



PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

CAMP WAMPANOAG

172 Middle Road

Chilmark, MA

Girl Scout Council of Southeastern Massachusetts, Inc. is the owner of approximately 3.5 acres of land in Chilmark at 172 Middle Road. We have owned this property since 1958 and have operated a camp there since that time. For zoning purposes, we are an educational use exempt under M.G.L. Ch. 40A, s. 3. Last year, there were 107 girl and 44 adult members of Girl Scouts on Martha's Vineyard.

The Board of Directors of our council along with the Martha's Vineyard Service Unit (i.e., the adult Girl Scout volunteers on Martha's Vineyard) agreed several years ago that the "lodge" on our site needed to be replaced. There were several reasons for replacement:

- 1) The existing lodge is unsafe and unsanitary. The main room floor is a series of plywood sheets set on an unknown foundation (probably concrete blocks spaced at intervals). There is a very narrow crawl space below the floor in which rodents are known to live. The kitchen has no running water. The doors do not fit well in their frames and permit insects into the building. The fireplace is unsafe and can't be used, per order of the Chilmark Fire Chief.
- 2) There is a desire to provide storage area for island Girl Scout memorabilia. Girl Scouts on Martha's Vineyard have a large amount of memorabilia relating back to the very start of Girl Scouting in 1912. These items are now spread around the island in people's basements, attics and garages. Plans for the proposed building include storage areas to consolidate the memorabilia, make it accessible to future generations of Girl Scouts, and provide for some climate control.
- 3) There is no area in the lodge for proper camp-related functions. The existing building is too small for a separate infirmary/isolation area. It is too small to accommodate campers on a rainy day. There is no separate room for a camp office where matters involving privacy can be handled.
- 4) The building is without insulation and central heat. The building now provides no opportunity for Girl Scout functions during one half of the year. We can not hold troop



meetings or award ceremonies or special Girl Scout events between the end of April and late October in the only building on Martha's Vineyard devoted to Girl Scouting.

The existing building contains 910 square feet. The proposed building contains 1996 square feet. It is proposed that the existing building be razed once the new building is constructed. The net increase in floor area on the site would be about 1000 square feet. Features of the new building are these:

- 1) The building will be insulated with central heat. The state building code requires us to insulate the building. We do not object to this because there will now be the opportunity to hold Girl Scout events in our building throughout the year. Whether the building will, in fact, be open throughout the year will be a trade-off between troops wanting to have use of the site for events from November to April, on the one hand, and the cost of utilities, on the other.
- 2) Use of the building will be limited to 32 at any one time. The Chilmark Board of Health has approved our upgraded septic system for the new building. The use limit placed on the building by the BOH is 32.
- 3) The new kitchen will include features required by the Board of Health. The Chilmark Board of Health requires us to have a 3 bin sink and a floor drain. We plan to install a residential stove and a residential refrigerator in the kitchen. The kitchen is sized to accommodate a troop of Girl Scouts helping with meal preparation.
- 4) The building will include an infirmary and private office. During camp use of the building, there will be an isolation/sick room and a separate private office.
- 5) The building will include a new fireplace. Singing around or in front of a fire is a Girl Scout tradition. The new building will have a workable fireplace.

The proposed building has been sited with the following factors in mind:

- 1) It will comply with zoning set backs and height requirements. The existing building does not meet setback requirements. The new building will.
- 2) It will permit re-use of some elements of the existing septic system. The septic system for the building was constructed in the mid 1980's when a bathroom was added to the existing lodge. Portions of the system can be re-used for the new building, thus allowing some cost savings.
- 3) It will allow continued use of the flat areas of the site for play. Since the site rises toward the south, the play area has always been at the north and west portions of the lot. Siting of the new building will maximize use of the existing play field. Parking, which will



remain unpaved and random, can be accommodated at the fringes of the play area as it always has.

- 4) It will limit our need for excavation and tree removal, thereby limiting site costs and preserving natural environmental features. If we were to place the building further south on the lot, we would be dealing with additional excavation and tree removal. It is our desire to minimize further environmental alteration at the site.

In addition to the lodge, there are three types of other structures on the site.

- 1) 4 platform tents. Set up the hill from the lodge, each wooden platform is 14 x 16 and is used in summers as the base for large canvas Girl Scout tents.
- 2) A bunkhouse. A small (perhaps 10 x 15) wooden structure sits near the platform tents. It has just enough interior area for 8 sleeping spaces in bunk fashion. The building is not insulated and is used only in summer months.
- 3) A latrine. A two seat latrine sits between the existing lodge and the platform tents/bunkhouse. The latrine has not been used for years (since the new bathrooms were built in the mid-1980's). If the Board of Health will permit it, we will remove this structure.

Use of the new lodge will include the following:

- 1) Troop use throughout the year on an intermittent basis. It is not anticipated that the new lodge would be used regularly for troop meetings – there are few Girl Scouts at the western end of the island as compared to the more heavily populated areas, so moving weekly troop meetings to the site is unlikely. However, it is likely that there will be use at intermittent times throughout the year. Martha's Vineyard troops may want to have award or "bridging" ceremonies at the building. Or they may want to enjoy a holiday party in December or a "Daisy Tea" at the time of the Girl Scout birthday in March. There may be special occasions when the island's memorabilia is on display for girls to learn about Girl Scouting "in the olden days". A few (and we expect very few) mainland troops may wish to venture to Martha's Vineyard on a week-end in the winter and use the lodge as a base for exploring the island or as a retreat for other learning opportunities. In these latter instances, the activity will be largely either off-site or indoor. Between April and October, the troop use is expected to be unchanged from present circumstances.
- 2) Camp use in summer. We host two types of summer camping on Martha's Vineyard. One is called (by MA DPH and the American Camping Association) "travel camping". Travel camping means that girls arrive at our mainland camp in Plymouth (usually on a



Sunday evening) and stay there while they plan their island adventure. Then, usually on a Tuesday morning, they take the ferry with their supplies to the island. They stay in Chilmark until Thursday or Friday when they take the ferry back to the mainland camp. The other is called "day camp". Camp Wampanoag day camp provides island girls with a safe and educational environment during week days, currently for two weeks at the end of the summer. The camp is staffed largely by volunteer adults. It operates with regular hours from 9 am to 4 pm, with extended hours if requested by parents from 8 am to 5 pm to accommodate parent work schedules.

Beyond Girl Scout troops and groups, use of the site is expected to remain as it has for the past 48 years. Each summer, a small group of Appalachian Mountain Club members bicycle to the site and use it as a base for island exploration. The group also helps us with site maintenance and we wish to continue this exchange with another educational non-profit. Similarly, we might entertain a school group that wanted to use the site for learning purposes. Our largest event on site was the memorial service for one of our dearest members, Virginia Welsh, who held the camp in such high esteem that she volunteered for day camp even though she was in a wheel chair with one leg. If requested, we would want to make the site available for a similar purpose in the future.

The building itself is designed to comply with zoning height requirements and be a fitting addition to the neighborhood. It was designed by an island architect/resident, Mr. Doug Ulwick, who also does work for the Society of New England Antiquities. The exterior will be shingled with a stone or brick facing on the chimney and appropriate asphalt or similar roofing. Exterior lighting will be low scale, designed to minimize the impact on the neighbors at night and only be sufficient for safety purposes (probably on timers). Electrical service to the building will be underground from the pole on the road easement.

Our building permit was issued on April 12, 2006. That permit is currently under appeal to the Chilmark Zoning Board of Appeals. A letter from the Town Counsel with regard to that appeal is attached.