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Martha's Vineyard Commission

Land Use Planning Committee

Notes of the Meeting of November 19, 2007

Held in the Stone Building, New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs. 5:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Christina Brown; Ned Orleans; Pete Cabana; Mimi Davisson; John Breckenridge; Chris Murphy, Ned Orleans; Susan Shea; and Richard Toole.

MVC Staff Present: Mark London and Paul Foley.

1. Moujabber (DRI 607-M)

Present for the Applicant: Joseph Moujabber (applicant); Matt Iverson (attorney)

Present from Town Boards: David Wilson (Chairman Cottage City Historic District), Adam Wilson (Oak Bluffs Zoning Administrator); John Bradford (Chairman Oak Bluffs Planning Board); Kerry Scott (Oak Bluffs Selectmen); Ron D'Orio (Oak Bluffs Selectmen)

Project Location: 10 Sea View Avenue Extension, Oak Bluffs Map 9 Lot 50 (0.18 acres - 7,841 sf)

Proposal: Addition to an existing 5-bedroom house.

Introduction:

- Chairman Brown summarized the situation. We have an application to the MVC for a DRI that was sent as a Discretionary Referral and accepted by the MVC because of the location as a gateway and the characteristics of the neighborhood.
- Our task and responsibility under Chapter 831 is to look primarily at the regional impact.
- This is not the first time that a project was referred to the MVC after work commenced.
- We are reviewing this application as if the partially built structure on the property was not there; as if there were only the 1914 house that the owner wants to add to.
- The Applicant has asked for some guidance and said that the December 2004 plans in front of us are not a final plan.
- Chairman Brown suggested that as we go through this process the applicant should prepare sketches and concept plans rather than formal plans.
- The staff has put together a couple of documents: *Oak Bluffs Zoning Analysis* and *Design Criteria for Evaluating Possible Addition (Preliminary Working Copy)*.
- Chairman Brown suggested that the LUPC begin by looking at the "Design Criteria" document and look at table 1 on page 4 titled "Defining Characteristics of Moujabber House and of North Bluffs Character Area".

Discussion:

- It was agreed that we should concentrate on the parameters of what type of addition the Commission might consider, rather than focus on the 2004 proposal.

- Neither LUPC nor the Commission can lock themselves into absolute criteria which would imply approval sight unseen; the Commission will have to look at a new proposal. The aim is to give Mr. Moujabber's architect some direction for preparing this proposal.
- Commissioner Orleans noted that, in addition to the good staff work on the zoning analysis and design criteria, we also have the guidelines from the Cottage City Historic District (CCHD).
- Mark London pointed out that the letter of referral from the Oak Bluffs Board of Selectmen raised two issues: guidance regarding the language of the Copeland District guidelines and referral of the project to the MVC for review as a DRI. Once the Commission accepts a DRI referral, it looks at all aspects of the project and is not constrained by the DCPC guidelines.
- After discussion, the LUPC agreed that the draft analysis prepared by staff was a good starting place for discussing the parameters of a new design. Any architect reading this should have a pretty good idea of what to do, though they are not overly constraining on the architectural design.
- It was noted that mass and scale are discussed in both documents. The Cottage City Historic District guidelines say that additions should be secondary in mass and scale to principal structures. It was agreed that apparent mass and scale will be considerations for evaluating a new proposal and that the addition should be secondary to the principal structure in mass and scale.
- Commissioner Murphy noted that there is a variation of roof pitch in the neighborhood. Mark London suggested matching the main building takes precedence; it would look odd if the roof pitch on the addition didn't have the same pitch as the existing house.
- John Bradford, Chairman of the Oak Bluffs Planning Board, agrees with the approach, namely giving them some general guidance and letting them come back with a design. We should not be architects here.
- It was agreed that LUPC, the applicant, and the Oak Bluffs representatives go through the documents section by section, to ensure that there is a consensus that they offer the basis for developing a new design.

Review of Oak Bluffs Zoning Analysis:

- Adam Wilson, Oak Bluffs Zoning Administrator, noted that if the intention is to go back to the situation before the recent structure was erected, consideration could be given to the original single-car garage, which was moved. Paul Foley will note this in the zoning analysis.
- The sections about accessory structures and apartment units were included for completeness, though neither is being proposed.
- Mark London asked John Bradford and Adam Wilson if there is any legal obstacle to an addition to the house. Adam Wilson confirmed that Section 3.5.5 allows an addition by Special Permit; it is an elastic provision that does not set specific square footage demands.
- The Oak Bluffs officials confirmed that this is an accurate summary of the zoning.
- Mr. Moujabber and Mr. Iverson confirmed that the applicant is not considering converting the building into apartment units. There are five bedrooms now and they would just be bigger. There would not be more of them.

Review of Design Criteria for Evaluating Possible Addition:

- Kerry Scott had a question about demolition and it was decided to reword that so that it is clear we do not mean demolishing the older house.
- John Bradford noted that the Cottage City Historic District guidelines spell out a lot of what needs to be considered here.

- Kerry Scott had a question about Number 4 on page 2 - "its impact on abutters". Mark London said that the Commission could leave this largely to town boards. He noted that staff did not update this sentence since the MVC accepted the Discretionary Referral. Chairman Brown added that Chapter 831 makes the Commission look at the impact on abutters. Ron D'Orio noted that there was testimony that the abutting property was experiencing flooding problems.
- David Wilson of the Cottage City Historic District said that he thought the report was very thorough and wished they had the staff resources to put this together for all proposals.
- Commissioner Breckenridge suggested the applicant provide a photomontage of the streetscape such as was presented by the Lookout Tavern. He also suggested they do a montage with angular views.
- There was a discussion about the definition of "Vineyard Vernacular" and it was decided that we should just say make it fit into the neighborhood.
- One Commissioner said that when he looks at the proposal, he would interpret secondary in scale and mass to be significantly smaller, not just an inch shorter and an inch thinner.
- After reviewing the document, LUPC confirmed that this is a good basis for the applicant to use to design the addition for review by the Commission.
- Matt Iverson asked how the Character Area was defined; he noted that there were a couple of houses in the area that were excluded and wondered why. Mark London said that the aim was to identify the historic ensemble; recent buildings on the edge of the area which are out of character were not included.
- Revised versions of the documents discussed tonight will be sent out as soon as they are ready.
- The Applicant was reminded that they should come back with a concept and not expensive detailed drawings.
- They were also encouraged by Commissioner Breckenridge to go and talk with the Cottage City Historic District Commission informally. Matt Iverson said they would be happy to do that. Chairman Brown clarified that the Commission cannot tell you that this will definitely fly with the MVC, but they can give some ideas that might be acceptable.

Schedule:

- Matt Iverson said he thinks they could tentatively aim to have plans in December, but he would have to talk to their architect first. Staff said that at this point December 17 is an open LUPC date.
- Chairman Brown said to the applicant that it appears that we all agree that they are not quite ready for public hearing yet. Matt Iverson agreed and said he would be in touch with Paul Foley about setting a date for the continued LUPC.

Adjourned 9:00 pm.