

February 22, 2019

Martha's Vineyard Commission
The Stone Building
33 New York Avenue
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

DRI # 689 – Description of Proposed Development and Summary of Impacts

The Yard For Dance Campus Renovation and Expansion

Section A: Project Description: This section is a written description of the key features of the project. The description follows the MVC recommended outline as follows:

1. Context:

The Yard is located in Chilmark off Middle Road near Beetlebung Corner. The immediate area includes single family residences, Town Hall, the Firehouse, and Chilmark Community Methodist Church to the west.

2. Site:

- The site is a combination of three existing adjacent lots, Map 26 Lots 91, 92, and 95 (1.4, 0.7, and 0.4 acres respectively). The combined lots are roughly level in the center north-south axis, gradually sloping down to the west and sloping up to the east. A handful of mature oak trees dot the properties, along with a mix of brush and other native and non-native plant species around the perimeter of the lots.
- A portion of the site is in the Middle Road Roadside District.

3. Access, traffic and transportation:

- The campus expansion will generate a modest increase of vehicular trips to the site in the High Season (June, July, August and first week of Sept.). Due to the proposed winterization of the campus, event or community programming will extend into the Low Season and will modestly increase the vehicular trips during the latter 3 weeks of September through the months of October, November, December, January, February, March, April and May. See the Site Use and Vehicular Spreadsheet for a detailed breakdown of the current and anticipated impact of traffic on the site.
- The Yard will continue to actively encourage the use of car-pooling for visitors and patrons.
- Most patrons come as pairs or larger groups in one vehicle.
- The primary goal of expanding the parking from the existing 40 spaces to the proposed 74 spaces is to allow for ALL vehicles coming to The Yard to park on-site. Currently when on-site parking is filled, visitors/patrons are made aware of the full lot with a "parking lot full" sign posted on Middle Road. These visitors are then directed to the Chilmark Library parking lot, and they must walk to the site. Beetlebung Farm has also in the past graciously agreed to allow overflow parking across Middle Road. Middle Road has no sidewalks, and very narrow shoulders. By accommodating all patron, visitor, and staff parking on site, the proposal seeks to eliminate any pedestrian movement to and from Middle Road, thereby increasing the safety for all.

- Patron parking for performance events are managed currently by staff, directing patrons to efficiently locate and park cars. The expanded parking lot configuration is devised to have staff park before performances in the center of the “triple bay” parking positions, thereby making remaining patron parking relatively easy and intuitive. The Yard plans to continue to use staff to assist patron parking during events to facilitate rapid and efficient entering and leaving the premises.

4. Buildings and structures:

- The design concept for the diminutive “campus” of The Yard for Dance is to preserve the naturalistic setting for a cluster of structures that evoke the character and sensibility of Up-island Martha’s Vineyard. Keeping in place two existing shingle clad houses, one at the south facing Middle Road and the other in the middle of the combined parcels, three new structures are laid out to retain an informal and casual atmosphere to facilitate the study and performance of dance and movement arts. The new structures include the Performance Theater, the Rehearsal Pavilion, and a new residence called “The Way Back Yard”. See the expanded “Architectural Narrative” in the enclosed letter, Handel Architects dated 1/8/2019.
- The total square footage of buildings will increase from 7,567 sf to 14,761 sf (an additional 7,194 sf)
- Residential square footage of all buildings will increase from 4,454 sf to 5,496 sf.
- Non-Residential square footage of all buildings will increase from 3,113 sf to 9,265 sf.
- The number of aggregate bedrooms on the properties is currently 11, and will be increased to 12.
- Two of the three existing structures will be demolished and replaced. The existing Performance Barn/Studio will be re-built and enlarged. The existing small three-bedroom house known as “The Side Yard” will be removed and replaced by a new modest five bedroom residence to the rear of the site. All new structures will meet Massachusetts Building Code and made useable year-round.
- One of the existing structures (“The Front Yard”) will be renovated.
- All existing structures to remain will have minor repairs to the exterior to address deferred maintenance.
- Lot 92 is closest to Middle Road:
 - The existing 4 bedroom residential structure that will be renovated to a 3 bedroom residential structure.
 - One existing ground level bedroom currently used as a staff office will be converted into ADA compliant bedroom.
 - One existing ground level bedroom will be converted into a study.
 - Upgrades to the ground level kitchen and bathroom will be made to be ADA compliant.
 - Exterior trim and siding repairs will be made; the exterior character will not be changed.
- Lot 91 is the largest lot with an existing Performance Barn and a small living quarters attached.
 - The plan includes demolishing the pre-existing, non-conforming Performance Barn, renovating the 4 bedroom attached living quarters, and constructing a new 1 story

