

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT
Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	January 8, 2025
PROJECT:	COFA-08-24-019268 60 Bruin Road, Lot 23 (Tabby Roads) New Commercial Construction
APPLICANT:	Sarah Kepple (Pearce Scott Architects)
PROPERTY OWNERS:	Chris Dalzell (Prestige Worldwide Properties, LLC)
PROJECT MANAGER:	Charlotte Moore, AICP, Principal Planner

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant, Pearce Scott Architects, on behalf of the owners, Prestige Worldwide Properties, LLC, requests the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approve the following:

A Certificate of Appropriateness-HD (COFA-HD) to allow the construction of a new 2.5-story commercial main structure of approximately 4,200 SF and a detached 2-story Carriage House of approximately 1,100 SF to be constructed at 60 Bruin Road, Lot 23, in the Tabby Roads Development within Old Town Bluffton Historic District. The property is zoned Neighborhood General-HD (NG-HD), includes 0.396 acres, and is tax map number R610-039-000-1204-0000. See Attachments 1 and 2 for location/zoning map and application/narrative.

INTRODUCTION: The subject property is located on the south side of Bruin Road between Pearl Street to the west and Burnt Church Road to the east. The adjacent property to the south is an undeveloped wooded lot. While future road improvements are planned for Burnt Church Road, Town Staff confirmed with Beaufort County that the subject property is unaffected.

The proposed main building is a 2.5-story structure of 2,000 SF on the first floor and 2,200 SF on the second floor; the square footage for the half-story is not provided. The building will be located at the northwest corner of the property and include porches—a ground floor porch on the Pearl Street elevation and a ground floor porch on the Bruin Road elevation. The main/front elevation is Pearl Street. The detached Carriage House will have 600 SF on the first floor and 500 SF on the second floor. The Bruin Road elevation is the main/front elevation and will include a front porch. The Bruin Road porches for both structures are proposed to be connected to the street by a sidewalk; placement of the sidewalks and landscaping into a utility easement and the Bruin Road right-of-way will require proof of

permission by the easement holder and a right-of-way encroachment permit from the State of South Carolina. The buildings cannot encroach into the easement.

The main building has Center Hall House characteristics but is reviewed as an Additional Building Type. The main structure has a cross-hip roof. On the Pearl Street elevation, the ground floor porch is nearly full-façade; the space above this porch appears as a second floor enclosed porch. Wall materials are predominantly fiber cementitious board (horizontal Hardie siding with 7” exposure, vertical Hardie siding, and Hardie panels). A horizontal Boral board trim is proposed at the base of each elevation. The roof will be standing seam metal. The Carriage House has similar architectural and material characteristics. Architectural details are provided in Attachment 3.

A gravel parking lot with 13 parking spaces, to include two ADA compliant parking spaces and pathways, is proposed along the southern half of the property. The location of the driveway apron will cause the removal of at least one on-street parking space.

Staff comments on the conceptual design were reviewed at the August 26, 2024 Historic Preservation Committee Meeting (HPRC) (Attachment 6). The approval letter from Tabby Roads HARB is provided as 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, Application Review Criteria), 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.

The applicable criteria of UDO Sec.3.18.3 are provided below followed by a Staff Finding based upon review of the application submittals to date.

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

- a. *Finding.* The application is consistent with the principles set forth in the Old Town Master Plan. The Old Town Master Plan states that “The built environment, in particular the historic structures scattered throughout Old Town, should be protected and enhanced. While it is of great importance to save and restore historic structures, it is just as important to add to the built environment in a way that makes Old Town more complete.”

Old Town Bluffton Historic District is a locally designated historic district. The proposed buildings have been designed to be sympathetic to the architectural character of the neighboring structures and will enhance the neighborhood by adding architectural variety and create a more complete built environment.

- b. *Finding.* The Old Town Master Plan initiatives also 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 new construction proposed as part of this request will be in conformance with those standards if the conditions noted in item 2 of this Section are met.

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

- a. *Finding.* Town Staff finds that if the conditions noted below are met, the proposed buildings will be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5:

1) General Standards:

- a) The service yard area must be large enough to include HVAC units, utilities and receptacles for all businesses. Utility meters must be screened from public view; the location is not identified and may not yet be known. (UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.10.)
- b) Sheet A501 of the architectural drawings shows an attic/storage space that is accessible via a door. To confirm if this floor is a true half-story, identify the percentage of the total floor area that has head room of five or more feet. If it is more than 70% of the total floor area of the story directly beneath, it will be considered a full story. Also, provide Sheet A103 missing from the plan set. (UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.1.f.)

