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Martha's Vineyard  
Commission

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January 24, 2024

Dear Commission Members:

We understand that the Martha's Vineyard Commission has begun to review the plans submitted for the rebuilding of the Ocean View Restaurant located on 16 Chapman Avenue in Oak Bluffs.

As direct abutters to the proposed structure intended to replace the Ocean View restaurant, we strongly request that the proposed plans be rejected. Our house is 10 feet away from the proposed building and not only would the banquet hall look directly into our porch, living room, dining room and kitchen but the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor apartments (and balconies) would tower over upstairs bedrooms.

We have owned our house since 1998. Initially we were skeptical about buying a home next door to a restaurant but we subsequently came to appreciate the convenience of having a "kitchen away from home" right next door. For many years, the Ocean View complemented the rest of the neighborhood in size and was tolerable in terms of parking, traffic, noise and activity.

When the Ocean View burned down, we were off island and witnessed the flames shooting toward our house. We feared that it would be destroyed along with the restaurant. Thankfully the capable fire teams were able to contain the fire and minimize damage to our home.

Living next door to a burned-out hulk, demolition and subsequently to a vacant lot for two years was not pleasant but we were excited about the Ocean View being rebuilt.

It was a shock, to say the least, to see the proposed plans for the new structure. This goes completely beyond "rebuilding the Ocean View." The proposed plan for a three-story structure that's essentially an apartment building with a restaurant, banquet hall and bakery on the lower floors. We feel strongly that our peaceful residential neighborhood is at risk of being permanently transformed and not in a good way.

We know that the mission of the MV Commission is to protect and enhance the islands' environment, economy, character, and social fabric. Further, we are aware that the neighborhood falls within the Copeland Plan District IV and has been designated as a District of Critical Planning Concern by the Martha's Vineyard Commission.

Quoting from the Decision to designate this area as a DCPC: *"The Commission specifically finds that controlled development of land and buildings within the Sunset Lake - Copeland Plan Part IV District is essential to the protection of historic and cultural significance as well as the unique visual character to be found there... so important is the visual impact and so important are the*

*values, culturally, that are created that for present and future generations, special development controls within the District must be adopted... The Commission also finds, after its review, that present private and public regulations in the District cannot assure protection of the dominant Victorian influence and that damage to the Sunset Lake - Copeland Plan Part IV District land and buildings will be a substantial loss to the region or to two or more towns on the Island...The Sunset Lake Area is dotted with numerous small parks and green spaces surrounded by vintage Victorian charm. The area is quite conducive to strolling, chance encounters with friends and acquaintances in a surrounding of ease and charm of a by-gone era."*

Our concerns align with the mission of the MV Commission and the designation of this area as a DCPC. Here is some data regarding the proposed project that might be relevant to your deliberations:

**Size:** While the plans suggest that a lot of care has gone into designing an attractive building, it is massive and out of place in a neighborhood of single-family homes. The typical square footage of adjacent homes is approximately 1500 sf, while the proposed structure is over 10 times that size (even without the basement.) The height alone will most likely exceed the maximum allowable height of East Chop structures.

**Parking:** The proposed plan is to take over existing Summerfield Parkland and turn it into a parking lot. This is currently conservation land with trees, birds, wildlife and flowers. Leaving that aside for now, the proposed additional 22 parking spots will be barely adequate for 10 planned apartments and employees of the restaurant. That doesn't even take into account patrons of the restaurant. Last summer there was rarely parking on East Chop Drive, Wayland Ave, Chapman Ave and the restaurant wasn't even open! Section 5.1.1 of the Town Zoning By-Laws clearly states that in order to enlarge a structure you must provide adequate parking approved by the Planning Board. There is no room in this neighborhood for more parking.

