

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



## STAFF REPORT

### Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	April 6, 2022
PROJECT:	27 Bridge Street– New Construction: Single-Family Residential
APPLICANT:	Court Atkins Architects, Inc.
PROJECT MANAGER:	Katie Peterson, AICP, Senior Planner

**APPLICATION REQUEST:** The Applicant, Court Atkins Architects, Inc., on behalf of the owner, Mike Nerhus, requests that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the following application:

1. **COFA-05-18-011989.** A Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the construction a new 1.5 story single-family residence of approximately 4,120 SF and a Carriage House structure of approximately 1,188 SF located at 27 Bridge Street, in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District and zoned Neighborhood Conservation-HD.

**INTRODUCTION:** The Applicant is proposing the construction of a detached single-family residence of 4,120 SF and Carriage House of approximately 1,188 SF located in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. The proposed primary structure has some characteristics of the River House; however, it is 1.5 stories in height, exceeds the maximum footprint, and is in the Neighborhood Conservation-HD zoning district, so it is reviewed as an Additional Building Type. It should be noted that the original application for this site was received in 2018 prior to amendments to the UDO were made which prevented Additional Building Types from exceeding the maximum square footage for other building types permitted in the zoning district.

The one and a half story structure is under a cross gabled roof with a one-story gabled wing to the rear. It has front and rear porches under a combination of hip and shed roofs. A shed roof connects the rear porch to the Carriage House. Both structures feature asphalt shingle and standing seam roofs, vertical cement fiber board and batten and shake siding.

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 7).

**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 to construct a new single-family residence and Carriage House within the Old Town Bluffton Historic District, a locally and nationally designated historic district. The building has been designed to be sympathetic to the architectural character of the neighboring historic structures, so its addition to the architectural diorama 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 includes 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 Section 2 of this report 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 addition of the proposed residential structure adds to the district as well as help provide completeness to the neighborhood and overall district.
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 the design of the structure falls within the category of Additional Building Type as allowed in the Neighborhood Conservation Historic District per Section 5.15.5.D. 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.
    - b. *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 5.3.3.C. Tree Conservation During Site Planning. During the site planning for any property, consideration shall be given to the existing tree canopy and every reasonable effort made to maximize the preservation of the existing canopy. The Arborist report shows the 12-inch Southern Magnolia near the northeast corner of the structure to have no significant issues that would impact survivability of the tree. The structure should be moved back to allow the protected tree to survive and protect the existing tree canopy for the site.
      - 2) Section 5.3.7.A.1 Street Trees. All roadways on which development is proposed shall include large canopy street trees that are planted no greater than 50 feet apart. The Landscape Plan does not indicate large canopy street trees along the Bridge Street side of the property. The Landscape Plan must be updated to show large canopy street trees no greater than 50 feet apart along Bridge Street.
      - 3) Section 5.3.7.D.1. Lot Landscaping. All lots, except active recreation areas requiring open area that are part of a school or public park, shall contain sufficient landscaping, either existing or planted, to have a minimum of 75 percent lot coverage with tree canopy measured as the mature canopy, not including

building rooftops. The Landscape Plan indicates canopy coverage more than 75 percent of the lot; however, the Arborist Report (Attachment 6) indicates several large canopy trees in which had structural concerns which will impact the survivability of the trees. Should these trees be proposed for removal, the Landscape Plan will need to be updated to accurately reflect the canopy coverage.

- 4) 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 structure has a finished floor height approximately 2' 10" above adjacent sidewalk. The finished floor height must be raised to no less than 3' above average adjacent sidewalk grade.
  - 5) Section 5.15.6.N. Corners and Water Tables. Drip boards shall be a minimum 5/4 stock with a bevel (any exposed flashing must be copper or match color of water table). Skirt boards shall be a minimum 5/4 stock and furred out to sit just beyond the face of the foundation wall (after finish foundation material is applied, i.e. brick, stucco). The foundation details, which include the water table, does not specify the dimension of the drip board and notes the skirt board as a 1x material. The water table must be revised to be a minimum of 5/4 stock.
  - 6) Section 5.15.6.I. Windows and Doors. Windows are permitted to operate as be single-hung, double-hung, casement, industrial, tilt and fixed frame. The Type G windows on the left elevation are folding windows and must be revised to a permitted window operation.
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 that nature and character of the new construction to be consistent and harmonious with that of the surrounding neighborhood. As it is located on Heyward Cove, across from Town Hall, the mass and scale of the structure is appropriate for its location and the architectural detail 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 the construction of a new structure in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. Once the items in Section 2 of this report have been addressed, the proposed plans will

have been designed to be sympathetic in design to the neighboring historic and non-historic resources; therefore, the structure 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 incomplete. A front elevation of the Carriage House and portion of the left elevation in the porch has not been provided and must be provided for review and be found to be in compliance with the applicable standards prior to approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

As there are several trees 14 inches in diameter at breast height or greater, being proposed for removal, a Town of Bluffton Tree Removal Permit is required.

**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 condition:

1. Per Section 5.3.3.C. of the UDO, the structure should be moved towards the back of the lot to allow the 12-inch Southern Magnolia near the northeast corner of the house to survive and protect the existing tree canopy for the site.
2. Per Section 5.3.7.A.1. of the UDO, the Landscape Plan must be updated to show large canopy street trees no greater than 50 feet apart along Bridge Street.
3. Per Section 5.3.7.D.1. of the UDO, the Landscape Plan will need to be updated to reflect the canopy coverage should any tree from the arborist report currently proposed to be saved be removed.
4. Section 5.15.5.F.1.c. of the UDO, the finished floor height must be raised to no less than 3' above average adjacent sidewalk grade.
5. Per Section 5.15.6.N. of the UDO, the water table must be revised to be a minimum of 5/4 stock.
6. Per Section 5.15.6.I. of the UDO, the Type G windows on the left elevation are folding windows and must be revised to a permitted window operation.
7. Per the Applications Manual, a front elevation of the Carriage House and portion of the left elevation in the porch has not been provided and must be provided for review and be found to be in compliance

with the applicable standards prior to approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

8. Per the Applications Manual, approval of Town of Bluffton Tree Removal Permit is required prior to issuance of this Certificate of Appropriateness and all conditions of that approval met prior to passing a Final Historic District Inspection.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Location Map
2. Zoning Map
3. Application and Narrative
4. Elevations
5. Landscape Plan & Canopy Coverage
6. Arborist Report
7. HPRC Report