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THE TOWN OF KILL DEVIL HILLS
NORTH CAROLINA

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

November 12, 2025

Memorandum

To: Debora P. Diaz, Town Manager

From: Cameron Ray, Assistant Planning Director 

Subject: Local Historic Landmark Designation – 409 West Sportsman Drive: Ducey Cottage –
Public Hearing

Attached with this memorandum you will find an ordinance for designation of 409 West Sportsman Drive, Ducey Cottage, as a Local Historic Landmark. You will also find the designation report, which provides justification for the designation and State comments.

The attached designation report for 409 West Sportsman Drive was reviewed by the NC Department of Cultural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office and has obtained non-binding State comments regarding the designation. On November 05, 2025, the Historic Landmarks Commission held a public hearing for designation of 409 West Sportsman Drive with all comments positive for its designation.

The Commission is forwarding the ordinance designating, the Ducey Cottage, located at 409 West Sportsman Drive, as a Local Historic Landmark to the Board of Commissioners recommending adoption after the required public hearing. Once adopted, the ordinance will be filed with the register of deeds and the structure will be subject to the regulations outlined in Chapter 31 of the Town Code.

Staff recommends setting the required public hearing for this designation for December 08, 2025.

Local Historic Landmark Report
409 West Sportsman Drive

This application initiates consideration of a property for designation as a Kill Devil Hills Local Historic Landmark by the Historic Landmarks Commission and the Board of Commissioners. It enables evaluation of the resources to determine if it qualifies for designation.

1. Historical Name
Ducey Cottage
2. Location of the Property
409 W Sportsman Drive
Pin #988517009265
Attached is a copy of a Dare County Tax Map depicting the property.
3. Owner(s) of the Property
Charles J Owens
Denise Owens
Elijah Owens
Joseph Owens
Oscar Elias Jr Owens
Jeanne Owens
Thomas Owens
Victoria Owens
Margaret Smith
582 Fire Towner Rd, Sylvania, GA, 30467
4. Representative Photographs of the Property
Photos are attached.
5. Deed Book and Legal Description of the Property
Attached is a complete chain of title for the property. The most current deed reference is in Dare County Deed Book 2381 page 775 The property is shown on Dare County Tax Map 9885(17). The Tax Parcel number is 001537000. Dare County tax Record is attached for reference.

Architectural Description of the Property

The house located at 409 Sportsman Drive is clean a one-story single-family structure on a quiet street in Kill Devil Hills of North Carolina. The house is comprised of a squared volume with a front projection forming a protected screen porch entry. The clean white color, light blue eaves and low slope roof identify it as a flat top cottages that are indigenous to the Outer Banks. In terms of materials, the house is primarily a smooth stucco veneer over what looks to be concrete masonry units. It is painted a continuous bright white color throughout. The roofs are slightly canted to better shed water but it's

not visible to the viewer standing at eye level. Most windows are covered with light blue stand-off shutters. The white windows appear to be double hung typically with added horizontal muntins giving them a modern horizontal four panel look. There is no window trim other than a prominent sill projecting from the plane of the facade. A white chimney rises from the clean lines of the roof but since it's centrally located (and painted white with a blue band to match) within the volume of the house, it has less visual impact than it would if located on the exterior walls.

7. Historic Discussion of the Property

This house was built in 1960, according to Dare County tax records. The structure is located in the Avalon Beach Annex Subdivision, which was developed in part by Curtis and Lillian Jones of the Lakeside Company. This was the first subdivision in the area that was marketed and priced for the middle class. Promotional flyers and other advertisements were sent to employees at the Norfolk shipyard and Ford Motor Company Plant in Tidewater. The lots sold for between \$3,000 and \$5,000 at the time. Ms. Doris H. Ducey bought the lot from the Jones family in 1951. A house was originally constructed in the early 1950s and was destroyed by Hurricane Hazel in 1954. The current house was built in 1960 and was modeled in the same style as the original house. The house originally had a gas stove and a water well in the yard and has had minor modern upgrades in the kitchen. The original floor plan has remained the same since it was constructed. The house has remained in the Ducey/King Family since it was built and has been used solely as a vacation home

