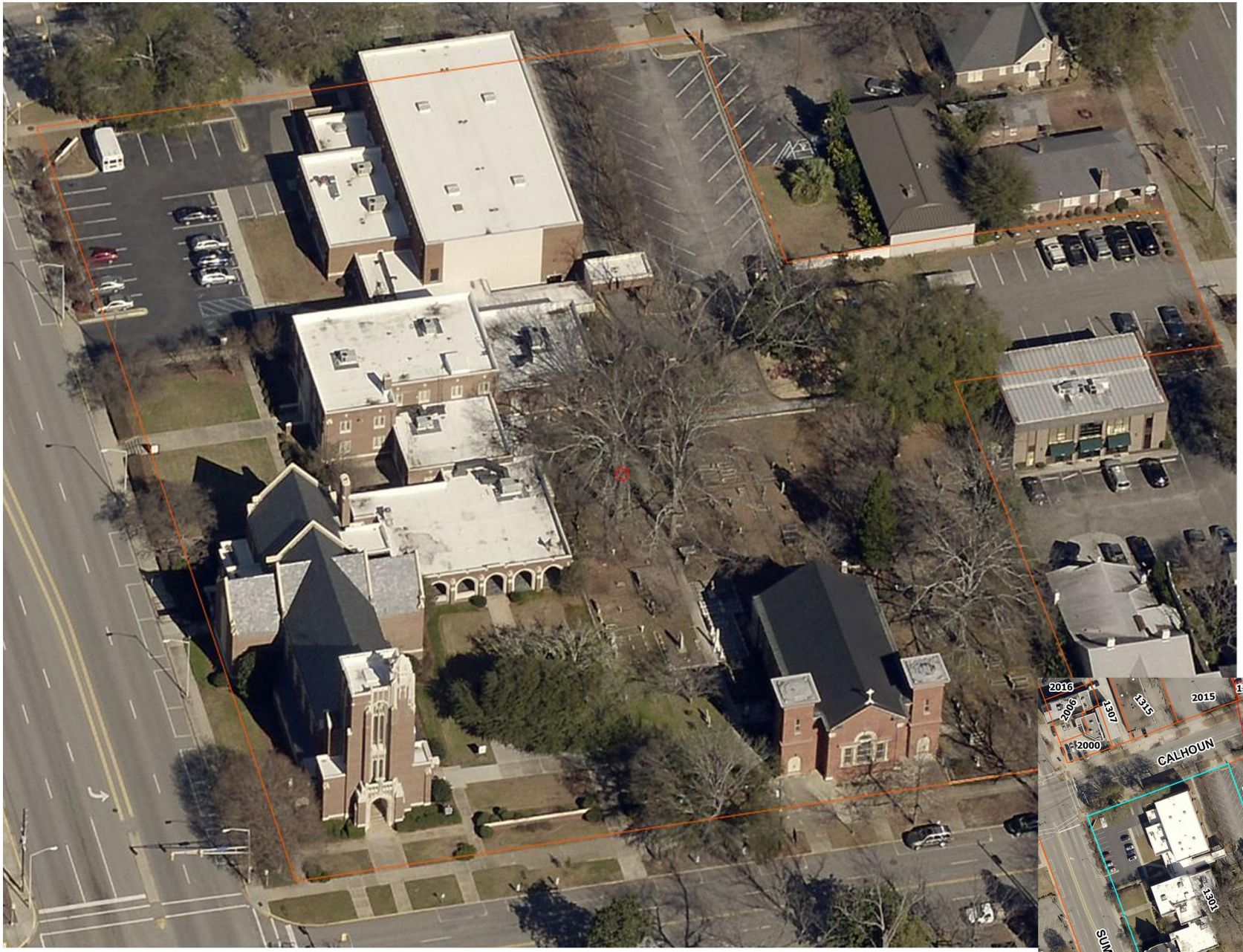
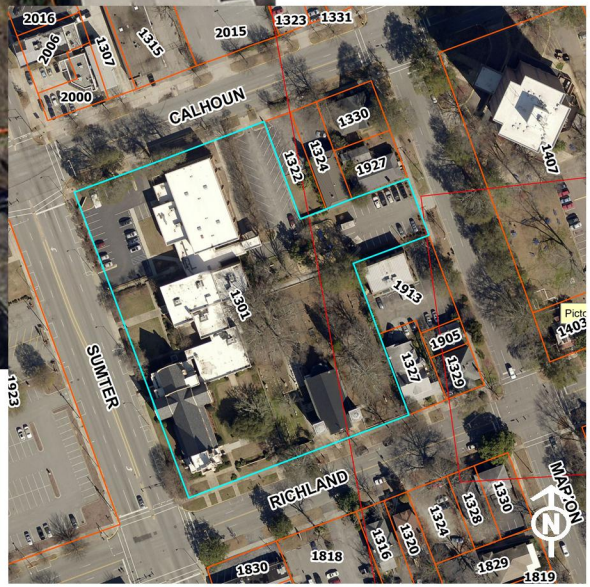




