

DRI-718: 7 Arlington Ave. Demolition Project

Ted Meleney <60rambler@cox.net>

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To: Lucy Morrison <morrison@mvcommission.org>;

Hello Adam and Alex,

I am forwarding this letter I wrote to Lucy concerning the Demolition request at 7 Arlington Ave. OB. I got an automated response from her saying to contact you in her absence. I would like the opportunity to be linked in or given the opportunity to attend any Zoom or other online meetings as well. I believe there is one on June 16th, but I'm not sure.

Thank you,

Ted Meleney

(25 Mill Square Rd.OB)

(401) 862-3048.

Hello Lucy Morrison,

Please add this letter in the online correspondence section concerning this application for demolition, provide it to the commissioners, and keep me informed of any public hearings scheduled or changed by emailing me at the above address.

I am writing concerning the demolition project at 7 Arlington Ave. Oak Bluffs. I am an abutter of the property on its corner, as well as an abutter of both the Dorchester (Buff) and Sands properties, which run on two sides of 7 Arlington. We have owned our property for 50 years, since 1972. In that time, as you can imagine, we have replaced much of the old wood that had become rotten while maintaining the same footprint. Porches have been rebuilt, windows replaced, a chimney rebuilt, and rooms updated from the inside to help conserve heat and make it snug. This is the approach we would take if we were to make our three season house year round. Our abutting neighbors have all done the same with their houses and this cottage style has not been lost in the neighborhood, yet.

Like all other residents in OB wishing to enlarge their house or add a guest cottage, we went to the building inspector and asked what was possible. I received the same response that all of my neighbors received, To add a guest cottage you must be 25' back from the road and 20' from your neighbor's property line. My neighbors, the Sands have done a fine job on their guest cottage and it meets these requirements. Additionally, they have made a very attractive building and made sure there was no noise generated between Memorial Day and Columbus Day, so we and our guests have not been bothered with construction noise during the "high" season. The new guest cottage blocks no one's view of the water.

Part of the 7 Arlington Ave. property demolition submission puts forth a plan to make a garage on the corner of their lot into a remote bedroom with a bathroom, essentially a guest cottage without a kitchen, yet, as far as I can tell. This building has always been a garage and storage building, and since it does not meet the setbacks required by the town, should not be approved as a guest cottage, a remote bedroom or anything other than a storage building or garage. It is within 5 feet of all three of our abutting property lines and will be a magnet for loud voices, noisy parties, loud and late music, and young people wanting to get away from their parents in the main house. It is also a perfect set-up for a Bed and Breakfast type rental suite. This building is within 25 feet of our closest bedroom and even closer to the Buffs house. This guest cottage should not be approved unless plans are changed to include the setbacks of 25 and 20' everyone else must abide by. It also should not have slide-by approval, while everyone else's attention is on the main house. Please vote no on this request.

Concerning the main house, doubling the size of the house and making it a year round home, if there is enough room and proper setbacks on the property, is not a problem for us. Adding a garage, moving the septic field and the driveway all seem like great ideas. I applaud the new design as far as the front of the house goes, but the back of the house stands out as an unattractive appendage that does not fit with the concept of a Vineyard cottage, looks like it was pasted on the plan with Scotch tape, and would be a terrible addition to otherwise attractive plans.

As your new guidelines rightly call for, these historic homes should be improved as much as is feasible by managing the renovations in place, not destroying everything first and building it back up. The whole structure should conform to the cottage look that makes Oak Bluffs and the island as a whole the charming place it is. I would like to see everything that is not rotted, saved, renovated and improved while keeping the outside as original as possible, from all angles.

Not only does the back part of the building not fit into the overall structure of this house, and all buildings in the neighborhood, but it very much will negatively impact the property next door, by blocking views they now enjoy and by having windows and a high back wall to look at only 12 feet from their property line, well within a 20 foot setback that would otherwise be required in new construction. There is no reason why the existing house can't be rebuilt and have any additions added at least 20 feet from the property line, that don't interfere with the neighbor's view and enjoyment of their property. Moving the new section to the North side of the existing house, toward Arlington Ave., rather than to the West, toward the Sands, would accomplish this. It would also be farther away from all three of our property lines.

I believe in managing in place as much as possible, not skirting prescribed required setbacks by calling a renovated storage building a remote bedroom, when it is really a guest house, and not blocking other people's views. If plans are revised so the Sands' concerns are met, and guest house and main building setbacks are 25 and 20', like everyone else must conform to, I have no objection to the plans, so long as all construction is done between Columbus Day and Memorial Day, not during the summer season.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ted Meleney