

# Revitalizing Old Town



*Blending Historic charm  
and modern  
conveniences gives new  
life to a historic town*

ARTICLE & PHOTOS PROVIDED BY  
PEARCE SCOTT ARCHITECTS

**B**luffton's small-town charm isn't coincidental. A strategic collaboration of the Town of Bluffton, Historic Bluffton Foundation, and local architects and builders continue to preserve original structures and seamlessly add new buildings into the fabric of Old Town. Preserving history and the town's remaining buildings from the Antebellum/Reconstruction Era have resulted in a surge of tourism and numerous local, regional, and national accolades. Integrating new construction has increased the town's ability to accommodate visitors and create a vibrant local marketplace to support the growing population of full-time residents.

First incorporated in 1852, Bluffton was a one-square mile town located on the May River. Settled as a summer home community, plantation owners and their families would enjoy the high ground and cool breezes on "The Bluff" and escape the hot,





## *the charming old*

unhealthy conditions of the rice and cotton plantations. The river offered easy water access for transportation and recreation. Today, Bluffton spans over 54 square miles, with the heart of the city still located in the Historic District, also known as “Old Town”, which encompasses numerous historic homes, buildings, sites, and landmarks.

In 2005, the Town of Bluffton created the Old Town Masterplan which divided the Historic District into five Zoning Districts. The Zoning Districts reflect the character of the streets in the various areas of the Old

Town Bluffton Historic District. It is these zoning districts that guide the Historic Preservation Commission, a volunteer board that holds the functions, duties, and powers of a board of architectural review provided for in South Carolina state law. “The board reviews properties for their historical significance, making recommendations for National Register nominations to Town Council, reviewing potential Old Town Bluffton Historic District additions, and surveying/ inventorying historic properties within the Town of Bluffton,” says Evan Goodwin of

Pearce Scott Architects and Technical Seat holder on the commission. “The board also reviews and approves new construction that will be sensitively integrated into the existing streetscape of the district. This has created a vibrant town with traditional and contemporary architecture that is based on the rich heritage of Bluffton.”

Local architectural firm, Pearce Scott Architects, is working on both revitalization and new construction projects in Old Town. “The Rate”, a former general store which served as a place of commerce and a space for social interaction, was recently

## *the functional new*



PEARCE  
SCOTT  
ARCHITECTS

843.837.5700  
www.pscottarch.com info@pscottarch.com  
6 State of Mind Street, Suite 200, Bluffton, SC 29910





**Above,** Streetscape of the Promenade in Old Town Bluffton.

**Below,** A contemporary farmhouse designed for a family in Stock Farm, Old Town Bluffton.

repurposed into a functioning office space, currently housing a general contractor's business. Upcoming projects include the Red Dot Store and Deer-Tongue Building, which will be remodeled for use by modern businesses to serve our community, and Old Post Office, which will be a residential space. Residentially, "The Little Green House", a well-known contributing structure in the town and the Joiner House are slated for reconstruction. Pearce Scott Architects is involved in multiple new commercial and residential projects in the Promenade, Calhoun Street, and off May River Road. "Designing a property for Old Town Bluffton is a special honor," says Pearce Scott. "Being responsibly sensitive to the existing streetscape, nature, and views is an exciting challenge when we are asked to design a new building. We consider scale, traditional building materials, and modern conveniences. It

consistently proves to be some of the most interesting and innovative architecture."

Amanda Denmark, President of the Historic Bluffton Foundation, and project manager with Pearce Scott Architects believes "preserving and improving existing structures in Bluffton not only celebrates the history of our town but re-energizes the neighborhood by re-inventing each building's use." This revitalization encourages more residents and business owners to build in Old Town, revitalizing it as the city center once again. Now a seven-day-a-week destination, Old Town is offering residents and guests the charm of Old Town with the flare of a new village with restaurants, shops, galleries, and stunning views of the May River! **LSA**

