



Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI 664 - Featherstone Art Barn & Pottery Building MVC Staff Report – 2016-08-16

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 Applicant:** Featherstone Center for the Arts, Inc.; Ann Smith (Executive Director); **Team:** Bill Potter and Woody Mitchell of Squash Meadow (Builders); Tracy Smith (SBH Engineering); Sean Murphy (Lawyer).
- 1.2 Project Location:** 30 Featherstone Lane, Oak Bluffs Map 41 Lot 6 (6.22 acres)
- 1.3 Proposal:** The proposal includes the demolition of two existing buildings (total app. 3,330 sf) and the construction of two new larger buildings with a total of app. 8,600 sf., and the re-location of a small existing chapel from off-site onto the Featherstone Center for the Arts campus which has 6 existing buildings comprising a total of approximately 9,000 sf.
- 1.4 Zoning:** R-3 Residential.
Local Permits: Building Permit; the entire property is in the Southern Woodlands DCPC; almost half of the property is in the Lagoon Pond DCPC; The Old Back Road Special Way runs through the site. The proposal requires Site Plan Review (See Attached S.W. DCPC Excerpts). Site Plan Review Regulations for preservation of "Special Ways" include the following: F.10.C: "...removal of vegetation, other than for historical preservation, shall be prohibited within 50 feet of either side of the center line of a Special Way...; F.10.E:) "No Special Way shall be widened, paved or hard-surfaced."; F.10.G: "...no motorized vehicles shall be permitted to operate on Special Ways within the District."; F.12.F: "To the maximum extent feasible, development projects shall retain mature stands of trees,...".
- 1.5 Surrounding Land Uses:** Rural Residential; Conservation (Land Bank);
- 1.6 Project History:**
- Featherstone is a year-round non-profit arts education facility open seven days a week.
 - The 6.22 acre campus was formerly a farm and was purchased in the 1990's and has been adapted for the use of the educational non-profit with 6 buildings and a couple of outbuildings. The buildings include: the Virginia Weston Besse Gallery and office in the old farm house (1,787 sf); the Barn Studio in the old barn (app. 2,500 sf); caretaker's cottage (to be demolished – app. 800 sf); The Studio & Children's Studio (2,305 sf); the Pebble Studio (805 sf); and a pottery studio (800 sf). The total existing square footage of the 6 buildings is approximately 9,000 sf. They also utilize several variously sized tents during the summer which augments their capacity somewhat.
- 1.7 Project Summary:**
- The proposal includes:
 - The demolition of two existing buildings (total app 2,300 sf) and the construction of two new larger buildings with a total of 8,600 sf and the re-location of a small existing chapel from off site:
 - The demolition of the existing approximately 1,500 sf Art Barn and the construction of a new 6,200 sf Art Barn with offices, classrooms, a commercial kitchen, and a gallery.
 - The demolition of the 800 sf caretakers' cottage and the construction of a new modular single-story 2,400 sf pottery barn;
 - The re-location of a small existing 180 sf chapel from off site.

- The proposal includes removing a small paved parking pad in front of the existing Art Barn and adding a new 4 spot parking area near the new pottery gallery accessed of the Old Back Road.
- The total square footage of the buildings on the campus with the addition of the new Art Barn and Pottery Studio and the demolition of the existing art barn and caretaker's cottage will be approximately 15,600 gsf.
- The hours of operation are 12 noon to 4:00 pm everyday with classes often held from 9:00 am – 10:00 pm. Various classes are taught throughout the year with an average of 50 classes a month (1,100 classes a year). There are approximately 43 teachers with average class sizes of 8 -10.
- The classes and activities of the arts education center are supplemented in the summer with regular events such as: Musical Monday; Flea & Fine Arts Market and Poetry Readings on Tuesdays; Jazz Thursdays; and other artistic exhibitions such as dance and photography.
- The Applicant has said they have decided to not host weddings on site any longer.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

2.1 DRI Referral: The project was referred by the Building Inspector.

2.2 DRI Trigger: The project was referred under DRI Checklist 3.1a (Development of Commercial over 3,000 sf) a Mandatory Review; DRI Checklist 3.1D (Development of auxiliary commercial buildings over 1,000 sf resulting in a total of over 2,000 sf) a Concurrence Review; DRI Checklist 6.1 (Private Facility over 2,000 sf) a mandatory.

