



COURT ATKINS
GROUP

July 7, 2025

Sam Barrow
Senior Planner
Office: 854-683-5681

Town of Bluffton
20 Bridge Street
PO Box 386
Bluffton, SC 29910
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Re: Final HPC – 32 Bruin Road

Mr. Barrow,

Please find the enclosed Final HPC drawings for building #2 as noted on the approved development plan (DP-12-24-019469).

As discussed during the HPRC meeting on 6/30/2025 with the committee, this building is located within the Neighborhood General Historic District (NG-HD) which encompasses a variety of commercial and residential, one- and two-story structures, and a mix of architectural precedents, all contributing to a unique and beautiful district within the Town of Bluffton. This building application should be considered an “Additional Building Type” while emulating the characteristics of the “Live-Work” Sideyard, which is referenced throughout as the design intent. The standards set forth in 5.15.5.C are identical for both building types. The only reason for the request is that the second floor is meant to be a commercial use rather than a residential use, which is aligned with the current commercial uses on property. Residential use would conflict with the businesses located at 32 Bruin Rd. Per 5.15.5.C the residential component for properties with frontage on SC Highway 46 and Bruin Road may be waived. The Live-Work Sideyard maintains the residential scale and form for the district.

In addition, below are responses to each of the HPRC comments dated 6/26/2025 and reviewed/discussed at the 6/30/2025 HPRC meeting:

Growth Management Dept Review:

1. Approval contingent on approved development plan and subdivision plat:

- The subdivision plat was reviewed and approved at the 6/18/2025 DRC Meeting. Stamped plans were provided by the Town on 6/20/2025 and currently being recorded with the County.
- The final development plan was reviewed and approved at the 6/25/2025 DRC meeting subject to conditional comments, which have been sent to the Town and accepted. Mr. Dan Frazier acknowledged their acceptance and approval via email on 6/30/2025.
- A question arose about Planning Commission. This project was reviewed and approved at Planning Commission on 3/26/2025.

HPRC Review:

For clarity of the comment responses, please note comments #2 through #19 are first, with #1 being addressed last, as it involves a more detailed response.

2. Provide floor plans:

- Floor plans were provided in the HPRC packet submitted on 5/22/2025 and reviewed at the HPRC meeting on 6/30/2025. As discussed, this project is currently being designed as a “cold, dark” commercial shell space. Tenants have not been identified at the time of this application. Updated floor plans have been provided for the Final HPC Review.

3. Provide height of service yard screening:

- Please reference Final HPC drawings for service yard height of 5’–10.5”.

4. Revise to show columns height and distance between columns:

- The column spacing has not been revised, but dimensions have been added to show compliance with 5.15.6.H.1.A

5. Service yard/HVAC equipment location under the rear porch negates rear fire egress:

- HVAC is not located under the stairs as assumed and the fire egress stair is compliant. The service yard-like cribbing has been removed under the stair to eliminate any confusion.

6. Fabric canopies on the front elevation. Provide additional information. Is this considered an awning?:

- This is not an awning and, as discussed, is simply an architectural design element/canopy. An awning is not required on an “Live-work Sideyard.” Additional detail and an example photo of a HD building is provided below.



Fabric canopy example in historic district

7. Provide back porch dimensions:

- Back porch dimensions have been added to the Final HPC drawings.

8. Align back porch columns and service yard screening vertical posts:

- The service yard posts have been aligned with the columns, as requested.

9. Provide stoop dimensions/depth:

- The definition and depiction of a stoop as described on 5.15.6.E.6 is not applicable, however, the depth of the stair landing as discussed at the HPRC meeting is 4’–8” (more than a stoop minimum). Dimensions have been provided on the Final HPC drawings.

10. Brick is not a permitted wall finish material. (5.15.6.G.3)

- The UDO states the opposite. Not only is it an approved material (albeit with some framework), but it is also encouraged “wherever possible.” 5.15.6.G.3.h notes that green buildings materials shall be used in the construction of building walls, including.... locally produced stone and brick.” LEED is a leading organization/certification for green building. LEED prevailing standard is materials produced within a 500-mile radius of the project site. The proposed brick for this project is Cherokee Moss Town, which is a tumbled brick, like Old Carolina (currently shown on the Fire Station #30 on Burnt Church Rd. near Old Town.) This brick is distributed out of Savannah, Georgia and manufactured in

Macon, GA approximately 190 miles away from the project site. Brick columns are also allowed per 5.15.6.H.2.a. The balance of the wall surface noted as brick is minimal. A brick sample will be brought to the HPC meeting. The intent of using a limited amount of brick is to compliment the existing office (former post office) building next door, which is all brick. See photo of the existing building below.



Existing building next door

11. **Provide additional details on the proposed "smooth panel" wall finish material:**
 - The material is a cementitious siding product. Additional details have been provided in the Final HPC drawings.
12. **Provide column materials, configuration, details and spacing. Cementitious material is not permitted.:**
 - The columns are wood columns wrapped in a cementitious trim product to increase durability and an improved painting surface. In the past, HPC has moved to approve similar details and would respectively request a similar approval.
13. **Provide manufacturers cut sheets for windows and doors:**
 - While 5.15.6.I or the COA application does not specially note the requirement of manufacturer cut sheets for "typical" building elements like doors and windows, the basis of design is noted as the Marvin Elevate series, which is a Clad Wood product as permitted in 5.15.6.I.2.a.
14. **Identify window operation:**
 - The window operation has been graphically noted on the elevations and detailed on the window and door schedule in the Final HPC drawings.
15. **Clarify metal roofing material and configuration:**
 - The metal roof is noted as a galvanized 5-V crimp 24" maximum spacing, panel end exposed, which will compliment the existing building on the site. See photo below:



16. Use of gutters indicated on the application but not shown on the elevations. Show gutter and downspout locations, finish materials and configuration.

