

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT Department of Growth Management

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| MEETING DATE: | January 5, 2022 |
| PROJECT: | 135 Bridge Street- Addition: Single-Family Residential |
| APPLICANT: | Pernell Smith |
| PROJECT MANAGER: | Katie Peterson, AICP, Senior Planner |

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant, Pernell Smith, on behalf of the owner, Brenda Dunaway, requests that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the following application:

1. **COFA-011-21-016093.** A Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the screened porch to be enclosed with windows on the existing 2-story single-family residence located at 135 Bridge Street, in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District and zoned Riverfront Edge-HD.

INTRODUCTION: The Applicant is proposing to enclose the screened front (May River facing) porch with glass windows on the existing 2-story structure located at 135 Bridge Street. The framing will remain the same as it exists in the porch, except for areas below the chair rail which did not align with the framing above.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee for conceptual review at the December 21, 2021 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 single-family residence 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 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 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 5.15.6.I. Windows and Doors. Window openings shall be oriented vertically. They may be configured as rectangular, square, transom, or sidelite. Transoms must be aligned with the window or door located directly below them. As proposed, all windows below the chair rail are oriented horizontally. The Applicant is requesting the HPC allow the use of horizontal windows as a variation of a transom window in line with the vertical window directly above each.

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 addition 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 non-contributing structure in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. If the conditions in Section 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 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 condition 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. The HPC must determine if the use of horizontal windows beneath the vertical windows, proposed to enclose the existing porch, meets the intent of Section 5.15.6.I. of the UDO.

ATTACHMENTS:

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