

July 14, 2022

To the MV Commission,

My family—first my grandparents, and then my father and his siblings—were the owners of 7 Arlington Ave before the Chuns bought it in 2012. My brothers and I used to marvel at the huge timber used for the beams and finished with only hand tools in the living and dining rooms—maybe that's partially what inspired one to become a civil engineer and the other an urban planner.

I write this letter to offer some historic notes on the property from my family's 28 years of ownership (beginning 1984). My grandparents bought the home from Joan Connelly Page and Earl Page, who had bought it in 1971. The Pages did only restoration, and no renovation, of the home, and were the owners who acted to add the property to the MACRIS listing. The MACRIS listing cites two bibliographical references about the house which I hope the MV Commission might be able to track down: a 1969 Vineyard Gazette article and a 1956 *Martha's Vineyard: Short History & Guide* by Eleanor Ransom Mayhew.

According to East Chop historian Jane Meleney Coe, the Pages bought it from Evelyn (Jimmy) and [T. Courtland Williams](#), who was president of the [Stone & Webster](#) Engineering Co (see also this second wikipedia entry https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Stone_%26_Webster) and who helped lay the groundwork for the East Chop Association's focus on preserving the natural surroundings. T.C. Williams had, in turn, bought the house in 1945 from [Goulding Wight](#), a WWI officer buried at Oak Grove Cemetery in VH, and whose daughter Betty met husband Howard Henrikson, a WWII Navy flier stationed at the Naval Air Auxiliary Base on the Island, at a gathering for the airmen hosted by the Hoffmans on East Chop. During the operation of the Rice Playhouse, both 7 and 11 Arlington Ave rented rooms to that organization (oral history from S. Winkelman of Oak Bluffs).

The MACRIS listing cites a number of historic features: enclosed balcony with jerkinhead, side covered balcony with turned posts, two sets of original French doors, cross gable; gable with jerkinhead. During my family's ownership of the house, we continued the Pages' work of restoration, not renovation, so all of the above features were present in 2012. Also to my knowledge:

- All framing and exterior walls are original to 1875, except for the 1917 addition mentioned below. Several of the rooflines are also original to 1875. The two dormer decks that are infilled were done so in 1917, for the purpose of enlarging one of the bedrooms and probably for creating a water view for the other, as the interior walls are consistent across all four second-story bedrooms. The tower was enlarged sometime during the Williams' ownership. The third dormer deck had the original 1875 turned posts as part of a side covered balcony until my family sold it to the current owners, who removed them during their 2012 renovations (that balcony had

some rot related to the roof issues but my grandmother didn't remove it because of its historic status).

- As of 2011, multiple wood 2/2 double-hung windows remained in the 1875 portion of the house, as well as what may have been originals in the 1917 portion of the house. No windows on the property were modern two-pane (I still have a crooked finger from one of those old windows slamming down on it), although there were mid-century picture windows in the living room and tower.
- When our family sold the home in 2011 there was no rot other than the roof and porch--ie, no structural deficiencies, but of course being a Victorian home over a century old, it cannot structurally support modern amenities such as laundry on the second floor. We knew at that time that the porch and roof would need to be replaced in the next 5-10 years, but my brother and I had been in the crawl space installing telecom cable and found no rot at that time.
- According to knowledge passed on by the owners previous to my family, the back stairs and part of the kitchen are original to the 1875 house (essentially half of the ell). There is a tiny but full-height basement that is accessible from the back ell, and runs approximately halfway underneath the ell. Presumably that basement portion is the footprint of what was added to the 1875 house, which includes the back half of the kitchen and a second-story "back" bedroom. Since the footprint of the house appears to be unchanged since 1917 and the "back" bedroom interior matches those of the other bedrooms, likely the whole addition dates to 1917.
- Also according to knowledge passed on by the owners previous to my family, the front of the house was always intended to face Arlington Ave, not East Chop Drive, as the peer reviewer guessed (and which everyone always thought was strange-- why wouldn't the home face the ocean like some of its neighbors?). But in 1917 the area was treeless and the house would have been fully visible from Arlington Ave, which aligns it with its fraternal twin at 11 Arlington and is consistent with all the other homes on Arlington Ave.
- I remember when 11 Arlington Ave was sold to the current owners, the Sands. That house had been condemned--I can still picture a baby pool that had been set up in the tower to gather all the rain that came in due to a collapsed roof with a beach ball-sized hole clear through to the sky. The condition for the purchase (presumably set by the town?) was that the Sands, as new owners, had to restore the house because of its historical status, despite a number of exterior changes such as the raised deck and a changed flat roofline. Since they are two halves of the same, I am not sure why 11 Arlington Ave would have greater protection than #7, and certainly #7 has never arrived at such a deteriorated state as when the current owners purchased it.
- I haven't spoken with the current owners of 11 Arlington since about 1994 when we toured that house, but since I acted as caretaker for our house for two years, I do know that my family was happy to prune the pines along the fence each year to conserve the waterview from the second and third stories of 11 Arlington.

I serve on my town's Planning Board, so I hope I have restricted my letter to information that is relevant for your deliberation. I would like to add just one argument for your consideration: one public comment suggested that there is no East Chop architecture. I disagree. I do not think that the only reason these houses have historic value is because some of them were once located in the Campground. The architectural vernacular of—to quote the MACRIS record for 7 Arlington Ave, “Victorian Eclectic”—has been the defining characteristic of homes in the vicinity of East Chop Drive since 1917. The East Chop Drive streetscape remained Victorian Eclectic for nearly a century, with most of these homes changing little from when they were first installed on the Bluff. Over the last decade, that character has been eroded by significant renovations to multiple homes on East Chop Drive, and one of the questions I think the commission should consider is whether efforts should be made to conserve that character.

I also want to reiterate that Eunu Chun and Lisa Kim are both wonderful people and their contributions to the community are many, but that is not relevant to the question before the MV Commission. The question is whether a permit to erase the majority of a historic home should be granted, and I trust the MV Commission to analyze that issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration of all the information put before you.

Sincerely,

Emily Friedrichs
Durham, NH