.

Mr. Davis asked if the documents could be linked to the AGHP.

Ms. Courtney stated those documents were linked to those pages and were on the City's website

Discussion continued:

- Felt having the old document with the changes they were asked to approve would be beneficial
- Felt this update would be beneficial to HARB when making decisions
- Document should be made for everyone to understand and work with and not an obstacle
- Would have to remedy the issue of siding because certain materials would not always be available
- Houses that were 100% able to be demoed should be able to be approved by staff and not pushed to the Board
- Most people looked at the code and building height and wanted to be above the minimum
- Thought crawl spaces helped the neighborhood rather than adding fill dirt to a lot
- Suggested adding the Datil Pepper Plant to the list of plants for landscaping
- Raising buildings would happen and there was no way to get around it and buildings would get raised or would be underwater

- Streetscape would level out as more and more homes were lifted
- Should have this available for the public through News and Notes and through links on the neighborhood council sites, felt the effort was just as important as the document itself
- Street names on the map should be a full page to help the information be clearly noticed
- HARB did not have purview over what was put back but thought it was difficult as every part of the historic fabric was important to the City
- Issue with finding materials that had longevity
- Understood the details that mattered were the one used on the home
- Old photos provided were useful and the information on the concrete block was helpful
- Major issue was the storm water and should look at not allowing the use of stem walls or back fill
- Asked if there was a section on institutional buildings
- Program the City had that was assisting in rehab for old institutional structures and guidelines would be helpful
- If alternative materials were approved should provide examples of what would be acceptable
- Should have parameters for people to use and include with their application¹
- Should include a line in the code to have a way for an alternative to be approved and better for the long term
- Plant list did not have enough diversity
- Issue with mandating that plants should be chosen from the preapproved list
- Flooding was an issue in HP districts and thought residential properties should not have a landscape plant requirement
- If necessary, should be allowed to have new material percentage that was available and HARB approved

¹ Break from 2:43p.m.-3:00p.m.

- Should be revisited because people should not lose their landscape due to flooding
- More plants should hold water and should have salt water tolerant plants
- Would be easier to have a list of plants that should not be planted
- Hard for projects to be approved by HARB unless materials or plants were preapproved
- Felt the plant list could be expanded to provided other options
- If applicant could prove their case, would be in support
- Did not feel plants were an issue when it came to applications
- The goal was for it to be as simple as possible for it to be administratively approved
- Felt the landscape design was more important than the actual plants

Ms. Skinner noted in the guidelines currently there was a \$1,000.00 threshold for administrative approval but anything over that had to go before HARB.

Discussion continued:

- Felt there were two goals trying to be met: salt tolerant plants and review of the plant material
- Felt instead of a money threshold could have a square footage threshold
- Anything within the HP zones HARB had full purview of the property
- Important to have historical accuracy and the design of the streetscape

Mr. Lammers said he was happy to rework the list with an emphasis on native plants. He felt it would be best to exclude plants rather than have a list of approved plants.

Ms. Courtney noted the commercial properties were what was mostly being reviewed and felt there was a need for a set of plans to know what could and could not be done. She asked where the threshold for

residential properties should be to create a HARB requirement.

Board discussion:

- Felt the hardscapes should be separated
- Felt the \$1,000 threshold was low and should be raised significantly and that would eliminate some of the residential but keep the commercial entities

Mr. Lammers said number six and number eight in the old guidelines noted no structural maintenance should exceed \$250.00 and no landscape feature was to exceed \$1,000.00. He suggested having a percentage instead of a dollar amount. He said for general maintenance and repair it would be limited to 10%, an example would be no more than 10% of the siding. He said this would provide staff the ability to review the application and request more plans if needed before presenting to the Board if. He said the dollar amount for landscaping was eliminated and for hardscaping, it was changed to no more than 100 square feet of landscaping. He said it was conservative but provided staff discretion to make decisions.

Discussion:

- Most important was to stop invasive plants
- HARB's purpose was to protect the historic districts
- To protect the HP district, they needed to monitor the percentage of structures that were contributing structures because once below 50% it would no longer be a contributing district
- Suggest making sure the reader understood why the guidelines were needed
- Should be a give and take for the people in the community
- Landscaping was an item that did not affect the historic designation

- Some areas had landscapes that were character defining features like the Plaza, Flagler, and the Alcazar
- Perhaps conduct a survey of the different landscaping and gardens that were significant to the City
- Landscaping today might not make sense if the home was lifted
- Landscaping was more of a trend and those could change yearly
- Unsure if people would know the plants were historic to the style property and what plants grew here now might not in the future

Mr. Lammers asked for feedback regarding the percent or keeping the dollar amount in the guidelines.