2) Building Walls:

- a) The exposed concrete foundation beneath the first-floor elevation must be a material that complies with the UDO. Tabby stucco (mixed shell size only) or stucco over block or concrete (sand-finished or steel trowel only) are permitted by UDO Sec. 5.15.6.G.1.a.
- b) A horizontal Boral board and batten trim is proposed at the base of each elevation on the main and Carriage House structures, extending upwards to ground floor windows. Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.G., material changes should occur only at the floor level. Further, as Boral is not a permitted wall finish material per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.G.3., the HPC will need to make a determination regarding its appropriateness of the material and the proposed application.

- 3) Railings:** The material to be used for railings on the Pearl Street elevation is identified only as “metal.” Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.2.d., wood (termite resistant, painted or natural) and wrought or cast iron are the only permitted railing materials.

4) Doors and Windows:

- a) Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.2.b., doors must be wood, metal or metal-clad. A door schedule must be provided with a revised Final Plan to determine compliance. Only the Pearl Street door material is provided (mahogany wood).
 - b) It appears that two slider windows are proposed on the ground floor/ Burnt Church Road elevation of the Carriage House. The window schedule (Sheet A801) identifies these windows as double-hung. Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.3.b., only single-hung, double-hung, casement, industrial, tilt and fixed frame windows are permitted.
 - c) The transom window over the door on the Pearl Street elevation does not align with adjacent windows. Per UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.4.a., “[o]verall building proportions and individual building features shall have a proportional relationship with one another.” The transom height should be lowered to align with the windows (like the transom window shown on Bruin Road elevation.)
- 5) **Gutters:** Half-round gutters are proposed but material has not been identified. Permitted gutter materials are copper, galvanized steel, and aluminum (14-18 gauge). Downspouts must also match material and finish. (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.J.1.b. and 2.c.).
 - 6) **Garden Walls:** Two stand-alone “garden” walls are proposed: One adjacent to the parking area along Pearl Street, and one adjacent to the Bruin Road right-of-way, the latter of which is proposed to be a 36-inch “pierced brick wall” with a 42-inch tall 20x20-inch brick column. Presumably, these walls are intended to screen the parking lot but would only do so partially. Wall details must be provided to show compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.K. Further, compliance with parking lot screening is also required (see #8 below).
 - 7) **Soffits:** Smooth-face Hardie panels are proposed for some soffits. UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P.5. states that soffits should be finished with beaded, v-groove or tongue and groove. The HPC should determine if smooth-face soffits are appropriate.
 - 8) **Landscaping:** Per the Applications Manual, a site plan (survey) indicating location, species, and caliper of existing trees and trees to be removed must be provided. (Applications Manual and UDO Section 3.22.2.A.). Replacement trees will be required as specified in UDO Sec. 5.3.7.F.4. Additionally, a tree canopy of 75% lot coverage, not including roof tops, must be provided for sites less than one (1) acre. and canopy coverage calculations shown per UDO Sec. 5.3.7.G. The canopy coverage to be provided appears to be 53%. Further, UDO Sec. 5.3.7.A. requires at least one large canopy street tree, and a foundation planting area at least 8 feet

wide shall be maintained around all structures. The foundation planting shall incorporate a mixture of trees, shrubs, and ground covers per UDO Sec. 5.3.7.E. A Tree Removal Permit will be required.

