

# TOWN COUNCIL

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## STAFF REPORT

### Department of Growth Management

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	February 9, 2021
<b>PROJECT:</b>	Consideration of an Ordinance Amending the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards Related to Certain Building Types, Maximum Building Footprint, Size and Height
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	Heather Colin, AICP Director of Growth Management

**REQUEST:** Approve First Reading of an Ordinance Amending the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards Related to Certain Building Types, Maximum Building Footprint, Size and Height.

**BACKGROUND:** With an increase in commercial and mixed-used infill development within Old Town Bluffton Historic District, concern has been expressed that some buildings seem too large for the District. In response, a workshop was held with Town Council in November 2020, followed by discussion of building size with the Historic Preservation Commission in December 2020 and January 2021.

Old Town Bluffton, also known as the Old Town Bluffton Historic District, is among Beaufort County's most desirable locations for new development, including mixed-use and commercial. Its roots as a small coastal village remain intact with its physical development pattern, historic buildings, Lowcountry architecture, mature tree canopy, as well as its eclectic character. This unique environment has spanned centuries, prior to Bluffton's dramatic growth as one of South Carolina's fastest growing communities. As referenced in the Old Town Master Plan (Master Plan), this uniqueness is Bluffton's "franchise" and "the key to [its] economy."

The Master Plan, adopted by Town Council in 2006, is a policy document developed through extensive study and community participation that established a clear, unified vision for Old Town Bluffton. The vision guides the Town's policies, programs, and regulations, including the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The UDO includes site and architectural standards specific to Old Town that may vary by zoning district and building type. There are five (5) zoning districts in Old Town, as well as a variety of permitted building types based on traditional Lowcountry building forms that differ by zoning district. The zoning district map is provided as Attachment 2; the various building types are shown in Attachment 3.

While mixed use and commercial development are located mostly north of May River Road or along May River Road, the heart of Old Town Bluffton Historic District is increasingly attractive for more intensive land use due to the availability of undeveloped or underdeveloped land. As land and construction costs escalate, maximization of land area and building square footage often follow. This may appear at odds with Old Town Bluffton's

more organic development, particularly south of May River Road, where portions of the historic district were developed prior to zoning and single-family residences were the predominant use.

In 2020, the Town “calibrated” land uses, as well as some general and architectural standards for the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. However, these amendments may not have been substantial enough relative to permitted land uses and building size to ensure that Old Town Bluffton’s character, charm and eclectic nature will be maintained. By some accounts, certain building types, all of which are identified in UDO Sec. 5.15.8, may allow for building footprints, sizes and height that are incongruous with existing development and the Master Plan.

The purpose of the November Town Council workshop was to provide an overview of building size, including processes and regulations that could contribute to the development of larger buildings. This included a discussion of building types (Main Street and Additional), zoning districts that permit Main Street buildings, the “Shopfront” area on Calhoun Street and “Large Footprint Buildings.” Based on this discussion, Town Council expressed the following:

- Focus on the Neighborhood Center-Historic District (NCE-HD) zoning district. The Neighborhood Core-Historic District is not at issue as it was intended to be the district where more intense uses and larger scale buildings would be located in Old Town (e.g., Promenade).
- Consider reducing the maximum allowed building footprint to no more than 2,000 to 2,500 square feet and the maximum building square footage to 5,000 square feet.
- The possibility that there too much commercial development.
- That mass and scale should relate to the streetscape, and that both may need to be defined.
- Is may be time to update the Old Town Bluffton Master Plan as the Town’s vision for the district may need more specificity.

Staff also held an informal discussion regarding building size with the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) at its December 2 meeting. The HPC is responsible for approving the appearance of all buildings within the Old Town Historic District, applying the standards of the UDO. The general consensus was that building size and how it is perceived is a function of its design and site placement, among other things, and not necessarily the size of its footprint and/or its total square footage. Additionally, it was noted that some of the UDO requirements do not necessarily reflect the Old Town Master Plan.

Given the Master Plan’s age and the amount of development that has occurred in Old Town in the past 15 years, re-evaluation of the Plan may be in order. As part of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan update in 2021, this will be explored. The Comprehensive Plan is a state-required policy document that identifies the Town’s long-range goals and objectives and serves as a blueprint to guide its growth. Because the update process will occur over the next year, minor amendments are proposed which, if adopted, could be revised with more extensive study of Old Town Bluffton.

Based on earlier feedback from Town Council and from the HPC, the amendments in Attachment 4 are proposed. These amendments were shared with the HPC at their January 6 meeting for discussion purposes only.

**REVIEW CRITERIA & ANALYSIS:** When assessing an application for UDO Text Amendments, the Town Council is required to consider the criteria set forth in UDO Section 3.5.3, Application Review Criteria. These criteria are provided below, followed by a Finding.

1. **Section 3.5.3.A.** Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan or, if conditions have changed since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted, the consistency with the overall intent of the Plan, recent development trends and the general character of the area.

**Finding.** The proposed amendments are consistent with the needs, goals, and implementation strategies of the Comprehensive Plan to maintain Old Town Bluffton's eclectic, Low Country character.

2. **Section 3.5.3.B.** Consistency with demographic changes, prevailing economic trends, and/or newly recognized best planning practices.

**Finding.** As stated in the Comprehensive Plan, Bluffton's "franchise" is its unique character in a village-type setting that has evolved over centuries. The proposed amendments will serve to protect this character while Old Town's long-term vision is re-examined through the Comprehensive Plan process and, possibly, and update to the Old Town Master Plan. Smaller building sizes may help to protect Old Town Bluffton's development character while allowing for increased commercial and mixed-use development.

3. **Section 3.5.3.C.** Enhancement of the health, safety, and welfare of the Town of Bluffton.

**Finding.** Though not health or safety issues, smaller building sizes will help to maintain Old Town Bluffton's historic development pattern of smaller mixed-use and commercial buildings, thus helping to maintain the district's historic welfare and the Town's economic engine.

4. **Section 3.5.3.D.** Impact of the proposed amendment on the provision of public services.

**Finding.** The amendments will have no impact on providing public services.

5. **Section 3.5.3.E.** The application must comply with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

**Finding.** The application complies with all applicable requirements of the Applications Manual.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:** As shown in Attachment 4, amendments are proposed to the Main Street building type (Sec. 5.15.8.A) and the following characteristics that relate to size: 1) size range (the overall building square footage); 2) maximum building footprint (not to include porches); and 3) building height.

Differentiating building size and height for Main Street buildings in the Neighborhood-Core Historic District (NC-HD), a zoning district that exists north of May River Road and along portions of May River Road in Old Town, and the NCE-HD district acknowledges the differences between their development intensity. Changes to size and height for Main Street buildings in the NC-HD district are not proposed.

For the NCE-HD District (Sec. 5.15.5.B), amendments are proposed to increase the front build-to zone from 0-10 feet to 10-25 feet for both the Main Street and Additional building types. A front building setback from 10-25 feet will allow larger buildings to set back farther from the public right-of-way so as not to overwhelm the streetscape, which is typical of the NCE-HD development pattern, especially on Calhoun Street. The setback can be usable space, such seating or dining, that can serve as an extension of the public right-of-way and create more vibrant spaces in Old Town. The side yard setback would increase from five feet to eight feet for Additional building types, which is consistent with the Main Street building type.

