

Project Plan for SEMINARY SUITES  
October 2019

## Background

The aim of Seminary Suites is to provide comfortable, modern, well-appointed lodgings to visitors to the Upper Delaware Valley. Featuring small stoves and refrigerators in each unit, the suites would accommodate individuals, couples and families in spacious, multi-room suites in one, two ~~and~~ <sup>and four</sup> three bedroom configurations. Our target market would be visitors in Callicoon for the week or weekend, and particularly those attending events at Seminary Hill Cidery, our orchard-based cidery located a mile from the units.

Seminary Suites will be constructed in two historic buildings at the corner of Seminary Road and State Route 97 in Callicoon, Town of Delaware. The oldest building was constructed in 1872 and faces State Road 97. Currently unoccupied, it was for many years a medical office building used by long-time Callicoon town doctor Mills. The second building on the site (both buildings are on the same tax parcel) was originally constructed around 1930 by Dr. Mills as the Callicoon hospital; the building is currently unoccupied, but until recently was long-stay apartments. Both buildings are located in the Callicoon Downtown Historic District.

The project to construct Seminary Suites will entail a “gut” renovation of both buildings, with new roofs, new wiring, new bathrooms, and in general a complete rehabilitation of the buildings, designed to retain their historic appearance.

The founder of Seminary Suites is Douglas A. Doetsch. Doug is a Callicoon native whose family has had a farm above Callicoon since the 1860s. Doug is a partner at the international law firm of Mayer Brown LLP.

## Seminary Hill Cidery and Tasting Room

The owners of Seminary Suites also own Seminary Hill Orchard and Seminary Hill Cidery. Seminary Hill Orchard has two properties in Callicoon. One property is on Kautz Road and includes the 88 acre family homestead (in the Doetsch family approximately 150 years), with a home, woods and about 6 acres of fields. Of this, 2.5 acres are fenced and planted with 250 heirloom apple trees. The other property is nearby on Wagner Lane. This is a 59 acre plot that is about 2/3 woods and 1/3 fields, with spectacular views overlooking the Delaware River and the former St. Joseph’s Franciscan Seminary. Of this, about 10 acres have been fenced, and 1200 apple/pear trees planted. This plot contains the Seminary Hill Cidery and Tasting Room currently under construction.

The Seminary Hill Cidery and Tasting Room is an almost 8000 square foot facility designed to meet Passive House Institute US (PHIUS) standards, which provide the most cost-effective path for achieving zero energy and carbon use. An eco-friendly and beautifully designed building with views overlooking the Delaware River will attract the tourists that are being targeted by Seminary Hill. The tasting room will hold approximately 100 people for tastings or special

events, and will have a bar with 6-8 taps as well as a porch with seating overlooking the orchard and the Delaware River. Champagne-style bottles of cider will be sold at retail. Ciders from bottles and kegs will also be available by the glass to drink on premises. In addition to Seminary Hill ciders, the tasting room will also offer local cheeses and sausages, as well as grilled vegetables and other light meals. The tasting room will be a place where visitors can learn about Seminary Hill ciders through a variety of written and visual materials, and visitors will also have the opportunity to learn about cider's rich heritage.

We anticipate that Seminary Hill will host weddings and special events, both inside the cidery for groups up to 100 and outside the cidery in an adjacent tent for larger groups. For example, weddings likely would be held in or adjacent to the orchard, weather permitting, with receptions in a tent nearby overlooking the orchard and the Delaware River. Weddings would be themed to the cidery, with special bottlings of cider designed by and for the wedding couples.

#### Need for Additional Lodging in Callicoon

Callicoon has become one of the focal points of tourism development in Sullivan County, but has a shortage of high quality lodging. Apart from the relatively new Nine River Road and the Western Hotel (which together have under 20 rooms), there are no hotel/B&B rooms in Callicoon. (There are a decent number of AirBnB or VRBO rental homes available in the region, but many guests prefer the in-and-out convenience of a hotel/B&B.) As Callicoon's attractiveness to tourists continues to grow, the need for additional lodgings – particularly on summer weekend – will become more acute.

Seminary Hill has already experienced the shortage of rooms for short term visitors. For two years, Seminary Hill has made itself available for weddings at the Doetsch home located at 134 Seminary Road, averaging about six weddings per year. (Once the Seminary Hill Cidery and Tasting Room is complete, anticipated for summer 2020, the weddings would take place there, rather than at the Doetsch home.) In booking these weddings, Seminary Hill competes with other wedding venues in Sullivan County, such as Handsome Hollow in Long Eddy, but also with other wedding venues along the Hudson River and further upstate. The couples looking at Seminary Hill and competing venues seek a "destination wedding" (often in a rural, agricultural location), where family and friends can spend a long weekend together. The ideal location will offer – all relatively close together - a rehearsal dinner location, a wedding location and a reception location. And critically, the ideal location will also offer nearby lodgings for most of their guests. Wedding venues that do not have lodging available will not compete successfully for these bookings. In discussions with couples who have decided not to book a wedding at Seminary Hill, they have mostly given lack of lodgings for guests as the main reason for choosing another venue.

Seminary Suites would add to Callicoon's hotel stock a total of eight units, all with sitting rooms and small kitchens in a suite configuration. Some would have a single bedroom, others two, *three or four* bedrooms or ~~three~~ bedrooms, to accommodate couples who wish for more room to spread out or families with children. These eight units would have a total of 14 bedrooms, all with en-suite bathrooms, and they could be reconfigured depending on guest needs to combine units or

subdivide units into more units. The fact that each bedroom has its own bathroom will greatly increase the flexibility of spaces available to guests. Seminary Suites will also include common space set up as a welcome parlor/library in the old Callicoon Hospital building, as well as a separate breakfast room in the building. These common spaces would serve both the old Hospital building and the old medical office building. All rehab work to the buildings would be done to Historical Preservation standards.

Apart from a continental breakfast in the Hospital breakfast room, Seminary Suites will not serve meals. Guests will be encouraged to walk down the hill into downtown Callicoon and try the many restaurants and taverns there. The idea is that the entire hamlet of Callicoon will be their neighborhood for the weekend, with shopping, dining and entertainment. As a result, Seminary Suites will contribute to tourism throughout Callicoon and hopefully more broadly in Sullivan County.

### Operations

Seminary Suites directly will create 1.5 FTE jobs over the first three years of operation. For the initial year of construction, all design work is being led by Tom Roberts and Anna Aberg of Livingston Manor. Upon opening, Seminary Suites will employ a full time manager and a part-time housekeeper. Due to the indirect effects of permitting more wedding and other event bookings, Seminary Suites is expected to create many indirect FTE positions. On a broader level, as a contributor to tourism, taking into account customary "multiplier" standards for tourism investment, the economic effect could be even more substantial.

Pricing of the units is expected to be consistent with other high quality lodgings in the area, such as Nine River Road. The per night price of a single bedroom suite likely would be roughly \$175-225, of a two bedroom suite roughly \$300-350, and of a three bedroom suite roughly \$400-450. Continental breakfast would be included with the room charge.

### Schedule/Timeline

July 2019: Schematic design complete  
July 2019: Town of Delaware approval obtained for use of property as inn  
October 2019: New roof installed on each building  
November 2019: Begin rehab work  
May 2020: Rehab work complete  
June/July 2020: Furnishing of rooms  
August 2020: Open

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