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Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI #250-M 222 Upper Main Street Change of Use MVC Staff Report – 2021-5-13

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 **Applicant:** Stony Brook LLC (Attorney Geoghan Coogan)
- 1.2 **Owner:** Stony Brook LLC
- 1.3 **Project Location:** 222 Upper Main Street, Edgartown, Map 20c, Lot 27
- 1.4 **Proposal:** Conversion of an existing residence to a 19-room inn, including site work to provide for parking and access requirements, limited demolition, and construction of a new addition to the main building.
- 1.5 **Zoning:** B2 District
- 1.6 **Local Permits:** Special Permit (Planning Board), Innholders License (Board of Selectmen), Annual Inspection / License to Operate (Board of Health), Building Permit
- 1.7 **Surrounding Land Uses:** Edgartown B2 District; densely developed, with various business and residential uses; a multi-family house to the west and single-family house to the east. The southern property boundary abuts the R5 District.
- 1.8 **Project History:** In 1987, the MVC approved an approximately 1,566 ft² addition at 222 Upper Main Street (DRI 250), which at the time was the Arbor Inn, raising the total to about 4,050 ft² and increasing the number guest rooms from six to 10. The proposal also included an additional living room and a new parking area. The MVC conditions required the proposed architecture and exterior materials to be consistent with the exiting building, and the proposed site improvements to be consistent with the existing landscaping. The property was vacant when the current owners purchased it in 2018, and 12-13 rooms have since been used as workforce and elder housing.

Project Summary: The project would take place in two phases and increase the total square footage of the main building from 4,079 ft² to 6,334 ft² (2,255 ft² increase). The total number of rooms on the property would increase from 13 to 19.

Phase one would include refurbishing and altering nine of the 11 existing guest rooms and bathrooms in the main building, converting the existing living room into a bedroom, and updating the existing common areas. One guest room would be converted into a laundry area and handicapped-accessible bathroom. The property includes a one-room cottage and one-room garage, which would undergo interior renovations, and possibly some exterior changes to the cottage. The cottage would be reoriented to make room for parking spaces, which would increase from seven to 21. Phase one would also include the installation of new windows, HVAC equipment, a fire sprinkler and alarm system, and life safety devices to accommodate the new layout. The main building currently has no fire sprinkler or alarm systems, and is not handicap-accessible.

Phase two would involve constructing a new handicap-accessible entrance to replace an existing deck at the front of the building, demolishing a one-story wing off the back of the existing building (391 ft²), and constructing a new three-story addition with six rooms, including two that

are handicap-accessible according to 521 CMR (1,323 ft² footprint). The addition would be about 26'6" at the ridgeline, compared to 23'11" for the existing building.

The new hotel would be operated by staff members of the existing Edgar Hotel across the street at 127 Upper Main, which shares the same owner. The property would likely operate from May–December. The front desk would be located at the Edgar Hotel, and guests of the new inn would use a mobile check-in system. The applicant has stated that an Edgar Hotel employee will be onsite at 222 Upper Main about 12 hours per day.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 **DRI Referral:** Planning Board, December 23, 2020
- 2.2 **DRI Trigger:** 3.1f (Dev. of Comm of use), 3.1h (Dev. of Comm – Parking 10+ vehicles), 1.3D (Modification to Previous DRI)
- 2.3 **LUPC:** March 1, 2021
- 2.4 **Public Hearing:** May 13, 2021

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

- 3.1 **Change of Use:** The Arbor Inn was last issued a town business license in 2011. It continued to operate without a license until 2015, at which time the selectmen placed a cease-and-desist order on the property. According to the Edgartown Assessor's Office, when a commercial property becomes vacant, the property could be considered residential. The property at 222 Upper Main was vacant when it was purchased in 2018, and it is currently assessed as residential.
- 3.2 **Island Housing Needs:** After purchasing the property, the applicant rented out rooms for a limited time to provide housing for 12-13 people, including employees of local businesses, and a few seniors who had lost their housing. At present the main building, cottage, and garage are vacant. The applicant has stated that the project will entail the hiring of one new employee at the Edgar Hotel. The Edgartown Planning Board has requested that if the Commission requires an affordable housing contribution, it be directed to the Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee.

The MVC Housing Policy (section 5.7) states, "Any DRI project that proposes to demolish, repurpose, or otherwise eliminate an existing residential structure must replace each unit of housing in the structure to be eliminated either on-site as part of the DRI project or off-site in appropriate circumstances." However, this section of the policy does not necessarily apply, given the property's history as an inn and rental property.

MVC staff recommends waiving the monetary mitigation in exchange for the provision of year-round staff housing, either on-site or off-site, for a minimum of two employees. The applicant has stated that two year-round units will be provided, but has not provided any details.

- 3.3 **Traffic and Transportation:** The proposal shows an increase from seven to 21 spaces. The Edgartown B2 District requires one parking space per guest unit, plus one for every 12 units, which would equal 21 spaces for the project.

The proposed curb cuts cross an existing shared use path. The curb cuts and driveway already exist, but the access will become one-way in and one-way out. Because guests might check in at

the Edgar Hotel and have access to those amenities, pedestrian traffic crossing that section of Upper Main Street may increase.

The project would involve granting an easement for the eastern access way, which is on the neighboring property. This has raised some questions as to how the access will be maintained if the neighboring property changes ownership in the future.

The applicant has stated that it will partner with Edgartown Bicycle to allow guests to get around without a car, and the property will include bike racks.

- 3.4 Water and Wastewater:** The Edgartown Wastewater Commission has approved the tie-in for the property, conditioned on other permitting to allow for the 19 rooms. The hotel will not provide dining service. MVC staff has recommended that the proposed landscaping include plantings other than grass to reduce the need for irrigation.
- 3.5 Stormwater and Drainage:** Impervious area at 222 Upper Main (including roofs, hardscape, decks, and patios) would increase from 7,432 ft² to 12,578 ft², not including the addition in phase two. MVC staff has recommended that the proposed parking area and driveway consist of as much pervious surface as possible. The site plan shows the location of the proposed gutters on the main hotel building, and four drywells.
- 3.6 Energy:** The plans for phase two show rooftop solar on the existing building and proposed addition, although the capacity of the system has not been provided. Heat pumps would be used for water and space heating.
- 3.7 Character and Identity:** The project is subject to Special Permit review by the Planning Board. The oldest part of the main building was constructed around 1938, with an addition in 1991. The main building is highly visible from Upper Main Street, although the proposed additions are mainly to the rear of the building.
- 3.8 Economic and Social Development:** The new inn will be operated by staff members of the existing Edgar Hotel, with one new employee expected as result of the change of use, and one employee assigned to the new inn per day.
- 3.9 Night Lighting:** Lighting fixtures are proposed at 37 locations at 222 and 230 Upper Main, with a mix of parking, path, granite-post, and wall-mounted lighting. Five parking light fixtures would be installed near the southern edge of the properties, including three at 222 Upper Main.
- 3.10 Landscaping:** The applicant has provided a landscape plan by Donaroma's Nursery, and has stated that existing oak trees at the front of the property will remain, while some trees to the rear of the property will be removed to make way for the additional parking spaces.
- 3.11 Zoning:** The project would entail a change from residential to commercial use in the B2 District, which is allowed by Special Permit.