

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



**STAFF REPORT**  
**Department of Growth Management**

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	December 4, 2024
<b>PROJECT:</b>	COFA-11-23-018694 1 Blue Crab Street, Lot 27 Perez Live-Work Building & Carriage House (New Construction)
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Jacob Woods (Court Atkins Group)
<b>PROPERTY OWNER:</b>	April Perez
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	Charlotte Moore, AICP, Principal Planner

**APPLICATION REQUEST:** The Applicant requests that 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 live/work building of approximately 3,180 SF with a commercial business on the first floor and a 1.5-story residential unit above, and a 2-story Carriage House, to be constructed at 1 Blue Crab Street, Lot 27, in the Tabby Roads 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 2.5-story main building will include a storefront manufacturing use of 1,500 SF, a second-floor residence of 1,342 SF, and a “bonus floor” of 338 SF that will be both living and attic space accessed from the residence. A 92 SF enclosed second floor connector from the main residence to a “mother-in-law” suite is proposed. The suite will be 423 SF of the 823 SF Carriage House. There is an inconsistency with the bonus floor square footage as the “attic space,” was not included; the total bonus floor is approximately 750 square feet.

The commercial space will house Palmetto Pops and include a small production facility and a “pick-up area.” On-site consumption of food is not permitted.

The primary structure features a front-facing gable roof and a nearly full façade 2-story side porch under a shed roof. A rear yard Carriage House is attached to the main building by a 2-story connector with an enclosed second floor; direct access between the main second floor residence and the “mother-in-law” suite would be possible via the connector. Access to the Carriage House residence would also be possible via an external stairwell.

Public entry into the commercial space will be provided via the Bruin Road (north) and Wild Spartina Street (west) elevations. Private access to the kitchen will be provided via the Wild Spartina elevation. Access to the second-story residential units in both the main and carriage houses will be from Blue Crab Street (south).

Materials on the main structure include Hardie plank lap siding with 7” exposure and Hardie board and batten panels underneath the front and rear gables, a combination of asphalt shingle and standing seam metal roofs, and a Tabby Stucco foundation. The Carriage House has similar details including a gabled primary mass with a shed dormer and Hardie board and batten siding. Smooth Hardie panel will be used for the connector. Architectural details are provided in Attachment 4.

Two and one-half parking spaces are required for the main and accessory residences, and three (3) are required for the commercial space. On-street spaces adjacent to the subject property, of which there are four (4), may be used to meet the requirement for the commercial portion. Town Staff is awaiting verification to determine if an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant space will be required.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) for conceptual review at the May 20, 2024 meeting. HPRC comments are provided as Attachment 3.

The Tabby Roads Habitat Architectural Review Board (HARB) provided a letter of approval with conditions dated October 3, 2024 (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, New Construction and Alterations), 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 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.”

The addition of new structures that comply with the Unified Development Ordinance allow for a more complete built environment within Old Town Bluffton Historic District.

**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 or otherwise approved by the HPC, the proposed live-work building and Carriage House will be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5:

**1) Parking:**

a) If an ADA compliant parking space is required, the parking area must be reconfigured accordingly and associated elements, such as landscaping, parking surface material and building access, revised.

b) Recommendation: It is recommended that the parking area “keyhole” adjacent to the tabby walkway and connector stairwell be identified as a “No Parking” area to avoid blocking access to the main building and to allow vehicles to maneuver to exit the property.

**2) Landscaping (See Attachment 5):**

a) Per the Applications Manual, a Town of Bluffton Tree Removal Permit will be required.

b) Section 5.3.3.G. Replacement of Removed Protected Trees. A tree canopy with a minimum of 75% lot coverage, not including roof tops, shall be provided where land disturbance is proposed for site less than one (1) acre. The canopy can include the mature canopy of any existing trees to be saved, as well as the mature canopy of proposed replacement trees. The mature canopy percentage must be provided.

**3) Building Square Footage:**

a) Correct square footages shown for the “bonus floor” in the main building (attic space not included) and the Carriage House total square footage. Revise total areas accordingly and update the plan set and the COFA-HD application with final submission.

**4) Windows and Doors:**

a) Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.L.1., “[e]ach floor of any building facing a park, square or street shall contain transparent windows covering 20% to

70% of the wall area.” While the percentage is met, the plans indicate that “one-way film” and “translucent film” will be used on three ground floor windows on the West (Wild Spartina) elevation to prevent visibility into the food preparation area. These windows must be transparent and, as an alternative, internal coverings, such as window shades or window blinds, can be used.

b) The Tabby Roads HARB will allow only one door for the west elevation of the main structure, which may not be possible if two are required in accordance with the Building Code. If a door must be eliminated, it should be replaced with a window of the same type used on the same ground elevation.

c) Provide window and door tables.

5) **Signs:** As commercial use is proposed, future signage must be approved through the Site Feature-HD permit process.

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.* The proposed structures are visually compatible with surrounding buildings, possessing similar characteristics, including such as mass, scale, and height.

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.

1. If an ADA compliant parking space is required, the parking area must be reconfigured accordingly and associated elements, such as landscaping, parking surface material and building access, revised.
2. Per the Applications Manual, a Town of Bluffton Tree Removal Permit will be required.

3. Per UDO Sec. 5.3.3.G., a minimum tree canopy coverage of 75% is required and must be shown on a revised Landscape Plan.
4. Revise incorrect square footages (main house bonus floor, carriage house total, main building total) on the plan set and the COFA-HD application.
5. Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.L.1., windows facing a street must be transparent, which precludes the use of translucent and one-way film to block visibility into the building from the street.
6. If a ground floor door must be removed on the west elevation and is not required by the building code, it shall be replaced with a window that matches the windows on the same elevation.
7. Provide window and door tables.
8. Per Section 3.19 of the UDO, a Site Feature-HD is required for 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. Location and Zoning Map
2. Application and Narrative
3. HPRC Comments (05.20.2024)
4. Architectural Drawings
5. Landscape Plans
6. Tabby Roads HARB Letter