

~~HULL CVS~~  
FOR: PH: HR 16060  
RECEIVED  
JAN 28 2016  
CLINTON  
P&Z

Planning and Zoning Commission  
54 East Main Street  
Clinton, CT 06413

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the CVS complex which has been proposed for East Main Street. On a personal level, this situation presents several ironies. I began my first term as a Planning and Zoning Commissioner just as the application for the existing CVS was about to be approved. I remember my first P&Z meeting, when CVS representatives made a strong corporate commitment to respect and embrace the historic character of our Town. This gesture was symbolized by the addition of plastic columns to the exterior of the proposed building. In the years since those columns have always troubled me. Clearly, they have no charm or authenticity but instead represent the "cookie cutter" approach of big business and a complete disregard for the uniqueness of a community, in this case our own.

Last summer, when I first heard whispers about the new CVS I was in total denial. Then I watched as its predecessor, and those columns, deteriorated. I soon realized that the rumors were undoubtedly true. If this plan is approved, we will have another empty storefront in the center of Town and plastic columns will be the least of our worries as a faux "colonial" style complex replaces historic structures and creates traffic nightmares.

The site of the new CVS is another personal irony, for myself and for my husband. Along with a group of preservationists, we tried desperately to save the Hull residence, a lovely 18th century Federal house that stood at the corner of Routes 1 and 81. Prior to its purchase by the present owner we had done site visits to the property, admiring its interior architectural detail and the soundness of its structure. The house needed attention, as did the separate summer kitchen behind it, but both had enormous potential. A State Historic Preservation official, who met with the current owner, concurred. Once the present owner purchased it, we made every effort to work with him. Sadly, the house and summer kitchen were lost due to demolition by neglect and ultimately finished off by a bulldozer. In their place is now a gravel parking lot. The carriage house, which the owner expanded, remains but is now slated for demolition too.

While much has been said about the need to save the two remaining houses on the block under siege, a 1763 cape and the circa 18th century Federal on the corner, I want to comment on the other buildings as well. Make no mistake, I don't want to see these dwellings lost, but there is more at stake. Much of the complex of red buildings facing the railroad tracks, and behind these houses, is not old and obviously poorly constructed. Certain portions of it, however, should be examined closely. One section dates from the second half of the 19th century. Consultation with a Clinton map of that era names Asa Pelton as the property owner. A quick internet search of Mr. Pelton reveals that he was an inventor, having received patents in 1846 and 1856. Surely there is more to learn about Mr. Pelton and what may have been his workshop. There is also a free standing, perfectly proportioned Dutch lath garage dating from the early 20th century. It's behind the corner Federal. What better site for a bike rental facility for urban visitors disembarking from Shoreline East?

This town, and this block, have so much potential. Let this be the moment, and the project, that defines our commitment to live up to it. Let's not let another historic resource, or in this case an entire block of them, be squandered in the name of corporate profit, or because of the greed of a few of our own citizens. What is being lost cannot be replaced, and that includes not just the obvious but also the potential for revenue from visitors who seek out our historic and natural resources and make our area a destination. A bit more of our character is about to be taken away, and as it disappears so too does some of our appeal as a coastal New England village. It's not just about pride in our community but also our local economy, and the dollars that tourists could leave behind.

It seems that everywhere I go in Clinton these days I overhear citizens expressing their dismay about this impending disaster. It has hit a communal nerve and I can only hope that the will of the majority prevails over the intent of a large corporation, a few local landowners and our newly enacted "floating zone" regulation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marye Wagner  
32 Waterside Lane  
Clinton, CT