



# CITY OF CHARLESTON BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW – LARGE

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## MEETING RESULTS

**JANUARY 10, 2024**

**4:30 P.M.**

**2 GEORGE STREET**

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BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Robinson (Chair), Seaton Brown, Eddie Fava (Alternate), James Meadors, Steve Ramos (Alternate), Luda Sobchuk, Jay White

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Tory Parish, B.D. Wortham-Galvin, Lawrence Courtney, Travis Galli

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### A. MINUTES

#### 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 16, 2023 BAR RETREAT

DECISION: APPROVED

MOTION: for Approval

MADE BY: Meadors SECOND: White VOTE: FOR: 5 AGAINST: 0  
*Brown, Meadors, Robinson, Sobchuk, and White reviewed.*

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#### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 13, 2023 MEETING

DECISION: APPROVED

MOTION: for Approval

MADE BY: White SECOND: Meadors VOTE: FOR: 5 AGAINST: 0  
*Brown, Meadors, Robinson, Sobchuk, and White reviewed.*

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### B. APPLICATIONS

#### 1. 159 CALHOUN STREET (COLLEGE LODGE – DEMOLITION)

**TMS # 457-04-02-059 | BAR2024-001290**

**Not Rated | c. 1963 | Height District 5 | Old and Historic District**

Request full demolition of the 1964 Downtowner Inn, now known as College Lodge, due to student safety, campus needs, and infeasibility of reuse due to seismic requirements, accessibility needs, and limited floor-to-floor heights with modern MEP/FP services.

Owner: College of Charleston Board of Trustees

Applicant: Paul Patrick / College of Charleston

**NOTE: Subsequent to a rescheduling due to weather conditions and related city office closure, the Board convened at this address on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. for a site visit.**

DECISION: DEFERRED

MOTION: Deferral with Board and Staff comments

MADE BY: Fava SECOND: Sobchuk

VOTE: FOR: 4 AGAINST: 0

*Fava, Ramos, Robinson, and Sobchuk reviewed.  
Brown, Meadors, and White recused.*

#### STAFF CONTEXT & ANALYSIS:

The purposes of our historic districts are “advanced through the preservation and protection of 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.” (Sec. 54-230) Therefore the question is whether this is a worthy visual reminder.

A decision on this demolition request is not about personal preferences or future use but whether the application meets the criteria for demolition.

The Ordinance offers criteria for reviewing demolition requests in the Old and Historic District asking us to consider, among other things, the (54-240.b):

- historic, architectural and aesthetic features of the structure
- nature and character of the surrounding area
- historic or culturally important use of such structure
- importance to the city

Weighing these considerations,

1. The is one of few Mid-Century structures remaining in downtown. Aesthetically, it features horizontal lines, the ‘DT’ breeze block, and cantilevered exterior circulation, though this feature has been significantly altered with vertical supports and taller guardrails which dilutes the purity of this feature’s design. The solid but paneled elevation facing Calhoun Street was indicative of the Downtowner Motor Inn.
2. The 2007 Preservation Plan for Charleston, ‘Vision | Community | Heritage’, describes the time of the Downtowner’s construction as a time when the prosperity of the post-war period was restored but “came at the expense of the inner city as suburban development began to decentralize Charleston, a city that had been for its entire history a compact urban settlement confined to a small peninsula.”
3. The Downtowner Motor Inn was one of many, and one of four in the state, and the structure’s features are prototypical of the brand. It certainly was not the only urban location. However, not all of the Downtowners featured hidden parking with some opting for surface parking lots, and the orientation and parking incorporation are somewhat unique for this one.
4. The structure was the Downtowner Motor Inn for a little over a decade, being acquired by the College of Charleston in 1975. Cultural significance may be best tied to it’s life as a dormitory.

5. The BAR did not have jurisdiction over this property until 1975, and Staff would not recommend approval of this design if it came before us today. For example, we would recommend a more engaging ground floor experience. However, the structure represents a brief period and rare architectural style in our city's evolution.
6. BAR Staff have reviewed SHPO's letter of late last week in response to a Preliminary Information Form and indicating SHPO's opinion that the structure is eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. However, Staff has not received or reviewed the submittal packet to SHPO. (For clarification from SHPO, a Preliminary Information Form was submitted to SHPO. The sender does not have to be the the property owner. The PIF is used for obtaining SHPO's opinion on whether a property would be eligible for the National Register. This is the initial step for having a property evaluated. SHPO reviews these frequently but only the National Park Service has the ability to list a property.)
7. The desire to update the structures and systems in this structure is understandable and somewhat compelling, but the current application does not demonstrate or convince that those alterations, while admittedly are impactful, will ruin the exterior features.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Deferral for information regarding impact to the exterior due to required and desired upgrades and for review of the packet submitted to SHPO.

