

Craig R. Dripps  
East Chop Association  
Box 1916  
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557  
November 12, 2021

Dear Members of the Martha's Vineyard Commission:

As President of the East Chop Association, I am writing on behalf of several members of the "Baptist Temple" neighborhood to voice concerns about the proposed expansion of the Shearer Cottage. Please realize that we deeply understand the significance and importance of this property and appreciate the large contribution its owners have made to the rich historical fabric of East Chop. In my thirty-year tenure as head of the ECA, I have observed that the family members have been integral partners in a cooperative and copacetic relationship with the neighborhood community. It is our deep concern, however, that the plans to dramatically enlarge the footprint of the cottage will not enhance this positive legacy; I fear that because of its impact people will be forced to take sides.

Besides the obvious issues of parking, septic, and lighting, increased traffic and accentuated noise levels are the primary concern. People choose to live in this community, not because of spectacular views, but because of the peaceful, quiet, and serene surroundings. The landscape is consumed with huge oak trees, cedars, pine trees, and wild huckleberries. There is always a rustling breeze. Some of the roads are two-way, but one lane, unpaved and worn, not because, as one of the tour van drivers was overheard crassly fabricating, "Historically, the town government has deliberately chosen to ignore this part of Oak Bluffs", but rather because the families of this community prefer to cherish and enjoy the rustic and simple ambience.

More than tripling the living capacity of the Shearer Cottage will increase dramatically the vehicular traffic in the area. People unfamiliar with their surroundings will be getting distracted, confused, and lost amidst the twisted and random array of narrow roads. Cars will be meeting head-to-head on one lane roads, as drivers force each other's hand to either pull over or back up. The "solution" to this inevitable dilemma will be a call to widen and pave the roads, and to place sidewalks and signs along the way, severely altering or destroying the very thing that neighbors already enjoy and visitors are coming to experience. There will be a significant disruptive increase in traffic moving through a neighborhood that is not designed to accommodate such volume.

The other concern is noise, which will increase with the proliferation of new rooms and the doubling of the outdoor deck space. I am assuming that the new hotel will be advertised as a destination venue for weddings and organizational retreats, with guests socializing outside, perhaps with music playing, on warm summer evenings. The sounds will be heard across the neighborhood, perhaps as late as the town's 11 p.m. noise curfew, as often as seven days a week, at the expense of neighbors who, in all fairness, should not have to endure the imposition.

This property has been affectionately referred to as the Shearer Cottage, not the Shearer Hotel. The proposed transition is too big and clearly inappropriate for its surroundings. Knowing that it will encumber the roads and the neighborhood, we ask the MVC to be sensitive to these issues in its deliberations as it determines the fate of this property and the future of the community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Craig R. Dripps

