

From: [Renee J Robins](#)
To: [Board of Appeals](#)
Cc: [Brad Botkin](#); [Annette Lochrie](#); [Scott Kutil](#); [Eleanor Chenevert](#); [LoPorto, Melissa](#); [Historic District Commission](#)
Subject: 5-9 Willow Street special permit
Date: Thursday, April 14, 2016 12:20:05 PM

To: Acton Board of Appeals

I live on Windsor Ave, with the back of our house looking across Central Street to the property at 5-9 Willow Street. We received the notice to abutters of the public hearing about their request for a Special Permit to rebuild two buildings at the rear of those lots. We will be out of town when the hearing is held, so I offer these written comments.

We have no objection to the owners rebuilding dilapidated structures in the rear that are not very visible from the street. However, in light of them needing a Special Permit to do so, and given the ugliness that the front of the property presents to the public, it would be in the interest of the town and particularly the neighbors to require some improvements to the buildings in front and the front of the lot generally. While not in the West Acton Historic District proper, the lots face properties on Central Street that do date to the same era as the Historic District and include some lovely smaller Victorians and village colonials. But across the street, the properties at 5-9 Willow are dominated by large expanses of asphalt, lack of clear sidewalk delineation, lack of trees, grass, or shrubbery, excessive parking of cars, and poorly maintained large garage buildings. Any improvement to these particular problems would be more than welcome, and especially in this part of town where pedestrian presence has been steadily increasing thanks to the farmer's market and the WAVE project.

Input from the Design Review Board might provide some easily-implemented suggestions for improving the sidewalk and landscaping, and simple improvements, repairs, and maintenance to the front buildings. Special Permits are not by right, and so the town has an opportunity to bring about overall improvements to the property and hence West Acton Village generally. I strongly urge the Board of Appeals to link such requirements to any approval of the Special Permit for 5-9 Willow Street.

I am cc'ing neighbors and the HDC and encourage them to weigh in with their concurrence.

Best regards,
Renee Robins
53 Windsor Ave.