Assessment of the Significance of the Site

- a. *Special Significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance:*
Built in 1960, this structure ushered in the era of affordable homes on inexpensive land. This was the first working class development on the Outer Banks. Its unique architecture was prominent at the time for its affordability. This architectural design of the Avalon Flat tops was based on the larger flat top houses designed and constructed by Frank Stick in Southern Shores. In the 1950's Avalon Beach was the largest residential development on the Outer Banks. Its unique architecture was prominent at the time for affordability. Additionally, the concrete block on slab also was cool in the summer heat and enclosed porches were utilized as a gathering place. In addition, concrete was used because after World War II lumber was very expensive and in short supply. The property is well preserved and maintains its original historic character. The original house was destroyed by Hurricane Hazel in 1954, which as a category 4 is the strongest storm to ever hit the Carolina Coast and the existing house was rebuilt in 1960. The house did not experience flooding from the Ash Wednesday Storm in 1962. The structure also made it through both the Halloween Storm in 1991 and Hurricane Isabel in 2003 with minor damage, in which areas of Dare County experienced major property loss.
- b. *Integrity of the property's design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:* The house is approximately 896 square feet constructed of concrete

block on slab with a flat roof. The property is unaltered from its original appearance. The house was constructed in 1960. Common to the original flat tops in the Avalon Beach Subdivision local contractors were used to construct these simple concrete block houses with flat roofs. The exterior color has always been white with Irish green trim, the trim was changed to teal in 2017. The original screen porch remains and there has not been any additions to the original footprint of the building other than modern upgrades in the kitchen and a new roof in 1993.

8. Assessment of the Property's Suitability for Preservation or Restoration, Educational Value, and Possibilities for Adaptive or Alternative Use

The property is in very good condition. The property has remained in the same existing footprint as originally constructed. There are approximately a dozen of these structures in their original condition in Kill Devil Hills. It is one of the best examples of this type of architecture built in the time period. The property and structure would provide a great addition to the Town's Historic Landmark inventory. It embodies both the recognizable style from the flat top designs from the 1950s and early 1960s. It also provides an example of how both the design and build of the flat tops were able to endure the elements.

9. Total Tax Value of the Property

Total value of the property is \$361,900 according to the Dare County Tax Office.

10. Documentation of Historical Significance to the Town of Kill Devil Hills.

The structure was built in 1960 in the height of development in Avalon Beach. Curtis and Lillian Jones of the Lakeside Corporation were the developers of the Avalon Beach Subdivision. In the 1950's there were hundreds of structures of this type built creating the largest residential development on the Outer Banks at the time. The Avalon Beach Subdivision was marketed as affordable second homes for the working class.

11. Documentation of Architectural Significance to the Town of Kill Devil Hills.

The house is an original concrete block structure with stucco siding. This flat top style was similar to the flat tops designed and built by Frank Stick in Southern Shores. It is similar to a number of houses built in Kill Devil Hills in the late 50s and early 60s whose design is unique to that period for its architectural significance. These structures introduced an era in Town that attracted the working class to the Outer Banks making it no longer just for the wealthy elites. The structure is in excellent condition, having minor upgrades, it remains basically unchanged since it was constructed with few minor renovations. These original flat top structures are becoming rare on the Outer Banks. Adding this house to the historic designation would provide the Town the ability to preserve a unique architectural design and classic style that was once prevalent both in this subdivision and throughout the adjoining towns.

12. National Register Criteria met by Property
Non-Applicable

13. Documentation for Inclusion of Accompanying Land

The lots on which the structure is located provide an appropriate setting for the building.

Bibliography

1. Christopher Nason, AIA Beacon Architecture and Design, PLLC Conducted the architectural review, and author of the architectural descriptions, Item No. 6
2. Phone Interview with Jeanne Owens 8/28/25.

