

BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

City of Charleston

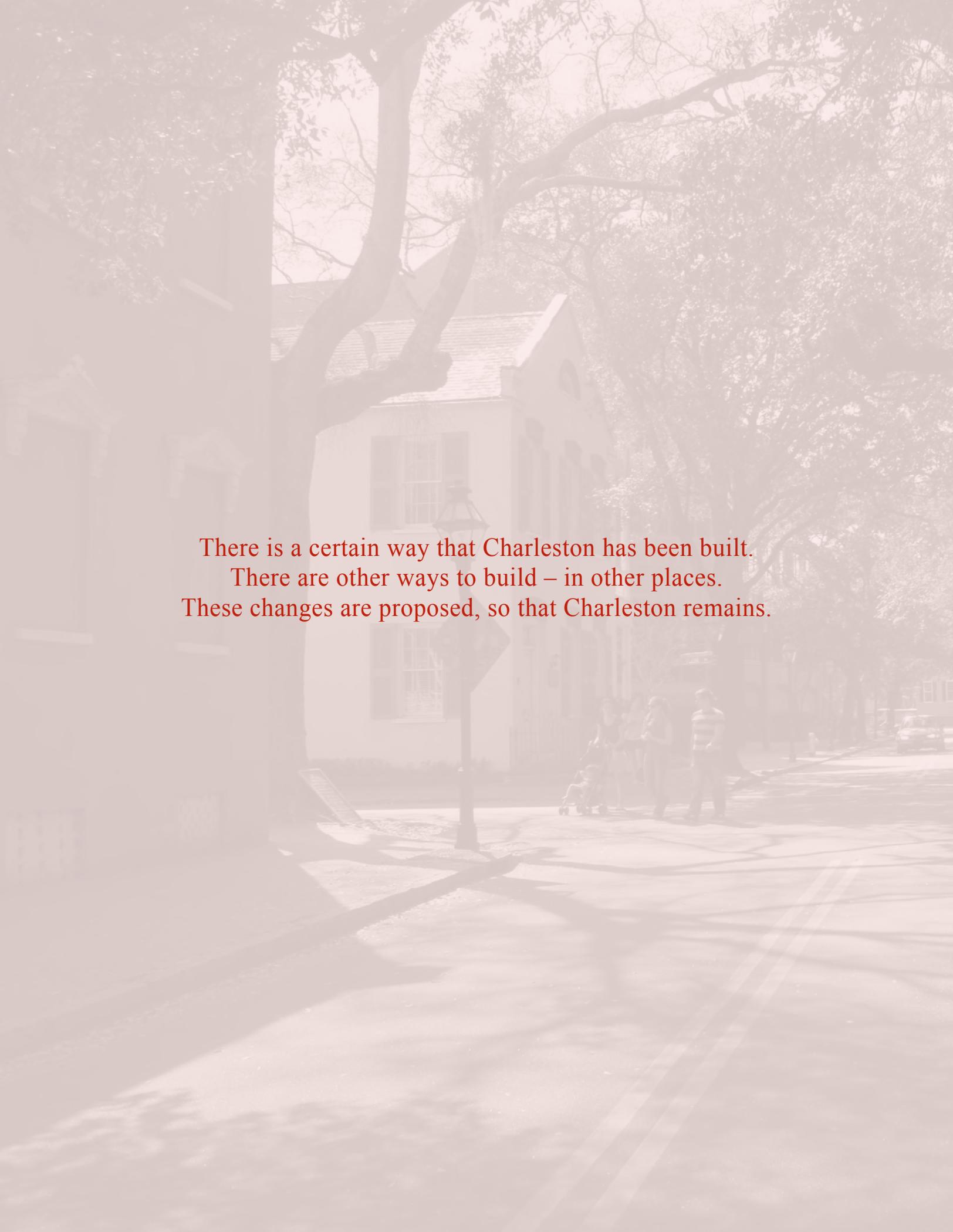


REVISED B.A.R. PROCESS

FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND LARGE PROJECTS

PREPARED BY DPZ PARTNERS

9/9/2015



There is a certain way that Charleston has been built.
There are other ways to build – in other places.
These changes are proposed, so that Charleston remains.

INTRODUCTION

This project is a collaboration between City of Charleston and Historic Charleston Foundation. The client's directive was simple: Charleston architecture must be great and must be of Charleston. The BAR Process has not been resulting in excellence.

DPZ Partners was contracted to advise the City of Charleston on this matter. Specifically, the assignment was to assess the design review process for new buildings within the Historic District.

Task 1. A comprehensive assessment of the current BAR, involving:

- An examination of buildings previously approved by the BAR.
- Interview with applicants who have experience before the BAR.
- Observation at a BAR review.

Task 2. Recommend changes for improving the following:

City policies, guidelines and ordinances pertaining to architecture in the City's historic districts.

- The Staff and BAR review processes.
- A mapping of the historic districts to a finer grain.

DPZ held a week-long charrette in the City of Charleston's Design Division building from March 9-13, 2015. It consisted of guided walking and driving tours of the historic districts, eight specialized group meetings, design sessions and two large public presentations (an opening and a final charrette presentation).

This report reflects final edits made by City of Charleston staff for publishing purposes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report consists of two sections. The first describes the toolset that will be used by the Charleston Board of Architectural Review in its procedures. This set will be a combination of certain existing tools, here refined and rationalized, and a few necessary new tools. The second part of this report consists of an analysis of the process of public input which informed and guided our creation of these new tools. There is a video recording associated with this week long event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWHTA2O9T2A>.

An extensive public discussion took place during the five-day charrette process, which included dozens of meetings with many different constituent groups. Feedback on the first and second drafts of this report was received from the Historic Charleston Foundation and the staff of the City of Charleston Department of Planning, Preservation and Sustainability.

REVISED B.A.R. PROCESS

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REVIEW PROCEDURES

CITY OF CHARLESTON, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING PRESERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY
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1. HISTORY OF THE BAR:

The Board of Architectural Review (BAR) was established in 1931 with the creation of the first preservation ordinance in the United States. As stated in the City of Charleston Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of the Board is “the preservation and protection of the old, historic or architecturally worthy structures and quaint neighborhoods which impart a distinct aspect to the city, and which serve as visible reminders of the historical and cultural heritage of the city, the state, and the nation.”

2. FUNCTION OF THE BAR

The BAR reviews all exterior work visible from any public right-of-way, including new construction, alterations, renovations, and demolitions. Some projects are required to go before the full BAR, while others may be reviewed at Staff level. Determination of the appropriate level of review is made by the Department of Planning, Preservation & Sustainability (henceforth the Staff).

3. COMPOSITION OF THE BAR:

There will be two Boards of Architectural Review, each consisting of five members and two alternates. Every BAR shall include three architects: at least one generally sympathetic and conversant with Modernist architecture and at least one with Traditional architecture.

The Administrative Officer of the BAR shall be the Head of the Department of Planning Preservation and Sustainability (Staff) or the Department Head’s designee. The role of the Administrative Officer is to clarify the intention of the Guidelines and, at the conclusion of every BAR agenda item, to clarify and summarize the proceedings so that the Applicant may receive clear direction. The Administrative Officer shall have no voting rights.



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In the event that someone of a profession other than design is a member of the BAR (for example, an attorney), he or she shall act in the capacity of a citizen and not in their professional capacity. The non-design profession representatives on the BAR shall endeavor to represent the community and not their personal preferences. Additionally, they should have a knowledge of design or preservation.

Members of the BAR shall serve a maximum of two terms of three years each. The Mayor reserves the right to dismiss BAR members for just cause such as lack of attendance, ineffectiveness, conflict of interest, etc.

4. ALLOCATION OF PROJECTS:

Generally, projects under 10,000 square feet shall be assigned to the BAR - Small, but this allocation is at the discretion of Staff, regardless of size, in order to balance the workload of the BAR.



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5. PRIOR TO BAR REVIEW:

Zoning Requirements: Prior to BAR review, the applicant shall determine if zoning approval is required by the City of Charleston Zoning Division.

Neighborhood Meetings: The applicant is encouraged to meet with the relevant neighborhood association and any adjacent property owners prior to BAR submittal.

6. BAR PROCESS:

A Pre-Application Conference For Large Projects: A meeting with the (Staff/City Architect/Preservation Officer) is required prior to application for Conceptual Review. The meeting shall include verification of an understanding of the Guidelines. Compliance to the Guidelines shall be interpreted as easing project approval by the BAR.

