

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT

Growth Management Department



MEETING DATE:	August 11, 2026
PROJECT:	Updates to List of Contributing Resources to the Old Town Bluffton Historic District
PROJECT MANAGER:	Glen Umberger, Historic Preservationist

REQUEST: Town Staff requests that Town Council approve and amend the *Town of Bluffton Contributing Resources Map* to reflect the use of historic names for Contributing Resources to the Old Town Bluffton Historic District.

BACKGROUND: On February 10, 2025, the Historic Bluffton Foundation (“HBF”) made a formal request to Town Council requesting that certain changes be made to the *Town of Bluffton Contributing Resources Map* (“the List”). Specifically, to “(1) name those resources identified [only] by address; (2) change [the] names of resources with incorrect historical names; and (3) [to] delete two demolished resources.” These name changes would be used by HBF to erect new historical markers at the locations of all Contributing Resources (Attachment 1).

A “Contributing Resource” as defined by the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO):

Any building, structure, site, object, feature, or open space, as designated by Town Council, that adds to the historic associations, architectural qualities, or archeological values that relate to the documented significance of Old Town Bluffton Historic District. Contributing Resources are shown on the ‘Contributing Resources’ map as approved and amended by Town Council.¹

Council last approved and amended the List of Contributing Resources in September 2024, updated April 21, 2025 (Attachment 2).

On March 10, 2026, Town Council accepted the *Town of Bluffton Historic Resource Survey Update* (Stantec, 2025) which included the historic names for all Contributing Resources within the local Old Town Bluffton Historic District. In some cases, historic names were added to a record of a Contributing Resource in order to: identify those resources previously identified only by a street address; to expand the historic significance of a resource previously identified by a common name which reflected a business associated with the building at the time of an earlier survey,

¹ See *Unified Development Ordinance*, §9.2 Defined Terms.

regardless of whether that business was still in operation or not; or to replace a common misnomer with more accurate historic name.

According to the National Park Service, the Federal agency within the Department of Interior which oversees historic preservation activities at the national level, including administering the National Register of Historic Places program, the use of a property's historic name for identification purposes "...is preferred for general reference because it continues to be meaningful regardless of changes in ownership or use and most often relates to the reasons the property is eligible for National Register listing."² Furthermore, the historic name is "[t]he name that best reflects the property's historic importance or was commonly used for the property during the period of significance."³ Additionally, in South Carolina, the Department of Archives and History, as the State Historic Preservation Office ("SHPO") offers that "[i]n most cases, the historic name is based on the original owner or builder of the structure or its historic use."⁴ Using these criteria and the results of the 2025 Historic Resources Survey Update, Town Staff revised the nomenclature for all Contributing Resources to the Old Town Bluffton Historic District to reflect the use of a Resource's historic name (Attachment 3).

The use of the historic name for Contributing Resources moving forward will ensure that our Resources are properly and more accurately documented in our records and will avoid future confusion as to a Resource's significance within the Old Town Bluffton Historic District.

NEXT STEPS: By Town Council's Resolution (Attachment 4), these names will be used to update and publish the *Town of Bluffton Contributing Resources Map*.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Historic Bluffton Foundation Request to Town Council (February 10, 2025)
2. *Town of Bluffton Contributing Resources Map*
3. Contributing Resource Naming Proposal
4. Draft Resolution

² "Name of Property," *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Form*, NRB16A (1997): 8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Survey Manual, South Carolina Statewide Survey of Historic Properties*, (December 2018): 22.