**BOARD COMMENT:**

- Challenges to making a usable structure. 7'-4" ceilings have shortcomings. Sympathetic. Cantilevered balconies, a key feature, have been altered and are not as attractive as the historic photos show them. The colored panels, also a key feature, are not there or are covered. Is a challenge to say the building is what it was and should be kept. Clearly a building of its time but not place? Not many like it in Charleston. A tough decision.
- Awesome building; appreciate the architecture of it. Site visit is a huge component for the decision. Would be important to hear from structural and mechanical engineers directly as there is confusion in the public realm based on letters. Warrants seismic upgrades. Hazmat materials were present, and spalling concrete at balconies. What will resulting space with the impact of the upgrades on the already low ceilings? Will it be what it was? Appreciate through presentation by Applicant and the letters from public. Possible confusion between PSC statement that property meets the criteria for listing but it's SHPO's opinion that it meets criteria, and they can't give it listing. Need clarity and need information from engineers about what would be required, needed, and the impacts.
- Is a dilemma. Need more information. Architecturally, why would we dismiss any era of architecture? International Style which has rights to exist in city fabric. Agree with HCF and PSC that building has merits and represents its own style. Not understanding how exterior will change; information needed. Does it have to be a dorm? Can it be something else?
- Excellent and thorough presentation. Still conflict over what can be done currently to the building to make it safer versus its future and what is needed to make that viable. Need engineers to indicate what can be done with it now with what it would look like on the exterior and what can be achieved in the future if it remains a dorm, relative to BAR purview. Second, Board struggle with wanting to save buildings from specific eras not because of their own merits but because others like it were erased. Had some retrofitting, but is more in-tact than others. Not a deep historical connection to Charleston. Style shouldn't be wiped out altogether but other better ones may be already gone. Deferral for benefit of public and applicant for ambiguity on engineering issues and for getting clarity from SHPO which Staff is following up on.
- Could explore other methods for mechanical systems.

For full Board comments, please visit the City of Charleston's YouTube Channel.

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**2. 159 CALHOUN STREET (NEW CONSTRUCTION)**

**TMS #457-04-02-059 | BAR2024-001291**

**New Construction | Height District 5 | Old and Historic District**

Requesting conceptual approval for new construction of a five-and-a-half story dormitory to include residential amenities, lobby, dining, and support spaces on the first floor with 224 beds on four and a half floors with communal spaces. The site will feature a pedestrian pass-through to connect Calhoun Street to the remainder of campus.

Owner: College of Charleston Board of Trustees

Applicant: Simons Young / Simons Young + associates

**NOTE: Application #1 was deferred, so no hearing on application item #2.**

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**3. 649 KING STREET**

**TMS #460-08-02-007/010 | BAR2021-000609**

**New Construction | Cannon/Elliottborough | Height Districts 4 & 6 | Old and Historic District**

Requesting final approval for construction of 15-unit apartment building with ground floor retail.

Owner: Ron Owens for Evening Post Industries Inc.

Applicant: Dylan Towe / LS3P

DECISION: APPROVED

MOTION: Final Approval with Board and Staff Conditions, with materials approved and with Final Review by Staff of the For-Permit set.

MADE BY: White SECOND: Meadors VOTE: FOR: 5 AGAINST: 0

*Brown, Meadors, Robinson, Sobchuk, and White reviewed.*

**STAFF OBSERVATIONS:**

The building has changed little in its fundamental arrangements of major elements and massing and continues to fit well in its context. Detailing has evolved well since the Preliminary Review, with a great deal of richness and visual interest through the use of multiple brick colors mixed with other materials. Materials should be explicitly reviewed and approved at this time by the Board. Staff verifies that the application meets submittal requirements, and additional drawings have been provided to Staff and Board members. Staff is satisfied that the Applicant has addressed previous Staff and Board comments.