The Additional building type allows developers to propose buildings that are not one of the approved building types within all five of Old Town Bluffton's zoning districts. Additional building types, however, can be desirable as the UDO does not limit its footprint or size. Therefore, an amendment to Sec. 5.15.5 (General Standards) is proposed to limit the building footprint and size to be no larger than the largest size permitted within any of Old Town Bluffton's zoning districts for other building types within a given district. As an example, the largest building size and footprint in the Neighborhood Core-HD district is 8,000 square feet and 3,500 square feet, respectively, for a Main Street building; therefore, an Additional building type in the Neighborhood Core-HD district could not exceed the maximum square footage permitted for a Main Street building.

**TOWN COUNCIL ACTIONS:** As granted by the powers and duties set forth in Section 2.2.6.C.4 of the UDO, Town Council has the authority to take the following actions with respect to this application:

1. Approval of the application as submitted;
2. Approval of the application with amendments; or
3. Denial of the application as submitted.

**PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:** The Planning Commission recommends approval to Town Council of the proposed Text Amendments as submitted. The Commission also expressed that additional work, in the future, is necessary and should

consider incorporating a context-sensitive approach where standards could vary by site location.

**NEXT STEPS:**

UDO Text Amendment Procedure	Date	Complete
Step 1. Town Council Workshop	November 10, 2020	✓
Step 2. Historic Preservation Commission Workshop	December 2, 2020 & January 6, 2021	✓
Step 3. Planning Commission Public Hearing and Recommendation	January 27, 2021	✓
Step 4. Town Council – 1st Reading	February 9, 2021	✓
Step 5. Town Council Meeting – Final Reading and Public Hearing	March 9, 2021	✓

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Presentation (Attachment 1)
2. Old Town Bluffton Historic District Zoning Map (Attachment 2)
3. Building Types (Attachment 3)
4. Proposed Amendments and Ordinance (Attachment 4)
5. Proposed Motion (Attachment 5)



*Consideration of Amendments to Chapter 23  
– Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5  
– Design Standards Related to Certain  
Building Types, Maximum Building  
Footprint, Size and Height*

**Presentation to Town Council**

**February 9, 2021**

**Department of Growth Management**

**Heather Colin, AICP, Director of Growth Management**

# Issue

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With an increase in commercial and mixed-used infill development within Old Town Bluffton (Old Town Bluffton Historic District), there is concern that some buildings may be too large and that the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) should be amended to reduce the size of Main Street and Additional building types, and to revise some related UDO standards.

# *Background*

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- Old Town Bluffton is an increasingly desirable location for new development and redevelopment, including mixed-use and commercial
- Such development has occurred mostly north of May River Road or along May River Road, but is increasing to the south, in the heart of Old Town Bluffton
- Compatibility with Old Town's character (historic, organic, architecture, tree canopy, eclectic nature) is a concern
- Old Town Bluffton Master Plan (2006) notes that Old Town's character is its "franchise" and "the key to [its] economy"
- Master Plan provides a unified vision for Old Town that guides policies, programs and regulations, such as the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)
- UDO includes site and architectural standards specific to Old Town, some of which were recently amended but may not adequately address concerns with building size



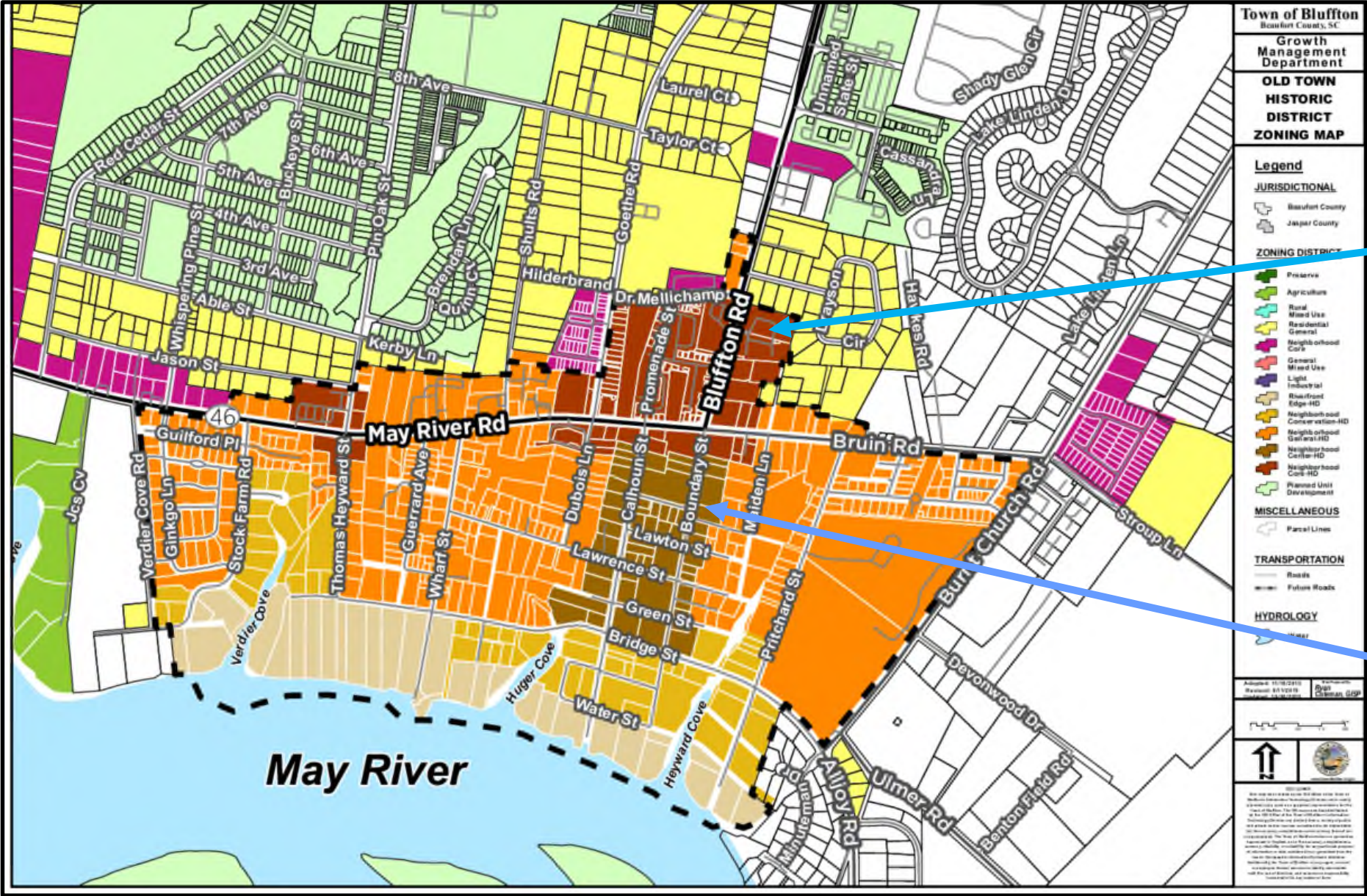
# *Recent Meetings Regarding Building Size*

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- **Town Council Workshop (November 10, 2020)**
  - Focus on the Neighborhood Center – HD District *[See next slide]*
- **Historic Preservation Commission (December 2, 2020)**
  - Mass and Scale were main discussion; good design is more vital than size
- **Historic Preservation Commission (January 6, 2021)**
  - Town Staff shared proposed amendments
- **Planning Commission (January 27, 2021)**
  - Consider context-sensitive standards for future work

