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Martha's Vineyard Commission

CR 7-2021 10 Oak Bluffs Ave. Change of Use MVC Staff Report – 2021-7-23 DRAFT

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 Applicant:** Joseph Moujabber; George Sourati, Engineer
- 1.2 Owner:** Joseph Moujabber
- 1.3 Project Location:** 10 Oak Bluffs Ave. (Map 9, Lot 34), Oak Bluffs
- 1.4 Proposal:** Replacement of a historic structure with a bakery and second-floor apartment.
- 1.5 Zoning:** Business 1 (B1)
- 1.6 Local Permits:** Building Permit, Special Permit
- 1.7 Surrounding Land Uses:** Other commercial, residential, municipal, and public uses in the B1 District, including the Flying Horses, Oak Bluffs Police Department, restaurants, retail, etc.
- 1.8 Project History:** The building, known as the Charles S. Tallman Gift House or the Pagoda Gift Shop, is a small but prominent fixture in the Oak Bluffs downtown area. It was built around 1870 with pine board construction, and includes a pagoda, rectangular ell, and shuttered openings for display. Charles Tallman, the original owner, had been seriously injured in one the most famous shipwrecks off Martha's Vineyard, and the Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Company presented him with the building in 1874, where he sold peanuts and souvenirs. The building is also considered part of the Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Company development and Oak Bluffs Amusement Area, both of which are listed in MACRIS. The Cottage City Historic District approved the proposal in March 2019, with some adjustments to the proposed exterior.
- 1.9 Project Summary:** The proposal is to demolish the existing building and replace with a new building that would have a bakery on the first floor (1,243 ft²) and a market-rate one-bedroom apartment (589 ft²) above. The total square footage would be as follows:
- Crawl space/basement: 667 ft² (reduced from 844 ft² in an earlier plan)
 - First floor: 1,243 ft²
 - Second floor: 589 ft²
 - Total: 2,499 ft²

The new building would have a slightly smaller footprint but more interior space, including a basement/crawlspace below. A narrow alley between the building and the Flying Horses building to the south would include a stairway to the second floor and a utility pad, with an 8' wood fence at the end facing Kennebec Ave.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 DRI Referral:** Oak Bluffs Zoning Board of Appeals
- 2.2 DRI Trigger:** 3.1f (Dev. Of Comm – Change of Use/Intensity)
- 2.3 LUPC:** July 19, 2021
- 2.4 Public Hearing:** Not yet scheduled

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

- 3.1 Historic Character:** The existing building is listed in MACRIS and was built around 1870, although the applicant has stated that much of the construction is from the 1940s or 1950s. The new building would include a similar pagoda structure, with cross bucks, decorative arch, overhang with wood brackets, cedar roof shingles, and painted wood cresting to match the original. (Some of the brackets would be salvaged from the original.) The elevations show wooden clapboard siding on the first story, painted to match the original; cedar shingle siding and green asphalt roof shingles on the second story; and double-hung windows with two panes above and below. The Cottage City Historic District approved the project unanimously in 2020 following a public hearing.
- 3.2 Water and Wastewater:** The property is connected to the town sewer, but has been unused for some time. The town granted the applicant 195 gallons per day of wastewater flow for the bakery and apartment in 2019, and extended its approval in January 2021.
- 3.3 Stormwater and Drainage:** The entire property consists of impermeable surface, as it is mostly occupied by the building. The new building has a slightly smaller footprint.
- 3.4 Traffic and Transportation:** The project does not include any dedicated parking spaces, and all employees would given VTA passes.
- 3.5 Energy:** The building would have electric heat pumps, and propane for cooking.
- 3.6 Climate Change Resilience:** The southern portion of the property is within the floodplain district, and the proposed floor level would be above the level of the floodplain. However, the floodplain is likely to expand in the coming years, increasing the property’s vulnerability to storms and flooding.
- 3.7 Noise:** Three AC units would be located in the alley between the building and the Flying Horses building to the south.
- 3.8 Landscape and Lighting:** There is almost no room for landscaping on the property, since the building extends nearly to the sidewalks on either side, and the Flying Horses building abuts almost immediately to the south. A landscape plan has not been provided. The applicant has stated that all exterior lighting will be downward shielded, and there will be no spotlights.
- 3.9 Housing and Employment:** The project will create a new business in downtown Oak Bluffs, but the number of employees and hours of operation are still unknown. The proposal includes a one-bedroom market-rate apartment on the second floor, most likely to be occupied by the current owner. The applicant has offered to provide summer housing to all of the employees.
- 3.10 Zoning:** The project requires a Special Permit from the Oak Bluffs Zoning Board of Appeals.