Martha's Vineyard Commission
CR 4-2022 43 Look Street Demolition
MVC Staff Report – 2022-7-8

1. DESCRIPTION

1.1 Owner/Applicant: BWP Properties LLC (Brian Purdy); Michael Morrison, agent
1.2 Project Location: 43 Look St. (Map 8, Block B, Lot 14), Tisbury
1.3 Proposal: Demolition of a house built around 1900.
1.4 Zoning: Residential 10 (R10)
1.5 Local Permits: Demolition permit
1.6 Surrounding Land Uses: Other residential and commercial (lodging) uses in the R10 district; William Street Historic District to the east.

1.7 Project History: The existing 2,726 ft², three-bedroom, two-story house was built around 1900. It is just outside the William Street Historic District to the east.

1.8 Project Summary: The proposal is to demolish the house and build a larger house in its place.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

2.1 DRI Referral: Tisbury Building Commissioner, April 19, 2022
2.2 DRI Trigger: 8.1b (Demolition of a house at least 100 years old)
2.3 LUPC: June 11, 2022
2.4 Public Hearing: To be determined

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

3.1 Character and Identity

Age: The town assessor lists the house as built in 1900.

History/Culture: The house is not known to be associated with any significant people or events, although it is part of a general development pattern that includes the William Street Historic District to the east and other historic homes along Look Street.

Design/Construction: The structure is modest in size and reminiscent of the Federal style. Distinguishing features include nearly symmetrical massing with hipped pyramid roof and mostly symmetrical fenestration on each side. The original wood exterior has been replaced with aluminum siding.

Historic Portion of Existing Structure: Apart from the enclosed porch in front, the entire house is considered historic.
**Previous Alterations:** According to the applicant, the enclosed porch was completed in 1994, and a smaller porch in back was added prior to 1974. The front porch has a hipped roof that matches the main structure. It is unclear if there had been a porch there at any time prior to 1994.

**Contribution to Streetscape/Community:** The property is located on the corner of Look and William Streets, just west of the William Street Historic District, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. It is similar in size to other buildings in the immediate area, which range in age from 1880 to 1980 and include a mix of styles.

**Historic Designation:** The house is not listed in MACRIS or any other historic register, and is just west of the William Street Historic District.

**Visibility:** The house is located at the intersection of Look and William Streets, just a few feet from the road in a densely developed area.

**Condition:** The town assessor lists the property as “Average +10” condition, which is slightly below average for the town. A structural inspection report by John Lolley (dated June 23, 2022) notes the following:

- **ROOF/ATTIC:** From ground level, the roof shingles appear to be in serviceable condition, however, during my inspection of the attic, there was evidence of water intrusion and rot in the attic roof and floor joists. The chimney shows significant mortar cracking and water stains from rain leaks. I would recommend that a mason inspect the chimney to check the interior of the flue for cracking as well as the overall serviceability and safety of the chimney. The insulation between the attic floor joists appears to be old, water damaged, and in need of replacement.

- **INTERIOR:** Areas of the interior walls appear to have disconnected from the studs and shifted vertically. Without a more extensive inspection, I could not speculate on a cause for the framing movement. Several areas throughout the building’s interior show signs of rainwater leaking into the house. Wall and ceiling surfaces throughout the house have cracks with water staining. To more thoroughly understand the apparent water leaks in the structure, the house should be inspected during a rainstorm. There also appears to be some structural cracking at various places. The wall board should be removed, and structural framing inspected. There are interior floor areas where the floorboards are of different heights creating a tripping hazard. Floors overall do not exhibit significant “bounce”.

- **BASEMENT:** There is a steel beam supporting the first floor and appears to be structurally stable. The basement walls have deteriorating lime mortar – a result of the freeze/thaw cycle reducing the integrity of the mortar and allowing groundwater and rain to seep through the walls into the basement. This coupled with the pipes lack of waterproofing is allowing for water into the wall and basement. These issues are something that will need to be addressed.