



Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI # 614-M7 Harbor View Hotel Modifications MVC Staff Report – 2021-1-20

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 Applicant:** Harbor View Hotel Owner LLC; Sean Murphy (Lawyer/Agent)
- 1.2 Project Location:** 131 North Water Street, Edgartown; Map 20B, Lot 107
- 1.3 Proposal:** Relocation and expansion of proposed spa, expansion of proposed Bradley Cottage, and reconfiguration of the number of rooms per building (net number of rooms remains the same).
- 1.4 Zoning:** R-5 Residential (minimum lot size 10,000 ft²)
- 1.5 Local Permits:** Modification to Special Permit from ZBA (public hearing); Certificate of Appropriateness by HDC (public hearing); Building Permits.
- 1.6 Surrounding Land Uses:** Residential
- 1.7 Project History:** The MVC approved a two-phase \$55 million renovation of the Harborview Hotel in 2008. The approved 2008 plan was for a total finished square footage of all buildings to rise from 91,277 ft² to 113,564 ft², an increase of 19,287 ft². The number of units was going to drop from 116 to 68, rooms would drop from 120 to 117, and bedrooms would go from 134 to 139. The project was proposed to be done in two phases.
- The project was financed by Lehman Brothers, who went bankrupt. In May 2012, a new group of seasonal residents became the controlling investors in the property. In 2014 they requested additional phasing time periods to allow the investor team a more realistic timetable and allow for the continuation of the financing that was put in place in May 2012. The DRI 614 Decision was modified on August 14, 2009 (614-M) to change the location and size of the spa; April 26, 2012 (614-M2) to change the phasing and the location of the office; October 16, 2014 (614-M3) to install cook tops in some of the units; November 17, 2016 (614-M4) to extend the timelines for the phasing; and June 21, 2018 (614-M6) for an extensive modification, including a reduction of 8,000 ft², relocation of the spa, and a net increase of 29 more rooms than the 2008 approval.
- 1.8 Project Summary:**
- **Main Hotel Building:**
 - The 1,620 ft² addition on the south side of the main building will not be constructed
 - The second, third, and fourth floors were approved for 36 rooms, but were built with 40 rooms: an increase of 4 rooms.
 - **Mayhew Cottage renovation:**
 - Approved for 48 rooms but built with 51 rooms: an increase of 3 rooms.
 - **Bradley Cottage:**
 - Approved as a 7,080 ft² building with 12 rooms; now proposed to be a 9,650 ft² building, including a 4,625 ft² spa and 4 rooms; an increase of 2,570 ft² and reduction of 8 rooms.
 - **Pease Cottage:**
 - Approved for 10 rooms; now proposed to be 11 rooms, an increase of 1 room.

No net change in the number of rooms: 8 rooms added to Main Hotel and Mayhew and Pease Cottages, and 8 rooms eliminated from Bradley Cottage. *Note that the changes to the Main Hotel and Mayhew Cottage have already been built, minus the 1,620 addition to the Main Hotel.*

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 DRI Referral:** Edgartown ZBA
- 2.2 DRI Trigger:** 1.2 Modification to a previous DRI
- 2.3 LUPC:** October 26, 2020 – LUPC voted 5-4 to recommend a full public hearing, with four members abstaining.
- 2.4 Public Hearing:** January 21, 2021

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

3.1 Traffic, noise, and lighting:

Many abutters have raised concerns about traffic, noise, and other effects resulting from hotel uses, including the poolside bar, horse and carriage rides, and events after hours. Most of the MVC conditions for the project in 2008 (amended in 2018) do not relate directly to those activities, although condition 4.1b limits hotel events to 306 people, and other conditions place limits on longer-term stays and aim to mitigate the effect of hotel activities on traffic and parking. The applicant has stated that the modified project will comply with the existing MVC conditions, including 4.1b.

The original 2008 proposal indicated an 850 ft² day spa for guests. The proposal was modified in 2009 to enlarge the spa to 1,869 ft² and relocate it to the proposed Snow Cottage. Modifications in 2018 included decreasing the spa to 1,620 ft² and relocating it to the main hotel building. The 2018 plans showed five treatment rooms, a relaxation room, women’s and men’s locker rooms, and an office/dispensary. The proposed spa is 4,625 ft² (2.85 times larger than approved) and the hotel has proposed that it be open to the public. The current plans show seven treatment rooms, a hair and nail salon, women’s and men’s relaxation rooms and locker rooms, two steam rooms, reception and dispensary areas, four bathrooms, and a walled garden.

Ron Müller and Associates provided a traffic impact statement on behalf of the hotel, concluding that the proposal will not materially alter its traffic generation characteristics, since the number of rooms and parking spots will remain the same as approved, and the spa would only create an increase of two treatment rooms. The statement also cites a report by the commercial real estate services and investment firm CBRE, which finds that hotel spas in general are used mostly by hotel guests; and information from the Harbor View that most of its guests do not drive during their stay.

3.2 Environment

- **Wastewater / Stormwater:**
 - The property is connected to the Edgartown Wastewater Facility.

3.3 Affordable Housing

The 2018 MVC conditions related affordable housing require the following:

- 1) A \$107,072 payment to the Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee upon receipt of the Certificate of Occupancy. (The MVC voted not to reduce that amount in line with the square footage reduction in the 2018 proposal.)
- 2) To continue to provide affordable housing for a portion of hotel employees by renting 22 bedrooms seasonally and 3 apartment units year-round at market rates, and only requiring the employees to reimburse a percentage of the cost.
- 3) To continue to provide furnishings, bedding, and other items for affordable housing.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

The MVC has received 64 emails and letters as of Jan. 20, 2021, mostly opposed to the project. Common concerns include the scale and scope of commercial development in the neighborhood, and the resulting effects on noise, traffic, parking, safety, cleanliness, lighting, character, and property values. Opponents have argued that the hotel has neglected town regulations and permits by allowing activities such as parties on the deck and lawn after hours, horse and carriage rides, the use of golf carts, an outdoor bar and restaurant with fire pits, and the use of 199 North Water St. for jet ski rentals, boat charters, and extended-stay lodging. (199 North Water St. belongs to the hotel owner.) Concerns focus largely on the proposed spa, which opponents see as following a trend toward more intrusive commercial activity by the hotel in recent years.