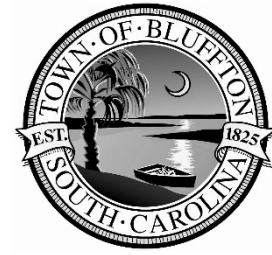


# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



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## STAFF REPORT Department of Growth Management

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	March 4, 2026
<b>PROJECT:</b>	COFA-09-25-019927 4 Blue Crab Street, Lot 51 Main Residence and Carriage House (New Construction)
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	William Court (Court Atkins Group)
<b>PROPERTY OWNER:</b>	Blue Crab Bluffton, LLC
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	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) to allow the construction of a new 2-story main house (an Additional Building Type) of approximately 3,800 SF and a 2-story attached Carriage House of approximately 886 SF to be constructed at 4 Blue Crab Street, Lot 51, in the Tabby Roads Development within Old Town Bluffton Historic District. The property is zoned Neighborhood General-HD (NG-HD).

*Note: This application was initially heard at the January 7, 2026 HPC meeting but was tabled to allow the Applicant an opportunity to revise the plan to address the multiple conditions in the initial staff report, as well as other items discussed at that meeting. See Attachment 7 for the Applicant's response to each item.*

**INTRODUCTION:** The subject property of 0.12 acres is located in Tabby Roads, a private community with an approved development plan that includes private covenants that regulate building size and setbacks, as well as certain architectural features. All buildings require approval from the Habitat and Architectural Review Board (HARB). The HARB approval letter, with conditions, is provided as Attachment 3.

The lot is located mid-block on the south side of Blue Crab Street between Wild Spartina Street and Pearl Street. Blue Crab Street serves somewhat similar to an alley; the homes on the north side of Blue Crab front Bruin Road and homes proposed on the south side will front Baiters Walk. Vehicular access to these homes is via Blue Crab Street. Baiters Walk is a pedestrian-only walkway, which the proposed house will front. Directly across the Baiters Walk is a row of six existing attached townhouses.

The house is one of four homes proposed by the property owner for the half-block on the south side of Blue Crab Street (Attachment 4). Originally planned for townhome development, both the Tabby Roads and Baiters Walk board of directors approved the future development of four single-family detached houses in 2020.

The 2-story main structure will have a 1,952 SF footprint (1,488 SF heated and 464 SF front and rear porches). The attached carriage house will have a 540 SF footprint. As the main structure is not characteristic of any of the permitted building types within the NG-HD district, the structure is classified as an Additional Building Type. Setbacks established by Tabby Roads are smaller than those required for the Additional Building Type in the NG-HD district.

The main structure features a cross-hip roof of standing seam metal, as well as a double-story front porch underneath a shed roof. A rear yard carriage house is attached to the main structure and will be underneath a standing seam metal pyramid roof that includes a rear dormer facing Blue Crab Street. The ground floor will include a double-bay garage; the second floor is a “bonus room.” Direct access between the main second floor residence and the bonus room will be via a main structure hallway. There will be no external access to the second floor of the carriage house.

Materials on the main structure include smooth Hardie lap-siding with 5-inch exposure on the ground floor and Hardie board and batten (2X) on the second floor. Hardie board and batten (2X) is proposed for the carriage house.

All windows will be 2-over-2 simulated divided lite casement and are shown to be metal clad wood. Door materials are identified as metal clad wood. The garage door is proposed to be a steel structure with composite overlay. The chimney will be tabby shell with a flat tabby shell cap.

Some proposed materials are not permitted by the UDO and would require approval by the HPC. This includes: 1) powder-coated aluminum railings and handrails (front/rear porch stairs and front/rear second-story porches and rear first-story porch); and, 2) boral trim in various locations (front/rear porch columns, corner boards, sills, drip caps, and certain service yard fence/screen elements).

