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## Report for MVC by OBHC re: 19 Mill Square Rd

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Pam <pammelrose@gmail.com>

Thu, Nov 18, 2021 at 9:43 AM

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# Oak Bluffs Historical Commission

November 18, 2021

Re: MVC request for review of plans and materials for [19 Mill Square Road](#)

The OBHC first reviewed this property with the owners on November 9, 2020 in our first Zoom meeting after all the closures caused by COVID 19 shutdowns. We had been aware of this property months prior to that, but we had to wait for the Building Official to be able to process and hand it over to OBHC for review which finally happened in the Fall of 2020.

We had researched the OB Town Assessor Property card, MACRIS, and information shared by members of the Commission familiar with both the architecture and the historic Vineyard Highlands area of Oak Bluffs. During our meeting with Chris and Abby Sage the owners, we reviewed their rationale for Demolition rather than renovation. After photos and documents revealed the massive deterioration and extensive rebuild that would be required for preservation, we then asked to review their proposed replacement. We found that the proposed structure incorporated most of the look and character of the original. We then discussed and made suggestions about ways they might tweak the plans to be even more in keeping with Victorian Shingle style of the original structure and in keeping with that historic area of Oak Bluffs. The owners listened to our suggestions and strongly avowed to preserve as many original architectural details and actual features as possible in the home that they planned to make their own family home.

Subsequently, after considering the overwhelming evidence of structural deterioration and hazards, their commitment and detailed plans that reflected a preservation of the existing structure's look and character, the OBHC voted to determine [19 Mill Square Rd](#) as "Not Significant". That designation allows the Building Official to move forward with the Demolition permitting.

Sometime after that we were advised of a change in MVC's DRI guidelines, which no longer recognized OBHC as a "historic commission", as it had done in prior years. Therefore, the 19 Mill Square had to be automatically referred by the Building Official, as it is over 100 years old (1897).

In early November 2021, the MVC contacted OBHC, that the [19 Mill Square Rd.](#), property needed to be reviewed once again by us before their Building permitting could move forward.

Today, during our November 17, regularly scheduled and posted OBHC meeting, we met with the Sages and several guests to review the plans and materials as requested by MVC. We began by comparing the plans we had seen in 2020 to the revised 2021 plans. We had each had an opportunity to review both in advance of the meeting. What was apparent to us was that they had indeed incorporated many of our earlier suggestions in the 2021 plans. We were all impressed and pleased by the detail and authenticity, as we spent quite a long time with Abby Sage just examining the more extensive copies the Sages had shared with the MVC.

We voted unanimously and enthusiastically on approval of the plans, also conditionally approved by MVC.

Then we reviewed the accompanying Materials List and felt no need to change or add anything. The actual building materials used in construction, other than the preserved, reclaimed or repurposed elements requested, is not usually in our purview. We have occasionally recommended materials or finishes, but more weatherproofed, resilient or durable materials can be used and still keep the historic appearance and character. We voted unanimously that we really had no real concerns or comment with the list provided by MVC.

We, Commissioners supported the original Demolition because we recognized, though we felt the existing structure was historic, it was also beyond repair or renovation. We also felt an obligation to encourage those who come before us who also honor the character, neighborhood, and preservation where feasible and have a love and affinity for Oak Bluffs. We were gratified to see our earlier recommendations to create more authenticity was reflected in these 2021 plans.

We hope you will approve and allow this construction to finally be able to be undertaken.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Melrose, Chairman

Joyce Dresser

Jim Dearing

Barbara Baskin

Susan Thompson

Sent from my iPad