



TISBURY

MASSACHUSETTS

TISBURY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
WILLIAM STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
VINEYARD HAVEN, MASSACHUSETTS 02568

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

August 16, 2023

Re: 33 Lagoon Pond Road, Tisbury - Demolition (retroactive)

Along with the MVC, Tisbury Historical Commission board members have independently reviewed the application for demolition and the proposed new building at 33 Lagoon Pond Road, Tisbury.

Based on the description of the condition of the building that was demolished, it is not unlikely that THC would have approved the demolition. We are, however, admittedly frustrated that yet another building old enough to require a review got demolished without a review, further entrenching the "beg forgiveness, not permission" mentality.

Lagoon Pond Road (formerly Howard Avenue and aka "Chicken Alley") was developed in the late 19C/early 20C with small, inexpensive single-family homes inhabited mostly by Portuguese immigrants. It was a finger of high ground surrounded by Bass Creek, Mud Creek, and the wetlands that are now Veterans Park, a functional, working-class neighborhood. The seaward (even-numbered) side was water -- the aforementioned Bass Creek, the remnants of the old channel between the Harbor and the Lagoon (until it was filled in the late 30s and early 40s). Every structure from the Island Color Center to the Marina was built on that fill in the mid-20C. Veterans Park was created by filling a former wetland in the mid-50s.

THC feels this is one of those cases where the area's historical significance lies in the structure and evolution of the neighborhood rather than in the structures that comprise it. The original architectural vibe of Lagoon Pond Road was small, 1- or 1.5-story single-family homes. The new zoning laws mean that any new residential construction in the area will be visibly out-of-scale with the old c. 1900 structures. The existing residential neighborhood along the odd side of Lagoon Pond Road, as it was built c. 1900, is on borrowed time because of rising sea levels.

The applicant describes the projected two-unit structure as a visual benefit. THC feels the submitted design is in no way sympathetic to the neighboring properties and, in this board's opinion, should be redesigned in a more cohesive and complimentary way. An MVC-DRI review of the submitted replacement should be required, so those neighbors most affected by this new structure can take an active role in the future of their changing landscape.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Tisbury Historical Commission,

Christine Redfield, chair
Tisbury Historical Commission
William Street Historic District Commission