- Performance barn with partial basement and mechanical mezzanine, and locating a new separate 5 bedroom dwelling at the back of the lot.
 - The capacity of the Performance Barn will increase from 100 to 120 seats.
 - The larger, accessible, year-round structure will add an additional multipurpose studio, increase the theater to 60'x60', add bathrooms for patrons, create Back of House dressing area for performers, and expand the outdoor crushed shell reception area ("The Shell Area") in front as well as add a new roof deck on the north side of the structure.
 - The square footage of the non-residential part of the new Performance Barn will increase from 3,113 sf to 7,245 sf.
 - Renovated "Back Yard" living quarters at rear of the Performance Barn will remain unchanged at 1,281 sf. Renovations will include raising the existing deck to the ground floor level, renovating the kitchen, and making exterior trim and siding repairs.
 - The total floor area of the new Performance Barn and living quarters will increase from 4,394 sf to 8,526 sf.
 - A new two-story, 5 bedroom 2,288 gsf dwelling (1,144 sf footprint) will be built on the North (back) of the lot. This structure will have a full basement.
 - Total square footage of buildings on Lot 91 will go from 4,394 sf to 10,814 sf.
- Lot 95 is the smallest and landlocked parcel directly west of the Performance Barn. Plans include:
 - Demolish an existing 1,246 sf residence and construct a one story 2,020 sf rehearsal/office pavilion with full basement and lofted storage area.
- Total bedrooms for all three lots will increase from 11 to 12 bedrooms.
- All new structures will meet the Massachusetts building code, and meet accessibility requirements of the A.D.A.
- All new structures will meet the requirements for height and roof configurations per Chilmark Zoning By-Laws.

5. Landscaping

- Landscaping will be consonant with Up-Island native plantings and, where necessary, simple retaining walls of field stone so prevalent in the area. There will be a significant investment in landscape to create bio-swales and drywells for storm water management.
- Bollard site lighting for the parking area will be shielded and downward pointed.
- Bioswales: These will be designed to facilitate surface water run-off and retention, thereby improving the current condition of surface water coming from off site (uphill) and continuing to neighboring properties (downhill).
- Drywells: There are no drywells currently. All structures will have new drywells to retain storm water and mitigate the surface water run-off currently experienced during heavy rainfall on the site.

6. Infrastructure (including water and septage)

- See VLSE site plan with proposed septic system improvements.
- A new well is proposed at the back of Lot 91. It will serve all structures on the site. This new well will replace the existing private well to provide proper separation from the relocated septic field AND the theater expansion.

- Water usage: the average summer occupancy of staff and visiting artists combined is 21 people; oftentimes fewer, as typically visiting artists are only individuals, duos, or trios. Off-season use by staff in residence is expected to average between 4-8 people.
- The proposal seeks to lower the existing Nitrogen load at the site with its increased flow by adding Innovative and Alternative (I/A) de-nitrification treatment to a new Title V septic system. See VLSE septic flow memo enclosed.
- The “port o’ potties” currently used for performances will be removed and replaced with permanent, fully accessible, restrooms for patron and staff use.
- Energy Use: the renovated and new structures will meet or exceed the Massachusetts “Stretch” energy code both in power consumption for the non-performance spaces and in insulation factors of the all the new building envelopes.
 - All new appliances to be Energy-Star or better.
 - All new lighting, inclusive or most theatrical production lighting, will be low-power, state of the art LED fixtures.
 - HVAC for the Performance Barn will be with a high-efficiency, air cooled, Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) fan coil or heat pump system.
 - All heating in the residences will be tied to a “smart thermostat” system to set un-occupied spaces to 55 degrees when not in use. Air conditioning is anticipated only for the theater only; natural ventilation to be used in all other structures not using a central air system.

7. Lighting and signage

- All lighting to meet Chilmark zoning code and “Dark Skies” initiatives (<https://www.darksky.org/about/>). All outdoor lighting will be focused downward, or kept at low levels and screened by planting.
- See landscape plan for exterior site lighting locations. The existing entrance signage facing Middle Road will remain. The site signage will be upgraded, lighting properly adjust to meet the above requirements, and height of the sign may be adjusted to improve sight lines for cars exiting the property.