D/DRC Case

1301 Richland Street

Individual Landmark

TMS: 09015-04-13

DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION

DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT
HISTORIC AGENDA

EVALUATION SHEET

Case # 4

ADDRESS: 1301 Richland Street, Ebenezer Lutheran Church

APPLICANT: Ebenezer Lutheran Church, owner

TAX MAP REFERENCE: TMS# 09015-04-13

USE OF PROPERTY: Religious

REVIEW DISTRICT: Individual Landmark, Group II

NATURE OF REQUEST: Request Certificate of Design Approval for new fence

FINDINGS/COMMENTS:

This property holds two distinct buildings for the church, a chapel constructed in 1870 and remodeled in 1900 is to the east and the 1931 Gothic-Revival influenced building to the west. Between the two buildings is a lawn and cemetery. In recent years this landmark property has experienced an influx of trespassers, who have damaged church property and disturbed the peace of the grounds. In an attempt to stop some of the pedestrian traffic, the church is proposing to build a 5' tall steel metal fence to secure the property along Richland Street. Already existing and just off and parallel to the sidewalk there is a brick wall with a rounded concrete cap, while a smaller, iron fence is perpendicular to the wall and extends north into the lot.

The proposed fence would start at the nave of the church at the front right corner (as one faces the church), extend with a gate across the sidewalk, and then move in a perpendicular fashion to extend south to the Richland Street-facing extant brick wall. It would then run parallel directly behind the brick wall, inches away from it, and extend across the second sidewalk, moving along behind the second extant brick wall for at least a few feet. Please see the attached photos for more information regarding the existing walls and fences on the property.

Because the proposed layering of fences directly behind one another is not consistent with historic landmark or district patterns, staff cannot recommend for this proposal. Likewise, the City's Zoning Ordinance allows for a maximum height of 4' in front yard setbacks, which this fence would fall partially into, so the proposed fence height of 5' is an issue. Church members feel that anything less than a 5' fence would not deter vagrants. Please note that the applicants submitted photographs of other fences that are 5' or higher—staff found that they were either historic/long existing fences or were at side or rear yards which allow for greater heights.

Staff has suggested a few options which follow at the end of the evaluation. Additionally, in a recent conversation it arose that the church is looking to replace existing failing chain link fences on other parts of the grounds. Chain link fencing is not consistent with historic fences for this landmark

property. If it is not visible from a public right-of-way, however, staff is not required to review it. Staff has therefore suggested that dense landscaping might be employed in other areas to screen the proposed chain link fencing. Using hollies, pyracantha, or other prickly evergreen shrubs would both hide the chain link and serve as a further deterrent.

PERTINENT SECTIONS FROM CITY ORDINANCE

Section 17-674: Review Process, Criteria for review of design of structures and sites. Issuance of a certificate of design approval shall be based upon the requirements set forth in the standards or design guidelines adopted by the city council for each historic district. For individual landmarks, the Governor's Mansion Protection Area, Elmwood Park Architectural Conservation District, and the Landmark District, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation as amended and listed below shall serve as guidelines until such time as design guidelines may be written and adopted by city council for each local historic district. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects, taking into account the designation level of each district.

(1) a. For landmark districts, the historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
Not applicable.

b. In architectural conservation districts and protection areas, the historic character of a district shall be retained and preserved through the preservation of historic materials and features which characterize the historic district.
Not applicable.

c. For individual landmarks and the landmark district, each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
Not applicable.

(4) Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
The existing brick walls with the concrete caps, while probably not original to the building to the church, are old and were fashioned with similar materials and detailing to complement the architecture and materials of the church. The walls create an entry to the church campus and are integral to the landscape of the landmark property.

(5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
While the brick wall would not be destroyed, a fence of different materials and style directly behind it would detract from it.

(6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
Not applicable.

(7) Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

Not applicable.

(8) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
While the new fence would be differentiated from the old, placing it so that it is visible directly behind the extant wall would not be a compatible or consistent handling of historic fences and/or walls on the property or in the nearby historic districts, nor is this pattern found on other historic landmark churches in Columbia.

(9) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
The fence could be removed in the future without affecting the integrity of the property.

OPTIONS:

Staff understands that there are real concerns to be addressed regarding security for the church but cannot recommend for the proposal as presented since it is not compatible with the manner in which historic fences already on the property are handled. Since there are guidelines to consider, staff has suggested a few options:

The first proposal is that the fence would start at the nave and move in a straight line across the property. This pushes the fence back behind the front wall of the church and would allow for up to a 6' height because the zoning code allows for such a height in side yards. Since the church needs to expand into the green space on certain occasions, large gates or a series of gates could be installed in the fence along the green space to open on those days to allow easy flow between areas. Terminating the fence on the right side of the property would require working out some details as there is an approximately 48" fence running lengthwise here.

