

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT

Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	April 6, 2022
PROJECT:	37 Calhoun Street- Addition: Single-Family Residential
APPLICANT:	Tim Probst - PDG Architects
PROJECT MANAGER:	Katie Peterson, AICP, Senior Planner

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant, Tim Probst, on behalf of the owners, Calhoun Street Cottage, LLC, requests that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the following application:

1. **COFA-01-22-016290.** A Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the addition of 185 SF to the existing 1-story Contributing Resource of approximately 1,340 SF located at 38 Lawrence Street in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District and zoned Neighborhood Center-HD.

INTRODUCTION: The Applicant is proposing a 185 SF, one-story addition to the rear of the Contributing Resource known as 38 Lawrence Street. The roof of the left wing of the house will be raised, but maintain the same gabled form, to extend over the proposed addition. The materials and detailing for the proposed addition will match those of the existing structure. In addition, the Applicant is proposing to remove the existing flat roof over the rear porch, remove the ramp leading to the front porch and install new landscaping and hardscaping to the site.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee for conceptual review at the February 21, 2022 meeting and comments were provided to the Applicant (See Attachment 5).

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.

It is important to note that the intent of Section 5.15 Old Town Bluffton Historic District of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) is that the Section be user friendly and informative to the residents and the members of HPC and is not intended to discourage creativity or force the replication of historic models. Rather,

it is to set forth a framework in which the diversity that has always characterized Bluffton can continue to grow. The Section also defines guidelines for design and materials similar to that used on structures within the Old Town, and it is the charge of the HPC to assess the interpretation of these guidelines as they pertain to applications using the established review criteria.

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 UDO in assessing an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness – Historic District (HD). The applicable criteria are provided below followed by a Staff Finding(s) 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.”

The Applicant proposes an addition to an existing Contributing Resource within the Old Town Bluffton Historic District, a locally and nationally designated historic district. The addition has been designed to be sympathetic to the architectural character of the existing structure and to the neighboring historic structures. The addition will both protect the integrity of the existing historic structures and 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 addition 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. 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) Section 5.3.1.C. Natural Resources. The intent of the Town of Bluffton Landscape standards is to eradicate or control certain exotic and invasive plant species that have negative impacts to native ecosystems. The Landscape Plan shows bamboo along the rear property line which should be removed as part of the landscape upgrades.

- 2) Section 5.15.5.F.1.c. General Standards. Residential structures shall have a first finished floor height raised a minimum of three (3) feet above average adjacent sidewalk grade. The proposed addition has a finished floor height approximately 18" above adjacent sidewalk grade to match the existing structure's finished floor height, which is an existing nonconformity. As the proposed finished floor height is in line with the existing structure, Staff finds this an appropriate height for the proposed and requests the HPC make a determination on this item.
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 addition 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 is 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. The Applicant seeks approval for an addition to an existing Contributing Resource in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. If the conditions in section 2 of this report are met, the proposed plans will be sympathetic in design to the structure and its neighboring historic and non-historic resources; therefore, the structure, with the proposed addition, 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.

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. Per Section 5.3.1. remove the invasive species (bamboo) along the rear property line.
2. Per Section 5.15.5.F.1.c. a determination on the appropriateness of the finished floor height, which is less than 3 feet above average adjacent sidewalk grade, but matches the existing structure's finished floor height,

must be made.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. Zoning Map
3. Application
4. Site Plan & Elevations
5. HPRC Report