

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



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## STAFF REPORT

### Department of Growth Management

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	December 3, 2025
<b>PROJECT:</b>	COFA-10-25-019966 5 Garfields Way Main Residence and Carriage House (New Construction)
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Scott Middleton (Southern Coastal Homes)
<b>PROPERTY OWNER:</b>	5 Garfields Way, 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) for construction of a new 2-story main house (an Additional Building Type) of approximately 2,648 SF and a 1-story detached Carriage House (garage) of approximately 264 SF to be constructed at 5 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 1,909 SF footprint (1,508 SF heated and 500 SF front/side porches and uncovered patio) 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 5). However, a portion of the side yard porch encroaches into the 25-foot rear yard setback. A variance must be obtained from the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow the encroachment, or the porch must be redesigned. The carport structure of approximately 264 SF footprint complies with the development standards for the Carriage House Building Type.

The 2-story main building would be constructed on a raised tabby foundation under a cross-gable roof (architectural asphalt shingles) with a partial façade front porch under a standing-seam metal shed roof. The building features horizontal lap siding (Hardi), vertical board and

batten (Hardi), 2/1 single-hung windows (vinyl), casement and French doors (wood), porch columns (wood), deep eaves, and wood or Hardi trim elements. A screened porch is proposed on the left elevation. The right elevation would include a 1-story “wing” that has a lean-to appearance from the front elevation. A utility service yard would also be located on this elevation. The rear elevation features a stoop along the entirety of the ground floor, four feet in depth, with brick steps along its length that provide access to a swimming pool and surrounding paver decking.

The Carriage House is a 1-story, 1-bay garage with a front-facing gable that has similar details to the main building, including an exposed tabby foundation, board and batten siding (Hardi) and wood trim. On its right elevation, a trellis (wood) and service yard are proposed. See Attachment 6 for architectural plans.

This project was presented to the Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) for conceptual review at the October 27, 2025 meeting. HPRC comments are provided as Attachment 11.

The Moss Oaks Subdivision Architectural Review Board (ARB) provided comments dated October 2, 2025 (Attachment 10).

**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 in Old Town 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 residence and Carriage House will be in conformance with applicable provisions provided in Article 5:

- 1) **Rear Yard Setback:** A portion of the side porch encroaches into the 25-foot rear yard setback required for the NG-HD district. A variance from the Town of Bluffton Board of Zoning Appeals will be required to maintain the porch in its proposed location, or the porch must be redesigned to remove it from the rear yard.
- 2) **Left Elevation of Main Structure:** The left elevation of the main structure is partially hidden by the screened porch and must be provided.
- 3) **Porch Screen:** The porch screen detail (Sheet A-8, 4), appears to show screen placement on the outside of an aluminum frame. The elevations suggest that the porch frame is to be wood. Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.E.5.f., any architectural expression, such as posts and railings, must occur on the outside of the screen. The frame should be wood to be consistent with other trim materials.
- 4) **Wall Section:** The wall section (Sheet A-7, 1) lacks some details, including soffit material and type (v-groove or tongue and groove) per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.P., frieze board (shown on the elevations but not the detail), and fascia material. Corner boards must be beaded or have ¼ round inset trim mold. This is not shown on the wall section (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.N.3.). Further, there is inconsistency between some materials provided on the Final Plan application (Hardi is noted for some trim but shown as wood on the plans, such as the corner board). Likewise, some details for foundation sill (2), porch column (3), and corner board (4) are missing.
- 5) **Fence:** A 6'-0" tall pressure-treated wood dog-ear fence is proposed along the rear property line and exceeds the opacity allowed by the UDO. UDO Sec. 5.15.6.K. requires that fences have a minimum opacity of 25%. A 4'-0" tall wood living fence with hog-wire infill will extend from the dog-ear fence to the rear of both the main structure and carport structure to enclose the pool area. This fence requires a top rail per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.K.3.g.
- 6) **Brick:** Brick is proposed to be used for portions of all stoops and porches, but the specific brick type has not been provided. To ensure that the brick

to be used is consistent with brick used elsewhere in Old Town, it should be a greyish-brownish brick (Savannah Grey or similar) that is recycled, salvaged or locally produced unless otherwise approved by the HPC (UDO Sec. 5.15.6.G.).

- 7) **Tree Removal Permit:** Per the Applications Manual, a Town of Bluffton Tree Removal Permit will be required to remove trees with a diameter at breast height(dbh) that is 14 or more inches.

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.

1. A variance must be obtained from the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow a portion of the side porch to encroach into the rear yard setback or the porch redesigned to remove the encroachment.
2. The entire left elevation of the main structure must be shown fully visible and not obscured by the side porch screen.
3. Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.E.5.f., all architectural expressions must be located on the outside of the porch screen, and the porch framework should be wood to match other trim.
4. Update the wall section to show all required details, materials, and required configurations per Sec. 5.15.6.N. (corners and water tables), Sec. 5.15.6.O. (skirting), and Sec. 5.15.6.P. (soffit and frieze) that comply with the UDO.

5. Per UDO Sec. 5.15.6.K., the rear yard dog-ear fence must have a minimum opacity of 25%, and the living fence must include a top rail.
6. Provide a cut sheet or sample of the brick to be used, which must be a greyish-brown color, (e.g., Savannah Grey).
7. Per the Applications Manual, a Town of Bluffton Tree Removal Permit is required to be approved before removal of any tree that is 14 or more inches diameter at breast height.

**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
3. Narrative
4. Photos
5. Site Plan
6. Architectural Plan
7. Landscape Plan
8. Door Cut Sheets
9. Window Cut Sheets
10. Moss Oaks Subdivision ARB Approval Letter
11. HPRC Comments (10.27.2025)