

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT

Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	May 19, 2025 (Special Meeting)
PROJECT:	COFA-03-25-019649 4 Tabby Shell Road, Lot 4 (Tabby Roads Development) Enclosure of an Existing Screened Porch
APPLICANT:	Joe DePauw (DePauw Architects)
PROPERTY OWNERS:	Jill and Steve Duncan
PROJECT MANAGER:	Charlotte Moore, AICP, Principal Planner

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant requests that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the following:

A Certificate of Appropriateness-Historic District to allow enclosure of an existing screened porch to create a Carolina Room of approximately 204 SF at the Main Residence located at 4 Tabby Shell Road, Lot 4 (Parcel R610 039 000 1184 0000) in the Tabby Roads Development. The property is in Old Town Historic District and is zoned Neighborhood General-Historic District (NG-HD).

INTRODUCTION: The existing screened porch enclosure is in the rear, southeast corner of the existing residence and is located underneath the main roof mass. Enclosure of the patio to a conditioned space will increase the square footage of the house from 1,166 square feet to 1,370 square feet, which is less than the 1,800 square foot maximum permitted for a Vernacular House building type. To properly condition the enclosed space, a small mini-split system would be installed in the side yard and screened.

As shown on Page A101 of Attachment 5, the walls on the rear (south) and left (east) elevations would primarily consist of double-hung, clad wood windows. While casement windows are used elsewhere, they include a simulated sash bar and are similar in appearance to the proposed double-hung windows. The windows will be surrounded by Hardie trim and panels that would include 1x4 Hardie sticking beneath the windows. On the left elevation, the existing screen door would be replaced by a wood casement door beneath a transom window.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) for conceptual review at the April 7, 2025 meeting. HPRC comments are provided as Attachment 6. It was suggested that the door/transom window combination be changed to

an 8'-0" door. The reasoning for maintaining this configuration is explained by the Applicant in Attachment 2.

As the mini-split system was a late addition to the plans, screening details must be provided to ensure compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.9.

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 enclosure has been designed to be sympathetic to the architectural character of the neighboring structures.

- 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 enclosure 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 enclosure will not deviate from these principles.

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 enclosure will be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5:

- 1) (UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.9) Provide screening details for the mini-split system to ensure compliance with the UDO.

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. The proposed enclosure complies with this condition.

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 non-historic resources; therefore, the enclosure will have no adverse effect on the public interest.

5. **Section 3.18.3.H.** The application must comply with the 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 condition 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 condition:

1. Provide screening details for the mini-split system to ensure compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.9.

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. Cover Letter
3. Final Application
4. Photos-Existing Conditions
5. Final Plans
6. HPRC Comments
7. Tabby Roads HARB Approval