

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



## STAFF REPORT

### Department of Growth Management

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	February 5, 2025
<b>PROJECT:</b>	COFA-11-24-019458 17 Lawrence Street New Two-story Carriage House
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Christopher Epps (InCircle Architecture)
<b>PROPERTY OWNERS:</b>	Jay & Lori Sofianek
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	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 two-story Carriage House of approximately 1,199 enclosed square feet. The property is zoned Neighborhood General-HD (NG-HD).

**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 662 square feet and 1,199 square feet. The second-floor residence will be accessed by an exterior wood staircase. The exterior siding is proposed to be horizontal, smooth cementitious fiberboard. The main roof structure will consist of architectural asphalt shingles and the “lean-to” roof and awnings will be standing seam metal.

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.

A 42-inch live oak tree is located approximately 15 feet in front of a portion of the proposed Carriage House location. As the tree requires protection and may affect access to the left bay, the Site Plan should be revised to show the proposed driveway reconfiguration and proximity to the tree.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) for conceptual review at the December 16, 2024 meeting. HPRC comments are provided as Attachment 6.

**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 building has been designed to be sympathetic to the architectural character of the neighboring structures and 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.**

- 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) **Railings** (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.3.d.): The stairwell will be wood, including balustrades and the top rail. The top rail is shown to be 2-inches in height but must be at least 2-¾ inches. Consider extending the top rail forward of the ground level stairwell posts to match main structure stairwell, and the use of caps on porch posts.
  - 2) **Gutters** (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.J.) Metal gutters are indicated on the project analysis but not shown on the plan set. Gutters must be shown on the final submission, and the metal must be copper, galvanized steel or aluminum (14-18 gauge) (Sec. 5.15.6.J.2.c.) in a rectangular, square or half-round configuration (Sec. 5.15.6.J.3.c.) and downspouts must match gutters in material and finish (5.15.6. J.1.b.).
  - 3) **Corner Boards** (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.N.3.): Corner boards must be beaded or have ¼ round inset trim mold. This is not shown on the wall section.
  - 4) **Soffit** (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P.5.): The soffit material is not identified in the wall section. According to the project analysis provided on the COFA-HD application, it is either cementitious fiberboard or wood. The material and configuration (beaded or v-groove tongue and groove) must be identified with the final submission.
  - 5) **Brackets** (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P.): Brackets are proposed underneath the awnings of ground and second-floor doors, as well as at the awning over the two-bay garage but details, including material, were not included and must be provided.
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. Show how the driveway will be reconfigured for access to the left bay of the Carriage House.
2. Provide a top rail that is a minimum of 2-¾ inches (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.3.d.).
3. Provide a beaded or ¼ round inset trim mold for the corner boards (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.N.3).
4. Identify soffit material and configuration (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P.5).
5. Provide bracket details. (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P.)
6. Show building materials indicated in the project analysis on the plan set, to include but not limited to door and window materials.

The Applicant may want to consider the following:

1. Extension of the top rail forward of the ground level stairwell posts to match main structure stairwell, and the use of caps on porch posts.

**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 and Narrative
3. Site Photos
4. Site Info
5. Building Plans
6. HPRC Report