Another suggestion is to allow the fence proposal with the modification of a dense 5' tall landscape buffer immediately behind the wall and then the suggested 5' fence installed behind it. This would negate the design issues if the fence couldn't be seen. Staff would suggest hollies or other evergreen shrubbery which is prickly enough to serve as a further deterrent. Staff believes this could be worked out with Zoning. However, the landscaping would have to be installed prior to the fence installation, as previous approvals, which depended upon landscaping, have not always been executed as approved. It would be necessary for the church to agree to keep the landscaping at a minimum of 5' height. Additionally, the height of the fence on the sections which run parallel to the church might have to be modified or screened to meet requirements.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff cannot recommend for the proposal as it stands, according to Section 17-674 of the City ordinance, but could recommend for one of the options listed above in the evaluation, with details being worked out with staff. Landscape buffers will need to be fairly close in height to the 5' at the time of fence installation if this solution is approved. Staff also will need to see the specifications of a proposed fence prior to its being installed.

FENCING PROPOSAL AT EBENEZER LUTHERAN CHURCH

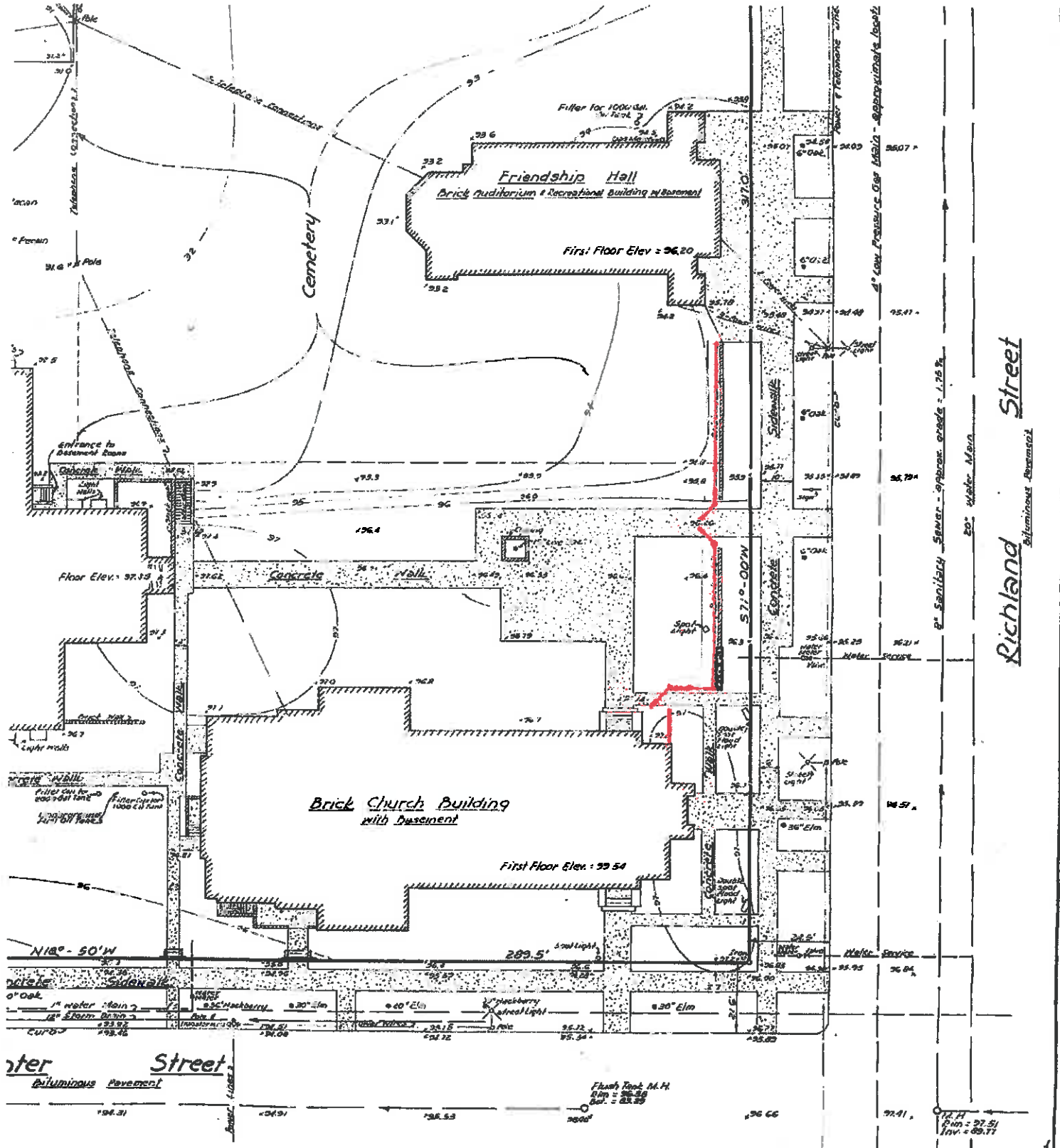
Ebenezer Lutheran Church proposes to place a security fence approximately ten feet to the rear of and parallel to its Richland Street property line. The fence will be a black painted steel picket fence identical in design to fencing installed on the property around Ebenezer's cemetery. The proposed gates will have arched tops reminiscent of the portico arches on the property. The height of the fence will be five feet, which is thought to be the minimum effective height to deter unauthorized persons from accessing the property. The addition of this fence, plus enhancing and locking existing fencing near the Calhoun Street side of the property, is necessary to protect our property, staff and worshipers.

