

History

The residents of Charleston have always had a great deal of pride in their city. Evidence of this shines through in the early part of the 20th century when Susan Pringle Frost and other pioneers began buying and restoring houses south of Broad Street as a response to houses being lost to demolition, and original fabric being removed and sold to out of town locations. These private citizens soon realized that they needed the assistance of the local government, and out of this early preservation movement came the establishment of the country's oldest historic district and the first Board of Architectural Review. This network of private citizens and local government has helped retain the historic character and sense of place that is Charleston. This pride of place is stated best by Alice Ravenel Huger Smith's *Reminiscences* as she describes Charleston (published in 1950; collection of the South Carolina Historical Society):

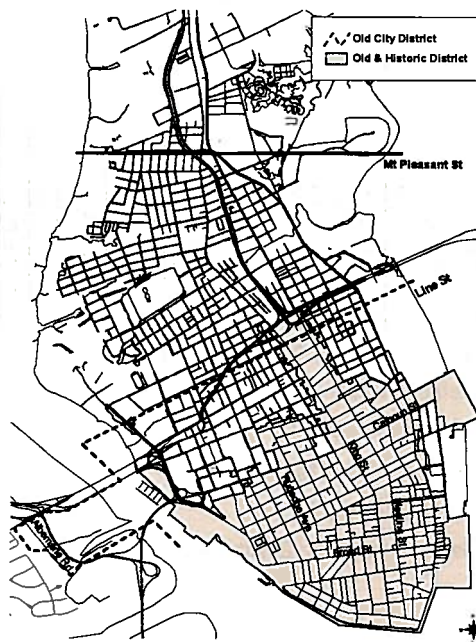
Yes, times do change. Small places and big places alike show it. Perhaps small happenings show it as great events...new things inevitably age, but I live in a town which being old is becoming new—a town, which, though never large, has known greatness—a town where the new is still welcomed and the old is still loved.

Since 1931 the boundaries of the historic districts and the members of the Board may have changed, but the goal of retaining the character of this special place has never wavered.

Board of Architectural Review

The Board of Architectural Review (BAR) was established in 1931. As stated in the City of Charleston Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of this board is "the preservation and protection of the old and historic or architecturally worthy structures and quaint neighborhoods which impart a distinct aspect to the City of Charleston, the state, and the nation." **Thus, the BAR reviews all exterior alterations visible from any public right-of-way.** The BAR consists of seven volunteer members, assisted by the City's Urban Design and Preservation Division.

The BAR has jurisdiction over all buildings in the Old and Historic District regardless of age or rating in architectural inventories, as well as new construction. In the Old City District (between Line Street and Old and Historic District) BAR has jurisdiction over buildings over 100 years of age, or rated in the Architectural Inventories.



Important Facts:

- Any exterior work including minor repairs or alterations must be approved by the BAR.
- The demolition of any structure 75 years or older on the peninsula south of Mt. Pleasant Street must be reviewed and approved by the BAR.
- When submitting a BAR application always remember to bring current photographs and any other pertinent information. BAR applications and submittal requirements can be found in our office or online at www.charlestoncity.info.
- The BAR does not have pre-approved paint colors. Any color (within reason) by any brand will be considered. Coating systems are not approved on historic structures.
- Repairs must be in-kind to match existing. Material substitutions are considered alterations which may require Board review. Synthetic materials are generally not permitted.
- Any additions, fences, or improvements that change the building foot-print, use, or number of units must be reviewed by zoning prior to BAR review.
- If there is a preservation easement on your property be sure to contact HCF or PSC for approval for any repairs or changes prior to submitting for BAR review.
- Failure to comply with BAR regulations is a violation of the Zoning Ordinance and may result in the issuance of a Uniform Ordinance Summons, which requires you to appear in Livability Court for trial. To report BAR violations in your neighborhood call 843-697-1280 or email mcevoyb@ci.charleston.sc.us

Additional Resources:

Local Organizations

Historic Charleston Foundation
40 East Bay Street
843-723-1623

Preservation Society of Charleston
147 King Street
843-722-4630

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Southeast Regional Chapter
456 King Street
843-722-8552

Internet Resources

City of Charleston
www.charlestoncity.info

Charleston County
www.charlestoncounty.org

National Trust for Historic Preservation
www.nationaltrust.org



City of Charleston

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City of Charleston

HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES

Preserving our built
environment since 1931



Planning, Preservation and Economic Innovation