Application: Deadline for applications is 12:00 noon, typically ten days prior to the meeting date. For meeting schedules, application forms, or additional information, please visit

<http://www.charleston-sc.gov/BAR> or contact the Staff.

Demolition: Demolition is defined as the removal of an entire building or a significant portion of a building, the removal of which may compromise the structure's architectural character.

Conceptual: Review of the general height, scale, mass and 3-dimensional form of a building or an addition to an existing building, and the general architectural direction and quality of the project as it relates to its site, its neighborhood, and the City of Charleston. This phase defines the overall quality and architectural character of the project.

Preliminary: Review of the development of the conceptual design and its relationship to its context in terms of the project's details, materials and finishes. This phase defines the level



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of quality of construction, and the relationship of the buildings' components to surrounding buildings and to one another.

Additional Reviews: For all required subsequent submittals and re-submittals, drawings should show the previous proposal for comparison on the same sheet.

Final: Review by Staff only, at Staff discretion, of the completion of the preliminary design based on completed construction documents and material specifications, consistent with the level of quality of the previous phases. At its discretion, Staff may also require a final review with the BAR.

Inspection: For some projects, as determined by BAR Staff, an inspection may be required during construction and following the completion of all work and prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

7. PROTOCOL AT THE BAR MEETINGS:

1. Staff introduces the project, providing the context and historic background (5 minutes).
2. The Applicant presents the project (10-20 minutes), depending on size and complexity.
3. The BAR asks questions, and the Applicant may respond.
4. There may be public comment. The Applicant may respond.
5. Staff shall present its recommendation.
6. The BAR discusses the project, continuing until all discussion is exhausted, prior to any motion.
7. The Applicant may clarify points of discussion.
8. The BAR votes.



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SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

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8. BAR SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

Note: The process includes at the minimum two, and at the maximum four types of BAR review: Conceptual, Preliminary, Additional (one or multiple, at BAR discretion), and Final by staff. The submissions for the reviews shall consist of required drawings, which shall be checked by the staff and deemed to be suitable for public presentation before they are taken to the BAR. Submittals not complying with these requirements will be rejected, to be submitted for the subsequent meeting. The submittal requirements are for all reviews unless noted otherwise.

Requirements: Shall be consistent with current requirements <http://charleston-sc.gov/BAR> , but will be expanded to include:

Fees: Completed application form and fee (a fee is only required with the Initial Review or Preliminary review).

Drawings: 5 half-size sets (for Board review) or 1 half-size and 2 full-size sets, numbered sequentially, (for Staff review) of the following:

Images: A minimum of two renderings shall be required.

- Proposed construction as it would be seen, at eye level, by a pedestrian on the sidewalk that lines the property including adjacent structures.
- Proposed construction as it would be seen, at eye level, by a pedestrian on the sidewalk across the street from the property including adjacent structures.
- Scale model including surrounding context (may be required by the Staff).



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GUIDELINES: URBAN TYPES

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The BAR may deal with problems of architectural aesthetics and quality, but must also deal with issues of building type, as building type is a central feature of the character of Charleston.

Charleston buildings in general may be characterized as narrow to the street frontage and oriented to the environment by solar shielding to the south and west. It is easiest to describe these in terms of five coherent and clearly identifiable building types, at least two of which the Board should make reference by name: the Charleston Single House and the Charleston Shopfront.

Charleston Single House:

The most characteristic is the Charleston Single House. This building is generally very close to the street frontage on the narrow end. It generally has a covered piazza to the south and/or to the west. It varies tremendously in size from modest to palatial and the program within varies from single-family residential, multi-family residential, office, shop, lodging, and of late, educational building. Charleston sideyard Single Houses are found all over the historic city.

Charleston Shopfront:

These are essentially commercial adaptations of the Single House, built tightly adjacent to one another, with the sideyard more-or-less removed but the side piazza remaining as a hyphen between buildings. This hyphen, or commercial piazza, provides gated passage to the rear and often features an open-air stair to allow side access to upper stories. The first floor is on the ground (not elevated as in the Single House) and englazed as required for retail purposes. Most of the southern half of King Street consists of Charleston Shopfronts.

Large Scale Building:

The Large Scale Building type is typically broken down into small forms to acknowledge the typical pattern of Charleston, serving the purpose of a large program such as hotel, office or apartment building. It is as thin as possible at the frontage.

Charleston Warehouse:

The Charleston Warehouse is the remnant of Charleston's industrial past. These are not necessarily narrow to the frontage, although they can be. They do not have piazzas but they are exceedingly simple in their massing with very high ceilings and large windows repetitively placed. For these simple buildings it is extraordinarily important that the materials—usually brickwork—be first rate, and that the windows have high quality, small-scale mullions. This type is suitable for newer programs such as office buildings, research labs, etc., and has proven popular for residential uses as well.

Parking Garage:

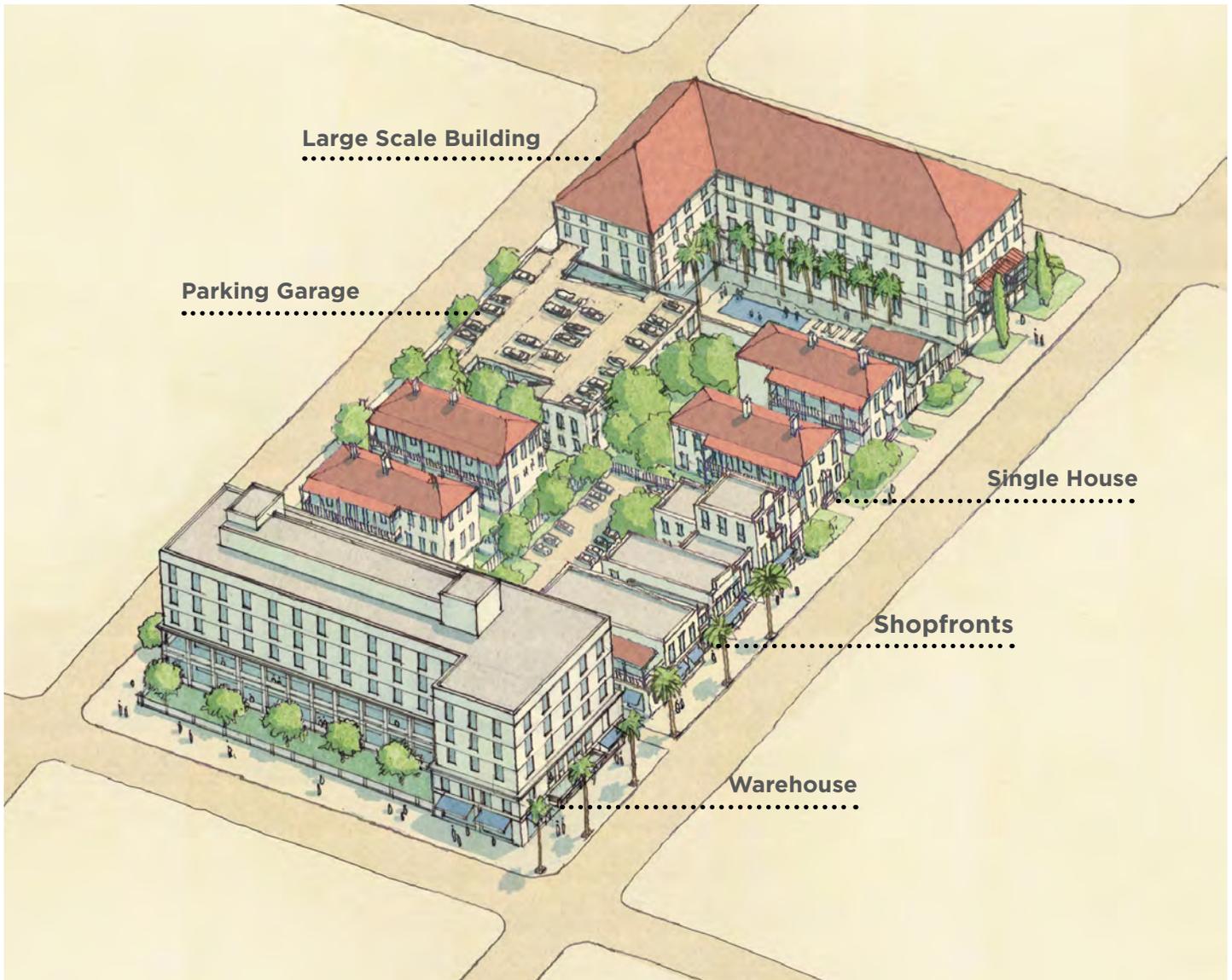
There is a fifth building type that is by now traditional, if rarely celebrated as such: the parking garage. In Charleston, parking garages are often articulated with vertical proportions and fenestrations similar to a residential structure, and often with louvers. At its most successful, the first floor frontage is assigned to retail to a suitable depth no less than 30 feet, with its parking internal.



