

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT

Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	February 1, 2023
PROJECT:	58 Calhoun Street -New Construction: May River Montessori School
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, May River Montessori, Inc., requests that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the following application:

1. **COFA-11-21-016057.** A Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the construction of a new 2 story private school structure of approximately 5,317 SF located at 58 Calhoun Street, in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District and zoned Neighborhood Center-HD.

INTRODUCTION: The Applicant is proposing the construction of a two-story school structure of approximately 5,317 SF. The structure has characteristics of the Main Street Building Type.

The two-story structure features a side facing hip roof with a two-story front porch under a shed roof and a two-story rear-addition under a hipped roof. It has a small addition to the front, and a corner, tower element near the Green Street side of the building. It features a combination of horizontal Hardie lap siding and vertical board and batten siding as well as standing seam and asphalt shingle roof materials.

As this project constitutes development, a Development Plan is required. A Preliminary Development Plan (DP-04-22-016574) was approved with conditions at the September 28, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. The Final Development Plan has been submitted and, at the time of this report, is slated to be heard by the Development Review Committee at their February 1, 2023 meeting.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee for conceptual review at the December 6, 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 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 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.* The Setbacks for the structure have been met. Main Street Buildings within the NCE-HD are required to have a Front Build-To zone of 10-25 feet, 8-foot side setbacks and 25-foot rear setback.
 - b. *Finding.* 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) Section 5.15.5.B. Neighborhood Center – HD: Building Types. Town Staff finds that the design of the primary structure falls within the category of Main Street Building Type as allowed in the Neighborhood Center- Historic District (NCE-HD), however, it exceeds the maximum total square footage permitted. The Application proposes a 5,317 SF structure (2,498 SF first floor, 2,819 SF second floor), while a Main Street Building Type within the NCE-HD is permitted a range of 2,000-5,000 SF with a maximum footprint of 2,500 SF. The building must be reduced in size to be no more than 5,000 total SF.

- 2) Section 5.15.6.I. Columns, Arches, Piers, Railings, Balustrades. Railings and Balustrades are permitted to be wood (termite resistant), painted or natural wrought or cast iron. The application proposes the use of powder coated aluminum. A determination must be made on the appropriateness of the use of powder coated aluminum as a substitute for those materials listed in the UDO for use.
 - 3) Section 5.15.5.K. Garden Walls, Fences, and Hedges. Fences in front yards must be a minimum of 24 inches in height and a maximum of 42 inches. The Landscape plan shows the Double Gate (1/L401), Single Gate (6/L400) and Fence (5/L400) at 4 feet (48 inches) in the front yard. The fence height must be reduced to no more than 42 inches in height.
 - 4) Section 5.15.5.N. Corners and Water Tables. Skirt boards shall be a minimum 5/4 stock and furred out to sit just beyond the face of the foundation wall. The skirt board is proposed as a 1x4 material (8/A5.0). The skirt board must be increased to a minimum of 5/4 stock.
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 is consistent with that of the surrounding neighborhood so long as the conditions in Section 2 of this report have been met.

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 new 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 structures, with the revisions noted, 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; however, any signage will require a Site Feature-HD permit to be reviewed through the Site Feature -HD process.

Finally, as the project constitutes development, all conditions of the Development Plan DP-04-22-016574 must be met prior to final approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness. It should be noted that should the site need to be modified based on the Development Plan requirements, it may result in the need to resubmit a Certificate of Appropriateness as this application could

not be amended to reflect the changes until it has been fully approved by meeting the conditions of approval, including the approved development plan.

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 due to the conditions noted below, the requirements of Section 3.18.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance have not been met and recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission deny the application based on the following criteria:

1. Per Section 5.15.5.B. of the UDO, the building must be reduced in size to be no more than 5,000 total SF.
2. Per Section 5.15.6.I. of the UDO, a determination must be made on the appropriateness of the use of powder coated aluminum as a substitute for those materials listed in the UDO for use.
3. Per Section 5.15.5.K. of the UDO, the fence height must be reduced to no more than 42 inches in height in the front yard.
4. Section 5.15.5.N. of the UDO, the skirt board must be increased to a minimum of 5/4 stock.
5. Per the Applications Manual, any proposed signage must be reviewed through the Site Feature-HD Application process.
6. Per the Applications Manual, all conditions of the Development Plan must be met prior to final approval of this Certificate of Appropriates.

ATTACHMENTS:

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