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Via Electronic Mail (emartinez@nantucket-ma.gov; hbackus@nantucket-ma.gov)

Nantucket Historic District Commission &
Historic Structures Advisory Board
2 Fairgrounds Road
Nantucket, MA 02554

Re: 34B Walsh Street – Application for Addition/Renovation

To Whom It May Concern,

We are abutters to 34B Walsh Street with a residence at 38 Walsh Street and are writing to provide comments and express concern regarding the applicant's proposed plans to implement a massive addition to the existing structure at 34B Walsh that will negatively impact the appearance of our neighborhood in Brant Point and that is highly inconsistent with the historic environmental context. Our home on Nantucket is located in front of 34B Walsh. We are quite familiar with the surroundings and neighborhood and are very concerned about the scope, scale, and impact of this project.

The existing structure at 34B Walsh Street is located on a shelled offshoot from Walsh Street. This offshoot, which runs from between 32 and 36 Walsh and behind 36, 38, and 40 Walsh, was formerly a public way before private purchase by the owners of 34, 34A, and 34B Walsh, and it provides a means of entry and egress to those properties. The existing structure at 34B Walsh is already visible from Walsh Street, as well as from Henry Street, James Street, and Hulbert Avenue.

As proposed, the height, long ridgeline width, and overall scale of 34B Walsh would be highly inconsistent and disharmonious with the surrounding homes in what is already a densely packed area. The structures at 34, 34A, and 34B were originally constructed as small, one or one-and-a-half story cottages. Those homes are extremely close to the properties at 36, 38, and 40 Walsh. In connection with a prior renovation of the structure at 34B Walsh, the owners claim to have reoriented the "front" of the structure to the rear of the property (relative to Walsh Street), even though the only real means of entry to the property through a proper door according to the proposed plan is on the side of the property facing Walsh Street. This is important because by claiming that the front of the house is in the rear relative to Walsh Street, the owners seem to have evaded the 10-foot frontage setback requirement, placing both the existing and massive proposed structure that much closer to Walsh Street. This increased proximity to Walsh Street proper would make the proposed structure even more visible from the surrounding streets.

The structure resulting from the proposed project at 34B Walsh would add full second and third stories, plus a large roof walk, to what is currently a one-and-a-half story structure. Critically, the proposed addition would create a massive 42-foot ridgeline parallel to Walsh Street. This proposed structure would tower over nearby properties, including the much smaller two-story structures on Walsh Street in front of it. The new structure would be highly visible from Walsh Street, James Street, Henry Street, and Hulbert Avenue. The “bleacher” effect the proposed structure would create is completely inconsistent with the rest of the Brant Point neighborhood and threatens to destroy the historic aesthetic that residents and visitors have enjoyed for decades. The diminishment of the historical character of our beautiful neighborhood is not in the best interest of the residents of Brant Point or Nantucket.

The existing one-and-a-half-story structure at 34B Walsh was built in 2002 and replaced a small cottage. The height of the existing structure today was deemed appropriate for this specific parcel and this specific setting at that time, and nothing has changed to justify a three-story structure being implemented on this site today. The large roof walk on top of the proposed three-story structure only exacerbates the issue.

The existing structure and site for the proposal at 34B Walsh is unusually situated, and the impacts of the proposed structure must be considered in view of these specific characteristics. While 34B Walsh has frontage to the shelled offshoot from Walsh Street (now a private way), it is very close to Walsh Street and to our property at 38 Walsh and the property at 40 Walsh, which stand between it and Walsh Street proper. The recitation by the applicant of other three-story properties that have been built up relative to their historical footprints at other parcels on Brant point makes for a very misleading comparison. The structures at these other properties referenced do not tower over other properties and structures immediately adjacent to them across a narrow offshoot or spoil the aesthetic of the neighborhood as this project threatens to do. Notably, in the case of the recent renovation at neighboring 34 Walsh Street, the long ridgeline of that structure runs *perpendicular* to Walsh Street, not *parallel* to Walsh Street, as has been proposed for 34B Walsh in the case at issue here. This makes a highly significant difference in terms of impact on the sight lines and impact to the historic aesthetic.

We urge that the application be rejected as submitted or that the scope and scale of this project otherwise be substantially adjusted to address these concerns. We note that the changes that have recently been submitted by the applicant do not address in any way the issues that have been raised here.

Thank you in advance for your careful review and consideration of our serious concerns with this application.

Sincerely,



Allen C. Nunnally & Sara DiVello