

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT

Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	October 1, 2025
PROJECT:	COFA-07-25-019856 5 Lawton Street Construction of a New Carriage House
APPLICANT:	Ansley H. Manuel (Manuel Studio)
PROPERTY OWNERS:	James W. Jeffcoat Revocable Trust
PROJECT MANAGER:	Charlotte Moore, AICP, Principal Planner

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant requests that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the following:

A Certificate of Appropriateness-HD (COFA-HD) to allow the construction of a new detached 2-story commercial Carriage House of approximately 1,180 SF located at 5 Lawton Street. The property is located in the Old Town Historic District and is zoned Neighborhood Center-Historic District (NG-HD).

BACKGROUND: The proposed carriage house is a two-story structure under a side-facing gable with a footprint of approximately 775 square feet (which includes a porch and exterior wood staircase) and approximately 1,180 total square feet. The carriage house will be built on a slab and will feature Hardie lap siding, a standing seam metal roof, aluminum clad windows, metal doors, pressure treated wood trim, columns and shutters. The location of the structure complies with the 5-foot side and rear yard setbacks required for carriage houses. The building height from grade to the roof ridge is 26'-3".

In July 2025 the HPC approved the demolition (COFA-03-25-019646) of a shed in the same location. As the carriage house will be used for commercial purposes and is in the rear yard of the 2-story Eggs'n'tricities business, a development plan amendment was required and approved by the Development Review Committee (DPA-11-24-019439). The existing main structure appears to be a mid-20th century building that has been remodeled in a style that would classify it as an Additional Building Type. An elevation of the two buildings was not provided to show the relationship in scale; however, a photo of the rear main structure was provided (Attachment 3).

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) for conceptual review at the August 18, 2025 meeting. HPRC comments are provided as Attachment 6.

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 consistent development 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. Section 3.18.3.B. Consistency with the principles set forth in the Old Town Master 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 carriage house has been designed to be sympathetic to the architectural character of the neighboring structures and will enhance the neighborhood by adding architectural variety.

- 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 proposed alterations as part of this request will be in conformance with those standards if the conditions noted in #2 of this Section are met.
- c. *Finding.* The Old Town Master Plan initiatives also promote preservation and protection of the legacy of the Old Town Bluffton Historic District through additions to the built environment which make Old Town more complete. The new carriage house would meet this criterion.

2. Section 3.18.3.C. 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 addition will be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5:

- 1) **Shutterdogs:** The shutterdog style proposed is not evident on the drawings. Provide a shutterdog detail that shows compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.M.1.d. (“S” hook, rat-tail hook, iron butterfly or other style that would be typical of the “era of significance” of Old Town).
- 2) **Windows:** The row of windows on the first and second floor on the east/rear elevation appear small in relation to the wall space and the windows sizes on the other building elevations. A determination regarding the proposed proportions is requested from the HPC.
3. **Section 3.18.3.D. Consistency with the nature and character of the surrounding area and consistency of the structure with the scale, form and building proportions of the surrounding neighborhood.**

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 structure is appropriate for its location and the architectural detailing, with revisions to address the items in #2 above, will be sensitive to the neighboring properties.

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 plans are sympathetic in design to the neighboring historic and non-historic resources; therefore, the structure, with the recommended revisions, will have no adverse effect on the public interest.

5. **Section 3.18.3.H. The application must comply 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.

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.

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. Provide a shutterdog detail to demonstrate compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.M.1.d.
2. A Site Feature-HD permit will be required for future signage (UDO Sec. 3.19 and 5.15.6.Q.).

Further, Staff requests a determination regarding the appropriateness of the proposed windows on the east/rear elevation of the carriage house.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location and Zoning Map
2. Application and Narrative
3. Site Photos
4. Site and Landscape Plans
5. Final Plan
6. HPRC Comments (08.18.2025)