- Gutters and downspouts have been added to the elevations. The gutters are galvanized steel half round with matching downspouts.

17. (duplicate #16) Are proposed shutters operable?

- Yes, they are hinged and operable painted panel and Bermuda-style composite wood shutters with simple iron butterfly shutter dogs on the panel shutters. Per 5.15.6.M.1.e, we are requesting the use of composite wood material in lieu of durable wood for the shutters. A majority of the shutters are on the second floor.

18. (#17) Provide corner and water table details:

- These details have been provided in the Final HPC drawings

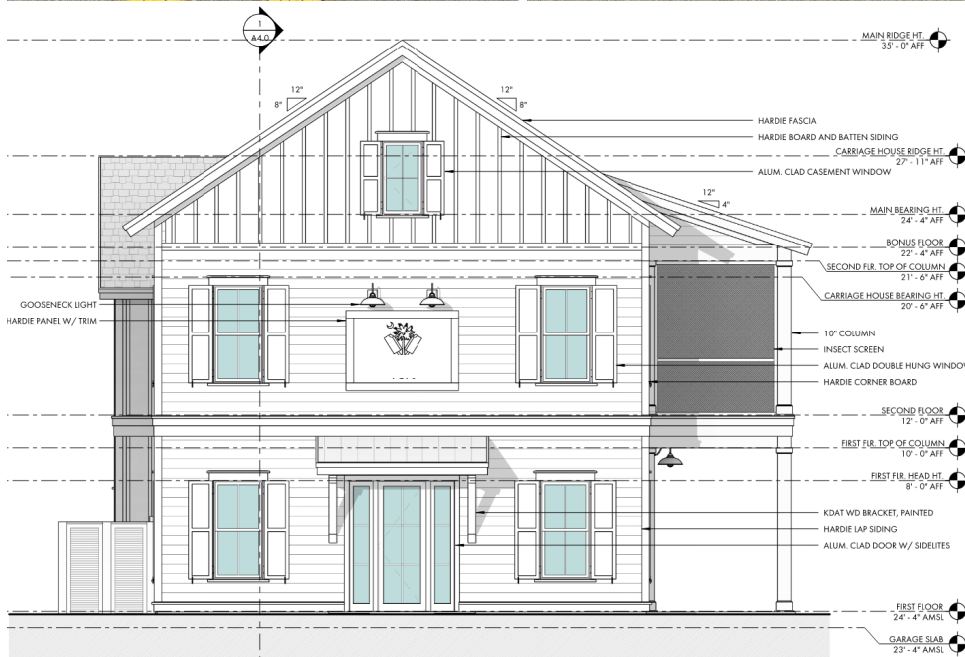
19. (#18) Provide additional cornice, soffit, and frieze details:

- These details have been provided in the Final HPC drawings

1. Building height shall be visually similar to those in the neighboring vicinity. Structure appears too tall compared to the other buildings on Bruin Rd.

- I appreciate the detailed discussion during the HPRC meeting regarding building height. As agreed, building height is regulated by 5.15.5.F.1.b "building heights are regulated by the number of stories, based upon the designated zoning district." For HG-HD, it clearly notes 2-story buildings are permitted within certain building types, including "Live-work Sideyard" and "Additional Building Type."
- Please note, we did change the primary roof pitch from a 10/12 to a 9/12, which lowered the ridge height by 1'-3.5"
- Specific to referenced comment of 5.15.5.F.1.a - "building height shall be visually similar to those in the neighboring vicinity." Please note the following observations:
 - i. Big picture – the overall Neighborhood General Historic District (NG-HD) is filled with a harmonious compilation of one- and two-story structures, often next to, across from and nearby each other.
 - ii. While not specifically part of Tabby Roads, this project would be visually associated with the Tabby Road Neighborhood, also part of the HG-HD. Again, the Tabby Roads neighborhood that surrounds our property is a near equal mix of 1.5-story and two-story buildings. There is even a three-story structure centered in the Tabby Roads neighborhood. The primary undeveloped lot next door in Tabby Roads, while not design, could be up to a 2.5-story building per the regulated district.

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- The image consists of two side-by-side photographs of a two-story house. The house has dark blue horizontal siding and white trim. It features a gabled roof with a white metal finish. A front porch with white columns and a white railing is visible. The house is surrounded by tall pine trees and a clear blue sky with some clouds. The left photo shows the front-left side of the house, and the right photo shows the front-right side.



- iv. Furthering the discussion, the existing buildings directly abutting this neighborhood block are all two-story buildings or 1.5-story buildings with a 2-story accessory garage behind this property. It would seem logical that this building would also be appropriate as a two-story building. Also note, the existing post office building is 28'-0" to the top ridge, only slightly lower than the proposed building. It was noted to focus on the immediately adjacent buildings. See photos.





- v. Finally, there was some reference to the buildings across the street along Bruin Road. While not part of the Town of Bluffton NG-HD (these properties are in Beaufort County), there is an even greater diversity of size and scale, to which none of these buildings would fit into or be appropriate for the NG-HD district. These buildings include a small “modular” home, a very wide brick ranch, a storage facility, a large 2-story and 3-story apartment complex, warehouses and a dated retail center. See photos below:





In conclusion, to HPRC Review comment #1, height is regulated by the number of stories, not the neighborhood. A 2-story live-work side yard/additional building type is permitted under the governing UDO. Further, a two-story "Live-work Sideyard" building is appropriate and in concert with the neighboring buildings immediately adjacent to his project and aligned with the neighboring Tabby Roads development along with the buildings on Pritchard St. nearly all of which are two-story buildings.

If we can provide further explanation and answer any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Atkins".

James C. Atkins Founding Principal
Court Atkins Group