



BOX 1447, OAK BLUFFS, MASSACHUSETTS, 02557, 508-693-3453,
FAX 508-693-7894 INFO@MVCOMMISSION.ORG WWW.MVCOMMISSION.ORG

Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI #708 19 Mill Square Road Demolition

MVC Staff Report – 2021-7-16 DRAFT

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 **Applicant:** Christopher and Abby Sage; George Sourati, Engineer
- 1.2 **Owner:** Christopher and Abby Sage, Trustees
- 1.3 **Project Location:** 19 Mill Square Road, Oak Bluffs
- 1.4 **Proposal:** Demolition of a historic structure and construction of a new residence.
- 1.5 **Zoning:** Residential 2 (R2)
- 1.6 **Local Permits:** Building Permit, Special Permit
- 1.7 **Surrounding Land Uses:** Other residences in the R2 district.
- 1.8 **Project History:** The existing six-bedroom, 3.5-story house was built around 1898 by Otis C. Johnson as a seasonal dwelling. According to the MACRIS file:

“This house is significant as part of the Vineyard Highlands, an area laid out originally in 1869 as an alternative to the Wesleyan Grove Campground by a group of Camp Meeting Association directors fearful of encroachments by the Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Company on Wesleyan Grove. The area includes the highest land in the resort, overlooking Lake Anthony [Oak Bluffs Harbor] and Vineyard Sound [Nantucket Sound], and is closely identified with the Baptist Camp Meeting which began there in 1875. This house has a prestigious location on the bluff called East Chop overlooking Vineyard Sound.”

The Vineyard Highlands (also listed in MACRIS) includes the approximate area between Vineyard Sound, Oak Bluffs Harbor, Oak Bluffs Cemetery and Munroe Ave., at the northeastern tip of East Chop. The Oak Bluffs Historic Commission reviewed the proposal in 2020 and found the house to be not historically significant.

- 1.9 **Project Summary:** The proposal is to demolish the existing building and build a larger single-family, four-bedroom, 3.5-story residence in a similar style, with a porch and patio. An existing driveway and garage would remain.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 **DRI Referral:** Oak Bluffs Zoning Board of Appeals
- 2.2 **DRI Trigger:** 8.1a (Demolition of structure listed in MACRIS), 8.1b (Demolition of structure more than 100 years old)
- 2.3 **LUPC:** July 19, 2021
- 2.4 **Public Hearing:** Not yet scheduled

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

- 3.1 **Historic Character:** As with the existing house, the proposed house would have 3.5 stories and cedar shingles, and would stand about 32' above grade. However, the new house would have a larger footprint extending to the west (away from Nantucket Sound), including a covered porch on

the east and north sides, and a large patio and third-floor deck facing the east side. The lower floor would also be more exposed on that side, possibly as a result of regrading.

- 3.2 **Water and Wastewater:** The property drains into Nantucket Sound and would have a new septic tank and leaching field to the west of the house (the property slopes away from the house in either direction). An existing cesspool would be pumped dry, crushed, and backfilled with sand.
- 3.3 **Stormwater and Drainage:** The project will lead to an increase in impervious surface on the site, including the building and patio. The applicant has not yet submitted a drainage plan.
- 3.4 **Energy:** The applicant has not yet identified the proposed energy sources for the new house.
- 3.5 **Climate Change Resilience:** The building is not within the Coastal District, but is surrounded on three sides by the Floodplain District, which is likely to expand in the coming years, increasing the property's vulnerability to storms and flooding.
- 3.6 **Landscape and Lighting:** The applicant has not yet submitted landscape or lighting plans.
- 3.7 **Zoning:** The project requires a Special Permit from the Oak Bluffs Zoning Board of Appeals.