

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT

Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	June 11, 2025
PROJECT:	COFA-03-25-019654 32 Tabby Shell, Lot 17 (Tabby Roads Development) New Carriage House
APPLICANT:	Drew Vann (Palmetto Star Construction)
PROPERTY OWNER(S):	Scott Ready
PROJECT MANAGER:	Charlotte Moore, AICP, Principal Planner

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant requests that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the following:

A Certificate of Appropriateness-HD (COFA-HD) to allow the construction of a new 2-story Carriage House of approximately 1,162 enclosed square feet. The property is zoned Neighborhood General-HD (NG-HD) and is in the Tabby Roads Development in Old Town Bluffton Historic District.

INTRODUCTION: The proposed Carriage House is a two-story structure under a side-facing gable with an upper-story residence over a two-bay garage. The Carriage House will have a footprint of 643 square feet (unheated) and 519 heated square feet (second-story residence) for a total of 1,162 square feet. The second-floor residence will be accessed by an exterior wood staircase. Wall siding is proposed to be horizontal, smooth cementitious fiberboard. The main roof structure will consist of architectural asphalt shingles and the “lean-to” overhang and awnings will be standing seam metal. The Carriage House is designed to match the architecture and materials of the main residence.

The location of the structure complies with the side and rear yard setbacks for the NG-HD district. Both the staircase and the second-floor porch are permitted to encroach into the setback (UDO Sec. 9.3.D.4.) but must be (and are) at least three (3) feet from the property line. The service/storage yard must be relocated to a location other than underneath the stairs per the Town’s Building Safety department as a fire in this location would cut off the only access to/from the second story.

The rear stairs of the main house do not exist as shown on the plan. The foundation of the house is lower than drawn and only one stair exits, which aligns with the chimney (See photos in Attachment 3). Therefore, the proximity between the main house and proposed Carriage House is not an issue.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) for conceptual review at the April 28, 2025 meeting. HPRC comments are provided as Attachment 9.

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 consistent development 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. 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.”

Old Town Bluffton Historic District is a locally designated historic district. The proposed Carriage House has been designed to be sympathetic to the architectural character of the existing residence and neighboring structures; it will 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 new construction proposed as part of this request will be in conformance with those standards if the conditions noted in #2 of this Section 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 Carriage House contributes to the district as well as helps to 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.**

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:

- a. **Service Yard.** The service yard must be relocated from underneath the stairs and screened in compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F. The service yard area must be large enough to include HVAC units, utilities and receptacles. Utility meters must be screened from public view. The Tabby Roads HARB communicated that it must approve the relocated service area as this requirement was unknown to them prior to their approval letter (Attachment 9).
- b. **Staircase.**
 - 1) The area underneath the staircase is proposed to be screened with horizontal boards of unknown material with placement of the boards over the support posts. While the UDO does not specifically address the screening of this area, other properties in Old Town Bluffton have used this same configuration. The Tabby Roads HARB will require the boards to be placed a minimum of 1" behind the posts so that posts are exposed. This requirement is similar to the UDO requirement for screened porches ("architectural expression" must be shown) and for underpinning (piers must be distinct). The HARB will require a separation of no greater than 0.5" between boards.
 - 2) Remove the notation "Final Stair Design To Be Determined On-site" from Final Plan. The staircase must be constructed as approved by the HPC and must be at least three feet from the property line.
- c. **Foundation.** As the concrete foundation will be partially exposed, the foundation must match the tabby shell foundation of the main residence and must be mixed shell size per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.G.1.
- d. **Doors.** Proposed door materials are aluminum for the garage doors and fiberglass for the three entry doors. Fiberglass is not a permitted material per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.2.b. Acceptable materials are wood, metal and metal-clad.
- e. **Windows.** Vinyl single-hung windows are proposed as shown on the Project Analysis Sheet but not indicated in the window schedule on the plans. The window schedule must be updated to show the material.

- f. **Cornice, Soffit and Frieze.**
 - a. The Tabby Road HARB will require the overhang and frieze board details to match the main house: 18” for the overhang and 2x10 trim for the frieze board.
 - b. The soffit configuration is not shown. It must be beaded or v-groove tongue and grove per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P.5.
 - g. **Landscape Plan.** Because all existing trees are proposed to be removed in the area to be disturbed, it must be demonstrated that 75% tree canopy coverage at time of maturity (and excluding rooftops) will be provided for the entire lot—not just the disturbed area. Some of the trees to be removed were used for the 75% tree canopy calculation for the existing house. A Tree Permit will be required to remove trees that are 14 or more inches in diameter at breast height (UDO Sec. 3.22.2.B.3.).
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 new construction 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, with revisions to address the items in #2 above, will be 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. If the conditions #2 of this report are met, the proposed plans are sympathetic in design to the neighboring historic and non-historic resources; therefore, the structure, with the recommended revisions, 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 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. The service yard must be relocated from underneath the stairs and screened in compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.
2. Provide the material to be used for the horizontal boards underneath the staircase and comply with the configuration requirements of Tabby Roads HARB, to include placement of boards at least 1" behind posts and spacing no greater than 0.5" between boards.
3. Remove the notation "Final Stair Design To Be Determined On-site."
4. An exposed foundation must match the tabby shell foundation of the main residence and must be mixed shell size (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.G.1).
5. Change entry doors from fiberglass to wood, metal and/or metal-clad to comply with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.2.b.
6. Update the window schedule to indicate that vinyl windows are proposed.
7. Provide the soffit configuration to beaded or v-groove tongue and groove per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P.5.
8. Revise the roof overhang to 18" and the frieze board to 2x10 trim per the requirements of the Tabby Roads HARB.
9. Show that a minimum of 75% tree canopy coverage at maturity will be provided for the entire lot not to include roofs (UDO Sec. 5.5.3.G.1.).
10. Submit a Tree Removal Permit application to remove trees that are 14" or greater in diameter at breast height (UDO Sec. 3.22.2.B.3.).
11. Proof of final approval by Tabby Roads HARB will be required.

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 & Narrative
3. Site Photos
4. Applicant's Photos
5. Survey
6. Plan (Final)
7. Landscape Plan
8. HPRC Comments 04.28.2025
9. Tabby Roads HARB Approval Letter