

**July 12, 2021**

**Martha's Vineyard Commission  
The Stone Building  
33 New York Ave  
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557**

**RE: 371 Indian Hill Rd**

**Dear Commissioners and Staff:**

I am writing you regarding the house at 371 Indian Hill Road in West Tisbury. The property was in my late husband's family for 80 years beginning 1888 and I felt it important you knew the history, as I believe it may impact your deliberation to approve the application for demolition.

The property was purchased by my husband's grandfather (Albert Berry) in 1888, as a vacation home. He purchased the house and 150 acres at the encouragement of his brother-in-law (Nathaniel Shaler) who owned several sheep farms in the area, that eventually became Seven Gates Farm. Colonel Berry summered on Indian Hill until his death in 1908 at which time the property passed to the next generation who left the house unattended for the ensuing 40 years.

My husband, Richard Berry purchased the property in 1948 from the family estate and spent the next year building a new house. The roof had collapsed, a large tree taken root in the sitting room, the flooring was gone, the house had no electricity and plumbing, and the kitchen was a small hut outside. My husband removed the gingerbread porch stretching across the western facade, added a large extension which included a new living room, master bedroom and bath, kitchen and screened in porch. He also added electricity, plumbing, two new dormers, new flooring, and rebuilt the chimney. In the end, it was a beautiful home, but it was a 1948 house, and not the restoration of a c1840's Vineyard home.

In 1968, my husband and I sold the house and 21 acres to the Parkers. Over the next 40 years, we divided the remainder of the property along the lines of Seven Gates where land was maximized, homes minimized, and the natural integrity preserved. The remaining 130 acres had 6 home sites and land was gifted to Sherriff's Meadow. My husband passed away in 2016, at the age of 91, we spent summers on Seven Gates Farm and then Indian Hill Road. My daughter and son-in-law purchased the property from the Parker estate in 2018 and have begun to restore the land and stone walls.

From my perspective, the demolition is justified. The house you are concerned about preserving was lost in 1948 and the house that took its place differed significantly from the original. The footprint was doubled, the interior re-configured, and three exterior facades

significantly altered with dormers, windows, and extensions. I will agree that the southern façade has some architectural integrity to the original structure. But let's face it, we are not talking about the original house or close to it. Regarding historical significance, I am not aware of any. The house had historical significance to our family, but the current structure does not.

In closing, I want you to know I fully support this application for demolition and hope that the history offered can lighten your burden. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, 203-655-9279.

Yours truly,

Signed Lois B. Berry