

RE: DRI Edwin Luce House, 371 Indian Hill Road, West Tisbury

Dear Martha's Vineyard Commissioners,

Distinct from much of the discussion of the State Historical Commission listed Captain Edwin Luce House demolition DRI, I have personal knowledge of the condition of the structure itself because I worked on it for the Parkers. And while most opinions on record so far are based on photographs, hearsay, cosmetics and emotions, no one to my knowledge who is a structural engineer has done a survey to determine the condition of the major structural elements of this historically listed building. The architects have described the condition but they are not structural engineers. I have lived for the past 35 years in a similar 1830 Greek Revival in West Tisbury which is very much intact and know these were built to last.

It is a given that peeling paint, old shingles present a woeful appearance especially if normal attention to maintenance has not been given and if the speculation might have been to make things appear worse on an application than they are.

Beyond the nuts and bolts, it is important to realize that this house was sited so as to command a view of Vineyard Sound by a retired whaling captain. The house and its locus bearing are one and the same. The present owners appear to acknowledge this fact in properly restoring that view shed connection. Why go to the expense of restoring one component and not the other? And despite the DRI checklist, what does it signify if an historic structure is not visible from a road? Trees grow.

Bottom line: This house is a candidate for upgrading and saving. I note that the request for 4 bedrooms in the demolition request matches the existing 4 bedrooms. If more space is needed for occasional family visits, one might look into designing and constructing new—or modular—on adjacent areas where another house and two other outbuildings already exist.

Hopefully, your deliberations will not repeat the tragic fate of the Mill House in Vineyard Haven.

Rez Williams

West Tisbury

January 14, 2022