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Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI #250-M 222 Upper Main Street Change of Use MVC Staff Report (Final) – 2021-6-10

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 existing 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 will 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 will increase from 13 to 19. The project was originally planned as two phases, but has morphed into one. (Construction would start around August 1, 2021, with completion expected by April 15, 2022.) Much of the interior work, and construction of the new entrance facing the street, has already begun.

The project will refurbish and alter nine of the 11 existing guest rooms and bathrooms in the main building, convert the existing living room into a bedroom, and update the existing common areas. One guest room will be converted into a laundry area and handicapped-accessible bathroom. The property includes a one-room cottage and one-room garage, which will undergo interior renovations, and possibly some exterior changes to the cottage. The cottage will be reoriented to make room for parking spaces, which will increase from seven to 21. Other aspects 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 previously involved 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. Those portions of the project will now happen concurrently with the others.

The new hotel will be operated by staff members of the existing Edgar Hotel across the street at 127 Upper Main, which shares the same owner. The property will likely operate from May–December. The front desk will be located at the Edgar Hotel, and guests of the new inn will 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 offered to acquire a property at 29 Chase Road, Edgartown, to house two employees year-round.

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 applicant has stated that guests will be informed of the location of crosswalks when they receive their welcome email.

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 7,433 ft² to 9,412 ft². 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. A revised parking plan shows the delineation of pervious and impervious parking surfaces, including pea stone in the vicinity of the old-growth trees.
- 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. The applicant has stated that security lighting will be motion sensitive, and all exterior lighting will be downward-shielded.
- 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 (including an older tree at the northwest corner of the site) 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/Town Review:** The project would entail a change from residential to commercial use in the B2 District, which is allowed by Special Permit.

The Edgartown Planning Board provided the MVC with a [list of findings and concerns](#), including as they relate to parking, curb cuts, landscaping, drainage, energy, and various other aspects of the project. The Planning Board also noted that the “residential” portions of the project had already been approved by the town Building Inspector. The Board expressed “general support for the project, as the town benefits from additional rental units, which support and promote local tourism.” In response to the Planning Board concerns (including a lack of information related to energy sources/efficiency), the applicant submitted a revised site plan showing the location of solar panels and clarifying that the project will have only one phase.

Following the MVC public hearing on May 13, the Planning Board provided [additional comments and recommendations](#) related to the front lot-line fence, the boundary trees, and the landscape and lighting plans, asking that the MVC defer to the Planning Board on conditioning the landscape design, as well as specifics of the lighting design, and whether to require a lot-line fence. The Board also recommended the following conditions related to the boundary trees:

1. *Applicant shall commission an evaluation of the four major boundary trees for potential tree loss prior to any landscaping work on site, in order to determine the viability of the subject trees.*
2. *If the trees are deemed unsafe or of very poor health, they shall be removed, stumps ground or removed, and replaced as follows:*
 - *Replacement trees shall be of the same genus and species (Acer pseudoplatanus, "Sycamore Maple"); a different genus and species of similar size, character and quality may be used, if approved by the Planning Board and Tree Warden of the Town of Edgartown.*
 - *Replacement trees shall be a caliper no less than 1/2 of the existing. If an existing tree with a caliper of 12" or larger is to be replaced, applicant may at their option replace with two or more trees with a caliper of 1/4 of the existing, or 4" caliper, whichever is larger.*

EXAMPLES

A tree with a caliper of 12" is to be replaced. Applicant may replace with a single tree of 6" caliper, or two trees of 4" caliper.

A tree with a caliper 20" is to be replaced. Applicant may replace with a single tree of 10" caliper, two trees of 5" caliper, or three trees of 4" caliper.

The applicant shall be required to submit an assessment of the four street-side trees, prepared by an arborist; if the health of any of the trees is deemed to be poor or critical, the applicant shall be required to remove the subject tree, and replace with the same species, at least.

Replacement trees shall be placed along the same line as the existing trees, equally spaced.