

- **Description of Project:**

The application for this project is being submitted to the Planning Board for Site Plan review as: Construction, exterior alteration, or exterior expansion of, or change of use within, a municipal, institutional, commercial, industrial, or multi-family structure involving more than 500 square feet<sup>1</sup>. The existing building is 16,331 square feet and accommodates 1678 people. The exterior alteration and expansion is in alignment with Oak Bluffs Comprehensive Master Plan Ratified by the Planning Board on April 25, 2019, section 5.4 Enhancing The Visitor Experience.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Tabernacle is a historic national treasure and a central part of the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association's (MVCMA) property located in Trinity Park, Oak Bluffs, MA. The Tabernacle was built in 1879 and is a covered open-air public venue open seasonally that can seat approximately 1,678 people. This is the fifth stage of the Tabernacle restoration that began in 2002. The approximately 17,000 square foot roof with three levels of roofing was originally constructed of corrugated iron sheeting. Later it was replaced with corrugated cement-asbestos sheeting fastened to wood purlins. The age of the current roof is believed to date to 1932 according to MVCMA Board of Director meeting minutes. A March 2020 roof condition survey produced by Hoffmann Architects of Hamden, CT indicated that the roof has reached the end of its useful life. The Tabernacle is an Official Project of "Save America's Treasures." In 2005, the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association, including the Tabernacle, was designated as one of only 2,600 National Historic Landmarks in the Country. The MVCMA is also the #1 attraction in Oak Bluffs according to TripAdvisor.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The Tabernacle is a historic open wrought iron structure which was constructed in 1879 to replace an older canvas tent located at the center of the Methodist cottage community in Trinity Park. It was originally designed by architect J.W. Hoyt of Springfield, Massachusetts and employs a structure comprised of T-shaped iron members, L-shaped angle iron, and pipe with wooden roof purlins supporting a multi-tiered corrugated asbestos cement roof. The upper structure consists of three roof tiers surmounted by a tower which rises to a height of 100 feet. The Tabernacle is approximately 130 feet across, and its main arches span 61 feet, making it one of the largest iron structures in the United States. The structure has been in continuous use for religious and cultural activities since the day it was constructed.

Phase V of the restoration project includes a proposed new addition/accessory structure, approximately 1,300 gsf in area, containing permanent gender-neutral toilet rooms intended to serve occupants, staff, and other island visitors, and provides an alternate accessible route to the stage.

**Proposed Work:**

The project includes the following scope of work:

1. New corrugated fiber cement roof to replace the existing corrugated asbestos cement roof installed in the 1930's.
2. Painting of the wood roof purlins and roof edge trim.

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<sup>1</sup> "The MVCMA submits this application in spirit of cooperation with the planning board but without prejudice to its rights under Massachusetts General Law 40A, Section 3, Paragraph 2, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000cc, et seq., and other laws that afford special land use protections for religious institutions."

3. Select structural work; including adding new in-plane roof turnbuckle assemblies (one in each bay), and new U-strap purlin hold-downs.
4. Construction of the new addition/accessory structure.
5. Sound booth improvements.
6. New fire alarm system in the Accessory Structure.
7. Grounds and landscaping including walkways and lighting
7. All exterior work shall conform to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings, as administered by the National Park Service.

According to the Town of Oak Bluffs Assessor's records, the Tabernacle has its own tax parcel (Lot. 81-3.1 on Tax Map 11) and is located in the "Residence One" zoning district (the "R1 District") under the Town of Oak Bluffs Recodified Zoning By-laws (the "Zoning By-laws"). Note: Per the Act to Incorporate the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association (MVCMA), the MVCMA provides the assessor's office a list of all buildings and taxable properties on the grounds of the organization for tax purposes only, however the land in its entirety is owned by the MVCMA. The Tabernacle borders the Zone AE special flood hazard area (the "AE zone"), as shown on the Dukes County Federal Insurance Rate Map ("FIRM"), and the Floodplain District Overlay District (the "FPOD). Additional information regarding the Tabernacle can be found at <https://www.mvcma.org/tabernacle.html>.

The MVCMA is the owner of the lot pursuant to a deed recorded with the Dukes County Registry of Deeds at Book 43, Page 502, and filed a registered plan of land with this registry at Plan Book 13, Page 1 in 1972. Please see deed and plan attached.

