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# Martha's Vineyard Commission

## DRI 694 Caleb Prouty House Historic Relocation Staff Report – 2024-3-5

### 1. DESCRIPTION

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- 1.1 **Owner:** The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company, LLC
- 1.2 **Applicant:** Amelia Hambrecht
- 1.3 **Co-Applicant:** The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company, LLC
- 1.4 **Applicant's Agent:** Attorney Geoghan Coogan
- 1.5 **Project Locations:** 15 Cromwell Lane, Tisbury & 187 Lagoon Pond Road, Tisbury
- 1.6 **Proposal:** Temporarily remove the roof of the Caleb Prouty House, a MACRIS-listed, Greek Revival dwelling (Circa 1838), and relocate the building to a lot on Lagoon Pond Road.
- 1.7 **Zoning:** B1 Commercial District & R10 Zoning District
- 1.8 **Local Review/Permits:** Tisbury Building Department, Tisbury Conservation Commission, & Tisbury Planning Board. Possibly Tisbury Fire Department & Tisbury Police Department
- 1.9 **State Review/Permits:** Massachusetts Historic Commission. Possibly Massachusetts Department of Transportation & Massachusetts State Police.
- 1.10 **Surrounding Land Uses:** To the North, the Caleb Prouty House property abuts Vineyard Haven's Stop & Shop grocery store. To the East, the Caleb Prouty House property abuts a parking lot recently created following the demolition of the old Golden Dragon Restaurant building owned by the Stop & Shop Supermarket Company. To the South, the Caleb Prouty House property abuts the historic Claghorne Tavern building ((Circa 1789). To the West, the Caleb Prouty House property fronts Cromwell Lane.
- 1.11 **Project History:** The project was referred to Commission in 2019 by the Tisbury Building Department. Prior overtures to relocate or demolish the building resulted in one or more concurrence reviews. The Prouty House presented some degree of obstacle to expansion plans previously proposed by the Stop & Shop Supermarket Company. The project was put on hold just before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.12 **Tisbury Historical Commission:**
  - In a September 1, 2023 letter the Tisbury Historical Commission (THC) wrote in part:
  - "THC realizes the significance of the location of the Caleb Prouty House and its remarkable survival in the Great Fire of 1883. Still, we also plainly see the troubling neglect its current stewards have led it to. This board considers this new proposal to move the home nearby as the best hope for the property. Like the many houses that burned and disappeared from our then landscape, we as a board feel strongly that the historical fabric of this town is limited and hope the MVC will agree that it is essential to preserve our historically significant structures and protect the character of our town with any efforts to keep this structure in some form."
- 1.13 **Moving Plan:**
  - Per the Applicant, a moving plan for the Caleb Prouty House will contain the following elements:

- Chimney's will be taken down and disposed of. Inside of roof and second floor will be supported.
- Home will be detached of all electric and plumbing.
- Home will have steel girders put under the house and raised.
- Sills underneath the house will be repaired.
- Home will be supported for transportation.
- Aside from the chimney's, no part of the house will be dismantled and destroyed.
- Roof will be taken off.
- Kitchen will be separated from main house.
- House will be moved in three sections. 1 kitchen, 2 roof, 3 house. House will be moved traveling through the new employee parking lot to Water Street, then turning right, through 5 corners and down Lagoon Pond Road, turning right on to Burt's Way, then turning right on to 187 Lagoon Pond Road.
- House will then be placed on a foundation at 187 Lagoon Pond Road.
- House will be restored at 187 Lagoon Pond Road.

#### **1.14 MACRIS-listing (PAL-Executed)**

- In 2013 Public Archeology Laboratory (PAL) generated the contents of a MACRIS listing for the Caleb Prouty House.
- The MACRIS listing states in part, "Caleb Prouty (born July 22, 1783) worked for the United States Revenue Service, a maritime law enforcement organization that was active between 1790 and 1915. His son, Everett, was also a mariner. His wife, Nancy, was the daughter of prominent Holmes Hole merchant, Elijah Hillman. Elijah had previously owned the adjacent property, the former landmark known as the 'Hillman House'..."
- The listing describes the Circa 1838 Caleb Prouty House as "an excellent local example of a moderately high-style Greek Revival style residence".
- The listing also states that Caleb Prouty House appeared to be "among the best preserved examples of its type and period in the village of Vineyard Haven and the Town of Tisbury."
- In consideration of a fire in 1883 that devastated significant parts of Vineyard Haven, the listing described the Caleb Prouty House "as a rare surviving standing building in the area."

#### **1.15 PAL Report (Archaeology):**

- In the Autumn of 2023 Stop & Shop Supermarket Company agreed to a scope of work for an archaeological survey at the present site of the Caleb Prouty House. PAL conducted the survey in the winter of 2024. The content of the technical report generated following the survey is restricted under Massachusetts Public Records Law. PAL Senior Archaeologist and Principal Investigator, Holly Herbster has provided a synopsis:
- "An intensive (locational) archaeological survey has been conducted for the project by PAL under a State Archaeologist's permit issued by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). The report, which is currently under review by the MHC, includes a recommendation that the removal of the Caleb Prouty House from the 15 Cromwell Lane property will not affect significant intact archaeological deposits and that no additional archaeological investigations are necessary provided the belowground foundation is not removed as part of the relocation project. If the foundation is proposed for removal and/or if any soil excavation is proposed as part of the house relocation, PAL recommends that the

plans be provided to the MHC and WTGH/A THPO for review and comment. The remainder of the 15 Cromwell Lane lot has not been subject to archaeological testing, and it is not known if intact, deeply buried soils are present below the fill levels around the house or below the paved and parking areas. The report also recommends that once the project plans for the relocation have been finalized, additional archaeological testing be conducted within the proposed areas of ground disturbance at the 187 Lagoon Pond Road project area.”

## **2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY**

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**2.1 DRI Referral:** Tisbury Building Department (2019)

**2.2 DRI Trigger:** Relocation/Alternation of a MACRIS-listed structure

**2.3 Possible Additional Trigger:** Development within a Coastal DCPC (relocation site)

**2.4 *Special Concern (Two Location DRI):*** Should a DRI be spread over two locations and if so, how should that be reflected in the decision-making process.

**2.5 Full Commission:** Slated March 7, 2024

## **3. PLANNING CONCERNS**

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### **3.1 Character & Identity:**

- Whether or not the relocation of the Caleb Prouty House from its original 19<sup>th</sup> Century location, one that survived a historic conflagration, will dilute the historical context of the dwelling.
- What, if anything, should be done with the Cromwell site once the building is removed?
- In communication with the Commission, the Applicant’s Agent has expressed a view on a monument or marker at the Cromwell site:
- “[W]e do not have any plans for markers. Should the commission request something, we will oblige.”
- In communication with the Commission, the Applicant’s Agent gave an update on the overall planning status of the Cromwell site:
- “[W]e do not have plans for the development of the site as of yet. [T]hat is in process but nothing to show right now.”

### **3.2 Impact on Abutters:**

- Whether or not the proposed new location for the Caleb Prouty House is near enough to abutting dwellings to be impactful.

### **3.3 *Special Planning Concern (House Condition):***

- Has the Caleb Prouty House degraded since the PAL evaluation and if so, to what extent? If the Caleb Prouty House has degraded, is there evidence of partial demolition by neglect?
- Will proposed restoration at the new location offset any degradation?