



April 7, 2026

Town of Bluffton  
20 Bridge Street  
Bluffton, SC 29910

RE: 204 Bluffton Road

HD Review Members:

We are requesting conceptual approval of a new building located at 204 Bluffton Road. Along with this project narrative, we have included the following documents for your review:

- Historic District Application / Project Analysis
- Project Narrative
- Comments and Responses from Conceptual Meeting
- Existing site survey (Exhibit A)
- Existing photos with location key (Exhibit B)
- Architectural Design Drawings (Exhibit C)
- Proposed Color Palette (Exhibit D)
- Window Brochure for Kolbe Gastra Windows (Exhibit E)
- Conceptual Streetscape Rendering (Exhibit F)

We are very excited to add this project to the Promenade and the current fabric of downtown. I look forward to discussing this project further at the next available Historic District meeting.

Thank you,



Thomas Michaels Jr. - RA

## Project Narrative

### Project Narrative U.D.O Information:

The proposed building type used for the development of the design is the Main Street Building which is permitted under the Neighborhood Core Historic District Zoning. The following are the requirements for the main street building lot standards as defined in section 5.15.5.A General Standards.

Building Type	Front Build-to Zone	Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Setback (from rear property line)	Side Setback (from side property line)	Height (in stories)
Main Street Building	10-20'	50-100'	70%-90%	25'	5'	2-3
Proposed Building	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	3

\*Note: The building lot is a designated building pad and not a traditional lot, so some requirements are not applicable.

The Main Street Building characteristics are outlined in the U.D.O in Section 5.15.8.A. Below are the requirements and information on how the proposed building complies with them.

- Size Range: NC-HD: 2,000 – 8,000 sq. ft.
  - The proposed building has a conditioned area of 3,978 sq. ft. With exterior porches and stairs, the total building area is approximately 4,560 sq. ft.
- Maximum Footprint (not including porches): NC-HD: 3,500 sq. ft.
  - The proposed building footprint is 1,326 sq. ft.
- Height: NC-HD: 2-3 Stories
  - The proposed building is 3 stories.
- Characteristics: A shopfront building. Retail/office space on ground floor. Office/living space on upper levels. Must have an arcade, colonnade, marquee or awning at the front façade (arcades / colonnades are preferred)
  - The first floor is developed as a real estate office with shopfront windows. The second and third floors have living areas. A colonnade is provided at the front elevation. Due to the site limitation with the angled street right-of-way, the clear distance of the colonnade is 5'-4" feet with an overall of 6'-6" feet finish to finish.

**Project Narrative Additional Information:**

Site:

The project is located at 204 Bluffton Road (Lot 8) in the Bluffton Promenade. It is one of the last remaining building pads to be developed. The building pad measures 26 feet wide by 51 feet deep and totals 1,326 square feet. An existing survey of the property has been provided and labeled Exhibit A. The Town of Bluffton zoning is Neighborhood Core – HD.

The site is situated between two existing structures located at 202 Bluffton Road to the North and 206 Bluffton Road to the South. The photos and location key provides existing photos looking at the property and looking out from the property. Images 1-3 are views from across Bluffton Road. Image 6 is a view of the lot from the rear parking court. Images 4, 5, 7 and 8 are taken from the center of the building pad.

Structure:

The project consists of a new three-story building of approximately 3,978 square feet conditioned. The first floor is planned to be a new real estate office. It will have a main entry located off Bluffton Road and a rear entry with access from the parking court. The second and third floors will be residential units. These units will be accessed from an exterior stair from the first floor as well as an interior elevator.

The front elevation addresses the street with a first-floor storefront protected by the weather with a three-story covered porch. Both residential units also have access to covered porches on the second and third levels of the structure. The building has two primary finishes. The first floor will be a brick veneer while floors two and three will be a horizontal siding. The main roof will be an architectural shingle and metal accents will be located on the front porch and rear porch. Addition clarification can be found on the architectural drawings.

## Comments and Responses: March 23 meeting

The following are modifications to the plans based upon the meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.:

- Soffits, porch ceilings and exposed roofing areas have been identified as a V-Grove finish compared to the previous smooth finish.
- All windows, besides transoms, have been changed to operable windows. These are either designated as double hung or casement.
- Caps and bases have been added to the columns at the first level to match the second and third levels.
- The horizontal lattice has been removed under the small stair landing.
- A new elevation drawing (1/A204) has been added to show the building behind the horizontal service yard screening.
- The service yard and rear porch have been enlarged to accommodate three condenser units, trash storage and electrical services

## Comments and Responses: January 26 meeting

### **Growth Management Review Comments**

Comment 1 Site: Show the location of staircases and service yards for adjacent buildings on the site plan to confirm proximity from the proposed staircase and service yard. Show connection to public sidewalk. As the colonnade, service yard and staircase extend beyond the property line, an updated letter of approval addressing these items will be required from the Promenade POA. SCDOT approval required to relocate sign (if relocation needed).

*Response: The adjacent stairwells and service have been shown on the site plans as shaded areas. The service yard on Lot 9 as well as an undocumented drainage inlet required the building to be flipped so that the second-floor access in from the Lot 7 side. All new proposed connections have been illustrated on the site plan. We have submitted to the Promenade POA with the new modifications and will present and approvals or comments when they are received prior to the meeting. We are working with SCDOT for the sign relocation and the required encroachment permits.*

Comment 2 Brick: A light-colored brick is proposed for the columns, which is not a brick color that is common to this area. For consistency with Old Town, brick must be a Savannah Grey color (brownish-grey) with a tumbled texture (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.G.3.h.).