2.3 Pre-Application meeting with staff: July 26, 2016

2.4 LUPC: August 15, 2016. LUPC waived the need for a traffic study.

2.5 Site visits: August 25, 2016 at 5:00 pm

2.6 Public Hearing: September 1, 2016.

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

3.1 Some Key Issues

- The campus and activities have grown steadily over the years to include up to 1,100 classes a year and many regularly scheduled events and several large functions. How has this increased activity impacted traffic, nitrogen loading, and the neighborhood?
- How much will the proposed expansion increase use of the property?
- The proposal includes the removal of at least 17 trees. Could the new buildings be sited to decrease the impact on vegetation?

3.2 Environment

- **Vegetation:** The proposal includes the removal of 17 trees.
- **Habitat:** Much of the property and part of the project site is designated as NHESP habitat.
- **Landscaping:** No plans submitted yet.
- **Open Space:** The property has a substantial amount of open space.
- **Lighting:** No plans submitted yet.
- **Noise:** When the Center holds events music can be heard some distance.
- **Water Source:**
- **Wastewater / Stormwater:**
 - Nitrogen Loading:**
 - The parcel is in the Lagoon watershed, a nitrogen sensitive water body for which the Policy allows a loading of 3.4 kilograms per acre per year.

- The Draft Mass Estuaries Report indicates the Lagoon is significantly over its nitrogen limit.
- Featherstone is not a school but is an educational center.
 - Classes are usually one hour long with varying student numbers (avg. 10 students per class) from 9:00 am to 10:00 pm estimated at about 50 classes a month or 1,100 classes a year.
 - This schedule does not fit the standard Title 5 category for education.
 - Title 5 calculations are inclusive of a full 6-7 hour school day.
 - Therefore the nitrogen calculations were based on their current and projected water use records.
- Currently the water use records indicate that Featherstone is below the current MVC policy load limit for the pond.
- The Applicant have proposed to install a de-nitrifying system that will produce nitrogen effluent of 19mg/l or below for the Farmhouse, the new Art Barn and the new Pottery Studio buildings. The other existing buildings will remain on the existing septic system.

- **Allowable Nitrogen Load:**

Lagoon Pond watershed limit .34 kg/acre/year

3.4 kg/ac/yr x 6.22 acres = 21.15 kg/yr

MVC Policy load limit 21.15kg/yr

Existing average water use (for years without flower garden) = 101,000 gallons/yr

Site load

Roof runoff .52 kg/yr

Impervious runoff 1.10kg/yr

Pervious runoff 1.36kg/yr

2.98kg/yr

N load from current water use 13.38 kg/yr

Total current load 16.36 kg/yr*

***With proposed de-nitrification system this load will be reduced by approximately 25%.**

- Current water use with no de-nitrification could be increased to 152,397 gallons/yr and would still be under the MVC Policy allowed nitrogen limit.
- The project falls within the Southern Woodlands DCPC which requires that no land use or development in the District shall result in a cumulative nitrogen concentration of 3mg/l or more in groundwater or of 1 mg/l or more in Lagoon Pond and/or Sengekontacket Pond.
- The MVC Lagoon watershed loading limit used for this project is 3.4 kilograms per acre per year and is the more restrictive of the limits. The MVC limit amounts to a groundwater concentration of about 1.1 ppm, this is arrived at by a conversion calculation in the DEP model.
- Two water meters are to be installed. One meter will service the Studio, The Children's Studio, The Pebble and the Pottery Studio buildings. The other meter will measure the water use of the Farmhouse, The Art Barn and the new Pottery Studio. Water use records from the two meters will reflect actual use.
- The denitrifying system will reduce the Nitrogen load of the proposed project by approximately 25%.
- Applicant has agreed to submit water use records and if water usage exceeds 152, 397 gallons/yr they will install de-nitrification on the septic system that services the Studio, The Children's Studio, The Pebble and the Pottery Studio buildings.