Necessity for fencing. For the past several years, foot traffic through the Church's property has increased significantly. Along with this increase in traffic has come a significant increase in criminal activity, panhandling and vandalism. The property has become a well-used cut through from Calhoun Street to the rest of the city to the south of our property. The area proposed to be fenced is not easily viewed from the streets surrounding the church property. This has resulted in its use as a gathering place for people who are concentrated on this end of the city. It is an almost daily occurrence to find individuals sleeping in the shrubbery and around the buildings in the area we propose to fence. It is constantly necessary to remove beer cans, liquor bottles and bedrolls from the area. Pre-civil war headstones in the cemetery have been broken and vandalized. In one case a headstone was used to smash a window pane to break into the church. There have been numerous calls for the police because of fighting, public intoxication, and drug activity. It is also constantly necessary to deal with unsanitary conditions on this portion of the property. Our concerns for the safety of our worshipers, staff, and attendees at events like our Patrons and Friends of the Arts free concert series dictate that we preclude unauthorized access to this area of our campus.

Location of new fencing. A lot of study has been given to the location of the fencing on the Richland Street side of the property, to address security concerns and to preserve architectural integrity. There are currently two brick walls parallel to Richland street located approximately ten feet from the property line. The walls are located between Ebenezer's Chapel and the main sanctuary. There is currently a gate between the Chapel and the end of the wall closest to it to fence in our cemetery. We believe that extending this fence along and behind these walls is the best solution. Based upon our exhaustive study of other churches' fences in the area, we considered locating our fence at the sidewalk also, but determined that architectural integrity was best served by locating it behind the brick walls. We also considered locating the fence several feet behind the walls inside the courtyard area but realized that this would severely limit gathering space we use for social events and festival Sundays.

Attachments:
Aerial photograph
Plat showing property lines and proposed fence
Fence detail
Pictures of fencing at other nearby locations

AERIAL VIEW – EBENEZER



hical Map Prepared for

cal Lutheran Church of Columbia

Columbia, S.C.

Scale: 1" = 20'

s, Inc Engineers - Columbia, S.C. Feb 15, 1966

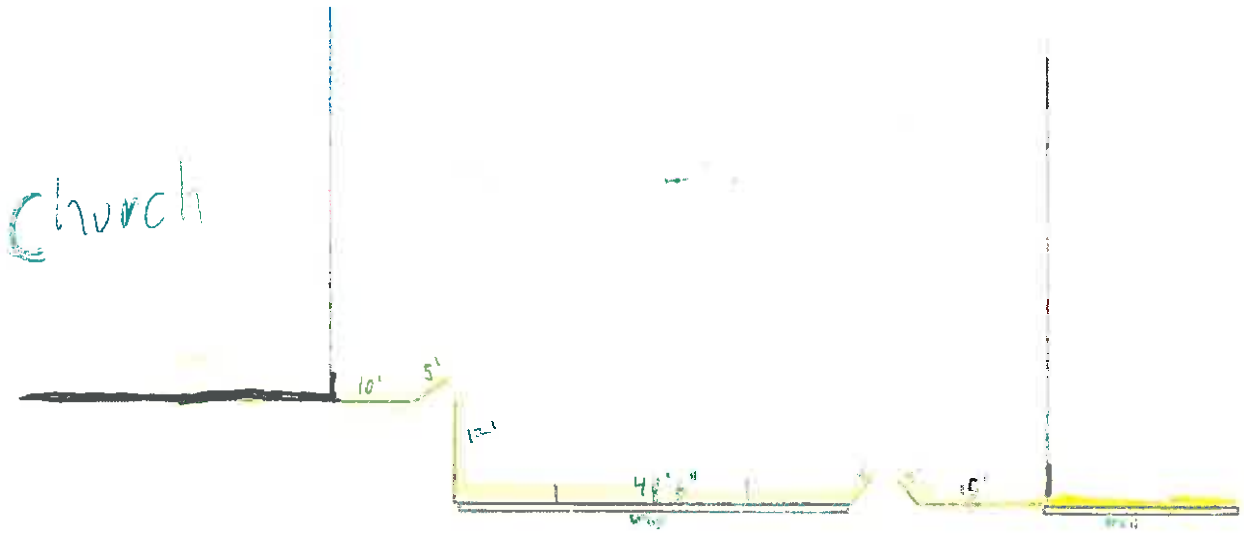
B.M. - Arrow on Fire Hydrant S.E. corner of Richland and Sumter Street Elev = 100.00 (assumed)