*Response: The brick that has been selected is Old Georgetown. It is similar to Savannah Grey. We have included a color image on the color board and will bring in a full-size sample to present at the HD meeting.*

Comment 3 Columns: The colonnade columns are bulky given their width (2'-6") and reduce full visibility of the storefront. Show the location of the rear porch columns on the site plan (Sheet A001).

*Response: The front columns have been reduced to a finished width of 2'-0". All column locations have been shown on the site plan (Sheet A001) and the Landscape Plan (Sheet A002)*

Comment 4 Service Yard Fence: The fence is shown to be 6'-6"; fence height must be no taller than 6 feet (UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.9.c.).

*Response: Due to the repositioning of the building on the site (please refer to Comment 1 above) the service area was relocated to the rear of the building under the porch. This area will be for service and access to the fire riser room. The horizontal boards for screening have been extended to full height to match the side porch and stairs.*

Comment 5 Signage: Signage is not reviewed with the COFA application. Per Section 3.19 of the UDO, a Site Feature-HD is required for any signs proposed on the site.

*Response: We have removed any building signage from the submittal. When a signage design is selected, we shall submit the appropriate application and documents*

Comment 6: Final Plan Submission: The Final Plan, to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), must include all required materials, as indicated on the COFA application. A complete application includes providing a written response to these HPRC comments, identification of all materials, configurations and dimensions that are consistent with UDO requirements. If variations are sought, they must be identified in the narrative to submitted with the application. Details must include corner boards, wall section through eave, corner boards, balustrade/railings, window and door schedules, gutters, and other applicable items. Please review UDO Section 5.15 (Old Town Bluffton Historic District) for specific requirements. An incomplete submission will not be scheduled for HPC review until such time as all required items are provided.

*Response: We feel we have prepared a submittal that addresses the UDO and the comments from the January meeting.*

### **HPRC Review Comments**

Comment 1 Height: The building appears much taller than neighboring buildings; consider lowering each story by one foot. [Note: The height to the top of the cupola is 48'-8 3/8". The height of the adjacent properties to the roof ridge are 43'-0" (202 Bluffton) and 41'-9" (206 Bluffton).]

Response: The overall height of the structure to the peak of the roof has been reduce to +/- 42'-11". This has been accomplished by the following methods:

- Reducing the plate height of the first floor by one foot to a plate height of 11'-0".
- Reducing the plate height of the third floor by 6" to a plate height of 9'-6"
- Altering the main roof pitch from an 8:12 pitch to a 7:12 pitch.
- Deletion of the cupola.

These modifications have brought the height more in line with the neighboring buildings.

Comment 2: Front Porch Entry / Columns: The front porch entry should be restudied. The columns are too tall, lack detailing and should be no taller than one-story. For a masonry application, they are also too skinny. Traditional brick masonry should visually ground a structure and provide scale. The relationship between the windows and columns should also be restudied as the windows continue past the porch.

Response: The front entry porch has been redesigned to address the comments. The brick columns have been reduced to a single story, and the second-floor column has been modified to a more traditional wood appearance.

Comment 3 Side Porch / Stairs: Restudy the side porch structure. The skinny deck posts are too slender and would benefit from a thoughtful cross bracing or screening detail. Related to the porch, the underside of the stairs should appear finished from the street if they are left exposed.

Response: The side entry porch and stairs have been redesigned. Larger columns and horizontal screening have replaced the previous design. The side entry is now similar to other structures in the Promenade.

Comment 4 Rear Porch: Restudy the size of the rear porch columns which are disproportionate to the height of the porch. Consider changing the column size/design as the floors process upward.

Response: The rear porch columns have been restudied and adjusted to be similar with the front and side porches. The horizontal boards for the service area add a base to the upper porch levels.

Comment 5 Porch Roofs: Consider creating more interest in the porch roofs, such as adding exposed rafters.

Response: The soffit design for the front porch, rear porch and side entry have been redesigned to include exposed rafter tails.

Comment 6 Cupola: The cupola on the top of the roof should serve a purpose, create a unique detail, or be removed. A cupola that lacks detailing and makes more lap siding and corner boards is not appropriate. The structure is already taller than its neighbors based on its taller floor heights, so a strong argument as to why the cupola should be a part of the design is necessary.

Response: The cupola has been removed from the design to assist in reducing the overall height of the structure. (Please reference Comment 1 above)

Comment 7 Brackets: Front porch brackets should support a beam which supports the rafters. The beam appears to be missing. This comment also applies to the back door bracketed roof.

Response: Beam have been added in the appropriate locations for both the front porch and the rear door awning.

Comment 8 Windows: Restudy the window details in the brick walls. A brick header and sill detail is more appropriate to the Bluffton vernacular than wood casing. Window lites should have vertical proportions (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.). Consider making the square windows on the right elevation taller, even if they already meet the UDO requirement.

Response: The windows in the brick wall have been modified to show the appropriate brick header and sill. All of the windows have been restudied, and additional windows have been added to both side elevations to create a better interior environment

Comment 9 Doors: The Riser Room door appears to have three horizontal divides which do not match the architecture of the adjacent door.

Response: The rear riser room door has been changed to a flat door. It shall be screened from public view from the horizontal lattice.

Comment 10 Water Table: Consider a brick water table on the brick between floors.

*Response: We have restudied the elevations and have added a brick water table between the first and second floor, replacing the wood skirting on the previous submission. We have also added a base to the first floor to provide additional interest and a bottom termination.*