

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT

Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	June 11, 2025
PROJECT:	COFA-03-24-019047 22 Bruin Road New Construction: Single-Family and Carriage House
APPLICANT:	Greg Harrold
PROPERTY OWNER:	Bertha Wooten
PROJECT MANAGER:	Charlotte Moore, AICP, Principal Planner

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant, Greg Harrold, on behalf of the owner, Bertha Wooten, requests that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the following application:

A Certificate of Appropriateness-HD to allow the construction of a new 1-story Single-Family Residential structure of approximately 1,696 SF and an attached 1-story garage (Carriage House) of approximately 688 SF located at 22 Bruin Road, in Old Town Bluffton Historic District and zoned Neighborhood General-HD.

INTRODUCTION: As proposed, the main structure is not specifically characteristic of any building type permitted in the Neighborhood General-HD zoning district and, therefore, is reviewed as an Additional Building Type. The front build-to zone for an Additional Building Type is 10-20 feet; however, the UDO Administrator approved placement of the structure farther back from the build-to zone because of a Beaufort-Jasper Water Sewer Authority Easement that extends 20 feet into the property from the Bruin Road right-of-way, and for the preservation of existing mature trees (Attachment 6).

The main structure is located underneath multiple rooflines, which is uncharacteristic of Bluffton's vernacular architecture. From Bruin Road, the roof at the front elevation (52'8" wide) appears mostly as a hip roof. From this roof, a front-facing gable roof ties-in and projects forward of the front wall plane to provide cover for a partial-width front porch (21'2" wide). A fixed window is in the gable. From the rear elevation, the roofline has the appearance of two pyramidal sections; underneath the larger pyramidal roofline is a covered porch and laundry room; the double-bay garage (Carriage House) is located underneath the smaller pyramidal section. From the left and right elevations, the Carriage House roof has the appearance of a hip-like roof that ties into somewhat of a hyphen that connects the main structure to the garage. Architectural asphalt shingles are proposed.

The walls will be clad with horizontal fiber cement board, which will also be used for the board and batten at front porch gable. The foundation will be a concrete slab coated with mixed tabby shell, to also be used for the chimney.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) for conceptual review at the January 29, 2024 meeting and comments were provided to the Applicant (See Attachment 7). Based on that meeting, a revision (Final Plan) was provided but did not return to the HPRC as a Concept Plan.

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 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 Criterion 2 of this Section are met.
- b. *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 a proposed single-family structure and Carriage House add to the district and can provide completeness to the neighborhood and overall district. The house is not a specific example of a building type permitted in the NG-HD district; however, as an Additional Building Type, the architecture of the house is a combination of Ranch-style that exists elsewhere on Bruin/May River Roads, as well as earlier Bluffton vernacular with a raised foundation, front porch, and traditional building materials. This combination will ensure the continuation of Old Town Bluffton's architectural legacy.

2. The application must be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5, Design Standards.

- a. *Findings.* Town Staff finds that if the conditions noted below are met, the proposed construction will be in conformance with applicable architectural design provisions provided in Article 5:

1) Building Form, Massing and Scale.

- a. While combinations of rooflines can be appropriate, the proposed rooflines do not appear to correspond to the massing of the main structure and the attached garage (Carriage House) as required by UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.2. For example, the hyphen or connection to the main structure and the garage is not readily apparent.
- b. UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.2.B. requires the avoidance of long, unarticulated masses. At the Right and Left Elevations of the main structure, there is too much blank wall area, which would be eliminated with the addition of windows.
- c. UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.4.c. requires that building elements and the spaces between them be organized into a logical manner. The Rear Elevation kitchen window should be centered between the porch columns, and the two bathroom windows reconfigured to avoid the close spacing as proposed. See Item #3 for a possible solution to the kitchen window placement. The elimination of the corner bathroom window would allow the interior bathroom window to be centered in the wall plane.
- d. The service yard will be screened by a 6' tall fence consisting of 1x6 cement fiberboard to match the wall material of the main structure and Carriage House. If electric meters are located within the service yard, the gate must be removed for utility company. If electric meters are to be located elsewhere, meters must be screened per UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.10.

- 2) **Chimneys.** A chimney detail is needed. Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.E.8.d., metal spark arrestors, exposed metal flues, and pre-fabricated chimney caps are permitted only when concealed within a masonry architectural feature and screened from the street.

