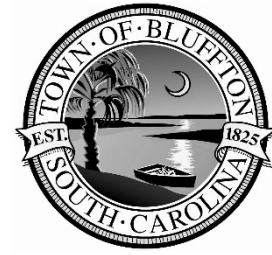


HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT
Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	March 4, 2026
PROJECT:	COFA-09-25-019941 1 Garfields Way Main Residence and Carriage House (New Construction)
APPLICANT:	Ansley Manuel (Manuel Studios)
PROPERTY OWNER:	Samuel Kopotic
PROJECT MANAGER:	Charlotte Moore, AICP, Principal Planner

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

A Certificate of Appropriateness-HD (COFA-HD) for construction of a new 2-story main house (an Additional Building Type) of approximately 2,478 SF and a 2-story attached Carriage House (garage) of approximately 1,188 SF to be constructed at 1 Garfields Way in the Moss Oaks Subdivision within Old Town Bluffton Historic District. The property is zoned Neighborhood General-HD (NG-HD).

INTRODUCTION: The subject property, 0.16 acres, is located in Moss Oaks, a small residential subdivision development that is accessed via Lawrence Street to the south and Wharf Street to the west.

The main building, with an approximate 1,794 SF footprint (1,510 SF heated and 284 SF front/rear porches) is not typical of any of the specific building types within the Neighborhood General-HD zoning district and is, therefore, classified as an Additional Building Type but will include materials that are traditional to Old Town. Compliance with the development standards (front build-to zone, side yard setback, and height requirements) is shown for the Additional Building Type (Attachment 6). The carriage house has a footprint of approximately 598 SF which complies with the development standards for the Carriage House Building Type.

The 2-story main building would be constructed on a raised tabby foundation with the main mass of the house under a side-facing gable roof with a shed dormer (all shingled). The front porch is located underneath a shed roof and is centered between two projections under front facing gables. The building features horizontal lap siding (Hardi), 2/2 casement windows (aluminum clad wood), casement and French doors (aluminum clad), porch

columns (wood), and Hardi trim elements. On the left elevation, the carriage house is attached and will have an internal, first-floor entrance to the main house from the garage. The right elevation would include a utility service yard. The rear elevation features a screened porch centered on the first floor, 8'-6" in depth, with brick steps that provide access to a surrounding paver patio. Brick will be Savannah Grey.

The Carriage House is a 2-story, 2-bay garage with a side-facing gable that has similar details to the main building, including horizontal lap siding (Hardi), asphalt shingles, and Hardi trim details. On its rear elevation, a service yard area is proposed. See Attachment 5 for architectural plans.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) for conceptual review at the October 20, 2025 meeting. HPRC comments are provided as Attachment 9.

The Moss Oaks Subdivision Architectural Review Board (ARB) provided comments dated February 17, 2026 (Attachment 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, New Construction and Alterations), 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 predictable and compatible development and architecture 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. Consistency with the principles set forth in the Old Town Master Plan and Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan.

- a. *Finding.* 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."

The development of new structures that comply with the Unified Development Ordinance allow for a more complete built environment within Old Town Bluffton Historic District.

2. The application must be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5, Design Standards.

Finding. Town Staff finds that if the conditions noted below are met or otherwise approved by the HPC, the proposed residence and Carriage House will be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5:

- 1) **Railings and Balusters:** Railings are proposed to be powder-coated aluminum on the front and rear porches of the main house. The balusters on the front porch of the main house are also proposed to be powder-coated aluminum. UDO Section 5.15.6.H.2.d requires railings and balusters to be wood (termite resistant), painted, or natural wrought or cast iron. Powder-coated aluminum has been approved for other residential properties in Old Town, but the HPC must determine that it is an appropriate material as it is not permitted by the UDO.
- 2) **Shutters:** Per UDO Section 5.15.6.M.1.e, shutters shall be constructed of durable wood. The applicant has requested the use of polymer composite for all shutters as shown in Attachment 10. Composite materials may be permitted if determined to be appropriate by the Historic Preservation Commission.
- 3) **Landscaping:** A total of three (3) protected trees will be removed (a combination of live oaks and water oaks) that require mitigation due to size (12-15 inches in diameter at breast height) (UDO Sec. 5.3.3.F.). One additional tree, a co-dominant live oak shown on the landscape plan as 24"-15" DBH, is rotting at its base according to an arborist report (Attachment 7); as such, an unhealthy tree to be removed will not require mitigation. As two (2) live oaks (five caliper inches total) will be planted, four (4) trees (10 caliper inches total) must be mitigated, which must be a minimum of 12 feet tall and have a tree canopy at maturity equal to the mature tree canopy of the trees to be removed (UDO Sec. 5.3.3.F.3.). If the UDO Administrator determines that any of the required trees cannot be provided on the site, she may require the Applicant to pay a fee-in-lieu of planting (UDO Sec. 5.3.8.).

3. Demonstration of a compatible visual relationship between new construction or alterations and existing buildings, streetscapes and open spaces. A compatible visual relationship must be generally of a similar structural mass, scale, height, proportion, directional expression of the principal elevation and rhythm of spacing, as applicable.

Finding. The proposed structures are visually compatible with surrounding buildings, possessing similar characteristics, including such as mass, scale, and height.

4. Compliance 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 the requirements of Section 3.18.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance have been met and recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve as submitted with the following conditions.

Conditions:

1. Provide four mitigation trees (10 caliper inches total), that are a minimum height of 12 feet and that will have a tree canopy at maturity that is equal to the mature canopies of the trees to be removed.

Determinations: The following alternative materials, which are not permitted by the UDO, will require a determination of appropriateness.

1. Powder-coated aluminum for the front and rear porch handrails and front porch balusters.
2. Polymer composite material for all shutters.

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 Map
2. Application & Narrative
3. Survey
4. Photos
5. Architectural Plans
6. Site & Landscape Plans
7. Arborist Report
8. HPRC Comments (10.20.2025)
9. Moss Oaks Subdivision ARB Approval Letter
10. Composite Shutter Info