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While urban quality in all cities is related to walkability, a mixture of uses, and the character of public space, sometimes, as in Nantucket or Santa Fe, quality is also maintained through the use of a coherent, consistent architectural style. In Charleston, style is not necessarily the deciding contributor – rather, the city’s character is driven by the recurrence of a very special building type.

This type is known as the Charleston Single House. It is a long, thin building that is narrow to the street front and includes a modest private side yard. It is this building type, more than it is the harmonious repetition of one particular style, that makes Charleston unique.

The Charleston Single House is adaptable from residential to commercial buildings. It is not confined to small, but also available for large buildings. [*The numbers below refer to illustrations on the following page.*]

1A. Best Practice: Charleston Single House

Notice the short setback from the sidewalk, and the fact that piazzas generally face south or west onto the sideyard. This is very different from the usual boxy American house. Despite the repetitive discipline of the type, there is no lack of variety in the urban fabric that these houses create together, as their asymmetry enables them to front the streets in three entirely different ways: long facades without piazzas, usually on the northern or eastern sides of the houses, are massive and imposing; the narrow gable-ends, which typically feature the front door, provide the thin fronts particular to Charleston; finally, long sides facing to the south or west, with their full-length piazzas, front the street like grand mansions. This is common south of Broad Street and throughout the older Historic Districts.

1B. Best Practice: Charleston Shopfront

For commercial streets the Single Houses can maintain the narrow facade, by eliminating the gardens and sometimes retaining an adapted piazza that provides a passage to the rear. When this side piazza is

large enough, it even has the ability to provide space for a small shop. This is common in the older sections of King Street.

1C. Best Practice: Large Scale Building

The Single House can also scale up for much bigger commercial purposes while maintaining the narrow front to the street and sideyard to the south. This can be clearly seen in the Mills House Hotel. Few problems are caused by large buildings that retain this contextual building type.

2A. Acceptable Practice: Charleston Warehouse

The Charleston Cigar Factory offers the best model for a large loft-type structure. There are other preserved local examples of a smaller size. These buildings are of a simple form and are most always of brick construction. Their quality derives from the pattern and proportion of the windows, the deep set nature of the windows and the simple detailing using brick for arches, window details, etc. These buildings can be wide or narrow to the street.

2B. Acceptable Practice: In General

If the creation of multiple smaller buildings with sideyards is infeasible, at least break the large building into smaller forms, which replicate the rhythm of a row of Single Houses, while still maintaining the single, larger building. The hyphens between these small forms should take their cues from the residual piazzas that separate Charleston Storefronts, offering as much openness and transparency as possible.

2C. Discourage Practice: In General

Monolithic structures without internal divisions of any kind can be made good enough for most suburban retrofit areas or larger, non-historic cities, as they successfully mask parking, line sidewalks, and even provide commercial frontages. In the historic heart of Charleston, however, buildings of this character will degrade the character of the city.



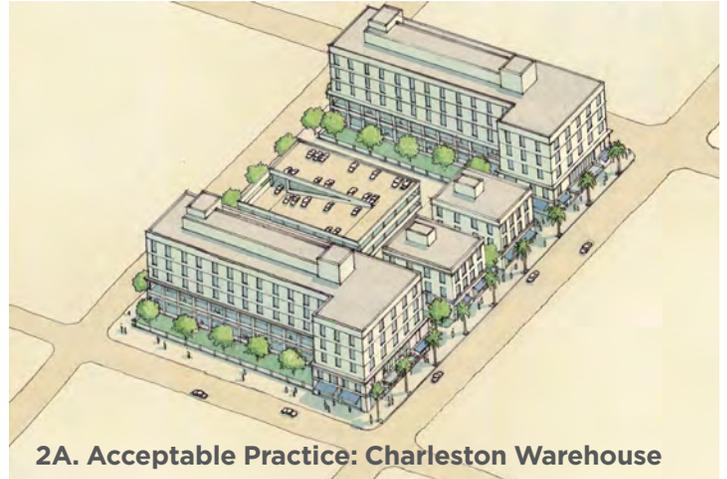
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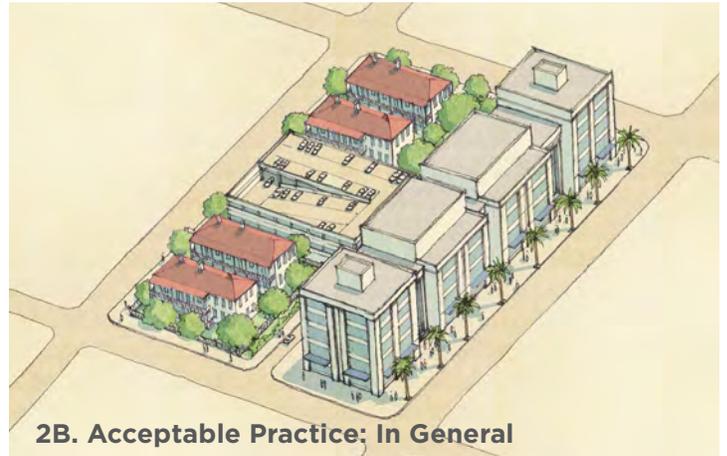
1A. Best Practice: Charleston Single House



2A. Acceptable Practice: Charleston Warehouse



1B. Best Practice: Charleston Shopfront



2B. Acceptable Practice: In General



1C. Best Practice: Large Scale Building



2C. Discourage Practice: In General



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GUIDELINES

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GENERAL NOTES:

- A *guideline* activated by “shall” is a mandatory rule, unless applicant makes a compelling argument to the contrary.
- A *guideline* activated by “should” is an option strongly recommended by the BAR.
- A *guideline* activated by “may” is an option that can be requested by the BAR.
- These guidelines are intended for civil buildings only.
- Civic Buildings and Buildings in the Special Districts shall be according to standards developed and adopted by the BAR.

SPECIAL GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION:

1. Building height shall be measured in number of stories, not in feet. The ground floor shall be higher than the other floors; a minimum of 14 feet clear for commercial buildings and 10 feet clear for residential buildings. The residential ground floor shall be raised a minimum of two feet from sidewalk grade.

Purpose: Higher ceiling heights present a more gracious façade to the street. On the interior, taller ceilings provide better light and ventilation.

2. Buildings should have a base, wherein the bottom is articulated differently from the rest of the building, either by a change of material, or a setback above the base. Material and craftsmanship on the base shall be more durable and of higher quality than the rest above. For buildings less than six stories, the base consists of the ground floor. For buildings more than six stories, the base shall be taller and proportionally appropriate to the building.

Purpose: The base serves two purposes: to present higher quality tactile and visual experience to the passerby and to help articulate the building at a human scale. The better materials and workmanship are especially critical at street level as it is within eye level and reach of pedestrians.

3. Buildings should be narrow towards the frontage—even commercial buildings, which may be massed as a single bar or as a series of wings.

Purpose: Narrow frontages permits a larger number and variety of structures to line the sidewalk, thereby enlivening the pedestrian experience. Additionally, vertical orientation reinforces Charleston’s visual character, which has always tended towards the vertical.

4. Whether large or small, building frontage should reflect the rhythm of the adjacent or fronting buildings. This can be achieved either by breaking up the project into several buildings or articulating a single mass as a series of smaller forms.

Purpose: To work in harmony with surrounding buildings. In a city, buildings should not pretend to be isolated objects, but rather work together



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with their surroundings to define and enhance the public realm.