# Old Town Bluffton Zoning Map





# Zoning Districts

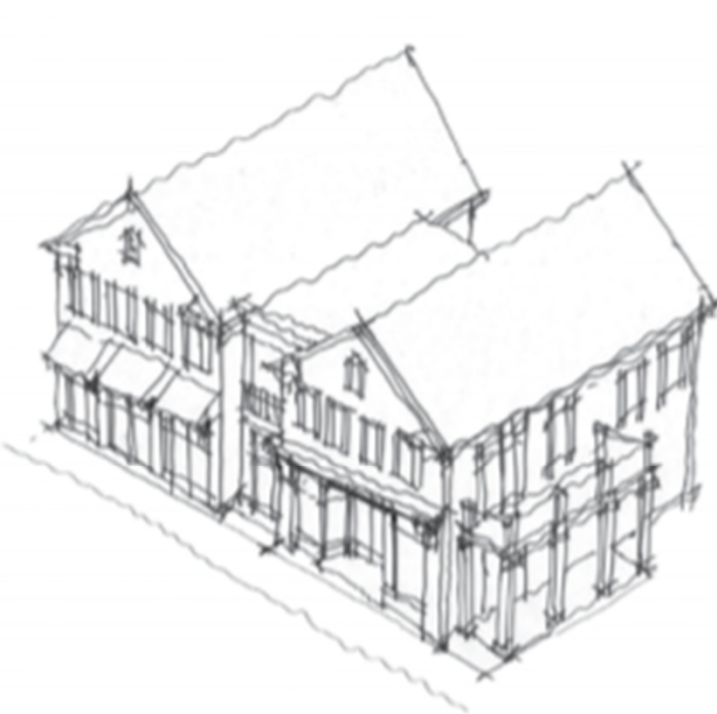
ATTACHMENT



- Old Town Bluffton has five (5) zoning districts. The type of development or use of land is determined by the zoning district for each property. Additionally, each district specifies which building types are permitted.
- The Neighborhood Core-HD and Neighborhood Center-HD are the most intensive in terms of land uses permitted and building size.
- Neighborhood Core-HD is the “commercial heart of the Historic District with the greatest potential for mixed-use and multi-story buildings.” The Promenade is zoned NC-HD.
- Neighborhood Center-HD (NCE-HD) is intended for “[m]oderate-intensity, mixed use development within the Historic District.” This includes portions of Calhoun and Boundary Streets south of May River Road and north of Bridge Street.
- Amendments are proposed only for the NCE-HD district, and for Additional Building types in all five zoning districts.

# Main Street Buildings (Characteristics)

## 5.15.8 Building Types

A. Main Street Building		
Same for NC and NCE Districts	<b>General:</b> Detached Mixed Use Building.	
	<b>Size Range:</b> 2,000 – 8,000 sq. ft.	CORE
	<b>Maximum Footprint</b> (not including porches): 3,500 sq. ft.	CENTER
	<b>Height:</b> 2 - 3 stories.	GENERAL
	<b>Notes:</b> A shopfront building. Retail/office space on ground floor. Office/living space on upper levels. Must have an arcade, colonnade, marquee or awning along the front façade (arcades/colonnades are preferred).	CONSERVE
		RIVER EDGE

# Neighborhood Center-HD Zoning District

ATTACHMENT



## B. Neighborhood Center Historic District (NCE-HD)

Planters  
Mercantile  
(1890)



The Pearl  
(2005)



*NCE-HD Precedent Imagery*

The red lines indicate the locations of required shopfront buildings (Main Street Building, Commercial Cottage, or Live-Work Sideyard). In addition to store-front buildings, civic structures are allowed within these areas.





# Neighborhood Center-HD Zoning District

ATTACHMENT



NCE-HD Precedent Imagery

## Neighborhood Center-HD Building Type Requirements:

	Front Build-to Zone	Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Rear Setback (from rear property line)	Side Setback (from side property lines)	Height (in stories)
<a href="#">Main Street Building</a>	0'-10'	50'-80'	75% - 90%	25'	8'	2-2.5
<a href="#">Commercial Cottage</a>	5'-20'	50'-60'	50% - 70%	25'	8'	1-1.5
<a href="#">Live-Work Sideyard</a>	0'-5'	50'-60'	40% - 75%	25'	5'	1.5-2.5
<a href="#">Duplex</a>	10'-20'	55'-70'	N/A	25'	8'	1.5-2.5
<a href="#">Triplex</a>		70'-100'				
<a href="#">Mansion Apartment House</a>	10'-20'	60'-80'	N/A	25'	10'	2-2.5
<a href="#">Carriage House</a>	One Carriage House may be built per primary structure and may have a maximum footprint of 800 sq. ft. Carriage Houses must be located behind the primary structure. See <a href="#">5.15.8.F</a> for a full description of this type.			5'	5'	1-2
<a href="#">Cottage</a>	5'-15'	50'-60'	N/A	25'	5'	1-1.5
<a href="#">Village House</a>	5'-15'	50'-60'	N/A	25'	5'	2-2.5
<a href="#">Sideyard House</a>	5'-10'	50'-65'	N/A	25'	8'	2-2.5
<a href="#">Vernacular House</a>	10'-20'	60'-80'	N/A	25'	10'	1.5
<a href="#">Civic Building</a>	5'-25'	N/A	N/A	N/A	5'	2

## Additional Building Types

As approved by the UDO Administrator or Board / Commission with approval authority in accordance with Article 2 of this Ordinance, additional building types may be allowed in the Neighborhood Center - zoning district. Building types not specifically listed shall be regulated by the following general requirements.

0'-25'	50'-100'	to be determined by UDO Admin.	25'	5'	1-2.5
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# “Additional Building Type”

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- Allows flexibility for innovative design that the UDO otherwise would not permit
- Not defined by UDO
- Not identified in Sec. 5.18.8 (Building Types)
- When and why this building type is permitted in place of other building types is not specified by the UDO
- Allowed in all zoning districts.
- In the NCE-HD, the site requirements differ from Main Street Building Types as follows:

Building Type	Front Build-to	Lot Width	Frontage	Side Yard Setback (min)	Height (in stories)	Characteristics	Building Footprint (max)	Building Square Footage
Main Street	0–10 ft	50-80 ft	75-95%	8 ft	2-2.5		3,500	2,000 – 8,000 sf
Additional	0-25 ft	50-100 ft	UDO Admin Determines	5 ft	1-2.5		UDO does not specify	UDO does not specify




# *Proposed Amendments*



# Sec. 5.15.8.A. Building Types, Main St Buildings

ATTACHMENT



A. Main Street Building		
General: Detached Mixed Use Building		Core •
Size Range: <del>2,000—8,000 sq. ft.</del>  <u>NC-HD: 2,000 – 8,000 sq. ft.</u>  <u>NCE-HD: 2,000 – 5,000 sq. ft.</u>		Center •
Maximum Footprint (not including porches): <del>3,500 sq. ft.</del>  <u>NC-HD: 3,500 sq. ft.</u>  <u>NCE-HD: 2,500 sq. ft.</u>		General
Height: <del>2-3 stories</del>  <u>NC-HD: 2-3 stories</u>  <u>NCE-HD: 2-2.5 stories</u>		Conserve
Notes: A shopfront building  Retail/office space on ground floor  Office/living space on upper levels  Must have an arcade, colonnade, marquee or awning along the front façade (arcades/colonnades are preferred)		River Edge

# Sec. 5.15.5.B, NCE-HD District Site Standards

ATTACHMENT



<i>Neighborhood Center – HD Building Type Requirements:</i>	Front Build-to Zone	Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Rear Setback (from property line)	Side Setback (from side property line)	Height (in stories)
Main Street Building	<del>0' - 10'</del> <u>10' - 25'</u>	50' - 80'	75% - 90%	25'	8'	2 – 2.5
Additional Building Types						
As approved by the UDO Administrator or Board/Commission with approval authority in accordance with Article 2 of this Ordinance, additional building types may be allowed in the Neighborhood Center zoning district. Building types not specifically listed shall be regulated by the following general requirements.	<del>0' - 25'</del> <u>10' - 25'</u>	50' - 100'	To be determined by the UDO Administrator	25'	<del>5'</del> <u>8'</u>	1 – 2.5

## Sec. 5.15.5, General Standards

ATTACHMENT



The maximum building footprint and building size for the Additional Building Type is proposed to be no larger than the largest footprint and size permitted by for other building types within the same zoning district.

