

11/1/2013

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

RE: Stop and Shop

Dear Commissioners,

I have reviewed the most recent plans posted on your website and submitted by Stop and Shop to rebuild the Vineyard Haven facility. As a concerned Oak Bluffs resident, I would like to pass along the following observations.

Greek Revival is the dominant style of architecture found in Vineyard Haven. This structure is an awkward effort to reflect that style becoming a hybrid of multiple elements that have no relation to one another. The Water Street elevation is a non-cohesive, architectural jumble that does not simplify or scale back and is fraught with useless embellishments. Neither the half-moon window nor the gable are appropriately scaled, railing systems that may be faux do not match, a shed protrusion occurs on a façade. Shallow, hipped roof overhangs appear that are of a distorted scale, cartoonish and of questionable purpose covered with trendy, copper roofing that is not traditional to Vineyard Haven architecture. The rooflines are overly complicated and distracting. This is a building that should be elegant, simple and understated. What has been submitted is a mish mash of style, elements of architecture seen around town thrown at the building in the hope that something will stick, trite and insulting. This artistic and creative island deserves and is capable of far better.

The parking lot elevation; doors that appear overly commercial with paste on muntins, shutters, probably vinyl appear foolish against a building of this scale. These elements are not acceptable in an historic town – commercial buildings should not be exempt. There are heavy columns of a contrived form at the entrance, secondary columns that don't match and what appears to be a metal rail that is not seen elsewhere in the building. As a wise architect once said, "the devil is in the details" and they were right. All these details will make or break this building and should be carefully considered.

May I suggest that the Commission do what was done for the hospital that made a weak design strong, bring in that team of local architects for their input. This is a onetime shot at a building that can be something very special and creative, and so far is a disappointing, missed opportunity that will make an enormous, negative visual impact on the town. It takes really good architects to pull it off, and those architects are on this island. This building is significant and as important as the hospital. Please pull that architectural team back together for review, scale this thing back to an appropriate size and stop wasting everyone's time.

Respectfully,
Barbara Baskin