5. Parking Garages and ground level parking in habitable buildings in A-Zones should be shielded at their frontage to a minimum depth of 30 feet of habitable space. In V-Zones and residential areas in A-Zones where flood elevation precludes habitable space at the street level, parking should be shielded by louvers, landscaped trellises, and/or crafted ornamental metal screens. Open parking lots should be screened by walls between 4.5 and five feet in height. The walls shall endeavor to be masonry matching the principle building if such exists.

Purpose: To mitigate the visual appearance of parking lots and garages in support of the pedestrian experience. The habitable space may provide workspace or retail shops.

6. The primary entrance of all buildings should be located on street frontage and not directly on a parking lot or garage.

Purpose: To support street life on the sidewalk.

7. Exterior materials should be brick, cut stone, smooth stucco (stucco over frame is discouraged, but if proposed will be held to strict deflection criteria) and clapboard. Composite and processed materials, steel sections, cast stone, and cementitious boards, in limited quantity, may be approved upon submittal of a sample to the BAR. Vinyl, Styrofoam, and other synthetic materials should be avoided.

Purpose: Materials shall not emulate other materials. The authenticity of Charleston should be supported by materials that are authentic in their appearance and function.

8. Building materials shall express their tectonics. (For example: heavier materials below lighter materials, wood and metal above brick, and both above stone).

Purpose: To ensure the legibility of the architectural language to the passerby and to support the authenticity of construction.

9. Metalwork, woodwork, stucco and stone by local Charleston crafts persons is encouraged.

Purpose: Charleston has local craft traditions dating back three centuries that are integral to its cultural and architectural heritage. They strengthen the identity and character of the city, empower local crafts people and contribute to the local economy.

10. Storefront glazing, doors, and building signage should be conceived as a unified design.

Purpose: To enhance the harmony of the building facades and



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streetscape.

11. All glazing shall be clear. A minimum of 70% glazing shall be required on storefronts at the frontage level.

Purpose: Glazing increases interest and even security for pedestrians. Dark, opaque and/or reflective glass is not civic in character, nor is it in the local vernacular.

12. Wall openings, with the exception of storefronts and transoms, shall be vertical in proportion. They should display a ratio between 2/1 and 3/1.

Purpose: Vertical windows allow greater depth of light into a room and, by providing a frame in proportion with the human body, express the human occupation within.

13. Facades should endeavor to have several window sizes, with smaller ones above. Three sizes should be provided for buildings taller than four stories and two sizes for buildings four stories or less.

Purpose: The size and frequency of windows is one of the most significant visual characteristics of a building. They should provide repetitive rhythm horizontally, but not be too repetitive vertically.

14. Thin mullions or muntins may be required on windows larger than two feet in any direction. The depth of the mullion should not be less than the width.

Purpose: To provide small-scale texture, and provide visual structure and relief to otherwise large, unsupported pieces of glazing.

15. Glazed openings should show a minimum wall depth of four inches clear to the frontage.

Purpose: To provide the building with relief and avoid the



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impression of cheap, paper-thin facades.

16. The building should have an array of small scale detail derived from the modularity of the material (brick or clapboard), elements such as mullions, louvers, string courses, trim details, brackets, cornices, and/or column details.

Purpose: Richness of detail is essential to providing points of visual interest to pedestrians, and to articulating the human scale of a building.

17. Buildings should shade fenestration facing south and west, by means of elements such as roof overhangs, arcades, porches, awnings, loggias, balconies and piazzas.

Purpose: This is a Charleston tradition that evolved as an adaptation to climate. It is integral to the city's aesthetic identity and enhances the sustainability of its building stock.



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APPROVAL MATRIX

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GENERALLY EASIER TO APPROVE < > MORE DIFFICULT TO APPROVE

URBAN GUIDELINES

- TALLER CEILING HEIGHTS < > SHORTER CEILING HEIGHT
- NARROW TO THE FRONTAGE < > WIDER TO THE FRONTAGE
- BASE DIFFERENTIATED < > BASE CONTINUOUS
- MANY SMALL BUILDINGS < > FEW LARGE BUILDINGS
- PARKING MASKED FROM FRONTAGE < > PARKING VISIBLE FROM FRONTAGE
- PARKING PROVIDED < > EXCESS PARKING PROVIDED

ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

- NATURAL & INTEGRAL MATERIALS < > COMPOSITE & CLADDING MATERIALS
- STRUCTURAL EXPRESSION < > SURFACE EXPRESSION
- APPLICATION OF LOCAL CRAFT < > ABSENCE OF CRAFT
- UNIFIED STOREFRONT DESIGN < > STOREFRONT BY COMPONENT
- CLEAR GLAZING < > DARK OR MIRROR GLAZING
- VERTICAL PROPORTIONS < > HORIZONTAL PROPORTIONS
- REPETITIVE FENESTRATION < > MIXED FENESTRATION
- SMALL MULLIONS < > LARGE OR NO MULLIONS
- THICKER WALL DEPTH < > THINNER WALL DEPTH
- SIMPLE MASSING < > COMPLEX MASSING
- SHADING ELEMENTS PROVIDED < > NO SHADING ELEMENTS

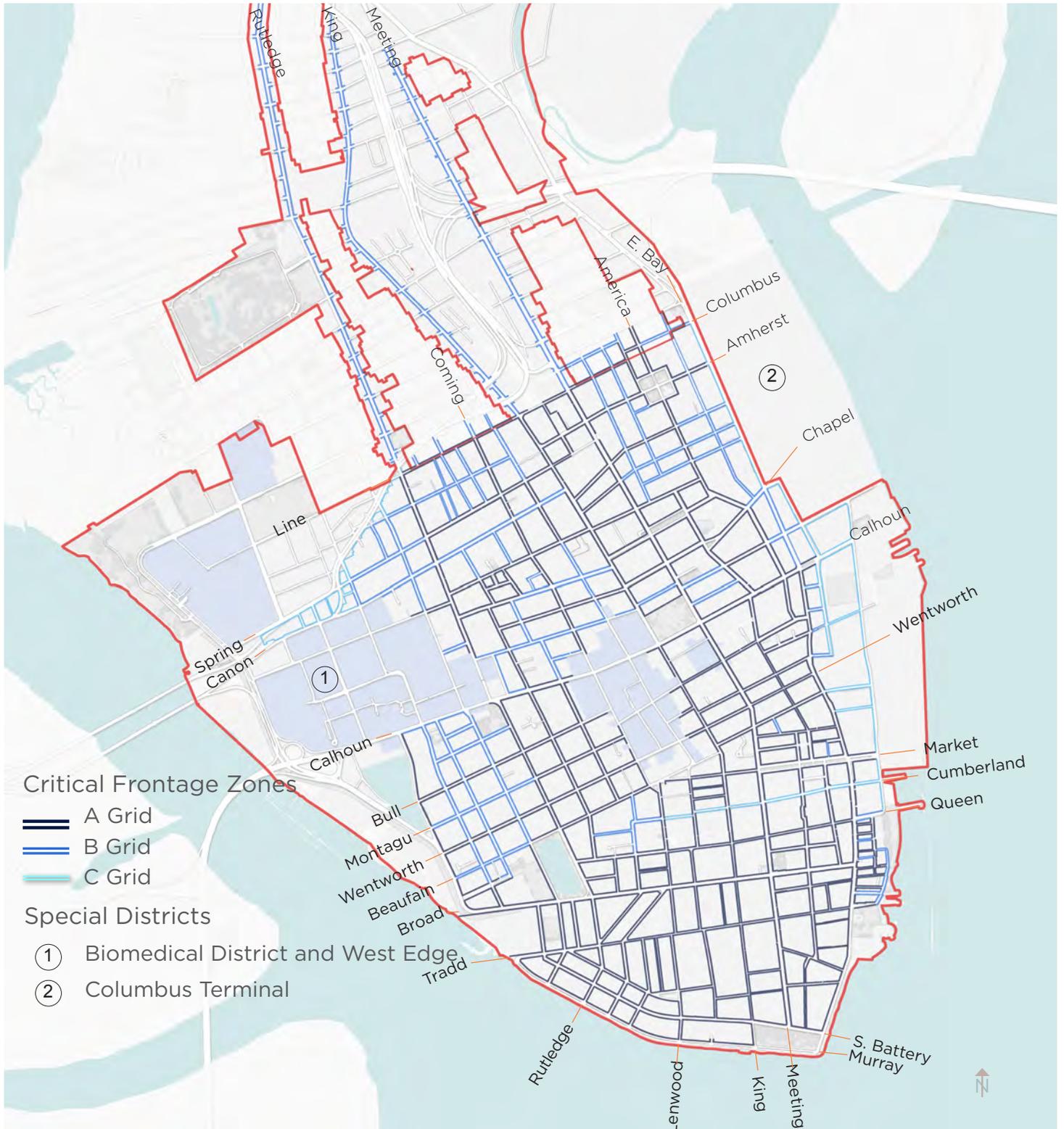


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CRITICAL FRONTAGE MAP

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CHALLENGES

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Ensuring new construction results in a better architecture that is reflective of Charleston's prevailing character has to be approached as a multi-faceted and complex task. There are three overlapping issues to consider.