Example: Neighborhood Core-HD Main Street building type allows a maximum of 8,000 sf and maximum footprint of 3,500 sf. An Additional building type could not exceed these square footages.

The existing or proposed building type shall determine the applicable lot standards. The maximum building footprint and building size for an Additional Building Type shall not exceed the largest building footprint and building size permitted for other building types permitted within the same zoning district. Building types shall only be permitted as listed in the applicable District. The maximum allowed density is based on the dimensional characteristics established for each building type in combination with other site characteristics that may limit the amount of land able to accommodate density. These other site characteristics include, but are not limited to, lot configuration, right-of-way, easements, protected natural resources, open space, topography, and parking.



## *Review Criteria*

# *Text Amendment Review Criteria*

ATTACHMENT



When assessing an application for a UDO Text Amendment, the Planning Commission and Town Council are required to consider the criteria set forth in UDO Section 3.5.3, Application Review Criteria. These criteria include:

1. **Section 3.5.3.A.** Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan or, if conditions have changed since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted, the consistency with the overall intent of the Plan, recent development trends and the general character of the area.
2. **Section 3.5.3.B.** Consistency with demographic changes, prevailing economic trends, and/or newly recognized best planning practices.
3. **Section 3.5.3.C.** Enhancement of the health, safety, and welfare of the Town of Bluffton.
4. **Section 3.5.3.D.** Impact of the proposed amendment on the provision of public services.
5. **Section 3.5.3.E.** The application must comply with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

# *Planning Commission Recommendation*

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The Planning Commission made a recommendation at their January 27, 2021 meeting to unanimously approve the proposed amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance.

# *Town Council Action*

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As granted by the powers and duties set forth in Section 2.2.6.C.4 of the UDO, the Town Council has the authority to take any of the following actions:

1. Approve the application as submitted;
2. Approve the application with amendments; or
3. Deny the application as submitted.

# *Proposed Motion*

ATTACHMENT



*“I move to approve amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Relating to Certain Building Types, Maximum Building Size, Footprint and Height.”*



# Next Steps

ATTACHMENT



UDO Text Amendment Procedure	Date	Complete
Step 1. Town Council Workshop	November 10, 2020	✓
Step 2. Historic Preservation Commission Workshop	December 2, 2020 & January 6, 2021	✓
Step 3. Planning Commission Public Hearing and Recommendation	January 27, 2021	✓
Step 4. Town Council – 1st Reading	February 9, 2021	✓
Step 5. Town Council Meeting – Final Reading and Public Hearing	March 9, 2021	✓



# *QUESTIONS*



**Town of Bluffton**  
Beaufort County, SC

**Growth Management Department**

**OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT ZONING MAP**

**Legend**

**JURISDICTIONAL**

- Beaufort County
- Jasper County

**ZONING DISTRICT**

- Preserve
- Agriculture
- Rural Mixed Use
- Residential General
- Neighborhood Core
- General Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Riverfront Edge-HD
- Neighborhood Conservation-HD
- Neighborhood General-HD
- Neighborhood Center-HD
- Neighborhood Core-HD
- Planned Unit Development