SOUTH CAROLINA

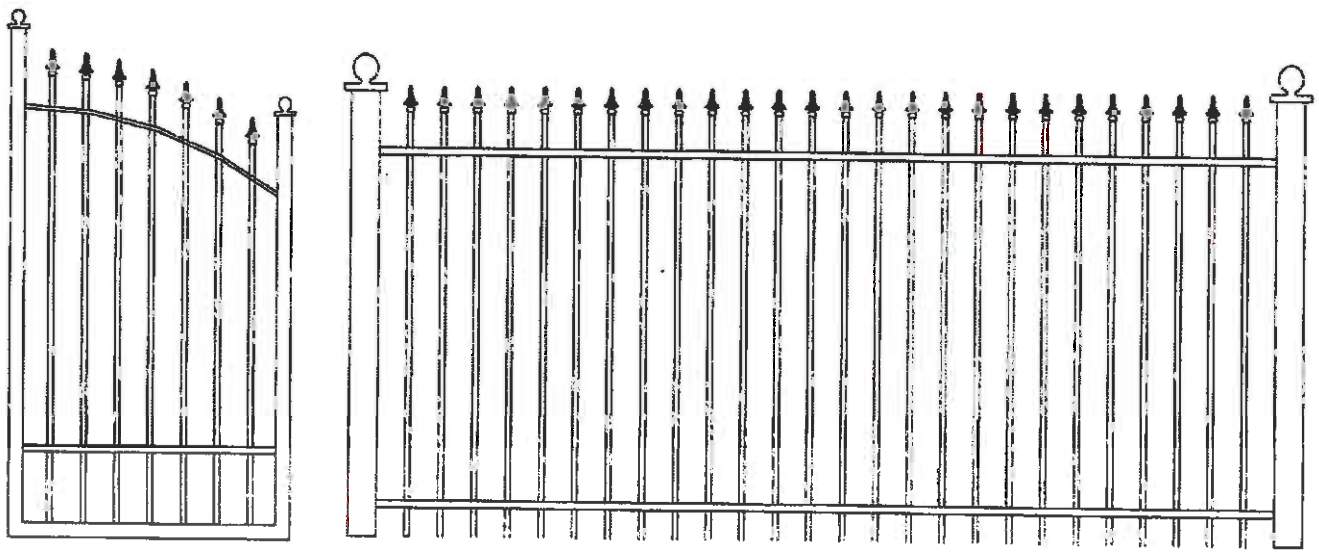
Plat Showing Fence Installation - Ebenezer