A complete signage package has not been included in this or previous submittals, but, as it is largely residential, main building and tenant signage should be minimal and relatively easy to handle at Staff level. Also, it is understood that a full and comprehensive Mockup drawings package will be submitted at the appropriate time.

**STAFF CONDITIONS IF APPROVED:**

1. While in pure elevation the corner turret roof appears to be well proportioned, foreshortening at grade level can make this element appear squatty as on Courier Square Phase 1 and as shown

on the renderings on pages 32 and 33. Staff suggests a restudy of the pitch of this roof to ensure it achieves the desired effect when viewed from a little closer to the building at ground level.

2. On Detail B3 on Sheet 29 and elsewhere the window frame setback is shown even with the back corner of brick at the jamb with little solid behind the backer rod and sealant. While Staff is appreciative of the desire to place the window as far back into the wall as possible, we recommend restudying this detail, allowing for a solid backing, and reducing the setback enough (1/4"?) to ensure that the sealant has a good surface to bond to, without resulting in an excessively wide inside corner joint.
3. While the lighting shown appears to be appropriate to the building and context, Staff would appreciate if the Applicant could address and speak to the overall extent of site lighting and impact to the building and site.
4. Recommend omitting the vertical muntin in the sidelites at the recessed balconies facing Line Street (page 12) so that the lite proportions are consistent with the adjacent door.
5. Coordinate with state and city to properly address any found gravesites. (Re: former St. James Methodist Cemetery)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Final Approval with Board and Staff Conditions, with materials approved and with Final Review by Staff of the For-Permit set.

**BOARD COMMENT:**

- Comfortable with staff comments. Would note that in the for-permit set, there are some flashing conditions detailed that might need revision that would have implications on the architecture. Review in the QA.
- Compliment the applicant for a thorough job with the details and materials. Many larger projects have included value engineering or lacked the diligence to determine how something would work. Richness of façade, level of detail, quality of materials were not eliminated from the project and appreciate applicant making it work.
- Agree with comments related to flashing. Any products that are specified that may have a long lead time or need value engineering? Would be great to have best mockup.

For full Board comments, please visit the City of Charleston's YouTube Channel.

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**4. PROPOSED ADDITIONS TO POLICY STATEMENT FOR STAFF REVIEWS**

DECISION: APPROVED

MOTION: To adopt policy statement as submitted with Board comments.

MADE BY: White SECOND: Sobchuk VOTE: FOR: 5 AGAINST: 0

*Brown, Meadors, Robinson, Sobchuk, and White reviewed.*

**STAFF NOTES:**

- To existing structures that don't fit any of the categories on the policy statement but are minor, minimally visible, and do not impact the historic or architectural significance.
- To BAR approvals during construction due to material supply issues.

- Which are material upgrades but affect the exterior and may be related to material availability of today.

**BOARD COMMENT:**

- Are times when wished something could be done at Staff, but also concern about the trickle of compounding effect.
- Discretion for Staff.
- Clear guidance. Support the changes.
- Support the changes but also at what point to material alterations change the overall scope of project and intent of the Board?
- Would see the culmination and could always bring back to Board.

For full Board comments, please visit the City of Charleston's YouTube Channel.

**5. PROPOSED REVISIONS TO SAMPLE PANEL GUIDELINES**

DECISION: APPROVED

MOTION: to Approve incorporating Board and Staff comments.

MADE BY: White SECOND: Meadors VOTE: FOR: 5 AGAINST: 0  
*Brown, Meadors, Robinson, Sobchuk, and White reviewed.*


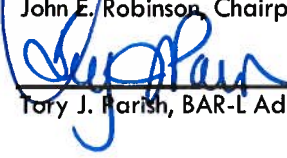
**STAFF NOTES:**

- Reinforce that panels are for workmanship review, and not material selection.
- Discourage excessive panels (size and scope).
- Reinforce that completeness is required for review.

**BOARD COMMENTS:**

- Like that it includes "mockup" and "sample" panels.
- Expectation for panel is clear.

For full Board comments, please visit the City of Charleston's YouTube Channel.

	<u>1-29-24</u>
John E. Robinson, Chairperson	Date
	<u>1.24.2024</u>
Tory J. Parish, BAR-L Administrator	Date