**MISCELLANEOUS**

- Parcel Lines

**TRANSPORTATION**

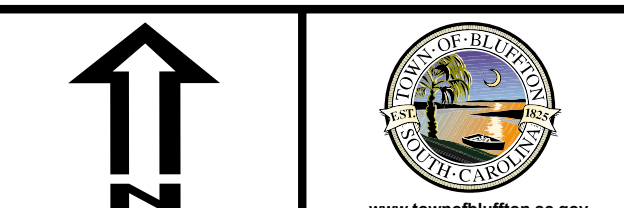
- Roads
- Future Roads

**HYDROLOGY**

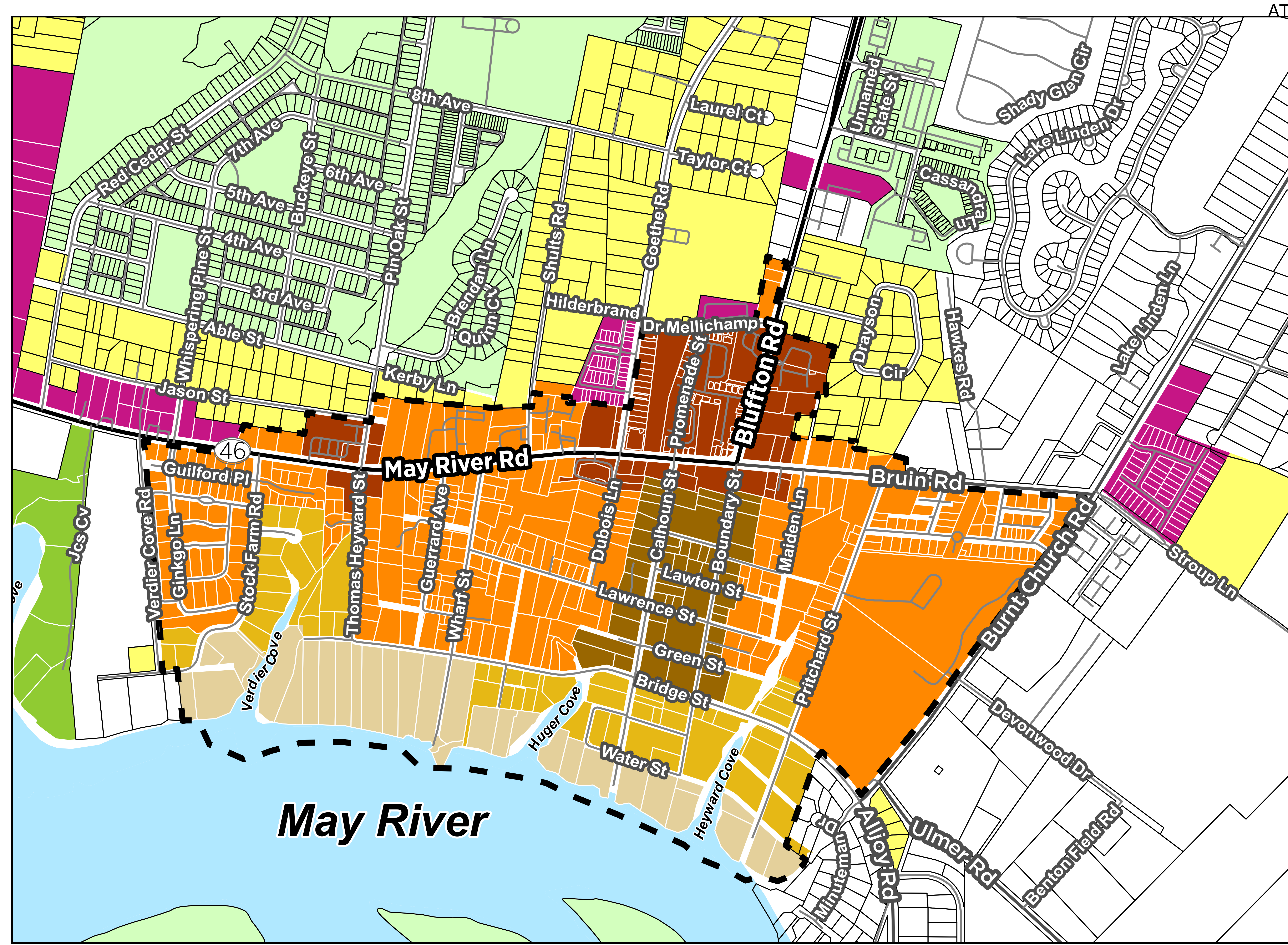
- Water

Adopted: 11/10/2015  
Revised: 8/11/2015  
Updated: 10/30/2020

Map Prepared By:  
**Ryan Coleman, GISP**



**DISCLAIMER:**  
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### 5.15.8 Building Types

#### A. Main Street Building

**General:** Detached Mixed Use Building.

**Size Range:** 2,000 – 8,000 sq. ft.

**Maximum Footprint** (not including porches): 3,500 sq. ft.

**Height:** 2 - 3 stories.

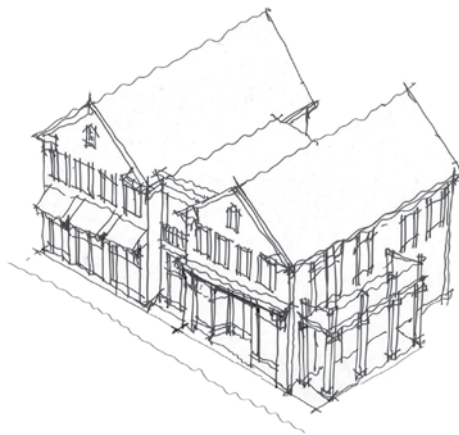
**Notes:**

A shopfront building.

Retail/office space on ground floor.

Office/living space on upper levels.

Must have an arcade, colonnade, marquee or awning along the front façade (arcades/colonnades are preferred).



CORE



CENTER



GENERAL

CONSERVE

RIVER EDGE

*Main Street Building Precedent Imagery*



\*Precedent images are for illustrative purposes only, with no regulatory effect. They are provided as examples, and shall not imply that every element in the photograph is permitted.

Introduction  
1

Administration  
2

Application  
Process  
3

Zoning  
Districts  
4

Design  
Standards  
5

Sustainable  
Development  
Incentives  
6

Nonconformities  
7

Penalties &  
Enforcement  
8

Definitions &  
Interpretation  
9



**B. Commercial Cottage****General:** Detached Mixed Use Building.**Size Range:** 600 – 1,800 sq. ft.**Maximum Footprint** (not including porches): 1,500 sq. ft.**Height:** 1 – 1.5 stories.**Notes:**

A shopfront building.

Similar to the historic Peeples' Store on Calhoun Street.

May contain a living unit in the attic story.

Typically 18' - 30' wide, but may vary.



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*Commercial Cottage Precedent Imagery*

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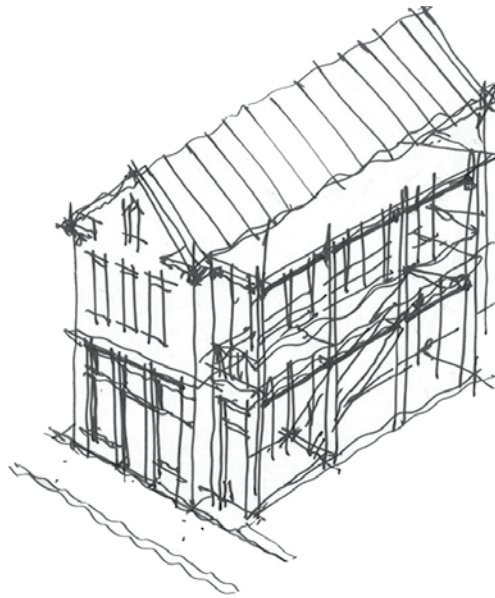


**C. Live-Work Sideyard****General:** Detached Mixed Use Building.**Size Range:** 1,800 – 3,200 sq. ft.**Maximum Footprint** (not including porches):  
1,500 sq. ft.**Height:** 1.5 – 2.5 stories.**Notes:**

A shopfront building.

A retail or office space on the ground floor,  
with one dwelling unit above.Must have a single/double story side porch  
or arcade.Building tends to be positioned with the  
non-porch side close to the adjacent side  
property line, creating a "side yard" which  
the porch faces onto.

Typically 24' - 40', including the side porch.



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**Live-Work Sideyard Precedent Imagery**

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**D. Duplex/Triplex**

**General:** Two or Three Attached Single Family Residences.

**Size Range:** 800 – 2,800 sq. ft. (per unit).

Maximum Footprint (not including porches): 1,000 sq. ft. (per unit).

**Height:** 1.5 – 2.5 stories.

**Notes:**

Each unit must have own separate, forward (street).

Facing entrance.

Units shall be arranged with fronts parallel to the street.

Units shall all be constructed simultaneously and be of the same architectural character.

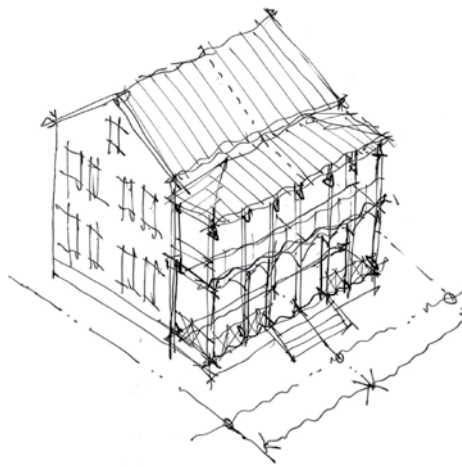
Units may be rentals or condominiums.

Units share one single lot.

One carriage house is allowed per unit.

Triplex may be 3 full stories if raised up on a full height basement.

Each unit is typically 15' - 30' wide.



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CONSERVE

RIVER EDGE

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*Duplex/Triplex Precedent Imagery*







Introduction	1
Administration	2
Application Process	3
Zoning Districts	4
Design Standards	5
Sustainable Development Incentives	6
Nonconformities	7
Penalties & Enforcement	8
Definitions & Interpretation	9

E. Mansion Apartment House

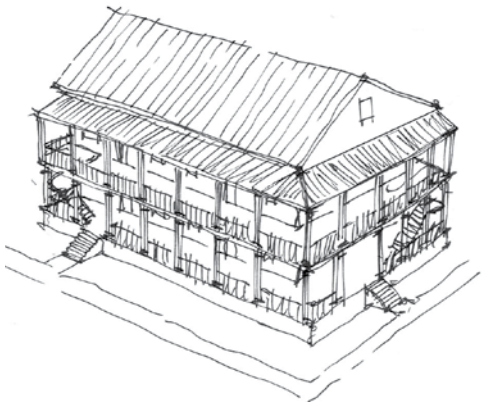
**General:** Detached Multi-Family Building (4-6 units).

**Size Range:** 1,800 – 4,500 sq. ft. (per unit).

Maximum Footprint (not including porches): 2,000 sq. ft.

**Height:** 2 – 2.5 stories.

**Notes:**  
 Building may contain 4-6 units.  
 Has the appearance of a large home.  
 Must have one primary entrance.  
 Shall have a shared front porch.  
 Units may be rentals or condominiums.  
 Building is typically center hall in format.  
 One carriage house is allowed on the same lot.  
 Typically 40' - 60' wide.



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Mansion Apartment House Precedent Imagery



\*Precedent images are for illustrative purposes only, with no regulatory effect. They are provided as examples, and shall not imply that every element in the photograph is permitted.