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE AREA

The sheer size of the two historic districts is greater than four square miles. While very large for all to be considered historic, they account for less than 4% of the total area within the city limits of Charleston. Therefore it is not unreasonable to expect this area to be held to a higher standard.

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE CITY

Not every street within the affected historic districts can be of the highest quality. Currently, Charleston already has a very high percentage of streets with excellent urbanism. Any attempt to make all streets great will likely result in too many mediocre streets and an inevitable degradation of the pedestrian experience. Cities need streets devoted to necessary noxious uses, such as parking access, visible garage structures, loading areas, gas stations and drive-through areas. Therefore categorizing the streets to a greater degree of specificity in terms of its pedestrian-friendly frontages was warranted in order to determine the additional architectural standards that could be required. The total area was evaluated and ranked into three different categories based on the quality of their frontages, from best (A Grid) to worst (C Grid).

CURRENT SHORTCOMINGS

The current problems with the BAR are of four kinds: related to urban design, political or architectural issues, and related to quality of construction.

PROBLEMS OF URBANISM

The new buildings being proposed are often of a size unprecedented to Charleston prior to the 1960s. These projects require a specific kind of expertise--not least for the accommodation of massive quantities of parking. Accordingly, the Second BAR shall be selected to develop expertise in the particulars of the larger projects, while the First BAR will develop expertise in the particulars of the smaller projects--generally in the more historically sensitive areas. This expertise will be accumulated by Staff to be transmitted to new members of the BAR.

PROBLEMS OF STYLE

Issues of style are often the source of the disaffection with the performance of the BAR both by the professionals and the citizens. The BAR should not have a bias. The BAR has manifested a pro-



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CHALLENGES

CITY OF CHARLESTON, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING PRESERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

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nounced sympathy that the architecture of Charleston should be “of its time” while being aware that the citizens they represent often prefer an architecture “of its place.” Inevitably there is compromise: traditional buildings are modernized and modernist buildings are traditionalized. This is the source of the mediocrity of much of the recent architecture of Charleston. This can be addressed by having two architects on each BAR--one with expertise on modernist architecture, another with expertise on traditional architecture--each available to provide advice at the request to the Applicant--depending on their preference. Every building regardless of style could then be improved with sympathetic and expert advice--instead of diluted or hybridized.

PROBLEMS OF QUALITY

Quality has not been easy to resolve because materials are cheaper, and components and building techniques are worse. This, fortunately, need no longer be the case, as the real estate market in Charleston has become so high that the Staff and the BAR now expect first-rate material and the finest craftsmanship--if not throughout the entire building, at least in the areas that pedestrians most experience--and with the more important components, such as fenestration. Matters of interior quality do not concern the BAR--other than ceiling height, which must be generous in order to respond to historic proportions of the facades of Charleston.

PROBLEMS OF PROCESS

The BAR suffers from a frustrating process, the resolution of which is a task of this report. To this end, several tools are provided.

1. The existing application documents have been thoroughly rationalized, clarified, and made succinct.
2. The protocol during the hearings institutionalizes the necessary give and take between the BAR, the Applicants and the citizen-participants.
3. The overwhelming number of applications has been resolved by the creation of two BARs.
4. The requisite expertise with large and new buildings as well as the older, smaller buildings, will be subject to the expertise of one or another BAR. The criteria by which the BAR advises has been clarified with the introduction of the Guidelines. This allows the Applicant to have some notion of what would ease passage of their projects rather than guessing, or being subject to the arbitrary preferences of the members of the BAR.



BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

CONCLUSION

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SCENARIO 1: Charleston is not currently in any sort of architectural crisis. The process at the BAR could continue as it is, with the long-range consequence that the older historic districts would retain most of their character, and the newly developed areas would become more like other places but of a relatively high standard. The existing historic districts are excellent. With some care, the newer, larger, buildings of the new areas would provide more affordable housing for the younger population that Charleston is losing as the historic areas become progressively rare and expensive.

SCENARIO 2: The BAR is not doing as good a job as it might because of sheer exhaustion. Too many projects are submitted for an area that has become much too large for the BAR members to provide a local, knowledgeable, response. The BAR's review should be split into two boards, one reviewing the large new projects that are the focus of this report and a second board renewing smaller projects and renovations. The result would likely be places of higher architectural quality, because more time could be spent by each BAR.

SCENARIO 3: Involves the change described in Scenario 2, with the additional overlay of Critical Frontages. This new mapping provides three levels of expectation for care and quality in both districts. Guidelines would reduce the guessing game of the applicant and permit more objective and efficient assessment by the BAR. There would be an emphasis, not only on architecture syntax, but on the building types that are unique to Charleston.

SCENARIO 4: Includes the above and, in addition, a complete re-assessment of the zoning code and of the standards administered by the Fire Marshall, the Engineering Department, and the Building Inspector, which do not necessarily support the character of Charleston. Given the erosion of the common-sense interpretations under Mayor Riley's tenure, this would result in the gradual loss of the character of the public spaces in the historic districts. The mitigating language in the manuals, in particular, should be the applicable criteria no less than the main tables.

SCENARIO 5: In addition to the above, the establishment of a design school dedicated to the study and projection of the phenomenon of Charleston (rather than the importation of "new" ideas from elsewhere).



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This school should educate generalists knowledgeable in architecture and design, public works and administration, all of which Charleston has been a laboratory for under Mayor Riley, and which the world now admires and needs to learn from.

RECOMMENDATION: The revised BAR process provided in this report is at the level of Scenario 3. Scenario 4 should be undertaken by the current administration, as it is likely to be politically fraught. Scenario 5 should be initiated by Mayor Riley immediately upon his retirement.

BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
City of Charleston



APPENDIX
REVIEW OF THE B.A.R. PROCESS

PREPARED BY DPZ PARTNERS

15 JUNE 2015



APPENDIX

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THE MEETINGS

SCHEDULE MARCH 9-13

Time	Monday March 9, 2015	Tuesday March 10, 2015	Wednesday March 11, 2015	Thursday March 12, 2015	Friday March 13, 2015	
8:00 am	Travel to Studio	Travel to Studio	Travel to Studio	AMD - Semi-annual HCF Meeting (40 East Bay Street)	Travel to Studio	
9:00 am	Set-up Studio	DPZ Team Briefing	DPZ Team Briefing	DPZ Team Briefing	DPZ Team Prep	
10:00 am	Client Team Briefing	Meeting 2 - City Staff Meeting	Walking Tour & Concurrent Design Session	Client / DPZ Progress Review	Final Charrette Presentation	
11:00 am	Walking Site Tour of Districts / Lunch	Concurrent Design Session		Design / Production		
Noon		Meeting 3 - Architects - Group 1	Meeting 5 - Neighborhood Representatives	Meeting 7 - Preservation & Builders/Contractors	Break-down Studio	
1:00 pm		Lunch In	Lunch In	Lunch In	Next Steps Meeting w/ Client	
2:00 pm		Meeting 4 - Developers	Meeting 6 - Architects - Group 2	Design / Production	Lunch Out	
3:00 pm		Design Session	Prep Opening Presentation		Concurrent Design Session	DPZ Team Departs
4:00 pm		Meeting 1 - BAR Members			BAR Meeting (75 Calhoun Street)	
5:00 pm		Design Session	Opening Charrette Presentation			
6:00 pm	AMD PRIVATE LECTURE: Princeton Club (Charleston Library Society 164 King Street)	Concurrent Design Session				
7:00 pm	Dinner Out	Dinner Out	Dinner Out	Dinner Out		
8:00 pm						
9:00 pm						

FINAL PRESENTATION, MARCH 13



MEETING NOTES

The views of those attending the meeting are summarized below. They do not necessarily represent the views of DPZ.

