

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	December 4, 2024
PROJECT:	COFA-09-24-019336 5812 Guilford Place, Lot 12 (Stock Farm) New Commercial Construction
APPLICANT:	Jacob Woods, Court Atkins Architects, Inc.
PROPERTY OWNERS:	5812 Guilford Place, LLC
PROJECT MANAGER:	Charlotte Moore, AICP, Principal Planner

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant, Court Atkins Architects, Inc., on behalf of the owners, 5812 Guilford Place, 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-story commercial main structure of approximately 2,420 SF and a connected 2-story Carriage House of approximately 1,050 SF to be constructed at 5812 Guilford Place, Lot 12, in the Stock Farm Development within Old Town Bluffton Historic District. The property is zoned Neighborhood General-HD (NG-HD). See Attachments 1 and 2 for application and location/zoning map.

INTRODUCTION: The proposed main building is a 2-story structure with a 1,170 SF tenant space on the first floor and the 1,250 SF Alair Homes office on the second floor. The connected carriage house has a 525 SF tenant space on each floor.

The main building is reviewed as an Additional Building Type based on size (footprint and overall square footage), as well as architectural characteristics that are not distinctly one of the permitted building types in the NG-HD district. The setbacks for the site, which are determined by the Stock Farm Development Plan, have been met. Architectural details are provided in Attachment 3.

The primary structure has a cross-gable roof. A 2-story tabby stucco façade is featured at the front and left gables; the front facade includes the main entry, a balcony, and a 2-story trellis that screens a porch, stairwell and garden located behind the wall. The left side façade includes a secondary entry and a second-floor bay window. On the right elevation, a partial hip roof extends from the gable featuring two walls that are predominantly windows. The rear of the main structure has a 2-story porch underneath a shed roof. Materials on the main structure include cementitious fiber siding with 7”

exposure, both horizontal and vertical, tabby stucco over CMU (parapet walls), a combination of asphalt shingle and standing seam metal roofs, and a tabby stucco foundation.

A rear yard 2-story Carriage House is attached to the main building by a 2-story unenclosed connector with a staircase. The Carriage House has similar details including a gabled primary mass with a shed roof extending from the right elevation. Fiber cementitious siding, both horizontal and vertical will be applied, and roof material includes standing seam and dimensional asphalt shingles. A rear courtyard is also proposed. As there will be an elevation change from the front of the property to the rear, a ramp will be provided.

Staff comments on the conceptual design were reviewed at the October 7, 2024 Historic Preservation Committee Meeting (HPRC) (Attachment 2). The narrative provides the response from the Applicant.

Town Staff has not yet received an approval letter from Stock Farm POA.

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) **Additional Building Type:** Town Staff finds that the design of the primary structure falls within the category of Additional Building Type as allowed in the Neighborhood General- Historic District per Section 5.15.5.C. Additional Building Types are permissible. As has been past practice, the Town Staff requests the Historic Preservation Commission review and make a final determination regarding the appropriateness of the Additional Building Type.

2) **General Standards:**

a) Building fronts for commercial structures must have at least one of the following: an arcade, colonnade, marquee, porch or awning. (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.C.2.) A porch is provided but is located behind the parapet wall and not fully visible; therefore, the Historic Preservation Commission must determine if the porch location meets the intent of this standard.

b) 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.).

3) **Building Walls.**

a) Expression lines are lacking on the front façade, portion of the right/west façade, and portion of the left/east façade. The parapet walls and the rear elevation of the Carriage House do not include cornices. An expression line must delineate the division between first and second stories, and cornices must delineate the top of facades. (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.G.2.a.) The Historic Preservation Commission must determine if the use of the vertical wall at meets the intent of this standard.

4) **Columns and Railings.**

a) Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.2.a., columns may be wood (painted or natural), cast iron, concrete with smooth finish, brick, stone, steel or tabby. Only the rear porch section identifies column material (painted

wood). Provide column detail for columns not shown to demonstrate material and configuration that complies with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.2.

- b) 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. Aluminum is proposed for the front façade balcony railing, the second-floor porch at the rear of the main building, and for the second-floor connector railing. The Historic Preservation Commission must determine if aluminum is an appropriate alternative material. Railing material for all stair locations has not been identified. The material(s) proposed for stair railings must be identified and consistent with the cited UDO section or approved by the HPC.

5) 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 to determine proposed door material(s) and operation shown.
- b) Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.3.b., a fixed frame window cannot exceed 36 square feet and must be located within a retail storefront. Fixed frame windows are proposed on the front and right elevations and appear to be proposed on the rear elevation on the main building, as well as the rear of the carriage house. A window schedule was not submitted; more information is needed for all windows, including operation. The Historic Preservation Commission must determine the appropriateness of the fixed frame window type for proposed locations.

6) Landscaping (See Attachment 5):

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. 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:

- a) Proposed parking spaces are partially on the subject property and extend into Stock Farm private right-of-way and will require approval from the Stock Farm POA.
 - b) Town Staff is awaiting verification to determine if an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant space will be required. If required, adjustments to the plan may be necessary. Staff will work with the HOA to ensure that all existing spaces remain and new spaces meet current design standards.
- 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.
 - b) The building setbacks for Stock Farm apply and compliance shown. There may be a slight encroachment into the 20-foot front yard setback. This may be a Scribner's error, Town Staff will work with the Applicant to confirm that all setbacks are met at time of as-built foundation survey.
 - c) All signs must be reviewed through the Site Feature-HD process and meet the requirements found in Section 5.15.6.Q of the UDO.
 - d) Provide approval letter from Stock Farm POA.
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. A determination by the HPC that the front porch location behind the parapet wall meets the intent of UDO Sec. 5.15.6.C.2.
2. The service yard area must be large enough to contain all service-related items and utility meters must be screened from public view.
3. Provide column detail for columns not shown to demonstrate material and configuration that complies with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.2.
4. A determination by the HPC that aluminum is an appropriate alternative material for the front façade balcony railing, the second-floor porch at the rear of the main building, and for the second-floor connector railing.
5. Identification of railing material for all stair locations. The material(s) proposed for stair railings must be identified and consistent with permissible materials or an alternative material approved by the HPC.
6. Provide a door schedule to show that door material(s) comply with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.
7. A determination by the HPC that fixed frame windows are appropriate for the proposed locations.
8. Provide a window schedule to show that all windows comply with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.
9. Provide a site plan (survey) indicating location, species, and caliper of existing trees and trees to be removed per the Applications Manual and UDO Section 3.22.2.A. and identify replacement trees as specified in Sec. 5.3.7.F.4. 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.
10. Provide at least one large canopy street tree per UDO Sec. 5.3.7.A. and a foundation planting area at least 8 feet wide shall be around all structures. The foundation planting shall incorporate a mixture of trees, shrubs, and ground covers per UDO Sec. 5.3.7.E.
11. A Tree Removal Permit is required per the Applications Manual.
12. Provide an approval letter from Stock Farm POA, which must include approval of the proposed parking spaces encroaching into the Stock Farm private Guilford Street right-of-way.
13. Revise plan accordingly if an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant parking space is required.
14. Comply with the building setback requirements.
15. Per UDO Sec. 3.19, a Site Feature-HD permit is required for applicable future signage.

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. Application and Narrative
2. Location and Zoning Map
3. Architectural Drawings
4. HPRC Comments & Applicant Response
5. Landscape Plan
6. Site Photos