**F. Carriage House****General:** Detached Accessory Structure.**Size Range:** 250 – 1,200 sq. ft. (per unit).**Maximum Footprint** (not including porches): 800 sq. ft.**Height:** 1 – 2 stories.**Notes:**

Must be an accessory structure.

Only one permitted per lot, unless otherwise noted.

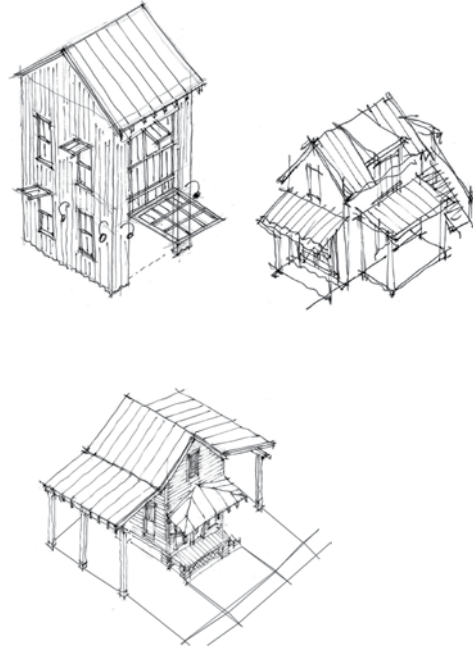
May be used as a garage, living unit or home business (or combination).

May function as a small-scale shop, studio or workshop.

Garages are limited to 2 cars, with maximum garage door widths of 12' each.

Must be of same general character as primary structure.

Must be placed behind the primary structure and towards the back of the lot



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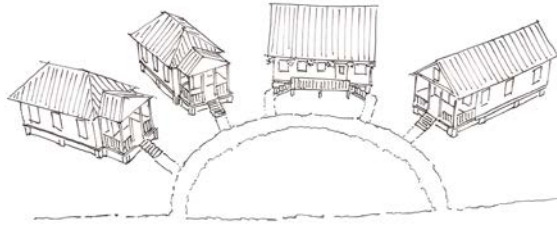


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*Carriage House Precedent Imagery*

\*Precedent images are for illustrative purposes only, with no regulatory effect. They are provided as examples, and shall not imply that every element in the photograph is permitted.



**G. Bungalow Court****General:** Detached Clustered Single Family Residences.**Size Range:** 400 – 900 sq. ft.**Maximum Footprint** (not including porches): 700 sq. ft.**Height:** 1 – 1.5 stories.

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**Notes:**

Units must face each other or an adjacent public ROW.

Court must contain a center green or common space.

All units share one lot (condominiums).

Bungalows shall be accessed by pedestrian paths.

Parking and driveways must be located behind units and along adjacent property lines - may be communal parking.

Carriage houses are not allowed.

Schemes for courts in which any of the bungalows face the back of adjacent buildings or turn their back on an adjacent street shall not be permitted.

*Bungalow Court Precedent Imagery.*

\*Precedent images are for illustrative purposes only, with no regulatory effect. They are provided as examples, and shall not imply that every element in the photograph is permitted.







## H. Cottage

**General:** Detached Single Family Residence.

**Size Range:** 700 – 1,500 sq. ft.

Maximum Footprint (not including porches): 900 sq. ft.

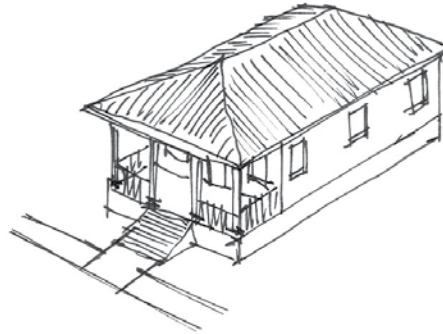
**Height:** 1 – 1.5 stories.

**Notes:**

Almost always has a front porch.

Typically 18' - 28' wide.

Typically positioned close to one of the adjacent side property lines.



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### Cottage Precedent Imagery



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**I. Village House****General:** Detached Single Family Residence.**Size Range:** 1,200 – 2,400 sq. ft.

Maximum Footprint (not including porches): 1,100 sq. ft.

**Height:** 2 – 2.5 stories.**Notes:**

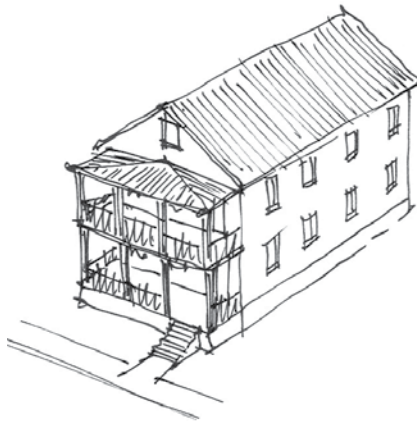
Almost always has a front porch.

Shall be narrower along the street front than it is deep.

Typically positioned close to one of the adjacent side property lines.

Principal mass of the building typically has a forward facing gable.

Typically 20' - 30' wide.



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*Village House Precedent Imagery*

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**J. Sideyard House**

**General:** Detached Single Family Residence.

**Size Range:** 1,200 – 2,800 sq. ft.

Maximum Footprint (not including porches): 1,200 sq. ft.

**Height:** 2 – 2.5 stories.

**Notes:**

Positioned with narrow side facing the street and a full-length side porch.

House tends to be positioned with the non-porch side close to the adjacent side property line, creating a "side yard" onto which the porch faces.

Typically 24' - 35' wide, including the side porch.



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*Sideyard House Precedent Imagery*

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**K. Vernacular House**

**General:** Detached Single Family Residence.

**Size Range:** 1,600 – 2,800 sq. ft.

**Maximum Footprint** (not including porches): 1,800 sq. ft.

**Height:** 1.5 stories.

**Notes:**

Similar to the Heyward House and Seabrook House.

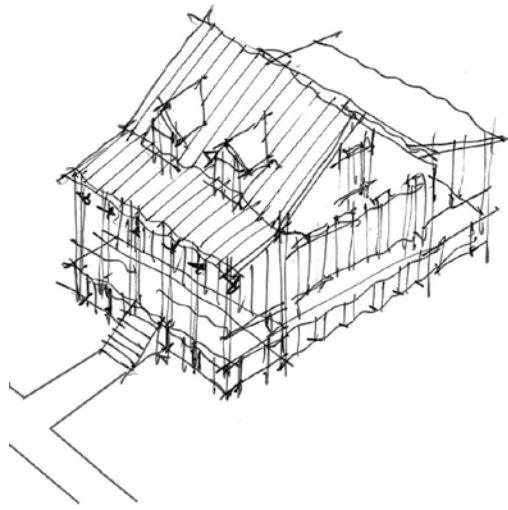
Must have a full-length front porch.

May have dormers.

May have side or rear wings, which are secondary to the main mass of the structure.

Typically 38' - 50' wide.

Gables always occur on the sides of the house, i.e., the roof ridge shall run parallel to the front façade of the house.



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*Vernacular House Precedent Imagery.*

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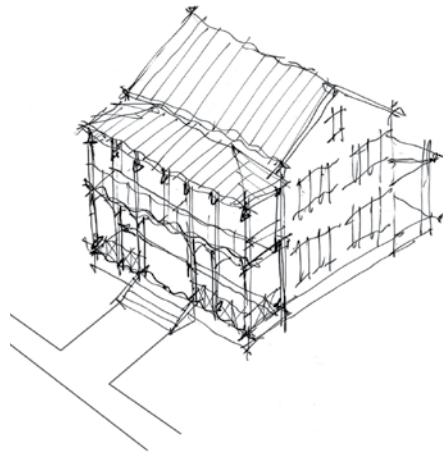
**L. Center Hall House****General:** Detached Single Family Residence.**Size Range:** 2,000 – 5,500 sq. ft.**Maximum Footprint** (not including porches): 2,000 sq. ft.**Height:** 2 - 2.5 stories.**Notes:**

Similar to Seven Oaks and Guerrard's Bluff.

