

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



## STAFF REPORT

### Department of Growth Management

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	December 6, 2023
<b>PROJECT:</b>	77 Bridge Street - Demolition of Non-contributing Structures
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Ansley Hester Manuel, Architect
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	Katie Peterson, AICP, Senior Planner

**APPLICATION REQUEST:** The Applicant, Ansley Hester Manuel, Architect, on behalf of the owner, Sara Harwell Kelly, requests that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the following application:

1. **COFA-04-23-018245.** A Certificate of Appropriateness-Demolition to allow for the removal, in whole, of the existing 800 SF single-family residence and 120 SF shed located at 77 Bridge Street, in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District and zoned Neighborhood Conservation -HD.

**INTRODUCTION:** The property consists of 0.29 acres located on the south side of Bridge Street, two parcels west of Huger Cove within the Neighborhood Conservation – HD zoning district. The structure, built in 1980, is a one-story rectangular structure under a forward-facing gable roof. It has T-111 vertical siding and an asphalt shingle roof. The right side of the structure extends approximately three feet further than the left at the rear of the structure. The 2016 built shed also has a gable roof and T-111 vertical siding. The applicant desires to demolish both structures in their entirety.

The structure was not identified in the 1996 National Register Nomination or the 2008 Historic Resources Survey; therefore, is not classified as a contributing structure. The structure is approximately 816 SF in area and was constructed in 1980 as a residential structure.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee for conceptual review on July 17, 2023, and to the Development Review Committee on July 19, 2023, where comments were provided to the Applicant (See Attachments 4). It should be noted that while there are plans for future construction of a new single family residential structure, the demolition subject to this application must only be reviewed based on the criteria found in Section 3.18 of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and may not take the future plans for the site into consideration.

**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.

**REVIEW CRITERIA & ANALYSIS:** Town Staff and the Historic Preservation Commission are required to consider the criteria set forth in Section 3.18.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance in assessing an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness – Historic District (HD). These criteria are provided below followed by a Staff Finding(s) based upon review of the application submittals to date. In this regard, Staff provides the following:

1. Section 3.18.3.A. Consistency with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

*Finding.* For this application, the Standards for Rehabilitation do not apply because the Applicant is seeking to demolish a non-contributing structure.

2. Section 3.18.3.B. Consistency with the principles set forth in the Old Town Bluffton Master Plan.

*Finding.* The application is consistent with the principles set forth in the Old Town Bluffton 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."

As noted above, this structure is not listed in either the National Historic District or designated as a contributing structure to the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. Additionally, Town Staff submitted this request to the Historic Bluffton Foundation (HBF), A Call to Action, the Bluffton Township Black History Historical Preservation Society (BTBHHPS), and the Palmetto Bluff Conservancy for their review and opportunity for comment. Due to the timing of the application and the Thanksgiving holiday, Staff will send any comment received to the Commission prior to the meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup> and incorporate it into the minutes accordingly. The Palmetto Bluff Conservancy and Historic Bluffton Foundation both replied prior to publication of this report and had no additional information about the structure or objection to the request.

3. Section 3.18.3.C. The application must be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5, Design Standards.

*Finding.* Town Staff finds that this requirement is not applicable to this application as this standard is intended to regulate and guide new construction and not demolitions.

4. Section 3.18.3.D. The nature and character of the surrounding area and consistency of the structure with the scale, form and building proportion of the surrounding neighborhood.

*Finding.* Town Staff finds that this requirement is generally not applicable to this application as this standard is intended to regulate and guide new construction and renovations rather than demolitions. However, given that the structure is not considered contributing, removal could provide opportunity for future development that may be more consistent with the character and nature of the surrounding neighborhood.

5. Section 3.18.3.E. Preservation of the existing building's historic character and architecture.

*Finding.* The building proposed for demolition is not considered a contributing structure and is not listed in the 2008 Historic Resource Survey prepared per Federal and State guidelines and endorsed by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. As such, this criterion does not apply to this application.

6. 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.* The historic, architectural, and aesthetic features of this structure have not been found to be "contributing" in the 1996 or 2008 Historic Resource Surveys meaning Town Council has not determined the structures do not substantially add to the integrity, associations, or quality of the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. Therefore, the removal of this structure would not be detrimental to the public interest.

7. Section 3.18.3.G. For an application to demolish, either whole or in part, any Contributing Structure, the Historic Preservation Commission shall consider:

- a. The existing and historical ownership and use and reason for requesting demolition; and
- b. Information that establishes clear and convincing evidence that:
  - i. The demolition of the structure is necessary to alleviate a threat to public health or public safety; and
  - ii. No other reasonable alternatives to demolition exist; and
  - iii. The denial of the application, as a result of the regulations and standards of this Section, deprive the Applicant of reasonable economic use of or return on the property.

*Finding.* The application seeks approval for the demolition of a non-contributing structure, so this review criterion does not apply to the application.

8. Section 3.18.3.H. The application must comply with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

*Finding.* The application has been reviewed by Town Staff and has been determined to be complete, meeting all requirements of the Applications Manual.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Town Staff finds that the application meets the requirements of Section 3.18.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance and recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission review the applicable review criteria above and take action as appropriate.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Location and Zoning Map
2. Application and Narrative
3. Survey and Existing Conditions Photos
4. HPRC and DRC Comments