- 3) **Posts.** The rear porch post appear to be spaced approximately 10'3" on-center. UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.1.a. requires porch posts to be spaced no farther apart than they are tall as measured from the centerline of the post. The posts are approximately 8'9½" tall. The use of double columns

could address the distance and may also help to center the kitchen window between columns. Material to be used for the column is not indicated. A rear porch section is needed.

- 4) **Windows.** All windows will be vinyl clad. Window operations are mostly single-hung with two fixed windows proposed in the Rear Elevation at the bathroom, and underneath the front porch gable. Fixed windows are permitted only for storefronts. It is recommended that the window underneath the gable be removed as it is for decoration rather than function. The rear bathroom window should be changed to an operation permitted by UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.3.b. Operable wood shutters with shutterdogs are proposed on all windows.
- 5) **Doors.** The door schedule and project analysis sheet indicate the use of wood for the front door, metal for the garage-bay doors and fiberglass for the back porch doors. Fiberglass is not a permitted material per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.2.b. Permitted materials include wood, metal and metal-clad. A revised plan must show a UDO-compliant material for the porch doors, as well as the side garage door (which was not specified in the door schedule). The UDO Administrator may approve the use of wood composite if the doors are consistent with the character of the Historic District and the materials to be used are of equal or better quality than traditional building materials. Show door operation for all doors, which must be casement or French per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.2.b.
- 6) **Corners and Water Tables.** Details for cornerboards and watertables were not provided and must be included to show compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.N.
- 7) **Friezes and Soffits.** Frieze material is not indicated. Soffit configuration is not identified for the main structure or garage, and shown as “smooth” for the front porch. Soffits must be beaded or v-groove tongue and groove to comply with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P.
- 8) **Landscape Plan.**
 - a. A tree canopy with a minimum of 75% lot coverage, not including roof tops shall be provided where land disturbance is proposed for sites less than one (1) acre. Provide updated canopy coverage calculations to ensure the 75% lot coverage is met. (UDO Sec. 5.3.3.G.)
 - b. Provide a list of all trees to be removed and their diameter at breast height (DBH). Any tree that is 14-inches or more at DBH, will require a

Tree Removal Permit. Trees cannot be removed until an approved, stamped COFA-HD is issued.

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. If the conditions noted in #2 of this report are met, a compatible visual relationship will be demonstrated with surrounding properties, streetscapes and open spaces.

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.

Finding. The Certificate of Appropriateness Application has been reviewed by Town Staff and has been determined to be complete; however, there are several trees being proposed for removal which require a tree removal permit which must be submitted, reviewed, and approved prior to issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

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 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. Restudy the roof to be less complex than is proposed and consider a greater physical separation between the main structure and the garage to better delineate the two distinct spaces.
2. Provide additional windows on the Right and Left Elevations of the main structure to comply with UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.2.B.
3. Eliminate the corner window on the Rear Elevation or reconsider window placement to space the rear bathroom windows in a logical manner to comply with UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.4.c.
4. If electric meters are to be placed in the service yard, the gate must be removed. If electric meters are located elsewhere in public view, they shall be screened.
5. Provide a chimney detail to ensure compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.E.8.d.
6. Revise rear porch post spacing to comply with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.1.a.

7. Provide material to be used for the porch posts to comply with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.2.a.
8. Remove the fixed window in the porch gable and change the fixed window on the rear elevation to an operation permitted by UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.3.b.
9. Change the material of the rear porch French doors to be wood, metal or metal-clad to comply with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.2.b.
10. Provide details for watertables and cornerboards (UDO Sec. Sec. 5.15.6.N.).
11. Provide frieze material and change the soffit to beaded or v-groove tongue and groove to comply with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.
12. Demonstrate that 75% tree canopy coverage will be provided (UDO Sec. 5.3.3.G.).
13. Provide a list of trees to be removed from the lot and their diameter at breast height (UDO Table 5.3.3.G.). A Tree Removal Permit will be required for any tree that is 14-inches or more in diameter at breast height (DBH).

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 & Zoning Map
2. Application
3. Photos
4. Survey
5. Plans
6. Site & Landscape Plan
7. HPRC Comments (01.29.2024)