May have a single or double height front porch.

May have side or rear wings, which are secondary to the main mass of the building.

Typically 40' - 55' wide.



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*Center Hall House Precedent Imagery.*

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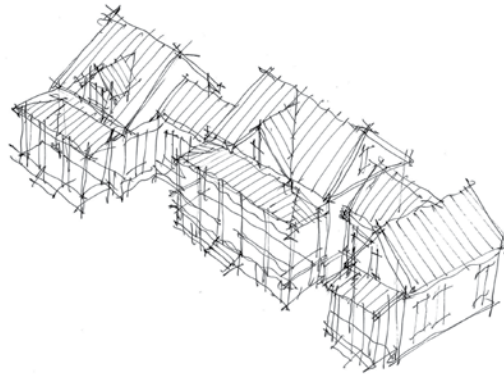
**M. River House****General:** Detached Single Family Residence.**Size Range:** 2,000 – 4,800 sq. ft.**Maximum Footprint** (not including porches): 2,000 sq. ft.**Height:** 2 - 2.5 stories.**Notes:**

Similar to Pritchard House.

Typically has a porch on both the street and river sides.

Large, central mass like the Vernacular House, but with smaller wings extending out from one or both sides.

Typically 60' - 90' wide.



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*River House Precedent Imagery*

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**N. Civic Building**

1. Civic buildings contain uses of special public importance. Civic buildings include, but are not limited to, municipal buildings, churches, libraries, schools, recreation facilities, and places of assembly. Civic buildings do not include retail buildings, residential buildings, or privately owned office buildings. Civic buildings should be monumental and should help to enhance the public realm, rather than take away from it. The buildings should evoke a civic character and be carefully designed to reflect the architectural character of Bluffton and the Lowcountry. The design of civic buildings shall be subject to review and approval by the UDO Administrator and the Historic Preservation Commission.
2. Civic buildings are reviewed on a case-by case basis. Although intended uses will be a significant determinant of form, there are several common design principals inherent to civic buildings. These principals affect their relationship to private buildings and to their setting as a whole.
3. Placement
  - a. Civic buildings should be oriented toward the public realm (streets, squares and plazas) in a very deliberate way.
  - b. Placement of buildings and primary architectural elements at the termination of public vistas can provide an appropriate level of visual importance.
  - c. Building entrances should always take access from the most prominent façade(s). Avoid entrances that take access from the rear or are visually concealed.
  - d. Placement of civic buildings, depending upon program and site, can often benefit from being set back from the adjacent build-to lines of private development. This allows the scale of the building to have more visual emphasis and can create a public space in the foreground. The amount of this setback should be carefully determined based on the urban design objectives of the particular site.
  - e. The primary massing of civic buildings should be symmetrical in form. The appearance of a balanced design increases the level of formality which is appropriate to the public use.
  - f. Massing of civic buildings, although often larger as a whole, should be divided into visually distinct sections. Massing divisions should provide visual order to the building and create vertical proportions within individual elements.
4. Scale/Height
  - a. The scale of civic buildings should be larger than corresponding buildings

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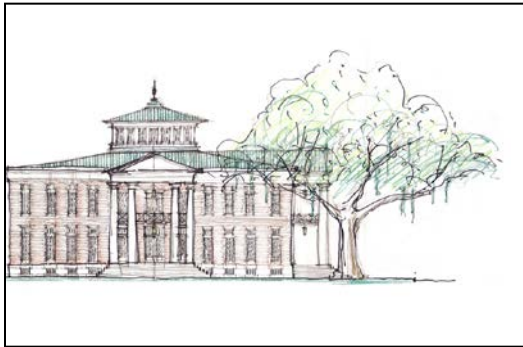


in order to be more prominent and visible across greater distances.

- b. Floor-to-ceiling heights and architectural details should be proportionately larger than those of private buildings that exist or are anticipated within adjacent blocks.
  - c. Prominent roof forms and additive elements such as cupolas can visually extend the height of the building.
5. Materials/Details
- a. It is of great importance that civic buildings be made of durable, high quality materials. The use of long-lasting materials is an expression of confidence in the future of the Town.
  - b. Civic buildings should be made of masonry, including brick, stone, and cast concrete. In some cases wood construction is appropriate and should be executed with the highest quality framing and cladding materials. Stucco should be avoided as a material that lacks scale and texture. If used, stucco should be traditional, have integral pigment, and be scored to define human-scaled dimensions on the façade.
  - c. Building details should be designed at two scales. At the larger scale, details should be robust to read from a distance. Closer to the building, the details of the lower levels should have another measure of refinement that can only be seen at the up-close, pedestrian scale.

*Civic Building Precedent Imagery.*

The following are examples of civic buildings which demonstrate the general architectural and urban character intended by these standards.



\*Precedent images are for illustrative purposes only, with no regulatory effect. They are provided as examples, and shall not imply that every element in the photograph is permitted.





## O. Church Buildings

- |            |
|------------|
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| CENTER     |
| GENERAL    |
| CONSERVE   |
| RIVER EDGE |
1. Church buildings contain uses of special public importance. Church buildings include, but are not limited to, churches, synagogues, other facilities used for prayer, contemplation by persons of similar beliefs or conducting formal religious services on a regular basis and places of religious assembly.
  2. Church buildings should be significant and should help to enhance the public realm, rather than take away from it. The buildings should be carefully designed to reflect the architectural character of Bluffton and the Lowcountry. The design of church buildings shall be subject to review and approval by the UDO Administrator and Historic Preservation Commission.
  3. Church buildings are reviewed on a case by case basis. Although intended uses will be a significant determinant of form, there are several common design principles inherent to church buildings. These principles affect their relationship to private buildings and to their setting as a whole.
  4. Placement
    - a. Church buildings should be oriented toward the public realm (streets, squares and plazas) in a very deliberate way.
    - b. Placement of buildings and primary architectural elements at the termination of public vistas can provide an appropriate level of visual importance.
    - c. Building entrances should always take access from the most prominent façade(s). Avoid entrances that take access from the rear or are visually concealed.
    - d. Placement of church buildings, depending on program and site, can often benefit from being set back from the adjacent build-to lines of private development. This allows the scale of the building to have more visual emphasis and can create a public space in the fore ground. The amount of this setback should be carefully determined based on the urban design objectives of the particular site.
    - e. The primary massing of church buildings should be symmetrical in form. The appearance of a balanced design increases the level of formality which is appropriate to the use.
    - f. Massing of church buildings, although often larger as a whole, should be divided into visually distinct sections. Massing divisions should provide visual order to the building and create vertical proportions within individual elements.
  5. Scale/Height
    - a. The scale of church buildings should be larger than corresponding buildings in order to be more prominent and visible across greater distances.
    - b. Floor to ceiling heights and architectural details should be proportionately





larger than those of private buildings that exist or are anticipated within adjacent blocks.