CHAIN OF TITLE

1. THIS DEED, Made this 10th day of May, 1951, by and between Curtis L. Jones and wife, Lillian M. Jones, doing business under the name of The Lakeside Company, of Dade County, State of Florida, parties of the first part, and Doris H. Ducey, of Princess Anne County, State of Virginia, hereinafter designated as parties of the second part, whether one or more: Being Lot No. 174, as shown on Map or Plat of Avalon Beach made by T. R. Pettit, Registered North Carolina, Engineer, dated the 26th day of June, 1950, which said Map or Plat is duly of record in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Dare County, North Carolina, in Map Book 1, at page 107. Together with easements in, to, on and over all roads and community beaches on the Atlantic Ocean and Kitty Hawk Bay as designated on the aforesaid Map or Plat, and annexes thereto, which said privileges shall be in common with other property owners of Avalon Beach and annexes thereto.
2. THIS DEED made this the 12 day of October, 2004, by and between MARTHA COWENS ECKSTORM AND HUSBAND, WILLIAM ECKSTORM, Grantor, and OSCAR ELIAS OWENS, JR., of 582 Firetower Road, Sylvania, GA 30467, Grantee: Being all of Lot No. 174, as shown on map or plat of Avalon Beach made by T. R. Pettit, Registered North Carolina Engineer, dated the 26th day of June, 1950, which said map or plat is duly of record in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Dare County, North Carolina, in Map Book 1, Page 107. Together with easements in, to, on and over all roads and community beaches on the Atlantic Ocean and Kitty Hawk Bay as designated on the aforesaid map or plat, and annexes thereto, which said privileges shall be in common with other property owners of Avalon Beach and annexes thereto. Grantor inherited their interest in the above described property from the Estate of Doris M. King, see Dare County Estate File 04E-275. Doris M. King was formerly known as Doris H. Ducey. See Deed recorded in Deed Book 39, Page 205, Dare County Public Registry.
3. THIS DEED OF GIFT made this 29th day of April, 2020, by and between OSCAR ELIAS OWENS, JR. AND WIFE, JEANNE OWENS, of 582 Fire Tower Road, Sylvania, GA 30467, Grantor to OSCAR ELIAS OWENS, JR. AND WIFE, JEANNE OWENS, AS TENANTS BY THE ENTIRETY, of 582 Fire Tower Road, Sylvania, GA 30467, Grantee: Being all of Lot No. 174, as shown on map or plat of Avalon Beach made by T. R. Pettit, Registered North Carolina Engineer, dated the 26th day of June 1950, which said map or plat is duly of record in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Dare County, North Carolina, in Map Book 1, Page 107.
4. THIS DEED made this the 8th day of June, 2020, by and between RUTH ELAINE OWENS LANGFORD AND HUSBAND, GERALD LANGFORD, of 2224 Eagles Hammock Boulevard, Middleburg, FL 32068, Grantor, to OSCAR ELIAS OWENS, JR. of 582 Fire Tower Road, Sylvania, GA 30467, Grantee: Being all of Lot No. 174, as shown on map or plat of Avalon Beach made by T. R. Pettit, Registered North Carolina Engineer, dated the 26th day of June, 1950, which said map or plat is duly of record in the Office or the Register of Deeds of Dare County, North Carolina, in Map Book 1, Page 107. Together with easements in, to, on and over all roads and community beaches on the Atlantic Ocean and Kitty Hawk Bay as designated on the

aforesaid map or plat, and annexes thereto, which said privileges shall be in common with other property owners of Avalon Beach and annexes thereto. Ruth Elaine Owens Langford inherited one-eighth (1/8th) undivided interest in the above described property from the Estate of Doris M. King, see Dare County Estate File 04-E-275. Doris M. King was formerly known as Doris H. Ducey. Also see Deed recorded in Deed Book 39, Page 205, Dare County Public Registry.



**North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office**

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Josh Stein
Secretary Pamela Brewington Cashwell

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Darin J. Waters, Ph.D.

October 29, 2025

Ryan Lang, Senior Planner
102 Town Hall Dr.
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948

Email: rlang@kdhnc.com

RE: Proposed Designation of **Ducey Cottage, 409 Sportsman Drive West, Kill Devil Hills, Dare County.**

Dear Mr. Lang:

Thank you for the report we received on the proposed designation of the Ducey Cottage, 409 Sportsman Drive West, Kill Devil Hills, Dare County. We have reviewed the report and offer the following comments in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 160D-946.

According to the report, Ducey Cottage is of special local significance because its architecture and association with Avalon Beach.

The report provides a good argument for local significance of Ducey Cottage. We have shared recommendations with staff to include additional information in the report. We believe that with the recommended additions, the report will provide the Kill Devil Hills Historic Landmark Commission and local governing board sufficient information to determine whether Ducey Cottage possesses the requisite special local significance and integrity for local historic landmark designation.

Landmark designation means the community recognizes the property is worthy of preservation because of its special significance to the local community. If designated, any substantial changes in design, materials, and appearance to the property are subject to the design review procedures of the preservation commission. The owner may receive an annual deferral of up to fifty percent of the property taxes for as long as the property is designated and retains significance and integrity. (N.C.G.S. 105-278 *et seq.*).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report. Please note, our comments are advisory only and therefore nonbinding. Once the governing board has received a recommendation from Kill Devil Hills

Historic Landmark Commission, it should proceed in the same manner as would otherwise be required for an amendment to the zoning ordinance. Once the decision has been made, please return a completed copy of the enclosed form to our office.

