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Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI #707 9 Beecher Park Demolition

MVC Staff Report – 2021-7-28

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 **Owner and Applicant:** William and Melissa Callahan; Chuck Sullivan, architect
- 1.2 **Project Location:** 9 Beecher Park, Map 8, Lot 120, Oak Bluffs
- 1.3 **Proposal:** Demolition of a historic house and construction of a new house in the Vineyard Highlands.
- 1.4 **Zoning:** Residential 2 (R2)
- 1.5 **Local Permits:** Building Permit, Special Permit
- 1.6 **Surrounding Land Uses:** Other residential uses in the R2 District
- 1.7 **Project History:** The existing two-story residence was built in 1877 in the expansive Campground style, with several additions over the years. According to the MACRIS file, "This building is significant as part of the Vineyard Highlands, an area laid out in 1869 as an alternative to the Wesleyan Grove Campground by a group of Camp Meeting Association directors fearful of the 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 the Vineyard Sound [Nantucket Sound], and is closely identified with the Baptist Camp Meeting which met there beginning in 1875." The Vineyard Highlands includes the approximate area between Vineyard Sound, Oak Bluffs Harbor, Oak Bluffs Cemetery and Munroe Ave., at the northeastern tip of East Chop.
- 1.8 **Project Summary:** The proposal is to demolish the existing six-bedroom house, and an existing garage (likely from the 1930s), and replace them with a new four-bedroom house, and a new garage with an office/bedroom on the second floor. (The second floor of the garage is intended as an office, but the Board of Health considers it a bedroom.) The house and garage would be connected by a covered porch. The new buildings are intended as a year-round residence.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 **DRI Referral:** Oak Bluffs ZBA
- 2.2 **DRI Trigger:** 8.1a (Demolition of a structure listed in MACRIS), 8.1b (Demolition of a structure more than 100 years old)
- 2.3 **LUPC:** July 26, 2021
- 2.4 **Public Hearing:** August 12, 2021

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

- 3.1 **Character and Identity:** The new building will be similar in style to the existing building, but will be larger, with additional features such as dormers and windows. The property is not within any historic district, although the Oak Bluffs Historic Commission (OBHC) has some purview over structures that are more than 100 years old. The OBHC has not reviewed the project, although Historic Commissioner Barbara Baskin (currently between appointments) has urged the

commission to consider whether some portion of the front of the house can be preserved, since that is likely the most historic part. The property abuts an approximately 1.5-acre property that is owned by the East Chop Association and protected as open space. The applicant has stated that some paneling and framing may be reused from the existing structure.

- 3.2 **Water and Wastewater:** The property drains into Oak Bluffs Harbor. The new house will have a septic system, and an easement would be granted for a leaching field on the abutting property to the east that is owned by the East Chop Association. The applicant has stated that an IA system is not required since the groundwater separation is adequate. The number of bedrooms onsite will decrease from six to four.
- 3.3 **Energy:** The applicant has not specified the proposed energy sources, but is considering rooftop solar, either now or in the future.
- 3.4 **Landscape:** The applicant has not yet provided a landscape plan.