- 7) **Parking Area:** The screening of parking lots in Old Town Bluffton Historic District has specific UDO requirements, including: "...the setback between any public right-of-way and an off-street parking area shall contain a combination of landscaping, including a variety of trees and shrubs capable of providing year round screening, and architectural features such as, but not limited to, garden walls, fences and columns designed in accordance with the Old Town Bluffton Historic District Architectural Standards. The visual buffer shall be a minimum of 42 inches in height and should have a minimum 50% opacity. Shrubs shall be projected to reach their required height and opacity within one year of installation." Further, "the buffer between any public right-of-way and an off-street parking area shall contain pedestrian amenities such as, but not limited to, benches, fountains, are or other features to create visual interest and continuity in the streetscape." The Landscape Plan must be revised to show compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.7.D.
 - 8) **Other:**
 - a) Landscaping and hardscaping encroachments into State-owned right-of-way (SC 46) will require approval of an encroachment permit from the State. Proposed encroachments into the utility easement will require proof of approval.
 - b) Because of the driveway apron installation on Pearl Street, the existing on-street parking configuration will change. The on-street parking space to remain must be at least 18 feet in length.
 - c) If exterior lighting is to be provided, a light plan shall be provided to show compliance with UDO Sec. 5.12.
 - d) All signs must be reviewed through the Site Feature-HD process and meet the requirements found in UDO Sec. 5.15.6.Q.
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. Town Staff finds the nature and character of the new construction to be consistent and harmonious with that of the surrounding neighborhood. The mass and scale of the structures are appropriate for their location and the architectural detailing,

4. 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 except for the applicable items in #2.

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 in Section 2.2.6.E.2. Town Staff finds that with the conditions noted below, 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 conditions:

1. The service yard area must be large enough to include HVAC units, utilities and receptacles for all businesses. Utility meters must be screened from public view; the location is not identified and may not yet be known. (UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.10.).
2. Confirm whether the attic/storage space in the main structure is a true half-story applying the calculation in UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.1.f. and provide Sheet A103 missing from the plan set.
3. The exposed concrete foundation shall be tabby stucco (mixed shell size only) or stucco over block or concrete (sand-finished or steel trowel only). (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.G.1.a.).
4. Identify the permitted material to be used for the stair and ramp railings. (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.2.d.)
5. Provide a door schedule to show material compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.2.b.
6. Revise the slider windows to a permitted window type identified in UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.3.b.
7. Align the transom window over the door on the Pearl Street elevation with the adjacent windows to comply with UDO Sec.5.15.5.F.4.a.
8. Identify the permitted material to be used for gutters and downspouts. (UDO Secs.5.15.6.J.1.b. and 2.c.).
9. Provide details for the “garden” walls proposed adjacent to the Pearl Street and Bruin Road rights-of-way to show compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.K.
10. Per the Applications Manual, a site plan (survey) indicating location, species, and caliper of existing trees to be removed must be provided. (Applications Manual and UDO Section 3.22.2.A.). Replacement trees will be required as specified in UDO Sec. 5.3.7.F.4. Additionally, a tree canopy of 75% lot coverage, not including roof tops, must be provided and canopy coverage calculations shown per UDO Sec. 5.3.7.G. At least one large canopy street tree, and a foundation planting area at least eight-feet wide shall be maintained around all structures (UDO Sec. 5.3.7.A.) The foundation planting shall incorporate a mixture of trees, shrubs, and ground covers per UDO Sec. 5.3.7.E. A Tree Removal Permit will be required.

11. The setback between any public right-of-way and an off-street parking area shall contain a combination of landscaping (a variety of trees and shrubs capable of providing year-round screening) and architectural features such as, but not limited to, garden walls, fences and columns designed in accordance with the Old Town Bluffton Historic District Architectural Standards. The visual buffer shall be a minimum of 42 inches in height and should have a minimum 50% opacity. Shrubs shall be projected to reach their required height and opacity within one year of installation. Further, “the buffer between any public right-of-way and an off-street parking area shall contain pedestrian amenities such as, but not limited to, benches, fountains, are or other features to create visual interest and continuity in the streetscape.” The Landscape Plan must be revised to show compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.7.D.
12. Provide proof of approval of any landscaping, hardscaping or other potential encroachments into the State-owned right-of-way (SC 46/Bruin Road) and the utility easement.
13. Show that the on-street parking space to remain on Pearl Street will be at least 18 feet in length to comply with the UDO. If the length is not available, the Tabby Road HARB must be consulted to determine an alternate treatment of the space.
14. If exterior lighting is to be provided, a light plan shall be provided to show compliance with UDO Sec. 5.12.
15. Per UDO Sec. 3.19, a Site Feature-HD permit is required for applicable future signage.

Further, Town Staff requests a determination by the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the following:

16. The application of different wall materials on the ground floor of the main building and Carriage House, as well as the use of Boral material.
17. The use of smooth-face Hardie panel for some soffits.

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 and Zoning Map
2. Application and Narrative
3. Architectural Drawings

4. Survey and Landscape Plan
5. Tabby Roads HARB Letter
6. HPRC Comments