New Fence & gates

Existing Fence

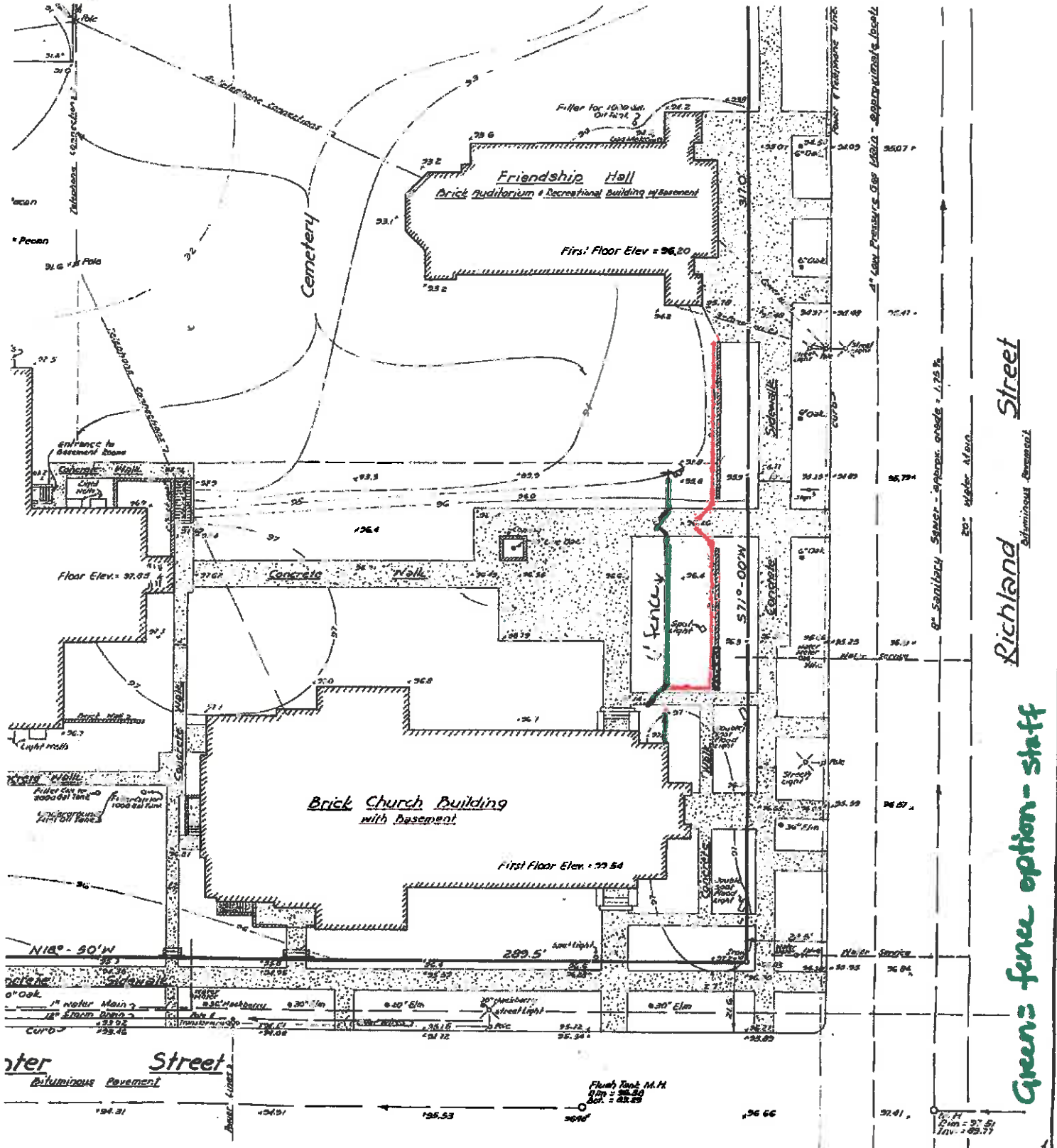


Proposed Fence Dimensions – Ebenezer



Fence Detail - Ebenezer

RENDERING OF PROPOSED FENCE - EBENEZER



Plat Showing Fence Installation - Ebenezer

Green: fence option - staff

hical Map Prepared for

cal Lutheran Church of Columbia

Columbia, S.C.

Scale: 1" = 20'

