



BOX 1447, OAK BLUFFS, MASSACHUSETTS, 02557, 508-693-3453,
FAX 508-693-7894 INFO@MVCOMMISSION.ORG WWW.MVCOMMISSION.ORG

Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI 731 Four Sisters Inn

MVC Staff Report – 2022-11-7

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 **Owner:** Marie Sheehy, Trustee
- 1.2 **Applicant:** Elizabeth and Harry Marshall; Chuck Sullivan, agent
- 1.3 **Project Location:** 14 Narragansett Ave. (Map 10, Lot 20), Oak Bluffs (0.17 acres)
- 1.4 **Proposal:** Construction of a five-bedroom inn on a vacant lot.
- 1.5 **Zoning:** B1 Commercial Business
- 1.6 **Local Permits:** Building permit, site plan review, Cottage City Historic District
- 1.7 **Surrounding Land Uses:** Residential and lodging uses in the B1 and R1 districts; Sea View Ave. and Inkwell Beach

- 1.8 **Project History:** A previous two-story, five-bedroom structure on the lot was demolished in 2004. The lot has remained vacant since then. It is not clear whether the Cottage City Historic District Commission reviewed the demolition.

Previous building (according to 2003 assessor records):

- Year built: 1880
- Footprint: 1,214 ft²
- Gross area: 3,133 ft²

- 1.9 **Project Summary:** The proposal is to construct a 2.5-story, 4,004 ft² inn with four guest bedrooms and a one-bedroom apartment for the innkeeper. Minus the proposed basement, the floor area would be 3,030 ft². The property is within the Cottage City Historic District and the building is designed to resemble other houses in the area. The project will include one on-site parking space for service vehicles and staff. The inn will be open year-round.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 **DRI Referral:** Oak Bluffs Building Official, April 17, 2022
- 2.2 **DRI Trigger:** 3.1b (Commercial development of 3,500+ ft²)
- 2.3 **LUPC:** Sept. 19, 2022
- 2.4 **Public Hearing:** Oct. 13, Nov. 7, 2022

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

- 3.1 **Wastewater:** The property will be connected to the town sewer, and the Oak Bluffs Wastewater Commission has approved the connection for up to five bedrooms.

- 3.2 Stormwater:** A preliminary drainage plan shows drywells at each corner of the lot. The applicant has stated that the plan will be designed to handle a 25-year storm.
- 3.3 Traffic and transportation:** Traffic associated with the project would include up to eight guests per day, service vehicles, two staff members who live onsite, and up to three additional staff members who would live nearby at 10 Pequot Ave.

There would be one parking space for service and staff, but no dedicated parking spaces for guests, who would need to park elsewhere in town. The Oak Bluffs Zoning bylaw requires one off-street parking space for each of the first five inn/hotel/guesthouse bedrooms in the B1 district, although this may be waived by special permit. The applicant plans to request a waiver for required spots and pay into the town's parking mitigation fund.

The property is within walking distance of the Steamship Authority terminal and passenger ferries, and guests will be encouraged not to bring a vehicle. The inn will provide courtesy pick-up service in Vineyard Haven when the Oak Bluffs ferries are not running, and will work with the town to designate a drop-off area adjacent to the property on either Narragansett or Waban Ave. Guests will also be given bus passes and bike vouchers, and a bike rack will be provided onsite.

- 3.4 Character and Identity:** The project is designed in the Victorian eclectic style and would resemble other buildings in the neighborhood. The project is also subject to detailed architectural review by the Cottage City Historic District Commission. Elevations and proposed materials have been provided, along with diagrams showing specific design features to be included. The building would stand about 33 feet from grade. Photos of the previous structure have been provided.

In terms of finished living space (not including basements, porches, decks, unfinished storage areas, etc.), the proposed building according to assessor data would be the fourth largest among the 44 buildings within 200 feet of the property.

- 3.5 Energy:** The building will be all electric, with rooftop solar subject the Cottage City District Commission approval.
- 3.6 Housing and Economic Development:** The inn would be open year-round and have a capacity of eight overnight guests. The applicant anticipates five employees, including the two owners who would live in a one-bedroom apartment onsite. The applicant has stated that the other projected employees would not need housing, except for a full-time housekeeper, whose housing if needed would be provided within walking distance of the inn. A longer-term plan for employee housing has not been provided. A proposed massage room would be for guests only.
- 3.7 Landscape and Lighting:** The applicant has proposed native plantings in small gardens with minimal use of nitrogen, pesticides, and water. The project will include minimal path lighting with Dark Sky compliant fixtures. Landscape and lighting plans have not yet been provided.
- 3.8 Impact on Abutters:** The project would entail an increased intensity of use on the site compared to the current and previous conditions. The inn would be open year-round with up to eight guests at a

time, and up to five staff members. As proposed, there would be no events at the inn, and food service would be for guests only. The applicant has stated that ventilation for the kitchen would not require a hood or vent stack outside the building.

Concerns from others in the neighborhood include the following:

- Proposed inn is larger than previous house that was demolished and would be the only three-story building in the immediate area.
- Project will increase demand for limited parking in the neighborhood.
- Impact of mechanicals and outdoor shower on noise and privacy.
- Transition of homes to rental properties in the neighborhood.