The right/eastern side yard will include a brick fence that will be adjacent to and erected along most of the property line (but not on the property line). A brick paver path and service yard are also proposed in this side yard; the service yard will include two hog fence gates. As the fence will also serve as the screen for the service yard on the adjacent property, the service yard fence must be of a height that will effectively screen mechanicals and other items to be stored. A second service yard is located in the left/western side yard and will include two hog fence gates. A brick paver path is also proposed.

Elevations and architectural details are provided in Attachment 5. The Landscape Plan is Attachment 6.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) for Concept Plan review at the October 13, 2025 meeting.

The Tabby Roads Habitat Architectural Review Board (HARB) approved the revised plans, including the composite shutters.

**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 addition 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.**

- a. *Finding.* Town Staff finds that if the conditions noted below are met or otherwise approved by the HPC, the proposed main structure and carriage house will be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5. Conditions follow the order in which they are provided in the UDO.

- 1) **Porch Railing:** As the front porch height is 31-inches, a porch railing will be required per the International Residential Code and should match the second-story porch railing (which must be corrected to show one consistent railing style).
- 2) **Columns:** The 10-inch columns are proposed to be wrapped in boral material. UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.2.a. requires columns to be wood, painted

or natural wrought or cast iron. Boral has been approved elsewhere in Old Town for some trim work, but not for columns. A determination for use of this material is required.

- 3) **Railings and Balusters:** Railings and balusters are proposed to be powder-coated aluminum in the following locations: 1) at the second-floor front porch (with picket balusters); 2) at the front porch stairs; and, 3) the rear porches and stairs (with picket balusters). UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.2.d. requires railings to be 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.
- 4) **Doors:** The garage door will be “steel structure/composite overlay.” The composite material is not specified on the plan. UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.2.b. requires doors to be wood, metal, or metal-clad. The HPC must determine if the composite overlay material is appropriate.
- 5) **Trim:** Trim work is combination of Hardie and boral, the latter of which is not a material permitted by the UDO. The following are proposed to be boral: 1) corner boards; 2) drip caps; 3) top “rail” at second-story rear porch; 4) certain elements of the service yard gates; and, 5) sills. A determination as to the appropriateness of this alternate material is required.
- 6) **Landscape Plan:** A total of six (6) protected trees will be removed (all live oaks) that require mitigation due to size (8-10 inches in diameter at breast height) (UDO Sec. 5.3.3.F.). The total number of mitigation trees required is six (6) or 15 caliper inches 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.).

No trees are shown to mitigate the loss, only three proposed cabbage palms and a possible Japanese maple are proposed. Further, one street tree is required per UDO Sec. 5.3.7.A. but has not been provided. If the UDO Administrator determines that any of the required trees cannot be provided on site, she may authorize 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 that with the conditions 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 conditions and determinations:

**Conditions:**

1. Provide a front porch railing that is consistent with the second-story porch railing style and UDO Sec. 5.15.6.E.5.c.
2. Provide one porch railing style for second-story front porch.
3. Provide six trees (or 15 caliper inches) to mitigate the total loss of trees to be removed (UDO Sec. 5.3.3.F.), which must include one street tree (UDO Sec. 5.3.7.A.). If the UDO Administrator determines that mitigation trees cannot be provided for on the site, a fee in-lieu of planting may be required per UDO Sec. 5.3.8.

**Determinations:** The determinations below must be considered. If not acceptable, the HPC must provide an appropriate alternative.

1. Boral for the porch columns, corner boards, drip caps, fascia, top rail at the second-story rear porch, service yard gate elements (as shown on the plan) and sills.
2. Powder-coated aluminum for the porch handrails, porch balustrades, and pool gate.
3. Composite material as an “overlay” for the garage doors.

*Note: Per the Applications Manual, a Town of Bluffton Tree Removal Permit will be required for trees to be removed with a 14-inch DBH or greater.*

**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. HARB Approval Letter (01.28.2026)
4. Composite Streetscape View
5. Architectural Drawings
6. Landscape & Site Development Plans
7. Response to January 7, 2026 HPC Conditions and Comments
8. Manufacturer's Info (Boral, Railings)
9. Color Board