s, Inc Engineers - Columbia, S.C. Feb 15, 1966

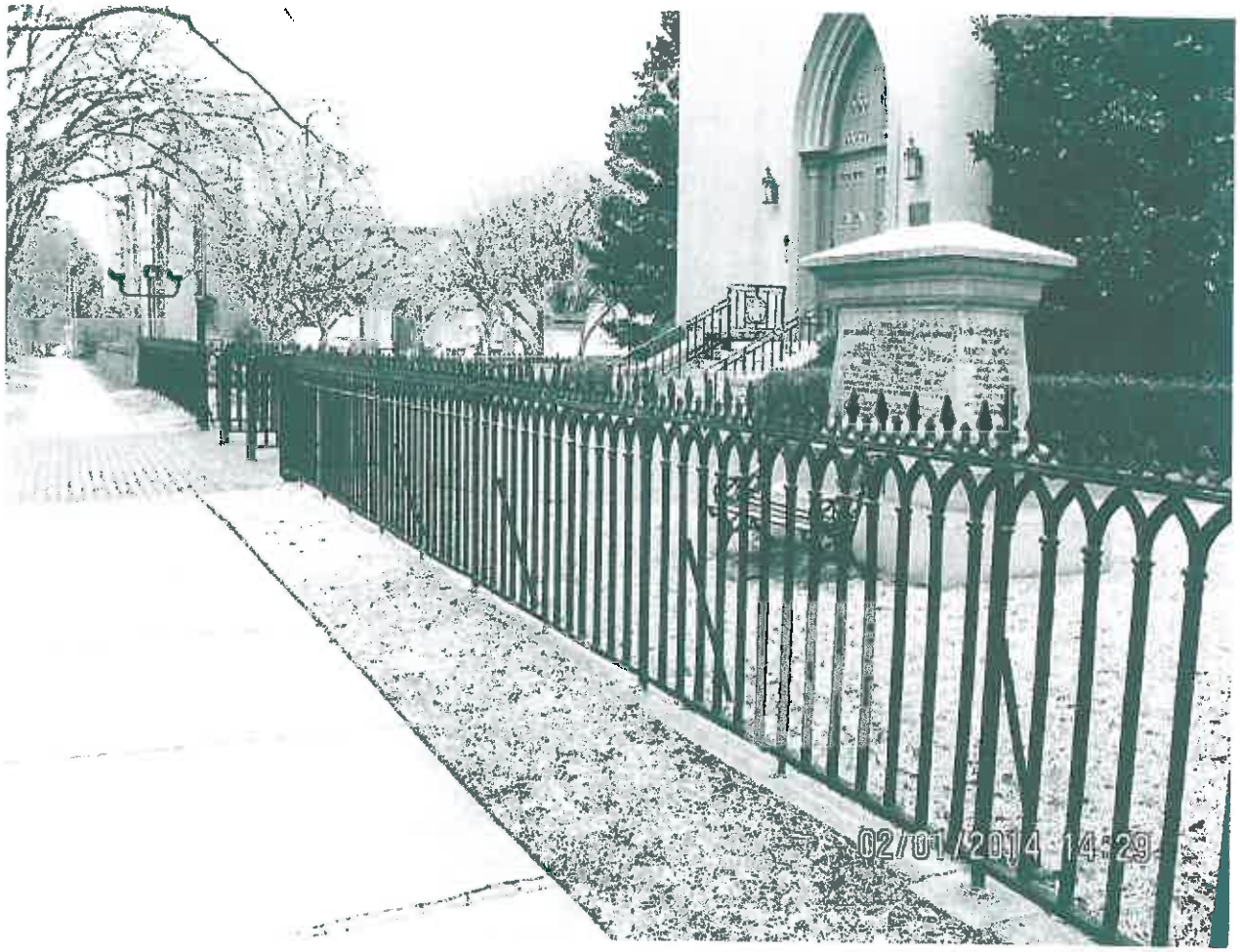
Downtown Fencing

Columbia, SC

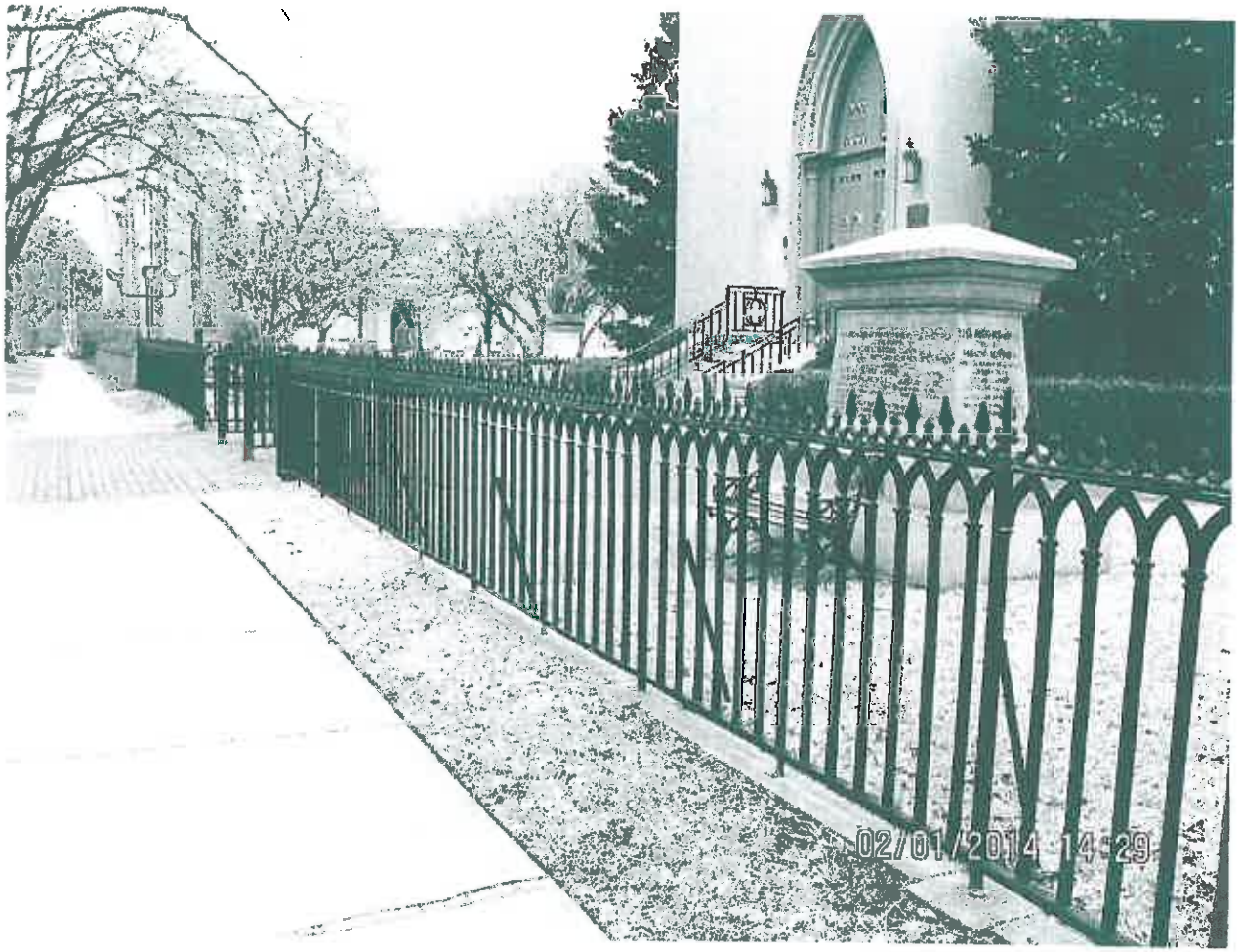
First Baptist – 5'1"H, 33" from sidewalk

