

To: Martha's Vineyard Commission
Re: Demolition of 1133 Main Street, Vineyard Haven
Date: April 20, 2022

Dear Commissioners:

This letter is in response to Alex Elvin's email of March 17th requesting more information regarding the demolition of the house at 1133 Main Street, Vineyard Haven.

We think the house was deign built in 1890, probably by a builder named Hinckley. There was no architect, as is typical of most older West Chop houses.

The building is located on the the single-lane dirt spur of Main Street after it curves around West Chop and continues to the SW. This is where Iroquois Avenue branches off at the flagpole to complete the West Chop circle. The road continues on to intersect Golf Club Road and is recognized by few drivers as part of Main Street as it is not used as a through-way. This spur of Main Street is utilized solely by the inhabitants of the road. The view of the house is not significant from the inland side due to this being a little-traveled road.

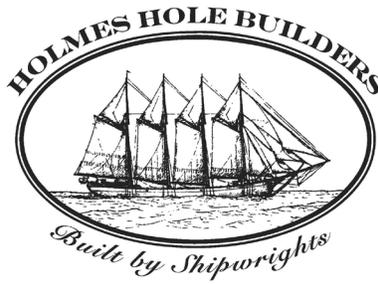
The view of the building from the water side, however, is more significant. The house sits back from the beach partially within the 100-year flood zone, overlooking the West Chop Club's private beach and is visible from both the beach and passing boats in Vineyard Sound.

It is a typical 100+ year-old residence of the rambling, eclectic, shingle-style of the West Chop area. It is imposing in length and height, with 3 stories above grade on the road side and 4 stories on the Vineyard Sound side. The building has undergone numerous piecemeal renovations and additions over the years, including:

- complete window and door replacement with modern aluminum or vinyl clad units, with most multi-paned sash replaced with single pane designs and large picture windows
- significant changes to the layout and size of windows and doors
- removal or addition of bay windows in various locations
- addition of various porches, railings and staircases on various levels
- filling in basement walls with masonry and wood walls on the lower level
- adding windows to basement level
- most first floor rooms have been "updated" over the years
- second and thrid floor rooms are more original

The structure itself is lightly balloon-framed and sits on original cedar piers which in turn sit on minimal small stone footings at ot near grade. The foundation has been added to over the years in an effort to shore up the building, using a combination of concrete block and poured concrete. There is no re-bar and no frost-depth footings.

We have done some small renovations and repairs in the past two years and have found the wood structural members to be undersized, compromised by years of cutting when adding plumbing, eliminating bearing



walls to modernize rooms and distorting under load. It is reported by the owners that the building sways, shudders and creaks in high winds.

Although the building has oil-fired hydronic heat and used year-round, very little of the residence is insulated, nor is it sufficiently framed to a depth to achieve decent R-values, much less values that meet Stretch Energy Codes. It is the desire of the owners to convert to all-electric heat pumps, but a renovation of the building will not make this possible.

Our preliminary cost-analysis shows that the building will have to be lifted in order to address the foundational issues. This cost alone is daunting for a building of this size and for the amount of time it will be in the air in such an exposed location. Furthermore, any historical integrity of the interior will be destroyed with the complete gutting necessary to make the structure safe and to address concerns with outdated ungrounded wiring and corroded cast-iron plumbing.

The fact is that is is not anywhere near cost-effective for the owners to undertake the extensive renovation necessary to extend the life of the building and to make it safe and habitable for their current needs. And it is also true that the building has been extensively modified from its 1890 exterior appearance, starting in the 1930's and continuing to the present time.

The owners feel that replacement with a modified and updated version of this classic West Chop house is a better alternative that will have no regional impact or historic significance.

Please see the few historical photographs that have been located, a structural report from Vineyard Engineering and red-lined drawings from Paul Weber Architects.

Thank you for your attention and for your continued valuable service to our community,

Gary S. Maynard
Principal & Director of Operations