3.3 **Transportation**

- **Access:**
 - The site is on Featherstone Lane which is off of Barnes Road in Oak Bluffs
 - The project site driveway (Featherstone Lane) on Barnes Road is approximately 1,925 feet north of the Roundabout Intersection at Barnes Road and Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road.
 - The access driveway to the first parking area is about 640 feet set back from Barnes Road.
- **Parking:**
 - Plans show a new 4 spot parking area intended for handicapped spots near the new pottery gallery accessed of the Old Back Road Special Way.
 - The existing parking will remain which includes both an upper lot that is shared with the MV Land Bank, a lower lot, and handicapped parking spaces at all the buildings and/or studios on the campus.
 - The main drive and fire lane is kept clear of parked vehicles, but there are overflow parking spaces on the upper lawn area.
 - Featherstone staff and volunteers assist in parking operations during events.
- **Circulation:**
 - Currently there are two unpaved drives (one upper and one lower) off of Featherstone Lane. One of the unpaved drives (Upper) is a part of a Special Way
- **Sight Lines:**
 - The speed limit on Barnes Road is 40 miles per hour.
 - The stopping sight distance for vehicles on Barnes Road is adequate as required by American Association of State Transportation and Highway Officials (AASHTO).
 - The sight lines from the existing access driveway to take a left turn are less than what AASHTO recommends for 40 miles per hour, and it may assist in safety to have advance signage heading northbound on Barnes Road that alerts drivers of the Featherstone campus.
- **Trip Generation:**
 - Based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual rate for Junior/ Community College, ITE Land Use Code 540, the estimated trip generation for 15,000 square feet is 412 daily trips. The PM Peak Hour Trips estimated are a total of 38 PM trips, with 22 in and 16 out.
 - Based on Featherstone's usage estimate of participants for classes and events, the July and August total is approximately 10,900 people, or about 180 people per day on average. At two trips per person, this puts the July – August daily average at about 360 trips.
 - It appears that the ITE estimate for the College is relatively close to the estimate based on Featherstone's classes and events, and therefore seems a reasonable assumption.
- **Crash Data:**
 - A review of the MassDOT Crash Data on the section of Barnes Road in the vicinity of Featherstone Lane for the 2012-2014 three-year period has one crash that was a property damage only crash in 2013 at Barnes Road and Beech Tree Landing.
- **Mass Transit, Bicycle and Pedestrian:**
 - VTA bus routes 7 and 9 traverse Barnes Road and do have bicycle racks.

- The bicycle and pedestrian path on Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road is about 1,925 feet (0.36 miles) from the Featherstone site, and there are walking trails behind the YMCA toward Featherstone.
- There are no bicycle or pedestrian facilities on Barnes Road; all users share the roadway.
- **Traffic Summary:**
 - Should LUPC find that traffic is a concern, it is recommended that a traffic study by an outside consultant be requested from the applicant.

3.4 **Affordable Housing**

- The proposed project is to develop a 2,400 square foot Pottery Studio and 6,200 square foot Art Barn equaling a total footage of 8,600 square feet. The recommended monetary mitigation for a 8,600 square foot development is \$8,200.
- The applicant will be removing a vacant seasonal cottage that is not up to building code and is not habitable. Staff would recommend that the removal of the cottage is not displacing a year-round unit and therefore does not trigger a replacement of an on-site year-round Affordable Housing unit.

3.5 **Economic Impact**

- Featherstone is a year-round non-profit arts education facility that provides many classes, exhibits and performances. As a non-profit it is exempt from municipal property taxes.
- Featherstone is open seven days a week and the hours of operation are from 9:00am – 10:00pm. It is not anticipated that the Hours of Operation will change.
- There are four full time and part time year-round employees. It is not anticipated that those employment numbers will increase.
- Various classes are taught throughout the year. There are approximately 43 teachers and class sizes are on average 8 -10 students per class
- It is anticipated that the proposed project may have a minimal impact on municipal services such as police or fire.
- The propose project will be tied into town water at the applicant’s expense
- The applicant will install a fire hydrant that will improve fire safety within the Featherstone campus

3.6 **Scenic Values**

- **Streetscape:** The proposed art barn and pottery building should not be visible from Barnes Road.
- **Building Massing:**
- **Architectural Detailing:** The proposal is for modular construction.
- **A.D.A. Accessibility:** The proposed art barn and pottery building will be accessible.

Local Impact/Abutters

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4. **CORRESPONDENCE**

4.1 **Town Officials:**

4.2 **Island Organizations:**

4.3 **Public:**