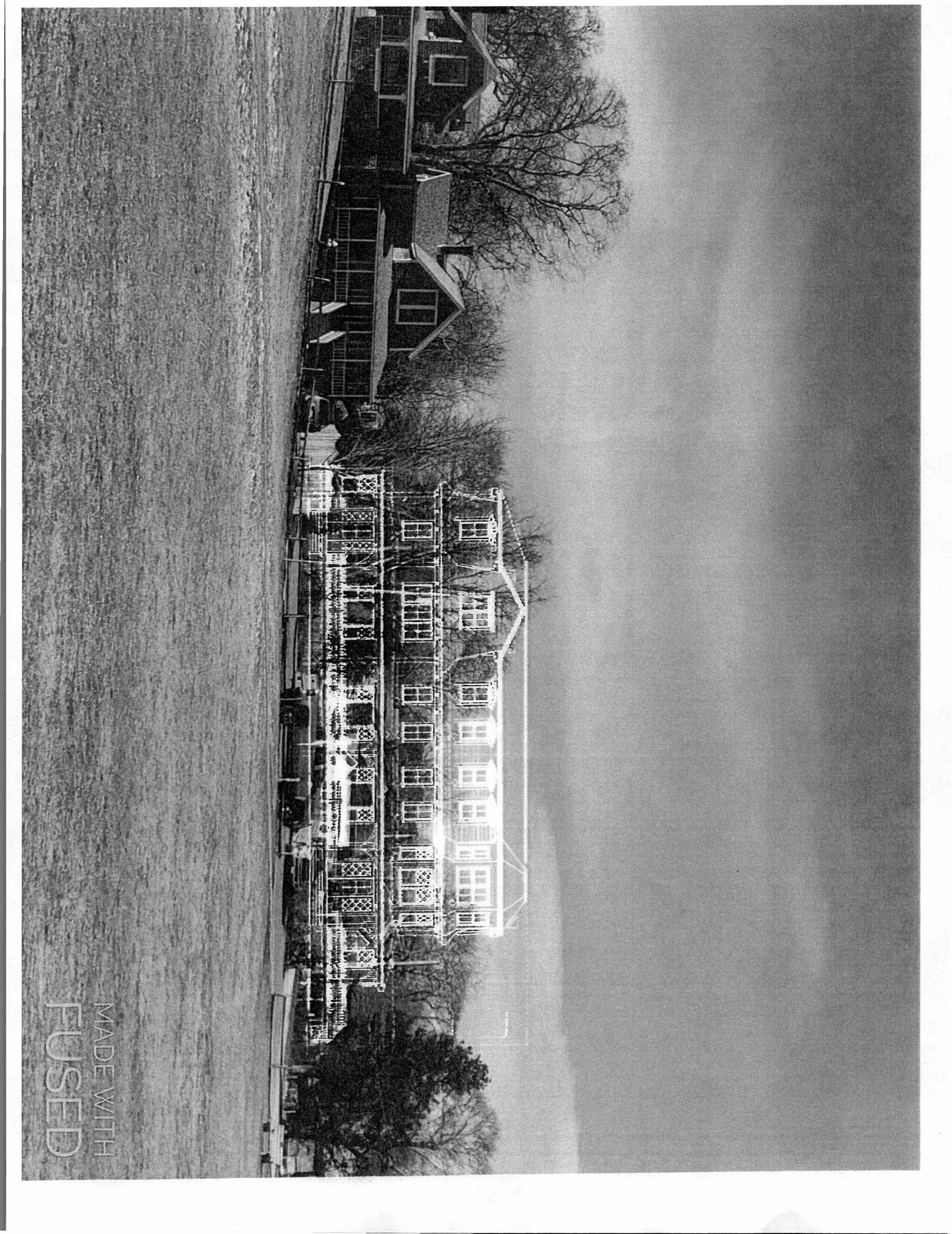
**Quality of life:** The proposed Ocean View amounts to replacing a grandfathered restaurant with limited operating hours in a residential neighborhood with a restaurant, banquet hall, bakery, 10 residential apartments and parking spaces (some on park land.) A commercial structure of this size in a residential neighborhood will greatly upset residential quality of life due to delivery truck traffic, dumpsters being emptied, all night lighting and residents coming and going, possibly at all hours. Additionally, several of our neighbors' views of the harbor and Washington Park will be completely blocked. Again, this development is inconsistent with preserving the character of our neighborhood.

**Potential impact elsewhere on the island:** In addition to our personal concerns, we are also concerned about the potential of setting a precedent that might impact other long-established residential neighborhoods on the island. If this is approved, other neighborhoods could be at risk of having out of place commercial enterprises located in their midst without adequate consideration of the impact on homeowners.

Thank you for considering these concerns. We and our neighbors have lived in this neighborhood for many years, some for generations. We believe it is possible to strike a balance that allows for the revitalization of the Ocean View, and does so without compromising the character of our community.

Sincerely,

Deborah and Jim Reidy  
14 Chapman Avenue, Oak Bluffs



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