

3.18 Certificate of Appropriateness – Historic District (HD)

3.18.5 Demolition

Proposed Change: Demolition of non-contributing structure is proposed to be reviewed through the Site Feature Permit application (a Town Staff review) rather than a COFA application. A cross-reference to the Site Feature Permit section is proposed.

A. Non-contributing Structures

~~The below items shall be provided by the Applicant and reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission in its consideration of a request for demolition of any structure, in whole or in part, in Old Town Bluffton Historic District that is not designated as a Contributing Resource:~~

- ~~1. The construction date, history of ownership, development, use(s), and the reason for the demolition request; and,~~
- ~~2. Compliance with all applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.~~

[See Sec. 3.19, Site Feature-Historic District \(HD\) Permit.](#)

B. Contributing Resources

The demolition of a Contributing Resource, either in whole or in part, is detrimental to the integrity and status of Old Town Bluffton Historic District and, where applicable, the Bluffton National Register Historic District, as significance of these districts is embodied by their contributing resources. Demolition of a Contributing Resource that is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, contributes to the Bluffton National Register Historic District, or that was designated as contributing to the Old Town Bluffton Historic District on or after June 19, 2007, shall not be permitted except in extraordinary circumstances and when all preservation alternatives have been exhausted.

1. The Historic Preservation Commission shall consider the following in its consideration of an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness-HD for demolition, either in whole or in part:
 - a. The construction date, history of ownership, development, use(s), and other pertinent history of the Contributing Resource, and the reason for the request;
 - b. A report prepared by a State of South Carolina registered professional structural engineer with demonstrated experience in historic preservation detailing the structural soundness of the Contributing Resource supported by findings, including clear and convincing evidence that demolition is necessary, in whole or in part, to alleviate a threat to public health or public safety;
 - c. Evidence that demolition is required to avoid exceptional practical difficulty or undue hardship upon the owner of the property and that no other reasonable alternatives to demolition exist, including but not limited to relocation. If exceptional practical difficulty or undue hardship is claimed, evidence shall be provided to demonstrate that the applicant did not have the opportunity to discover the nature of the difficulty or undue hardship and that application of the standards would deprive the applicant of reasonable use and economic return on the property.

- d. Consistency with applicable principles set forth in the Old Town Bluffton Master Plan and Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan; and,
- e. Compliance with all applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

2. **Delay of Decision Regarding Demolition**

In considering the criteria for demolition, the Historic Preservation Commission may find that the preservation and protection of the Contributing Resource and the public interest will best be served by postponing a decision for a designated period not to exceed 180 days. During the period of postponement, the Historic Preservation Commission shall consider what alternatives to demolition may exist. Consideration by the Historic Preservation Commission shall include:

- a. Alternatives for preservation of the structure, either in whole or in part, including consultation with civic groups, interested private citizens, and other boards or agencies (both public and private); and,
- b. If other alternatives for preservation cannot be identified, including relocation, and the preservation of the Contributing Resource is clearly in the interest of the general welfare of the community, investigation of the potential of the Town to acquire the property.

3. **Effect of Approval**

- a. In granting a Certificate of Appropriateness-HD for demolition, the Historic Preservation Commission may impose such reasonable and additional conditions, which may include deconstruction of historic building components for re-use.
- b. The process for demolishing a Contributing Resource, including documentation to be provided, shall comply with demolition guidelines approved by Town Council.

3.19 Site Feature – Historic District (HD) Permit

3.19.2 Applicability

Proposed Change: *Demolition of a non-contributing structure/resource is added to the list of site feature items.*

A. Permit Required. A Site Feature - Historic District (HD) Permit is required for the following:

- 1. Sign, to include new signs, modifications to existing signs, or replacement of existing signs. Certain signs, as indicated in Sec. 5.13.3, are exempt from the Site-Feature-Historic District (HD) Permit requirement.
- 2. Modifications or improvements to site elements such as changes to parking lots, sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting;
- 3. Garden Structures and Sheds; as specified in Sec. 5.15.5;
- 4. Maintenance or repair of any features of an existing structure or building that do not alter such features or change the design, architectural character, or outward appearance, as determined by the UDO Administrator. Any replacement material shall be like-for-like, or an equivalent material that is approved by the UDO Administrator; and
- 5. Minor, non-structural exterior modifications to existing structures and buildings that do not alter the architectural character. Examples of such work include, but are not limited to, the addition of screens or balustrades to an existing porch, the addition of a deck without a roof, and accessibility improvements for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To

preserve the outward appearance of a building or structure, such work is discouraged on the principal façade.

6. Demolition of a non-contributing structure.

3.19.3 Application Review Criteria

Proposed Change: *Criteria for review of a proposed demolition is added. “Historic structures” is revised to “contributing resources” to capture buildings, structures, objects and sites.*

As applicable, the following shall be considered in reviewing an application for a Site Feature - Historic District (HD) Permit:

- A. Conformance with applicable provisions provided in *Article 5, Design Standards*;
- B. For signs, conformance with the following applicable provisions:
 - 1. Sec. 5.12, Lighting;
 - 2. Sec. 5.15.6.Q., Signs; and,
 - 3. Sec. 7.10, Nonconforming Signs;
- C. For ~~historic structures~~ Contributing Resources, in addition to the above and as applicable, conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- D. For demolition of non-contributing structures, the construction date, history of ownership and uses (if known), and property survey (if available). ~~Compliance with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.~~
- E. Compliance with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

3.19.4 Effect and Expiration of Approvals

Proposed Change: *Adds demolition as site feature action.*

- A. **Approval.** The issuance of a Site Feature – Historic District (HD) Permit shall authorize the Applicant to either install, modify, replace, or ~~replace~~ demolish the site feature as specified by the permit. When a Building Permit is required to install, modify, or replace a site feature, an approved Site Feature – Historic District (HD) Permit shall be provided at time of Building Permit application.