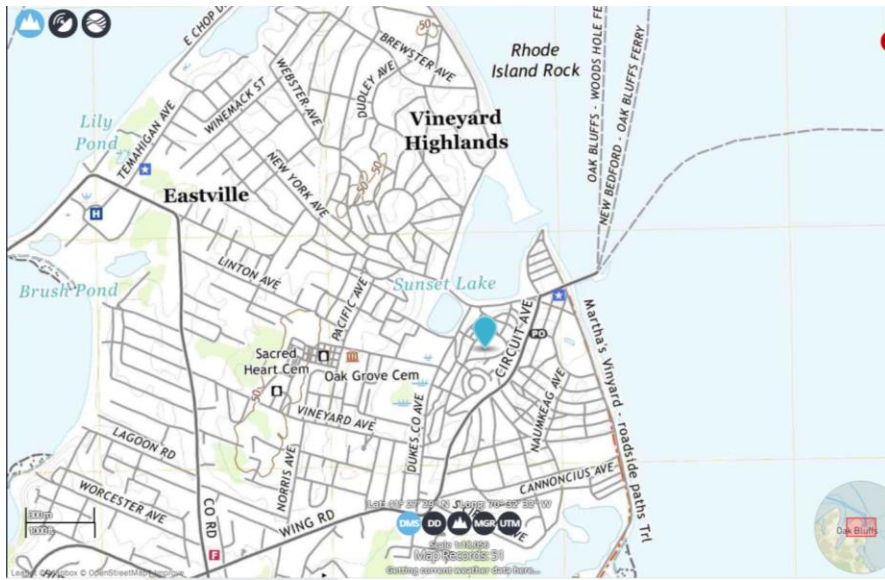
### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The USGS quadrangle map, along with before and after drawings and photographs are included herein to fully illustrate the project as follows:

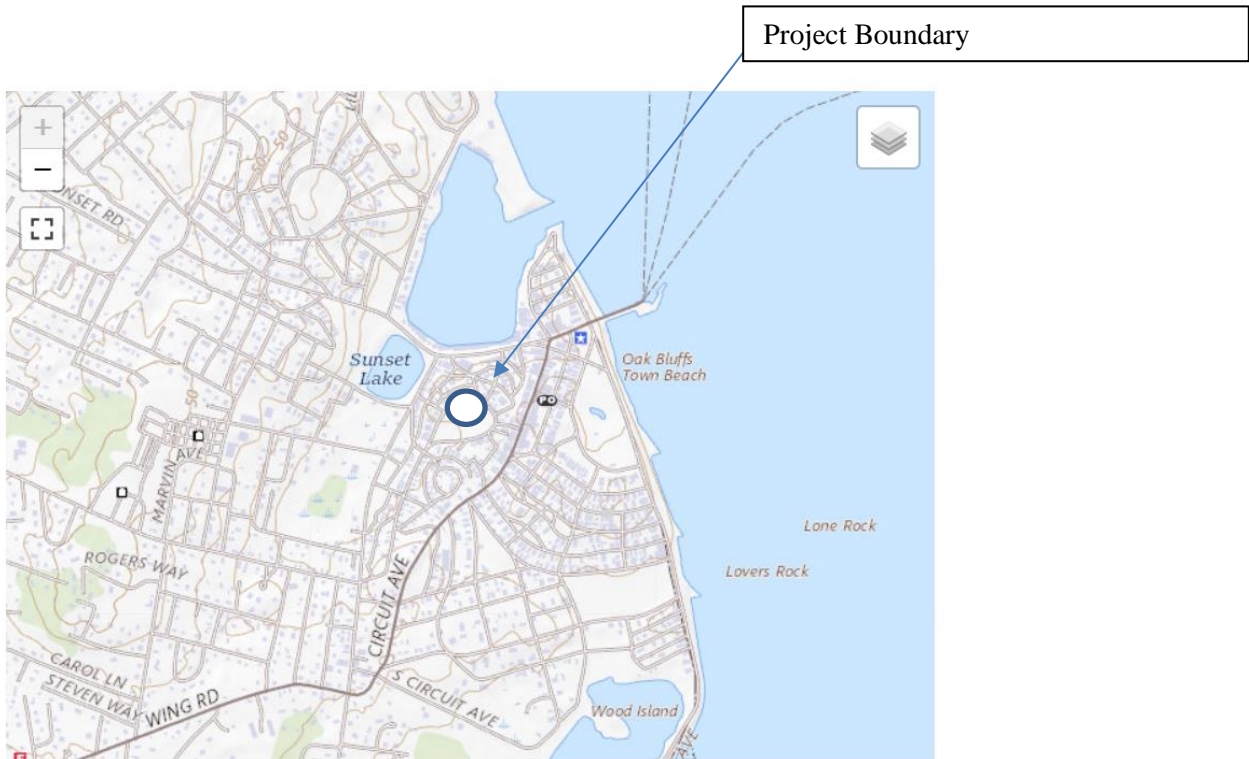
- USGS Quadrangle Map



1. Map 1887



2. Map 2021



**PHOTOS:**



1. General Interior View



2. Exterior Stage Wall to which addition will be affixed



3. Historical Accessory Structure from pre-1901 in the Exterior Stage Wall location



#### 4. Stage

- **See Attached Tabernacle Phase V and Site Plan**

- Five separate plans, 24"x36", minimum scale 1"=20'
- Site Layout containing boundaries of the lot(s) in proposed development, proposed structures, drives, parking, fences, walls, walks, outdoor lighting, loading facilities, and areas for snow storage after plowing.
  - locus plan at 1"=100" showing 1000 feet from project
- Topography and drainage plan showing existing and proposed final topography at two-foot intervals and plans for handling storm water drainage. (If Minor Site Plan then topological plan may depict topographical contours at intervals available on maps provided by the USGS.)
- Utility and landscaping plan
- Architectural Plan
  - Early iteration color renderings to show size and scale
  - Updated black and white renderings to show updated building design
- Landscaping plan
- Drainage Calculations
- Drainage Design