- c. Prominent roof forms and additive elements such as cupolas can visually extend the height of the building.
6. Materials/Details
    - a. It is of great importance that church buildings be made of durable, high quality materials. The use of long-lasting materials is an expression of confidence in the future of the Town.
    - b. Church buildings should be made of masonry, including brick, stone, and cast concrete. In some cases wood construction is appropriate and should be executed with the highest quality framing and cladding materials. Stucco should be avoided as a material that lacks scale and texture. If used, stucco should be traditional, have integral pigment, and be scored to define human scaled dimensions on the façade.
    - c. Building details should be designed at two scales. At the larger scale, details should be robust to read from a distance. Closer to the building, the details of the lower levels should have another measure of refinement that can only be seen at the up-close, pedestrian scale.
    - d. Decorative and artistic features or materials of a more formal or religious design, for example stained glass windows, should be permitted.

#### *Church Building Precedent Imagery.*

The following are examples of church buildings which demonstrate the general architectural and urban character intended by these standards.



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**P. Manufactured Homes (for replacement only, see Section 5.15.2.E. for applicability)**

1. Except as noted in this Section, the replacement of existing manufactured homes located in the HD zoning districts are exempt from the architectural standards of Section 5.15.6.
2. Placement
  - a. Placement of the manufactured home shall be in accordance to the lot standards prescribed for the Additional Building Type of the applicable zoning district.
  - b. Location of the primary entrance shall be located on the exterior wall facing the frontage street except in those cases where the existing lot configuration and required setbacks prohibit this orientation.
  - c. Service yards and utilities shall be located in the rear or side yard and fully screened from view.
3. Porches/Stoops
  - a. Design of porches and stoops shall be subject to Section 5.15.6.E.5 – Section 5.15.6.E.6.
  - b. Design of any associated railings, columns, or balustrades shall be subject to Section 5.15.6.H.
4. Foundation Piers/Skirting & Underpinning
  - a. Each manufactured home must be set on an appropriate foundation.
  - b. Design of any exposed foundation walls or foundation piers shall be subject to Section 5.15.6.H.
  - c. All hauling mechanisms, such as hitches, shall be removed prior to occupancy.
  - d. The entire perimeter area between the bottom of the structure and the ground of each manufactured home shall be skirted or underpinned and shall use the manufacturer's skirting material or other allowed material prescribed in Section 5.15.6.O.
5. Building Walls
  - a. Building walls may be clad in vinyl or aluminum siding (smooth, horizontal preferred) or a permitted finish material in accordance with Section 5.15.6.G.
6. Roof
  - a. Roofing material and configurations shall be in accordance with Section 5.15.6.J.

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7. Shutters

- a. Shutters are encouraged, and when used should be sized to match opening and situated as would be an operable shutter.

Introduction  
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Administration  
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Application  
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Sustainable  
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ORDINANCE NO. 2021 – \_\_\_\_\_

**TOWN OF BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON'S MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 23, UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE, ARTICLE 5 – DESIGN STANDARDS, RELATING TO CERTAIN BUILDING TYPES, BUILDING SIZE, FOOTPRINT AND HEIGHT**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Bluffton desires to improve the general safety, welfare, health and properties of the citizens of the Town of Bluffton; and,

**WHEREAS**, to establish the necessary provisions to accomplish the above, the Town of Bluffton has authority to enact resolutions, ordinances, regulations, and procedures pursuant to South Carolina Code of Laws 1976, Section 5-7-30; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Bluffton's Town Code and Ordinances provide guidance and requirements for development within the Town of Bluffton through regulations set forth to protect and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the Town's citizens, as espoused through the provisions of the Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan and as authorized by the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, Title 6, Chapter 29 of the Code of Laws for South Carolina; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Bluffton Town Council adopted the aforementioned standards, which are known as the Unified Development Ordinance, Chapter 23 of the Code of Ordinances for the Town of Bluffton, South Carolina on October 11, 2011 through Ordinance 2011-15; and

**WHEREAS**, the Unified Development Ordinance unifies the subdivision, land use, development/design regulations, as well as the Old Town Bluffton Historic District Code into a single set of integrated, updated, and streamlined standards; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council shall from time to time examine ordinances to ensure that they are properly regarded, enforced, sufficient and satisfactory to the needs of the community and can further suggest changes as deemed appropriate; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Bluffton Town Council desires to amend the Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Relating to Certain Building Types, Size, Footprint and Height.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA**, in accordance with the foregoing,

the Town hereby amends the Code of Ordinances for the Town of Bluffton, Chapter 23, Unified Development Ordinance as follows:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. The Town of Bluffton hereby amends the Code Ordinances for the Town Of Bluffton, South Carolina by adopting and incorporating amendments to Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Relating to Certain Building Types, Building Size, Footprint and Height as shown on Exhibit A attached hereto and fully incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 2. REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES. All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

SECTION 3. ORDINANCE IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT. This entire Ordinance shall take full force and effect upon adoption.

DONE, RATIFIED AND ENACTED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

This Ordinance was read and passed at first reading on \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

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Lisa Sulka, Mayor  
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

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Kimberly Chapman  
Town Clerk, Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

A public hearing was held on this Ordinance on \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

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Lisa Sulka, Mayor  
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

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Kimberly Chapman  
Town Clerk, Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

This Ordinance was passed at second reading held on \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

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Lisa Sulka, Mayor  
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina


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Kimberly Chapman  
Town Clerk, Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

**EXHIBIT A****Sec. 5.15.5.B (Design Standards - Neighborhood Center Historic District, NCE-HD)**

<i>Neighborhood Center – HD Building Type Requirements:</i>	Front Build-to Zone	Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Rear Setback (from property line)	Side Setback (from side property line)	Height (in stories)
Main Street Building	<del>0' – 10'</del> <u>10' - 25'</u>	50' - 80'	75% - 90%	25'	8'	2 – 2.5
Additional Building Types						
As approved by the UDO Administrator or Board/Commission with approval authority in accordance with Article 2 of this Ordinance, additional building types may be allowed in the Neighborhood Center zoning district. Building types not specifically listed shall be regulated by the following general requirements.	<del>0' – 25'</del> <u>10' - 25'</u>	50' - 100'	To be determined by the UDO Administrator	25'	<del>5'</del> <u>8'</u>	1 – 2.5

**Sec. 5.15.8.A. (Design Standards - Building Types, Main Street Building)**

A. Main Street Building		
General: Detached Mixed Use Building		Core •
Size Range: <del>2,000—8,000 sq. ft.</del> <u>NC-HD: 2,000 – 8,000 sq. ft.</u> <u>NCE-HD: 2,000 – 5,000 sq. ft.</u>		Center •
Maximum Footprint (not including porches): <del>3,500 sq. ft.</del> <u>NC-HD: 3,500 sq. ft.</u> <u>NCE-HD: 2,500 sq. ft.</u>		General
Height: <del>2-3 stories</del> <u>NC-HD: 2-3 stories</u> <u>NCE-HD: 2-2.5 stories</u>		Conserve
Notes: A shopfront building  Retail/office space on ground floor  Office/living space on upper levels  Must have an arcade, colonnade, marquee or awning along the front façade (arcades/colonnades are preferred)		River Edge

**Sec. 5.15.5 (Design Standards - General Standards)**

The existing or proposed building type shall determine the applicable lot standards. The maximum building footprint and building size for an Additional Building Type shall not exceed the largest building footprint and building size permitted for other building types permitted within the same zoning district. Building types shall only be permitted as listed in the applicable District. The maximum allowed density is based on the dimensional characteristics established for each building type in combination with other site characteristics that may limit the amount of land able to accommodate density. These other site characteristics include, but are not limited to, lot configuration, right-of-way, easements, protected natural resources, open space, topography, and parking.

## **Proposed Motion**

**Approval of Amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Relating to Certain Building Types, Maximum Building Size, Footprint and Height– Heather Colin, Director of Growth Management**

*“I move to approve amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Relating to Certain Building Types, Maximum Building Size, Footprint and Height.”*