This letter serves as our comments on the proposed designation of Ducey Cottage, 409 Sportsman Drive West, Kill Devil Hills, Dare County. Please contact me at Kristi.brantley@dncr.nc.gov (preferred) or 919-814-6576 should you have any questions about our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristi Brantley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "K" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end of the name.

Kristi Brantley
Local Preservation Commissions/CLG Coordinator

CC: Commission Chair

Enclosure

Lang, Ryan

From: Brantley, Kristi <kristi.brantley@dncr.nc.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 5:55 PM
To: Lang, Ryan
Cc: Ray, Cameron; Thomas, Reid; Carleno, Mary Jo
Subject: Ducey Cottage -HPO Comments
Attachments: DR0775_Ducey Cottage_HPO Comments_2025.pdf

Dear Ryan,

Attached is a copy of a letter written in response to the proposed designation of Ducey Cottage, 409 Sportsman Drive West, Kill Devil Hills, Dare County. Please share a copy with your Commission Chair.

If an ordinance is adopted to designate the property, please email me a copy of the ordinance.

I've copied Eastern Office Supervisor and Restoration Specialist Reid Thomas. Should the property owners have any restoration questions please feel free to share Reid's contact information. He can be reached at reid.thomas@dncr.nc.gov or 252-540-6502.

Historic Preservation Specialist Lauren Poole reviewed the report and offers the following comments:

The local landmark designation report for the Ducey Cottage in Kill Devil Hills in Dare County provides a good argument for local landmark designation. The residence is an example of the Flat Top type, a modernist design developed and popularized by architect Frank Stick along the Outer Banks of North Carolina during the mid-twentieth century. According to the report, the Ducey Cottage derives its primary significance from its architectural form and its association Avalon Beach, the largest residential development constructed on the Outer Banks during the mid-twentieth century. Although the local designation report includes some information about the prevalence of the Flat Top design along the Outer Banks, additional information would strength the eligibility argument. An expanded report should include a more in-depth discussion of the character-defining features of the Flat Top type and any Avalon Beach specific variants. Information about the number of Flat Top houses constructed along the Outer Banks during the mid-twentieth century and the number of surviving examples of the type with Avalon Beach would also strengthen the existing significance argument. The report should demonstrate why this example of a Flat Top residence rises to a level of significance to be eligible for local landmark designation. A more detailed statement of significance will aid in the creation of justifiable ordinance.

According to the report, the Ducey Cottage retains a high degree of physical integrity with few modifications. A new roof and kitchen were added in 1993, but otherwise, the exterior of the house appears to retain its original form and footprint. A description and photographs of the interior of the residence was not included in the local designation report, so it is unclear if any other alterations have occurred to the interior floor plan or finishes. Although the report briefly addresses the integrity of the resource, it lacks a full assessment of the house's integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. This will be problematic for the development of a justifiable ordinance and does not provide a sound basis for preservation planning activities or maintenance of the property. A successful report should include a comprehensive assessment of the residence's integrity.

The report does not provide a complete description and justification for the proposed designation boundaries. It is also unclear whether the interior of the residence is included in the local designation. The

designated areas should be clarified for the purposes of creating a justifiable ordinance. A description and photographs of the interior of the building, as well as a floor plan of the building, will also be necessary if the interior is included in the designation.

Although the report includes exterior photographs of the house, additional documentation is required. The report should include maps that clearly indicate the proposed boundary of the designated area. A tax or plat map of the property was not included in the report. Additionally, a site plan labeled with major buildings and landscape features is required.

Thank you for this opportunity to review this report. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Kristi

***Please note:**

As of 7/13/2023, my email address changed to kristi.brantley@dncr.nc.gov

Kristi Brantley

CLG/Local Government Coordinator
NC State Historic Preservation Office
NC Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources
Phone: (919) 814-6576
kristi.brantley@dncr.nc.gov

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And don't forget your Ws! Wear. Wait. Wash.

WEAR a face covering.

WAIT 6 feet apart from other people.

WASH your hands often.

