

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



STAFF REPORT Department of Growth Management

MEETING DATE:	November 5, 2025
PROJECT:	COFA-04-25-019723 54 Stock Farm Road New Construction: Single-Family and Carriage House
APPLICANT:	Amanda Denmark (Pearce Scott Architects)
PROPERTY OWNERS:	Erik and Paige Belchinger
PROJECT MANAGER:	Charlotte Moore, AICP, Principal Planner

APPLICATION REQUEST: The Applicant, Amanda Denmark, on behalf of owners, Erik and Paige Belchinger, requests that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the following application:

A Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the construction of a 1.5-story Main Residence (an Additional Building Type) of approximately 3,008 heated SF and a 1.5-story detached Carriage House of approximately 602 SF located at 54 Stock Farm Road in Old Town Historic District and zoned Neighborhood Conservation-Historic District (NCV-HD).

INTRODUCTION: The subject property, 0.85 acres, is located on Stock Farm Road outside of the boundaries of the Stock Farm development. The property is undeveloped except for a tabby shell chimney remnant ($\pm 4'-2" \times 9'-8"$), which is identified as an historic resource on the South Carolina Statewide Survey of Historic Properties. The chimney will remain intact in the rear yard of the proposed house.

The property was previously addressed as 45 Verdier Cove Road but was readdressed to 54 Stock Farm Road earlier this year as vehicular access to the property will be via Stock Farm Road. In the southeast corner of the property, as shown in the survey (Attachment 4), the current roadway encroaches onto the property. Per the survey notation, the road configuration will remain for the foreseeable future, and the property owners will maintain it until such time as the land is conveyed.

The primary structure, a 1.5 story ($\pm 30'-4"$ tall) single-family residence of approximately 3,008 square feet, is an Additional Building Type as it does not have full characteristics of any one of the allowed building types within the NCV-HD district. The development setbacks are met, including the front build-to line.

The home will be constructed on a raised tabby shell foundation and features a partial-façade front porch and a near full-façade rear porch on the main mass, two small wings, two brick chimneys, Hardie lap board with 7” exposure and board and batten siding, and a standing seam metal roof with exposed rafter tails. Windows are a combination of double-hung and casement of unspecified clad material. Doors are identified as wood on the application. False vents of unspecified material are proposed in the gable-ends of the main mass and the small right mass. Powder-coated stair rails are proposed for all staircases.

The detached Carriage House will be constructed with the main mass underneath a side-facing gable. A smaller lean-to mass will extend most of the length of the front elevation. In the rear, an unenclosed lean-to with a mid-roof connection is proposed and will be supported by wood columns with tabby bases. The carriage house will include 2-bays on the south elevation and two sets of French doors on the west elevation.

A fence with wood posts and hog wire infill will be constructed in a portion of the yard, connecting to an existing stockade fence in the rear yard along Verdier Road right-of-way.

This project was initially presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee for Concept Plan review on May 19, 2025.

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 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 new construction proposed as part of this request will be in conformance with those standards if the conditions noted in item 2 of this Section are met.
- b. *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 addition of a proposed single-family structure and Carriage House add to the

district and helps provide completeness to the neighborhood and overall district.

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

a. *Findings.* Town Staff finds that if the conditions noted below are met and positive determinations made by the HPC, the proposed construction will be in conformance with applicable architectural design provisions provided in Article 5:

- 1) **Service Yards:** Waste receptacles are not shown in the service yard. If receptacles are to be stored on the exterior of the main structure or carriage house, the service yard may need to be expanded or second service yard provided that conforms to the requirements of UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.9. The gate in front of the electric meter must be removed per the instruction of the electric utility.
- 2) **Chimney Cap:** The proposed chimney caps are a single course of brick rowlock, which is not a traditional configuration for Old Town Bluffton. While UDO Sec. 5.15.6.B. states that “[c]himney caps provide the opportunity for a wide variety of details,” the HPC should determine if the proposed configuration is appropriate.
- 3) **Columns and Posts:** Identification of the material(s) to be used for all posts and columns must be identified on the plan. The porch detail in Attachment 5 also lacks material information for some related trim pieces (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H. and UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P.).
- 4) **Doors:** The Project Analysis sheet indicates that wood will be used for exterior doors, which complies with the UDO. All exterior doors must be labeled on the plan, with operation shown, and match the door material that is to be indicated in the door schedule. Consider changing the four-lite door with panel in the rear of the main structure to match the six-lite doors at the porch and the carriage house.
- 5) **Vents:** False vents are proposed in most of the gable ends of the main structure but a detail, including vent material, has not been provided and must be identified in the Final Plan.
- 6) **Railings:** A non-traditional powder-coated aluminum railing is proposed with horizontal balusters for all exterior stairs. The distance between balusters is 3.5” (the UDO requires a minimum of 4” o.c.). The handrail dimension is not provided (the UDO requires a minimum of 2-3/4”). Railings, balusters and

handrails are permitted to be wood (termite resistant), painted or natural wrought iron (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H.2.d.). A determination of the HPC is required for this alternative railing.

- 7) **Details:** Some details required of the UDO do not have proposed material identified, which must be shown to shown compliance with applicable UDO Sections, including UDO Sections 5.15.6.N., O. and P.
- 8) **Landscape Plan:**
 - a. Along the front elevation of the main structure, a foundation planting area at least eight feet wide shall be maintained. The foundation planting shall incorporate a mixture of trees, shrubs, and ground covers in order to soften the building façade (UDO Sec. 5.3.3.E.)
 - b. A Tree Permit will be required to remove trees that are 14 or more inches in diameter at breast height (UDO Sec. 3.22.2.B.3.).
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. If the conditions noted in #2 of this report are met, a compatible visual relationship will be demonstrated with surrounding properties, streetscapes and open spaces.

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 Section 2.2.6.E.2. Town Staff finds that with the conditions 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 conditions:

1. If waste receptacles are to be stored on the exterior of the main structure or carriage house, the service yard may need to be expanded or second service yard provided that conforms to the requirements of UDO Sec. 5.15.5.F.9.

2. Remove the service yard gate in front of the electric meter.
3. Identify the material(s) to be used for all posts and columns, as well as all trim pieces in the porch detail to show compliance with UDO Sec. 5.15.6.H. and UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P.
4. Provide door operations and label exterior doors to match doors provided in the door schedule; the schedule must also be updated to show door materials (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.I.).
5. Provide a vent detail.
6. For the details (Sheets A501 and A502), provide applicable missing materials and dimensions, which must be shown to shown compliance with applicable UDO Sections, including UDO Sections 5.15.6.N., O. and P.
7. Along the front elevation of the main structure, provide a foundation planting area at least eight feet wide to include a mixture of trees, shrubs, and ground covers (UDO Sec. 5.3.3.E.)
8. A Tree Permit will be required to remove trees that are 14 or more inches in diameter at breast height (UDO Sec. 3.22.2.B.3.)

Further, Town Staff requests a determination by the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the appropriateness of the following:

1. The proposed chimney caps.
2. The proposed railings.

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 & Zoning Map
2. Application
3. Narrative
4. Survey

5. Plans
6. Landscape Plan
7. HPRC Comments 05.19.2025
8. Photos