- **Written Statement:**

Estimated time required to complete proposed project and any phases

The project is being voluntarily bid through a competitive public process. The project is expected to start

construction in September 2022 and complete in May 2023. There is a long lead time expected for roofing materials (12-16 weeks) for the Tabernacle roof which require onboarding contractors with enough lead time to order materials through the summer to be ready for construction in the fall.

Detailed estimate of costs of all planned site improvements

The 50% cost estimate for the project is \$4,475,754. The site costs are Div. 31-Earthwork: \$89,641, Div. 32 Exterior Improvements: \$57,444 and Div. 33 Utilities: \$72,275.

Number of dwelling units to be built

There will be 0 dwelling units built.

Acreage in residential use

The total property of the MVCMA is 34 acres which includes the land which the cottage owners lease and the Tabernacle at the center of the property.

Evidence of compliance with parking and off-street loading requirements

There are no changes to the parking on the property. The property is in the R1 district.

Forms of ownership contemplated for the property

The property is owned by the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association.

Summary of the provisions of any ownership or maintenance

Tabernacle maintenance is and will continue to be borne by the MVCMA. Tabernacle maintenance is covered first from 2% cottage transfer fees collected during any year. The MVCMA maintains a Tabernacle Endowment Fund to sustain ongoing maintenance. Annual maintenance expenses have been running \$25,000-\$35,000 per year, while cottage transfer fees have been consistently running over \$40,000. If the amount generated from transfer fees is ever insufficient to cover maintenance costs, the MVCMA would draw down funds from the Tabernacle Endowment Fund. Any amount beyond the annual maintenance expenses must be deposited into the Tabernacle Endowment Fund. The balance of this fund on June 30, 2021, was \$790,194.

Identification of all land that will become common or public land

There are no proposed changes to land ownership.

- **Narrative:**

Traffic

There are no changes proposed to the traffic patterns or use.

Drainage

See drainage plan attached. The plans include the creation of a bio-retention area and replacement of the asphalt walkway behind the Tabernacle with stabilized aggregate.

## Noise

There are no changes planned to the use of the Tabernacle.

## Other Environment Factors

### - **Description of the flood plain impacts and mitigation**

The Accessory Structure and associated utilities require regrading of the landscape behind the Tabernacle. This landscape and a portion of the accessory structure is in the floodplain. The volume floodplain impact is approximately 3,389 CF/ 125.5 CY, it will be limited further where possible. Compensatory storage will be provided onsite as part of the regrading efforts. See attached site plan.

### - **Description of any proposed landscaping changes**

Landscape changes are designed to integrate the accessory structure and associated pathways into the existing landscape. Changes consist of replacing the asphalt path with a stabilized aggregate path, adding a bioretention area for drainage, and adding planting beds and/or bushes consistent with the MVCMA's policy for screening and landscape. Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association Preservation and Construction Handbook:

[https://www.mvcma.org/uploads/6/9/5/4/69547609/preservation\\_and\\_construction\\_handbook\\_january2022.pdf](https://www.mvcma.org/uploads/6/9/5/4/69547609/preservation_and_construction_handbook_january2022.pdf)

### - **Preliminary exterior lighting plan showing location and types of fixtures**

See Attached Tabernacle Phase V Lighting Fixtures schedule. All exterior lighting is programmed for timed "on" and "off" and dimmed levels. Each will have an individual control.

### - **Current and proposed wastewater flow for the property**

Currently the Tabernacle specifically is not hooked up to the sewer, but the rest of the MVCMA property is connected. Although it is the intent to build a set of public restrooms to help the Town of Oak Bluffs meet its Comprehensive Master Plan goal to expand public restroom capacity in the MVCMA, initially it may be plumb ready for future connection when the municipal sewage treatment plant has sufficient capacity. All flow in the new restrooms is expected to be limited new flow to the Town as the individuals visiting the Tabernacle are already using other bathrooms either at public restrooms, personal homes in the MVCMA or in available bathrooms at businesses, restaurants and hotels in the downtown area already connected to the sewer system.

The MVCMA submitted and received a variance approval for the number of fixtures and lavatories to be added to the Tabernacle. Based on capacity the Tabernacle should have 26 lavatories. The MVCMA initially submitted the variance seeking to minimize the footprint and limit the number of bathrooms to 7. After review from the Board of State Examiners of Plumbers and Gasfitters, the plumbing board approved no less than 10 gender-neutral bathrooms. The plumbing board decision is attached.