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ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING PROPERTY LOCATED AT
409 WEST SPORTSMAN DRIVE
AND KNOWN AS DUCEY COTTAGE
AS A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

WHEREAS, pre-requisites to the adoption of this ordinance as prescribed in Part 3C, Chapter 160D-945 & 946 of the North Carolina General Statutes have been met; and

WHEREAS, the Kill Devil Hills Board of Commissioners has taken full consideration of all statements and information presented at a public hearing on _____ and considered the recommendations of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources on the question of designating the property located at 409 West Sportsman Drive, Kill Devil Hills, known as Ducey Cottage ("Ducey Cottage") as a local historic landmark; and

WHEREAS, Ducey Cottage is located in the Avalon Beach Subdivision, which was the first development marketed and priced for the middle class that offered financing; and

WHEREAS, Ducey Cottage is of historic, architectural, and cultural significance in that it embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of an Outer Banks flat top; and

WHEREAS, Ducey Cottage was originally constructed in 1960 for Mrs. Doris H. Ducey, of Princess Anne County, Virginia, and a previous structure existed on the property that was demolished by Hurricane Hazel in 1954; and

WHEREAS, in the 1950's and 1960's, Avalon Beach Subdivision was the largest residential development in Kill Devil Hills, with over a hundred flat top structures being constructed and sold by Robert Young and Clarence A. "Sug" York; and

PROPOSED Ordinance designating property located at
409 West Sportsman Drive
and known as Ducey Cottage as a Local Historic Landmark
Page 1 of 4

WHEREAS, Ducey Cottage is one of Avalon Beach Subdivision's original remaining flat tops from that era; and

WHEREAS, Ducey Cottage was built as a family summer home and is still used as such; and

WHEREAS, Ducey Cottage maintains its original integrity of design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association on both the exterior architecture and interior finishes; and

WHEREAS, Ducey Cottage maintains its original architectural appearance with concrete block exterior, a covered screened porch, and flat top roof; and

WHEREAS, Ducey Cottage survived numerous major hurricanes and nor'easters that caused major damage to surrounding structures, and a major tornado that destroyed property within the area; and

WHEREAS, Ducey Cottage was built in the first era in Kill Devil Hills that attracted working class to the Outer Banks; and

WHEREAS, although Ducey Cottage has undergone no additions since its construction, there have been upgrades; however, the house maintains the original floor plan layout; and

WHEREAS, Ducey Cottage is one of the best examples of this type of architecture built in the time period, as well as the enclosed screened porch and flat roof synonymous with Outer Banks flat tops; now therefore be it

ORDAINED BY THE KILL DEVIL HILLS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

1. All of the property located at 409 West Sportsman Drive in the Town of Kill Devil Hills is hereby designated as a local historic landmark pursuant to N.C.G.S. Chapter 160D-945 & 946. The property is presently owned by Charles J. Owens, Denise Owens, Elijah Owens, Joseph Owens, Oscar Elias Jr Owens, Jeanne Owens, Thomas Owens, Victoria Owens, and Margaret Smith and is identified on Dare County Tax Maps as Pin No. 988517009265 and is further described on Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof.
2. The significant features of the building located on said property may not be demolished, materially altered, restored, or removed, nor any new structure built upon the lot without a Certificate of Appropriateness being issued by the Kill Devil Hills Historic Landmarks Commission. Any application for the demolition of this building shall require the waiting period set forth in 160D-946 & 946 of Chapter 160A.

For purposes of this designation, “significant features” shall be understood to include:

- A. The exterior of the building
 - B. The grounds
3. Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance or repair of any architectural feature in or on the said building and property that does not involve a change in design, material or outer appearance, nor to prevent the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or removal of any such feature when a Kill Devil Hills Building Inspector or similar official certifies to the Kill Devil Hills Historic Landmarks Commission that such action is required for the public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition. Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent the property owner from making any use of this property not prohibited by other statutes, ordinances, or regulations.
4. A suitable Town-approved sign or plaque shall be posted indicating the property has been designated as a local historic landmark and containing any other appropriate information. If the owner consents, the sign or plaque shall be placed upon the building or property. If the owner objects, the sign or plaque shall be placed in the nearby public right-of-way.
5. The owner and occupants of the building known as “Ducey Cottage” shall be given notice of this ordinance as required by applicable law and copies of this ordinance shall be filed and indexed in the offices of the Town Clerk, Dare County Register of Deeds, the Town’s Building Inspector, and Dare County Tax Department as required by applicable law.

Adopted and approved by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Kill Devil Hills at a regular meeting held on the _____ day of _____, 2025, by a vote of _____ in favor and _____ opposed.

SEAL

John Windley
Mayor

ATTEST:

James Michael O'Dell
Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Casey C. Varnell
Town Attorney