

Pamela W. Lynn

From: scott kutil <sdk9@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, August 25, 2014 3:14 PM
To: hdc@acton-ma.gov
Subject: application 1422 new construction on Flannery Way

Dear Chair and Members of the Historic District Commission,

I understand that there is a Public Hearing regarding new construction this Tuesday August 26. Unfortunately, I cannot attend the hearing, because I am out of town. However, I want to register my opposition to this new construction and explain to the Commission the reasons for my opposition.

I am a resident of Acton, I live at 43 Windsor Avenue in the West Acton Historic District. I also served three years on the Historic District Commission, resigning my term in February 2011.

I obtained the public documents relating to application 1422 and found that façade of the building was the focus of the application. The façade shows two prominent attached garages flanked by entryways on either side of the garages. These prominent attached garages are very typical in modern duplex condominium design, and can be found all over Acton, except in the Acton Historic Districts. In the West Acton Historic District I only know of two homes that have attached garages, 25 Windsor Avenue and 48 Wright Terrace. The Wright Terrace home is a modern ranch and the Windsor home is a Sears Catalog Bungalow and therefore are not representative of the other antique homes in the West Acton Historic District. The antique homes do not have attached garages: they have barns that are used as garages or they have detached garages that were built years later to accommodate automobiles. And it goes without saying that none of the antique homes have a garage door as part of the front façade.

I am aware of how the Historic District Commission will often give suggestions to applicants about changes that might be made to a design in order to gain the approval of the Commission. I would suggest that this duplex new construction could be improved by taking some of the multi-family homes in the West Acton Historic District as an example. 59-61 Windsor Avenue is a good example of a single family home that was converted to multi-family dwelling, but there are other examples in the West Acton Historic District. During this conversion no new entrances were added to the façade and the full front porch and side porch was not modified. The existing two entrances on the front and side façades were used to accommodate the new apartments in the building. This same type of front façade, or something similar with the full front porch and two separate entrances, could be used in the design of this new construction on Flannery way and the garages could be moved to the side or the back of the structure so they would not be a visible part of the building's front façade. I believe a design like this would integrate much better into the surrounding antique homes in the area.

Finally, I urge the Commission not to approve the current front façade that is contained in application 1422. This façade design is modern duplex condominium design and is incongruous with the other homes that surround it on Massachusetts Avenue and incongruous with all of the antique homes in the West Acton Historic District. Approving this front façade would set a precedent that would encourage new development in the West Acton Historic District that would be insensitive to the setting and to the architectural details of the antique homes in the District.

Scott Kutil