Section B: Project Impacts: This section summarizes the impacts of the proposal including the project’s benefits to the community and the Island and to indicate how possible detriments have been mitigated. To facilitate analysis by the Commission, these impacts are organized according to the criteria outlined in Chapter 831, namely:

1. Impact on the environment (section 15b) – wastewater and groundwater; open space, natural community and habitat; night lighting and noise:
 - See section A.6 and A.7 above.
 - Noise control: Concrete construction for theater walls is proposed; heavy weight gypsum products for ceilings; and minimal windows will all facilitate noise attenuation the interior of the theater and studios. Production hours and rehearsals to be limited to hours between 9am – 10pm.
 - The open space of the site currently includes open lawn areas around the Front Yard, Side Yard, and Back Yard residences; the “Shell Space”, an outdoor reception and social area adjacent to the existing Performance Barn; and the existing parking area. Open space will

increase somewhat to expand the parking area; existing mature trees in this area will be preserved where possible.

- All new planting will be with native species, and is intended to create more visual screening from adjacent lots to the site. See Landscape Plans in this submission for more detail.
2. Impact on persons and property (section 15c) – traffic and transportation; scenic values; character and identity; impact on abutters:
- See section A.3 above and the attached descriptive narrative from The Yard.
 - The proposed renovations of the existing facility is not expected to have a significant adverse effect on the neighborhood. Several of the surrounding residents are primarily seasonal in use. Buildings in very close proximity to The Yard include the Town Hall, the Town Firehouse, a church, and a farm stand near Bettelbung Corner. The amount of traffic to/from the site will modestly increase in the summer season and the winter season. The timing and frequency of events is expected to remain in a similar pattern to the existing programming from the last ten years. See appended traffic and parking spreadsheet.
 - The Yard is near a town bus stop (adjacent to the community center) and staff and visitors will continue to be encouraged to use the public transit system.
 - The character of the new buildings will be consonant with the Up-island architecture of shingle-clad gabled residences and barns, and unlike some of the immediate neighboring buildings, all structures at The Yard are generally obscure from Middle Road.
 - Pedestrian foot traffic on Middle Road to the site during performances will be eliminated due to full on-site parking available for staff and patrons, thereby improving local road safety.
 - The hours of site usage are expected to remain the same on a daily basis, starting around 7am with yoga and similar health workshops, staff hours are typically 9 to 6pm; children’s weekend or summer programs start around 830-9am; mid-day and afternoon community programs vary on start times, but typically finish no later than 6pm; and evening programs and/or performances typically begin at 7pm and finish before 10pm; public events and patrons fully depart the site by 1030pm at the latest.
3. Impact on the supply of needed low- and moderate-income housing (section 15d):
- See the attached memo from The Yard.
 - The Yard currently has 1) seven full-time, year-round employees, 2) two part-time, year-round employee, 3) two full-time, summer-only employees, 4) six full-time, summer interns, and 5) additional contractors for property maintenance and bookkeeping. In the summer, two staff members and all six interns live on campus while one Yard staff member lives on campus in the off-season. All visiting artists stay on campus. The Yard recognizes that increasing year-round activity, post campus renovation, will require additional staff. At least one position in technical production will become year-round, an office manager and third educator will be added, and two more development/marketing personnel will join. There will be no change to the number of staff and interns living on campus in the summer, though two to four year-round staff will have the option to live on-site. The Yard will continue to house visiting artists year-round.
 - Accommodation for summer staff, visiting residents, and off-season fulltime staff and visitors which will positively impact the need for low- and moderate-income housing on the island.

4. Impact on municipal services and burden on taxpayers (c831, a15e):
 - The proposed development will favorably affect the provision of municipal services to the community, both in Chilmark and Island-wide, through increased access to wellness programs year-round and cultural performances. See narrative enclosed from The Yard.
 - The Yard for Dance is, and has been for some decades, a 501(c) 3 Not-For-Profit corporation.
 - The proposed development will NOT be a burden on taxpayers. It is privately funded and/or receives its operating funds from private donors and grants from cultural foundations. Box-office receipts or class fees are used to offset expenses, which typically exceed income from this source.

5. Efficient use or burdening of other (non-municipal) public facilities (section 15f):
 - The proposed development will have little or no impact on existing public facilities. There will be a modest increase in traffic on public roads, having no impact on the existing snow-plowing or repair requirements for these roads.
 - Other than power and telephone coming to the site via existing overhead wiring, there will be no impact on any other public facilities.
 - The energy use on site will modestly increase due to the increased number of events and off-season, wintertime use requiring domestic lighting and heating. See description in A.6 "Energy Use" above.