Washington St Meth- 6'3"H, 34"from sidewalk

First Presbyterian – 4’8”H, 34” from sidewalk



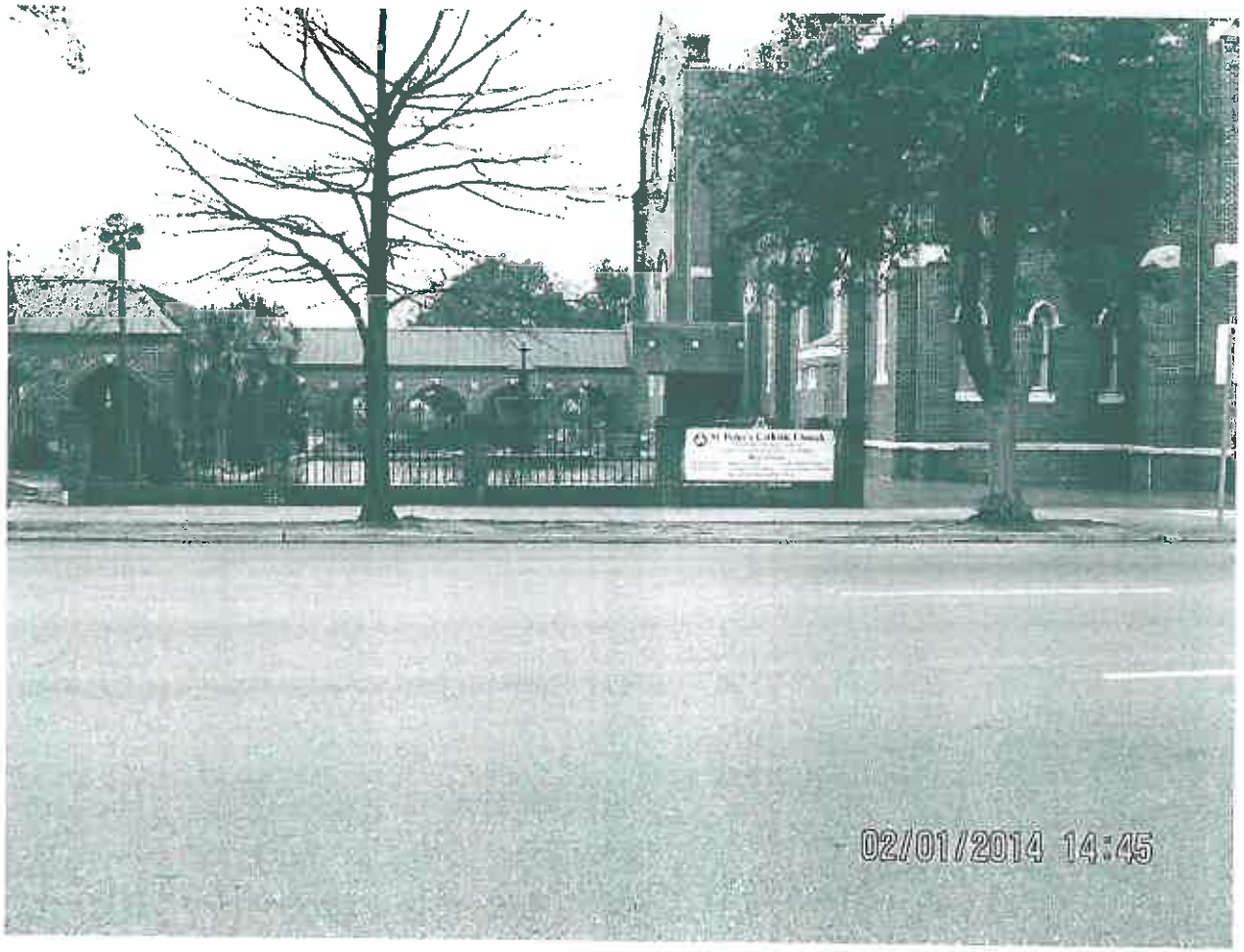
Trinity – 4'high, 29" from sidewalk



DeBruhl-Marshall Hse – 5’7”

(I actually rented an apt here in the early ‘70’s while attending USC)

St Peter's Catholic – 4'8" H, 8" from sidewalk



St Peter's Catholic – 5'H, 36" from sidewalk