Discussion:

- Dollar amount would change over time, but the percent would last forever
- Asked how that was calculated and who would do the calculations

Mr. Lammers said the calculations could be reviewed by staff after the applicant provided the information.

Ms. Courtney said it was difficult to obtain information from applicants; however, the precise calculations could help them if they were not over the percent. She said the two numbers were 100 square feet for the hardscape which could be calculated easily, but the 10% could be more difficult to determine.

Mr. Pappas said he was in favor of the percent; however, applicants might spread it out over time to have more than the 10%, and it needed to have a start date to avoid the 10% happening over and over.

Ms. Courtney asked if there was a way to prevent these alternations over time that were not allowed.

Ms. Duncan suggested a time frame for windows.

Mr. Benoit said there was language in the code regarding other changes to buildings that said only so much work could be done during a certain amount of years until it needed to be brought up to code.

Mr. Lammers said they would need to discuss the use of alternative materials but noted not all alternative materials were the same.

Board discussed:

- Felt once alternative materials were allowed for cedar roofs and wood siding there would be none left in the City
- Both were character defining features and once allowed, would have a dramatic effect on the City
- Suggested using a composite material that resembled novelty siding
- Divide what materials could and could not be replicated
- Concerned some materials would not weather the same as the wooden materials
- Felt St. Augustine was special, and it was not always about rehabilitation but restoration using historically accurate materials
- Cedar shakes and wood windows were defining to the town and should be protected
- Issue with composite siding was there were no imperfections like the wood siding
- Perks with using composite materials as they did not deteriorate like wood
- Historically accurate siding did not exist anymore, the wood today was softer
- Suggested having accurate siding on the front of the building and the back and sides of the building use alternative material
- Asked if there were other locations having the same issues with the materials

Mr. Lammers said San Francisco, California was experiencing the same issues and they stressed traditional materials. He agreed the appearance of the perfect cement boards was a draw back. He noted page 93 and said the statement could be 'St. Augustine stressed original materials and if the applicant wanted to use alternative it would be on a case-by-case basis'.

Mr. Bender said the guidelines needed to respond to what was wanted by the City.

Board discussion:

- Thought the issue did not apply to a large amount of buildings in the HP districts 1, 2, and 3
- It was more of the patina that was wanted
- In HP 2 and 3 should have wood, HP 1 was more diverse and HP 4 and 5 could have more flexibility
- Should be careful not to make buildings unaffordable to where the buildings became demolition by neglect
- Was no economic hardship in HP districts 1,2, or 3 no building was less than \$600,000.00
- Asked if it was important to have the materials around the entire home
- Felt it was a slippery slope and the guidelines would be weakened
- Investments in the district reaped rewards when the quality was maintained
- Not in favor of having different siding on the sides and back as it needed to stay authentic
- Should maintain accurate materials as it only applied to the HP districts
- If it were the entire City, then alternative materials would be needed but since it was the HP area only it should be viewed case-by-case

Ms. Courtney advised the Board needed to keep in mind the new construction and if those would be required to have the historic materials or it would be on a case-by-case

basis. She said the original materials helped to keep the home affordable and maintained, as newer materials did not last as long as and would have to be replaced more often.

Ms. Skinner said the older materials during hurricane Matthew survived better than the newer materials.

There was Board consensus to leave the definition the same and, on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Davis said the economic hardship could not be viewed for newcomers to the area but could for people who had lived in the homes for 40 or 50 years and could not afford the upkeep.

Ms. Duncan agreed that was an issue as the values increased, which was why there was the homestead exemption to help elevate the taxes.

5. 22-24 Cathedral Place PUD Amendment (No action will be taken by the boards) *

a) Discussion of proposed amendments to the Planned Unit Development (PUD), including the PUD narrative, site development plan, building elevations and exhibits

Item was withdrawn by the property owner

6. Other Business

a) Schedule additional meeting dates for additional review of the AGHP update

Ms. Courtney advised they were working on dates for October 12th and 13th at 9:00a.m. or 1:00p.m. She said they would let everyone know regarding dates and times.

Ms. Skinner thanked the Board for their feedback.

7. Next Scheduled Meeting Dates

a) Tuesday, October 4, 2022, 2:00 pm - Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) Regular Meeting

b) Thursday, October 20, 2022, 1:00 pm - Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) Regular Meeting

8. Adjournment

Having no further business, Ms. Duncan adjourned the meeting at 4:20 P.M.²



Catherine Duncan, Chairperson

² Transcribed by Elyse Wiemann