

August 12,2021

Re: 112 Dukes County Ave, Oka Bluffs, MA

Dear Commission Members:

I have observed the situation at 112 Dukes County Ave and wish to comment.

My name is Fran Eddings. I am 67 years old. I was raised in Oak Bluffs at 112 Dukes County Avenue. (When I was growing up it was 14 Dukes County Ave). I know the house and the Dukes County Ave neighborhood of course very well. I come to the Island yearly and remain connected to friends and family who reside here, primarily in Oak Bluffs.

The neighborhood was basically the same as it is now. There was Tony's Market and the Fish Market on Dukes County Avenue. Beside the house that I lived in, there was a garage, which currently was a workshop until last year. Behind the house at 112 Dukes County Ave, there was a chicken farm. One of my grandmother's best friends lived at 165 Circuit Ave (current address) which was directly behind the farm. Sometimes I would walk what is now known as Arch Ave, to go to that Circuit Ave house to visit. Another of my grandmother's friends lived at the house next to what is now Sea Smoke.

Across the street from my house were three 100+ years old houses that are still there today. In the surrounding neighborhood there were many children and the bus that picked-up all of us for school. The firehouse was operational when I grew up and I'd see the volunteer firemen come and go.

The house at 112 Dukes County Ave that has been demolished, was owned by my grandparents, Mildred and Spencer Wright. They purchased it in 1961. After that, my Uncle, their son, owned it briefly. It was sold to one of my siblings and their spouse. In 1995, they sold it to Lucy Abbot.

That house remained in my family for approximately 34 years. The verbal history that was passed to me when I was a child was that the house had been moved to the site from the campgrounds by the prior owner Josephine Chaffee in the early 1900's.

When I heard it was said that the structure did not have any historical significance I decided to write to the Commission.

By the Martha's Vineyard Commission's own valission, Ms. Chaffee purchased the house in approximately 1921 and had the house moved to 14 Dukes County Ave, Oak

Bluffs in approximately 1923, even acknowledging that the house was built in approximately 1850. This house had all of the architectural designs as other Gingerbread Houses in the Campground currently.

The exterior had not been altered by my family significantly. Over the years the interior was altered somewhat, for such things as insulating the walls; my grandfather added a deck off the dining room, took the large closet on the first floor and made it a full bathroom as the only bathroom was the upstairs half bath with a pull chain toilet and sink.

Ms Abbot enclosed the porch both on the first and second floors as most houses in the neighborhood have had completed over the years. The Gingerbread facade in the front was removed. But the porch and gingerbread facade features were there when I lived there as a child.

My recollection is up to the sale to Ms Abbot. I remember when we first went to the house after my grandparents bought it. Ms. Chaffee, the prior owner, had tacked up the walls with many many newspapers which she used as insulation. As a family we all helped to remove the tacks and newspapers. I remember that some of the newspapers were very old. My grandparents did insulate the walls so we could live there year round.

There was plank flooring and lovely beams. I do not believe it was ever removed by my family. The structure was truly very much, then and before the demo, a campground cottage.

The Abbots lived there and ran a licensed business until it was sold. It is unfortunate that this house was demolished without proper review. It is not just nostalgia for me; it's the removal of an historic anchor for the Dukes County Ave, a neighborhood with rich history.

I am of course familiar with the Bradley Square structure that was demolished. It was on a lot that is at the very least, was about 6 to 8 times bigger than the 112 Dukes County Avenue lot. While it wasn't on Dukes County Avenue, the building was a mission hall/gathering place and a Church. Even though the building was on such a large lot, to the best of my knowledge, there was no activity that I recall there, so it wasn't an issue. Even though the lot was very big, it didn't overpower the houses on Masonic Ave across the street. A building that large and even taller would be very much out of place at 112 Dukes County Avenue, a small street of small and medium size structures.

It would overshadow the neighborhood. A 3 story structure in keeping with a large Missio./church structure is not historically accurate for r12.

What replaces is important and needs to be, design wise, bulk wise and height wise, comparable to what was there, or the neighborhood's historic quality is null and void. I have not seen a streetscape or any size comparisons in the MVC materials between what was there and the new project. The new design is overwhelmingly too high and way too wide and bulky/long. The visual from Tony's Market will be of a very out of place structure. It will be an eye sore and visual detriment when people are driving in and out.

Two or three spaces for parking is not appropriate. I feel strongly about this. We always provided parking for our cars, our friends and family visitors. Where are the tenants or persons utilizing the business supposed to park? Any parking on Arch Avenue is very problematic. It's a private access for several other lots. we never would have blocked or partially blocked someone else's lot' It would be wrong for the commission to allow that under their permitting.

The development of 3 one story gingerbread type houses across the street built between three 100+ old houses was done small, thoughtfully, and although I'm sure that the increased the market value of the property, also took the neighborhood into consideration. Next to my old house is a tasteful structure in keeping with the neighborhood that provides year round housing with plenty of parking for tenants' If these two neighbors can develop and have one bedroom apartments with small square footage living areas and respect the historic nature of the area, both having on site parking, so can this Applicant without detriment.

In closing I wish to encourage you to downsize the footprint so the length and bulk is lessened, the height is lowered to two stories and have the Applicant rebuild what was there. He could do so and still fit in 2 apartments with 3 bedrooms in the space allotted; have a small commercial space; and, have parking on his lot to accommodate his tenants and customers.

I understand that the commission is charged with the duty of what the future will be in this neighborhood and a downsize and rebuild of an appropriate two story small footprint campground design will allow Dukes county Avenue to remain historic and have the wonderful mix of business and residential as it has now and did for the last 135 years and thus it will remain so for the next generations to come. The reason I still love the Vineyard is because it is peaceful. People always want to change, industrialize, build big and max out properties. But that is not the nature of this neighborhood or the vineyard. If the commission allows, authorizes and permits construction they will set the standard for large, tall, massive structures for Dukes county Avenue and the

surrounding historic areas. Buildings will be raised to 3 and 4 stories high from the current 1 and 2 stories high that it is now and has been for 135 years.

I believe that this is not a change that is best for this neighborhood and that the MV Commission will be dismayed in the event if it permits at this size and design. Then there will be no recourse for the Commission and the neighborhood.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

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