MEETING 1 WITH CURRENT AND PAST MEMBERS OF THE BAR

- BAR has evolved a lot since its inception. It was initially formed only to protect the historical buildings.
- There is no precedent within Charleston for the BAR to look to for large new buildings.
- BAR issues denials more often than they used to. Recently, they have gotten better at giving specific guidance on how to improve projects. This is proving useful to the architects.
- Architects tend to play it safe when they submit designs to the BAR for review. They seem risk-averse.
- Most contentious issues are with the new larger commercial buildings, less so with existing residential buildings.
- Issues of height and scale are the most recurrent.
- Different areas of the historic districts deserve different levels of attention.

MEETING 2 WITH CITY STAFF

- There is too high a population of new, mediocre buildings in Charleston. The BAR process does not always result in better buildings.
- The main problem is not contentiousness or the drawn-out BAR process, but the disappointing designs that ensue.
- Would like to see more inspiring buildings.
- Most of the buildings are by out-of-town architects. Charleston should have a well-respected roster of architects to choose from.
- Too often, the out-of-town architects do not take the time to understand Charleston and propose buildings that are not in the language of the city.
- There is a lack of context for larger projects. It is difficult to draw from Charleston precedents, so there is a blank sheet approach to design and assessment.
- BAR reviews about 10% of 2,000 projects submitted every year. The load is too heavy, averaging 15 projects per BAR meeting.
- Large projects and smaller ones all get the same level of attention and time, while some are obviously deserving of more time than others.
- BAR responds to what is submitted. They do not initiate improvements which might compete with cost, market feasibility, etc.

MEETING NOTES

- The BAR does not want to give up their control in the design review process to Staff.
- Consider feedback by assessing a building's endurance and aesthetic five years after completion.

MEETINGS 3-7 WITH OTHER GROUPS: *(Architects, Developers, Neighborhood Representatives, Contractors, Builders & Preservationists)*

- The zoning code is inadequate and has not been adjusted to the urban fabric of Charleston. It requires a significant overhaul.
- There is a high level of stress produced in the BAR process.
- The BAR reviews issues that are larger than, and not subject to its assigned role (i.e.: socio-economic issues, cultural issues, parking and density issues).
- BAR performance is fairly respectable, but often overwhelmed by sheer volume of work to review.
- The interaction with the BAR meetings is problematic. There is no dialogue permitted between the applicant or the architect and the BAR.
- The BAR needs a cohesive mission statement and principles or standards for their review of projects.
- The BAR does not understand the economics or design requirements of large-scale development. They are better at reviewing small-scale projects.
- Submissions should reflect the size and complexity of the project. Excessively complex submissions can be an unwarranted burden to non-design professionals and applicants.
- There is no distinction in the review process between a small project and a very large project.
- There is confusion on how long the process should take. Currently there are three reviews: Conceptual, Preliminary and Final, but the line is blurred on the submission requirements, especially for the first two reviews. The extra reviews when there are rejections do not necessarily yield better results.
- There seems to be an unstated rule that the Mayor has veto power on any project, which causes distress and a loss of faith in the BAR process.
- The submission requirements for the BAR need to be raised.
- The BAR has a responsibility to be precise, as it is costly for the appli-

MEETING NOTES

cant and architects to change their designs. Their recommendations can feel arbitrary or contradictory.

- Some stated the BAR was dictating too much, while others stated the BAR recommendations lacked clarity.
- The BAR may succeed in deterring poor design, however it may also weaken good design with unclear directives or the blending of traditionalist and modernist architecture.

OBSERVATIONS: MEETING 8 STAFF TOUR OF RECENT PROJECTS (SEE FOLLOWING PAGE)

- Most of the new work is good enough urbanistically and architecturally, but that is good enough for other cities, not for Charleston.
- There is very little agreement among staff or Mayor about what is good or bad. This causes a great deal of confusion.
- The zoning code does not support what Charleston is.
- The civil engineering department and the fire marshal's interpretation does not necessarily support Charleston urbanism.

SOLUTIONS DISCUSSED FROM ALL GROUPS:

- Consider having projects reviewed by staff, and only appeals heard by the BAR.
- Consider rewriting the rules of the meetings to provide applicants an opportunity to address BAR comments on an ongoing basis.
- Consider requiring BAR appointees to participate in an educational program. Some appointees could benefit from orientation on Charleston's architecture and on how to read drawings.
- Consider specialized BARs. Given the breadth of work reviewed, it is difficult for the BAR to have expertise with the entire range. They need to be more specialized: (i.e.: traditionalists/modernists/preservationists; historic urban fabric/suburban development).
- Consider having the activity of the Board monitored. Someone with knowledge of the zoning ordinance and BAR rules should monitor all meetings to ensure compliance.
- Consider reducing the appointment period from four years to three years to prevent meeting fatigue.
- Consider redrawing the historic district maps or having less stringent rules for certain areas.

STAFF TOUR OF RECENT PROJECTS

- ① Harbour View Inn - 2 Vendue Range
- ② Market Pavilion Hotel - 225 East Bay St.
- ③ Office Building - 158 Meeting St.
- ④ Office Building - 174 Meeting St.
- ⑤ Victoria Center - 205 King St.
- ⑥ Memminger School - 20 Beaufain St.
- ⑦ George St. Condos - 21 George St.
- ⑧ Anson House Condos - 2 Laurens St.
- ⑨ Laurens Place Condos - 2 Warfside St.
- ⑩ Office Building - 25 Calhoun St.
- ⑪ Condos - 33 Calhoun St.
- ⑫ Gateway Center - 40 Calhoun / 478 E. Bay St.
- ⑬ Charleston County Library - 68 Calhoun St.
- ⑭ Office Building - 100 Calhoun St.
- ⑮ Buist Academy - 103 Calhoun St.
- ⑯ Progressive Academy - 382 Meeting St.
- ⑰ Apartment Building - 400 Meeting St.
- ⑱ Burris Liquor - 418 Meeting St.
- ⑲ Holiday Inn - 425 Meeting St.
- ⑳ Elan Midtown Apartments - 441 Meeting St.
- ㉑ Hyatt Midtown Hotels - King / Spring St.
- ㉒ Horizon - Spring / Lockwood / Fishburne / Ha-good St

Recent Projects (2000 - 2015)
 Historic Boundary (2,680 acres)



ASSESSMENT OF RECENT PROJECTS 2



Office Building: 158 Meeting St.



Office Building: 174 Meeting St.



The Mills House Hotel



Francis Marion Hotel

The two upper images represent good quality, recently constructed buildings, which have several things in common that render them less desirable by the people. The two below are well liked despite being much larger. It seems that the problem is not just a matter of scale or urbanism, but of style. This issue can not be avoided, and hence the Guidelines. See the experimental transformation of images on the opposite page.

ASSESSMENT OF RECENT PROJECTS 3



This design was accepted by the BAR after six months of reviews, without apparent enthusiasm by anyone present, including its architects. It is instances like this that lead some to think less of the BAR process.