6. Consistency with and ability to achieve town, regional, state plans & objectives. (sections 14b, 15g and 15h):
 - To our knowledge, the proposed plan for renovation will not adversely affect town, regional, or state plans and objectives.
 - Overall energy use impact of the proposed development is expected to be negligible due to increased building energy-use efficiency, coupled with on-site renewable energy generation, thereby meeting regional objectives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and structures.
 - The new and renovated structures will be more energy efficient than the existing. This includes the production lighting and air-conditioning of the performance barn; the new residential structure will meet state energy code where the house to be demolished does not; all appliances in the existing and new facility will meet or exceed "Energy Star" efficiency.
 - On site power generation will include an approximately 19.2 kW solar photo-voltaic (PV) panel array on the Rehearsal/Office Pavilion Roof. The power generated by this system in this region is sufficient to provide most of the energy needs of at least one of the residences at The Yard, thereby partially offsetting the increased power use at the theater.
 - The Yard will be providing work-force housing for the part-time and full time staff and visiting artists in residence.
 - Regarding other community objectives, see the attached memo from the Yard

7. Conformity to zoning (section 15c):

- The proposed renovations and new structures will meet all height and roofline requirements in the Chilmark By-Laws.
 - The proposed renovations and locations of the new structures will conform to setbacks and other regulations except for certain non-conforming use or non-conforming existing setbacks. See appended Chilmark Zoning Board of Appeals application dated 10/2019 pages 4 and 5 for specific Special Permit actions to allow expansion of pre-existing, non-conforming structures.
 - The project Total Living Area will not exceed the allowable area under the Chilmark so-called "Big House By-Law" (6.11.B of the Chilmark Zoning By-Laws). The combined Residential Floor Area will not exceed the available area under special permit of the aggregate of the three lots (2.5 acres). It will be under that upper limit by almost 2000sf. [See the Chilmark ZBA permit request, pp. 4-5, enclosed in this submission].
 - The project design for building location, appearance, landscaping, lighting, water use, storm water mitigations, is intended to meet all the provisions of Chilmark Zoning By-Law 6.11.F including:
 - Visibility from public ways and impact on rural character
 - Protection of natural features
 - Minimizing alteration of, and protects where possible, natural features, grading, native landscape species, and landscaping
 - Minimizes impact of all site lighting: see A.7 above.
 - Minimize fossil fuel use: all heating and cooling will be electric; all appliances will be electric; there will be on-site electrical power generated by PV panels.
 - Reduce negative water quality impacts: see description of enhanced septic treatment system.
 - Mitigate impacts on natural habitat where practicable: The site is NOT in a NHESP Core or Priority Habitat.
 - The project will make best efforts to recycle existing components and of the demolished structures. The Yard will make available to any qualified contractor the removal and re-use of the existing "Side Yard" house for re-purposed use off-site.
8. Conformity to DCPC regulations (section 14d):
- The proposed development is located within the Middle Road Roadside District. The design is intended to have no impact on site line from the street, and will not exceed limitations on roof heights accordingly.
 - The proposed development is within the Chilmark Pond Watershed.
 - The proposed development is NOT within any known NHESP Core or Priority Habitat.

Section C: Response to MVC 01-10-2019 Staff Report PLANNING CONCERNS:

3.1 Key Issues identified by MVC Staff:

- Wastewater: How will the Nitrogen Load from the Wastewater flow be handled with this proposal?
 - The site is in the Chilmark Pond Watershed. Chilmark Pond is listed as an “impaired pond, over its Nitrogen limit.”
 - The existing Title V system dates from the 1980s, with an upgrade in the early 2000s.
 - The development proposes adding an Innovative and Alternative (I/A) de-nitrification treatment system to a new Title V septic system.
 - See appended Flow Calculations and system description in attached VLS memo.

- **Traffic:** Will larger facilities and expanded season have any traffic impacts on Middle Road?
 - See section A.3 above regarding traffic, vehicular and pedestrian flow to and from the site.

- **Construction:** During construction how will noise, dust, and traffic impacts be mitigated?
 - Prefabrication of certain large components like roof trusses, and possibly modular construction for the Rehearsal Studio and the New Residence (“The Way Back Yard”), is expected to reduce the presence of heavy equipment coming/going to the site by four to six months.
 - The project is expected to take approximately 12 months for construction on site, assuming a single phase of building.
 - All the construction systems and methodologies are typical of other residential construction in the area, and the noise, dust, and traffic no different than similar construction that is currently, or has been in the recent past, built in this part of Chilmark.
 - Surface water runoff during construction will include normal hay bale (or similar) barriers on all downhill portions of the site.
 - Those trees and limbs of neighboring properties will be properly protected to prevent damage.
 - During any dry periods, dust generated by construction vehicles from excavation or unfinished ground surfaces will be mitigated, when necessary, with light water sprinkling by contractors on a regular basis. Temporary burlap or seeding will be used where practicable.
 - Construction hours on site will follow local regulations.