

32 Waterside Lane
Clinton, CT 06413
May 31, 2017

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

Re: 77 West Main Street

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing with respect to the above referenced property and the proposals before you to possibly replace the existing structure with "multiple unit dwelling units in a single building."

With regard to the amending of Section 27.2.4 to allow for dwellings in a B-2 zone, I defer to those of you who have a better grasp as to plans of development that are now serving as guidelines for our Town. I previously served as Chair of Planning on your Commission but have not kept up with recent changes to our Town Plan.

I am well qualified, however, to speak to the matter of the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling at 77 West Main Street. It is a small structure but its loss would loom large in our Town. Regrettably, this house has no protection from ruin. It is not in a local, State or National Historic District. This, however, does not diminish its significance as an important historic landmark.

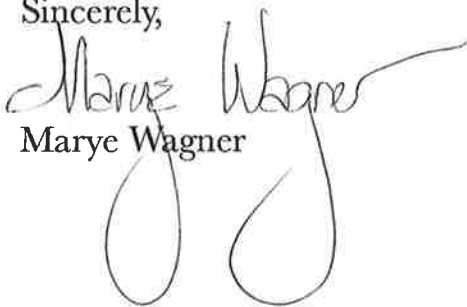
Seventy-seven West Main is an excellent example of vernacular architecture. Until recently, a wooden sign on its facade proudly noted the date of its construction - 1745. This predates the Stanton House by some 45 years and gives 77 West Main the distinction of being one of the oldest dwellings in Clinton. Obviously, the house has been subject to alterations over the years but important details are still intact. It was probably once a "Saltbox," with its rear lean-to replaced, but the distinguishing features remain. A solid stone foundation (now covered over with siding), an off-center entrance with a transom above (also covered over) and a handsome door frame. The low roofline and small windows on the front facade were also typical of this period. Few could afford a full second story so a half-story had to suffice. There was once a prominent center chimney, as evidenced by the centrally placed interior fireplace. A striking mantle of a later date encases the fireplace.

I am not implying that this house become a museum, or its interior returned to its original splendor. What I do want to stress, however, is that a significant part of this structure is little changed since its erection some 272 years ago. It stands along side the Post Road, and bore witness to its rich history. This was the thoroughfare where mail service first began between Boston and New York in 1672. Stagecoach service was added in 1783. Important historical figures passed by this house - Benjamin Franklin (1753), George Washington (1789), General Lafayette (1824) - to name a few. The loss of this house would be yet another huge blow to the historical integrity of Clinton.

The fate of this structure rests in the hands of the current owner. I am not asking that he singlehandedly preserve the house or make financial sacrifices on its behalf. Instead I am imploring him to explore means by which it could be saved and/or incorporated into his project. Properly executed, saving the building would not affect the project's bottom line, and may even add to it. I would be pleased to put the owner in touch with those who could assist, at no charge and under no obligation, in exploring options available to make the most of this unique property. There is great promise here - a possible win/win for both the Town and the property owner. It is also an opportunity to set a noteworthy example in historic preservation, which is the ultimate means of re-cycling - taking what is used and valuable and giving it new life.

I will remain hopeful for a positive outcome and committed to assisting in any way that I can to save this valuable asset.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marye Wagner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name. The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

Marye Wagner