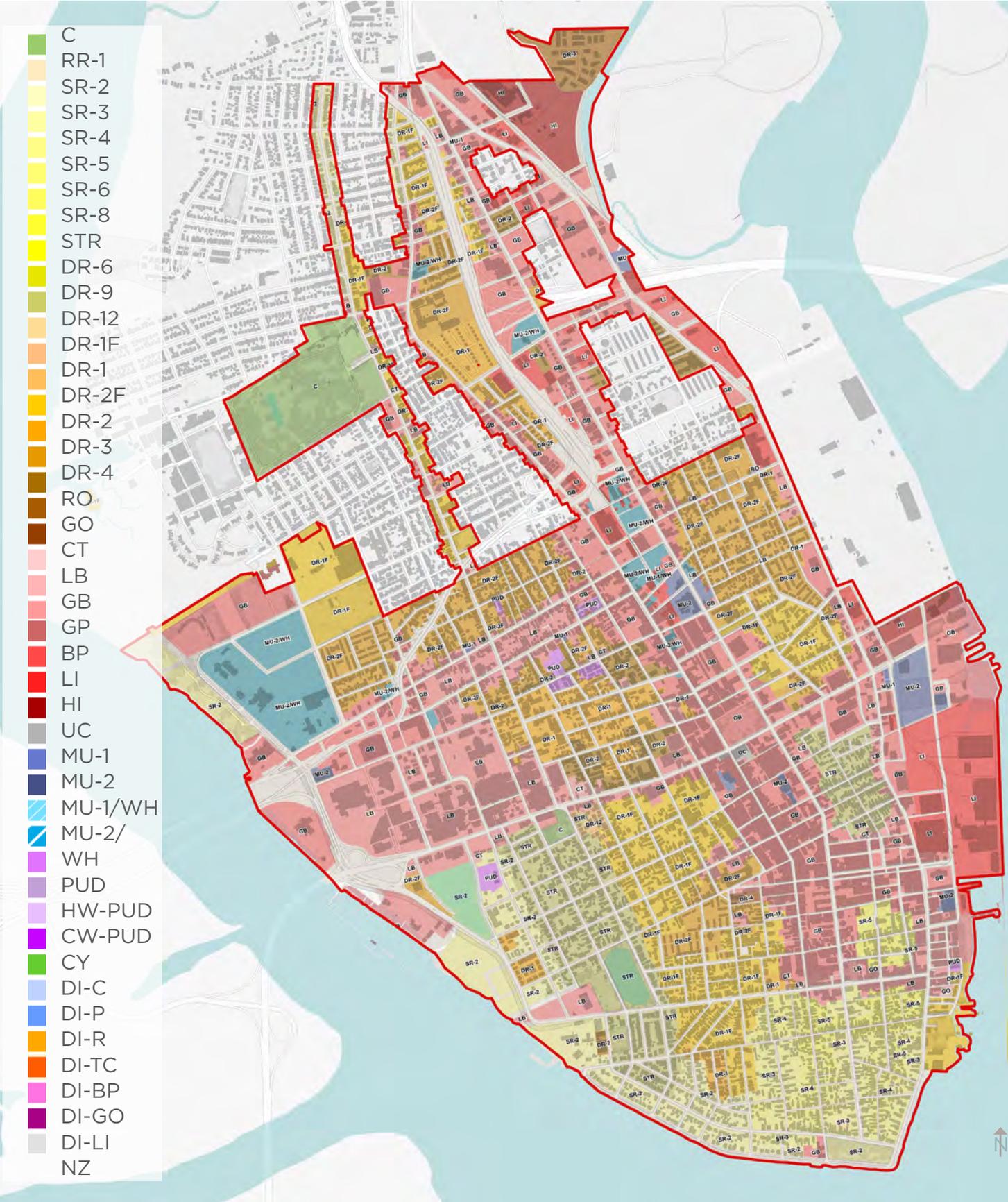
This alternative was prepared by DPZ during the charrette taking less than five hours of work. It follows the proposed Guidelines.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. MAP OF EXISTING ZONING

The existing zoning code and map is dysfunctional and does not play a part in either protecting or projecting the historic character of Charleston. The applicants to the BAR must comply with its prescriptions. This code must be thoroughly re-written to correspond to Charleston rather than the suburban sprawl which is its original intention. The public works manual must also be adjusted to reflect the realities of the Historic Districts, and the inspectors carefully trained to understand the "slack" that is necessary when supervising an old, idiosyncratic and delicate city built under a very different regime of standards, which nevertheless work well today.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

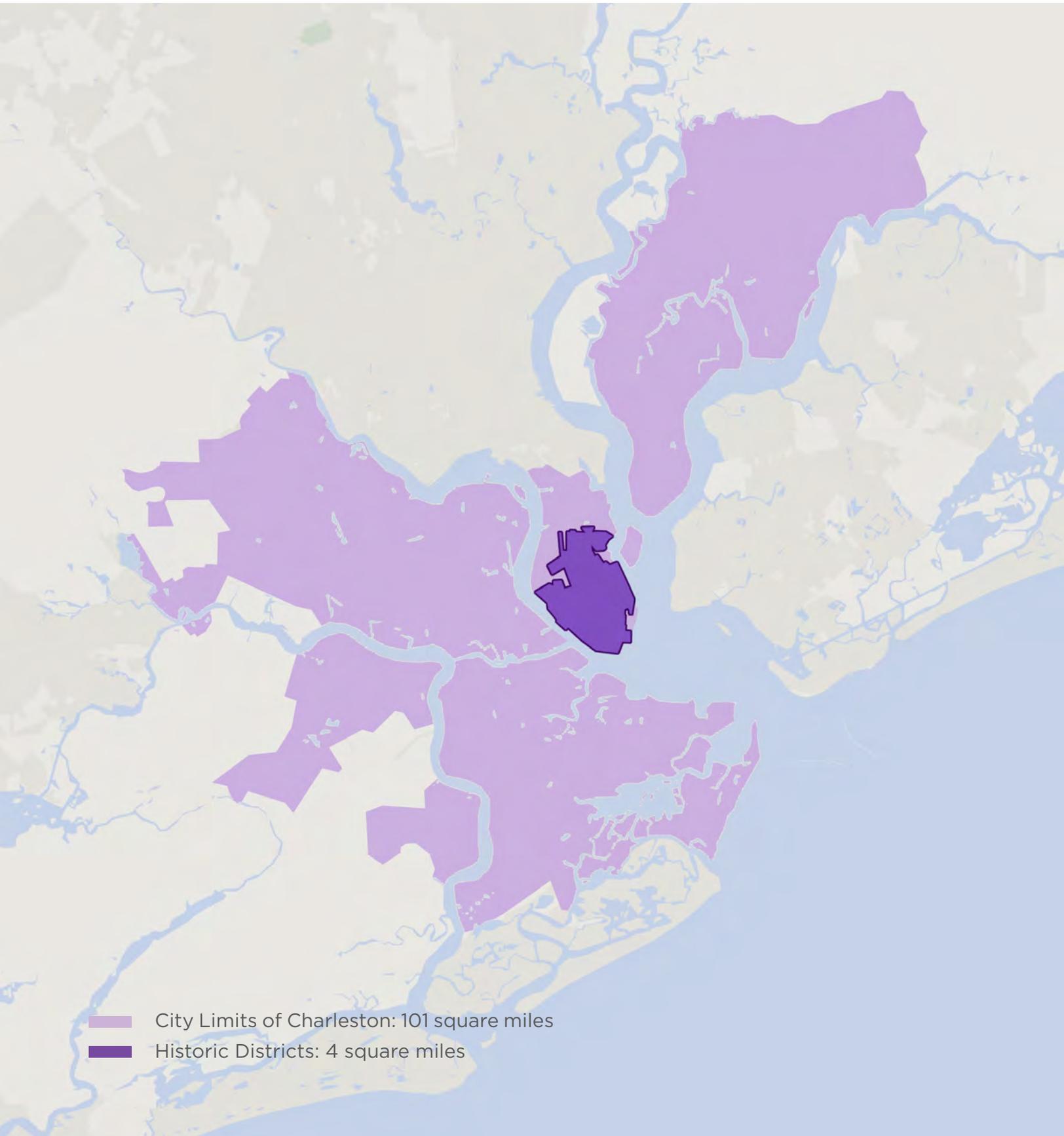


ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.THE CITY OF CHARLESTON AS A WHOLE

All of the Historic Districts of Charleston together comprise about 4 square miles. The Municipal boundary of the City of Charleston comprises a total of 101 Square miles. It is the premise of this report that the Historic Districts under the care of the BAR should privilege quality over style. Moreover, the historic building types that constitute Charleston's *architecture of place* should support the visual aspects of the Charleston *brand*.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS



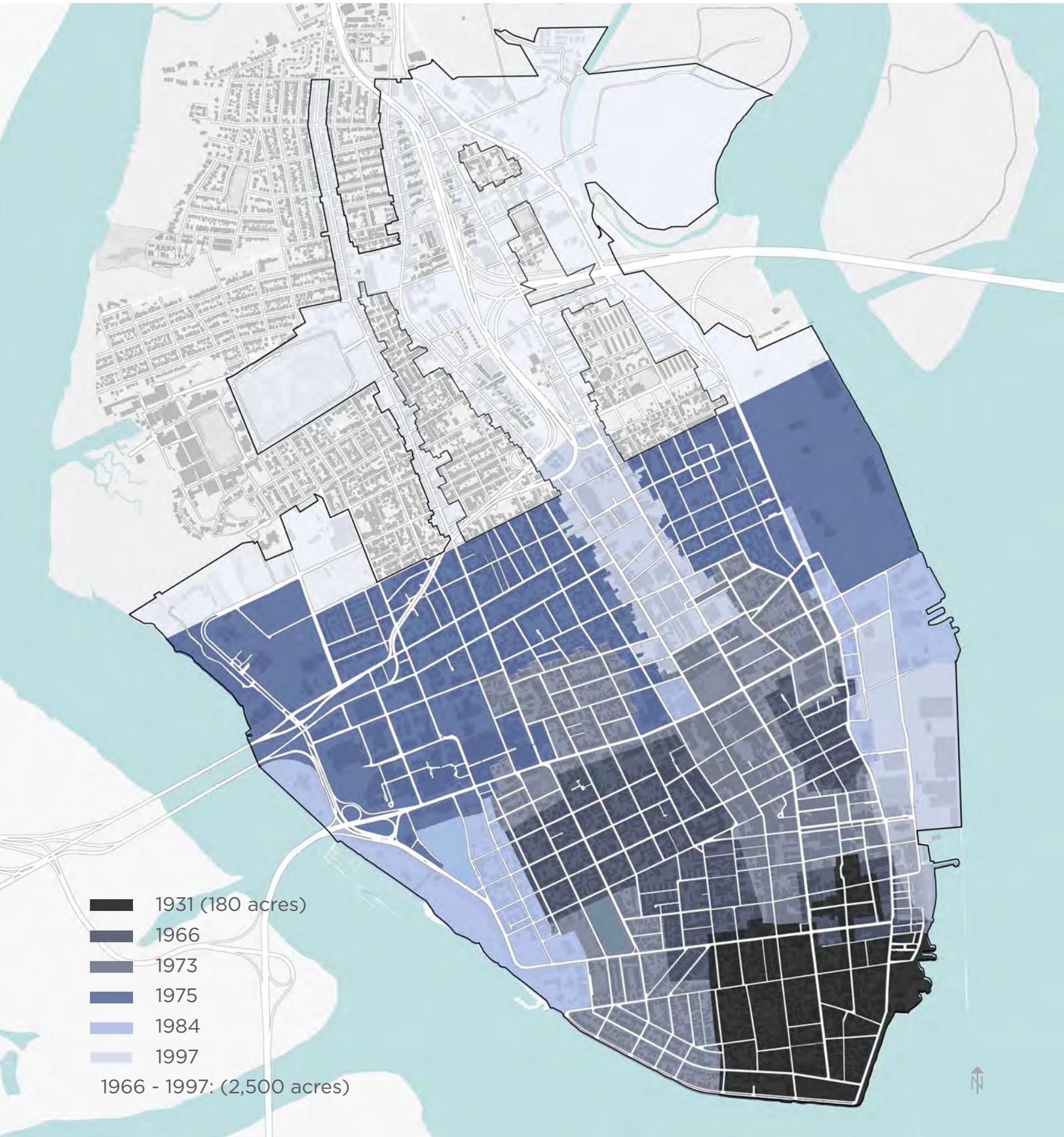
ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

3. GROWTH OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The area of the Historic Districts has grown over the 85 years since the first one was established in 1931. This map shows in progressively lighter colors the areas of more recent adoption into the Districts. It is possible to generalize that the earlier the date of adoption, the more delicate the historic context, justifying progressively special care taken by the BAR under the new guidelines for an *architecture of our place*.

The original Historic District of 1931 incorporated only 180 acres--generally south of Broad St. The current boundary, after five additional expansions now constitutes 2,680 acres. In addition, nearly 30 landmark properties have been added to the jurisdiction. It can be fairly assumed that this growth cannot be handled by a single BAR meeting twice a month as it did decades ago when there was so much less to supervise--and the context under discussion to be personally known by the members of the Board.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS



ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

4. SUBSET OF HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Currently there are two historic districts on the peninsula: the "Old City District" and the "Old & Historic District". With a few exceptions the regulations for each district are almost identical. These categories (and their names) cause some confusion by the BAR.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS



ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

5. CIVIC BUILDINGS AND SPACES

While the Guidelines can be applied to the private (or Civil) buildings, it is understood that the Civic Buildings¹ and Spaces are too specialized in their function or their aspiration to be subjected to preconceived constraints. Accordingly, criteria for the design of such projects shall be developed by staff and the BAR. This map shows the Medical campuses, recommending that they develop their own master plan and guidelines in consultation with the BAR. Elsewhere, the individual Civic buildings--like meeting halls, concert halls, and public museums shall also be determined in consultation with the Board—without reference to guidelines.

¹ Civic Buildings consist of places of public assembly such as town halls, concert halls, museums, churches, schools and the like.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS



ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

6. CRITICAL FRONTAGES

The Consultants have performed a Synoptic Survey based generally on the criteria shown on the diagram below. The resulting Critical Frontage Map appears as a permanent reference in the *Revised B.A.R. Process Section* of this document (see page 21). The higher the rating, the higher should be the expectation of compliance by the project to the Guidelines.

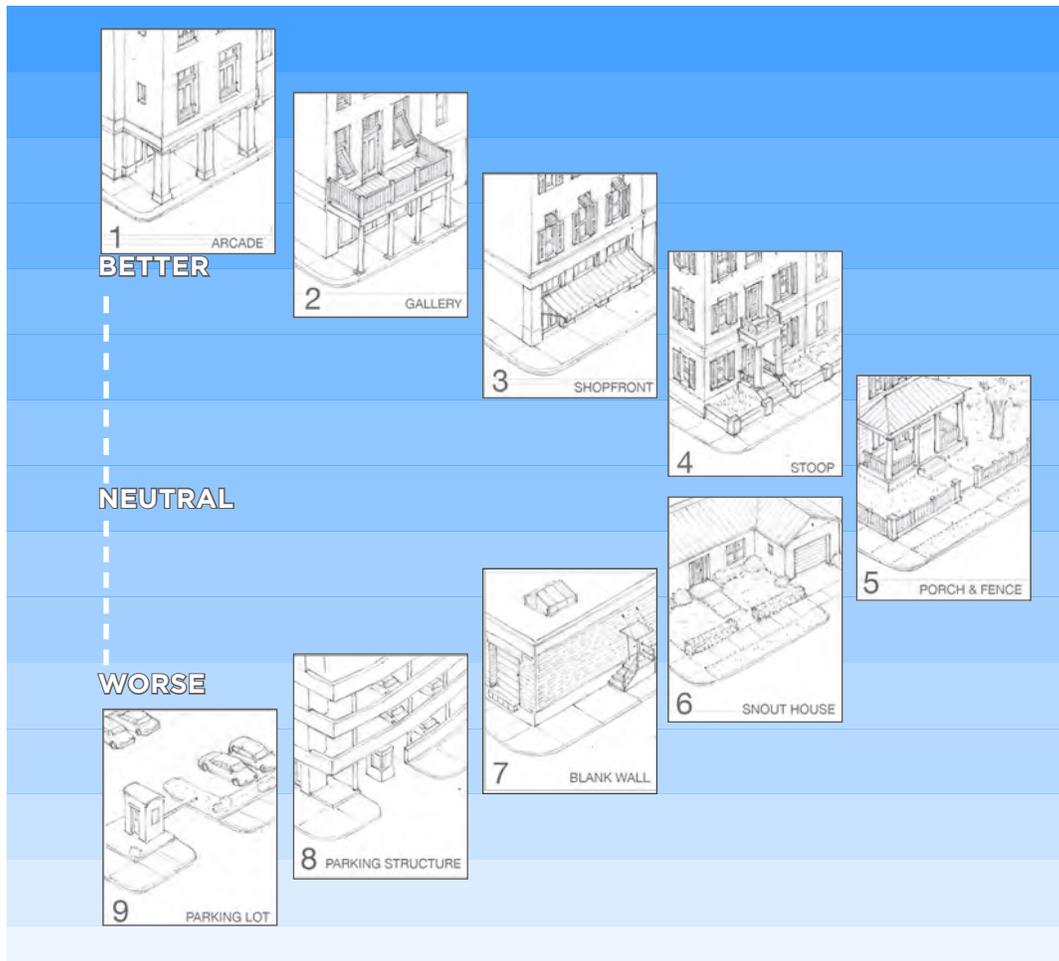


Diagram 6: Synoptic Survey

