

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT

Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	August 6, 2025
PROJECT:	COFA-05-25-019752 43 Thomas Heyward Street – House Addition
APPLICANT:	George Hutson (GTH Construction)
PROPERTY OWNER:	Megan C. Beach
PROJECT MANAGER:	Charlotte Moore, AICP, Principal Planner

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant, George Hutson (GTH Construction), on behalf of the owner, Megan C. Beach, requests that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approve the following application:

A Certificate of Appropriateness to add a shed dormer and convert a portion of the attic space of an existing 2-story residence into a “loft room” and bathroom of approximately 240 SF at 43 Thomas Heyward Street in Old Town Bluffton Historic District and zoned Neighborhood General-HD (NG-HD).

INTRODUCTION: The existing main residence was approved by the HPC on February 6, 2019 (COFA-12-18-012640) and was described as having characteristics of a raised coastal cottage. While not a permitted building type, it was acknowledged that raised cottages existed in Old Town and within the vicinity of the subject property; therefore, the house was approved as a 2-story Additional Building Type with a total of 2,740 SF. The ground floor is a 1,370 heated garage and the second floor is a 1,370 SF living space.

The proposed loft room and bathroom addition would be located underneath the existing roof, with a portion of the loft room located within a shed dormer addition on the Left elevation. This addition would cause the residence to become a 2.5-story structure, which is the maximum height permitted in the NG-HD district.

Placement of the shed dormer is not centered within the roof plane because of an interior staircase. The 5-V crimp roof, cementitious lap siding and trim, and vinyl windows (the latter noted on the application and not the plans), will match the existing structure. A wall section through eave must be provided to ensure consistency with the residence. Six-lite casement windows are proposed.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee for conceptual review at the June 9, 2025 meeting and comments were provided to the Applicant (See Attachment 5).

REVIEW CRITERIA & ANALYSIS: In its review of this COFA-HD application, Town Staff and the Historic Preservation Commission are required to consider the criteria set forth in Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Section 3.18.3 (COFA-HD, New Construction and Alterations), applying the standards and guidelines of UDO Sec. 5.15, Old Town Bluffton Historic District. The intent of the standards and guidelines is, in part, to provide guidance and ensure predictable and compatible development and architecture without discouraging creativity or forcing the replication of historic models.

To maintain the character of Old Town Bluffton Historic District, additions shall be consistent with the standards, criteria and guidelines developed for the District. Per UDO Sec. 3.18.3.A., the HPC shall consider the criteria below in its consideration of the COFA-HD application. A Staff Finding is provided for each.

1. Consistency with the principles set forth in the Old Town Master Plan and Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan.

- a. *Finding.* The Old Town Master Plan initiatives include the adoption of a form-based code that included architectural standards for structures located within the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. These standards are included in Article 5 of the UDO. The addition is in conformance with those standards and appears consistent with the architecture and materials of the existing house.

2. The application must be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5, Design Standards.

- a. *Finding.* The application appears to be in conformance with the applicable provisions of Article 5 of the UDO. A wall section to include the shed dormer through the eave, including materials to be used and dimensions is needed to ensure consistency with the existing residence.

3. Demonstration of a compatible visual relationship between new construction or alterations and existing buildings, streetscapes and open spaces. A compatible visual relationship must be generally of a similar structural mass, scale, height, proportion, directional expression of the principal elevation and rhythm of spacing, as applicable.

Finding. The addition appears in conformance with the architecture and materials used in the existing house.

4. Section 3.18.3.F. The historic, architectural, and aesthetic features of the structure, including the extent to which its alteration or removal would be detrimental to the public interest.

Finding. If the conditions #2 of this report are met, the proposed addition appears sympathetic in design to the surrounding historic and non-historic resources; therefore, will have no adverse effect on the public interest.

5. Compliance with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

Finding. The Certificate of Appropriateness Application has been reviewed by Town Staff and has been determined to be complete.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: It is the charge of the HPC to assess and interpret the standards and guidelines set forth in the UDO as they pertain to applications using the review criteria established in the UDO and to take appropriate action as granted by the powers and duties set forth Section 2.2.6.E.2. Town Staff finds that the requirements of Section 3.18.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance have been met and recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the application with the following condition:

1. Provide a wall section to include the shed dormer through the eave with materials and dimensional details to ensure consistency with the existing residence.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION ACTIONS: As granted by the powers and duties set forth in Section 2.2.6.E.2, the Historic Preservation Commission has the authority to take the following actions with respect to this application:

1. Approve the application as submitted by the Applicant;
2. Approve the application with conditions; or
3. Deny the application as submitted by the Applicant.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location & Zoning Map
2. Application
3. Photos
4. Plans
5. HPRC Comments – 06.09.2025