



Main Motion to recommend favorable action passed, 3-2

In favor: Casciari, LeBuffe, LeMenager

Opposed: Clemson, McCarthy

Hearing Closed at 9:15pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jack LeMenager

## Szekely, Brian

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**From:** Barbara Hyde <hydeclub@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 23, 2018 8:27 PM  
**To:** Szekely, Brian; Planning Board  
**Subject:** 654 Main Street proposal

To: Brian Szekely, Town Planner

As you know, a few days ago I was at Town Hall to see the plans for 654 Main Street. The concern I have is with the plan for the building to come right up to the sidewalk on Main Street with zero setback. This is a very tall building on the main street into and out of the town center. It creates a feeling of domination that is out of keeping with the rest of the town.

I traveled up and down Main Street looking at other buildings and their setbacks or lack of setbacks. Wedgewood Place has a significant setback with mature trees, and other condo buildings on the same side of Main Street, including one under construction, all have setbacks. Also, if you check out businesses and retail stores on Main Street, there is such a difference in appearance between those that are butted right up to the sidewalk and those that are set back even a few feet.

Buildings with zero setback can create an environment that is harsh. There is pavement, then concrete sidewalk, then a concrete or brick wall. If there is a long stretch with a building built right up to the sidewalk, the appearance is barren and sterile. With a tall building, it is even more pronounced. Trees, shrubbery, green space all mediate this effect and can humanize the space. The current plan for 654 Main Street would be more appropriate for the area if it were setback some and had landscaping added to the front. Much of the appeal of Downtown Winchester is from the very attractive use of greenery and landscaping.

At the very least with this plan, shouldn't there be street trees planted near the curb? Please keep in mind how the building will appear to passers by on Main Street, both pedestrians and drivers, and whether it will look like a monolith or an attractive addition to the neighborhood.

The size of the building will make it very dominant in the area, though apparently it is within the codes to build a large structure there. However, the way this building is designed is likely to influence more buildings in the future for that area, so it would be a good idea to get this design right and create a better balance between the size, closeness to the sidewalk, and some green landscaping.

Sincerely,

Barbara Hyde



# TOWN OF WINCHESTER

OFFICE OF THE

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**BRIAN SZEKELY**  
TOWN PLANNER

71 Mount Vernon Street  
Winchester, MA 01890

### September 25, 2018 Planning Board Meeting

The following is submitted to the Planning Board for consideration at your upcoming meeting – with the intention of providing additional information or inquiries regarding zoning relief being sought by the applicants, as well as notes on other projects in town.

#### **CBD PETITION**

#### **654 MAIN STREET**

Petitioner seeks Special Permit under Section 7.3.12 so as to be permitted to construct a new mixed-use structure that is proposed to be taller in height, and have a Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR) higher than permitted as of right and a front setback that is more than 0'. Additionally, relief is sought for the size of a parking space (that will be hopefully be corrected at Fall Town Meeting)The property is located in the CBD zoning district and contains 18,708 square ft.

	Requirement	Existing	Proposed
Lot Size	N/A	10,086 SF	Unaltered
Side Setback	0'	15.2	16.1', 3.4'   40.21'
Front Setback	0'	0-.2'	.33'
Open Space	Min 10%	73.56%	37.31%
FAR	1.5 by-right, 2.5 SP	.352	2.48
Height	45'	28'	<b>56'</b>

The applicant and the architect had several pre-application meetings with the Town Planner leading up to the submission package. **Regretfully, I made a large mistake in accepting this application.** The narrative alludes to the fact that the civil package wasn't ready at the time of application and that a full civil package would be received by this office within a week of the filing, which would have ended up being September 7<sup>th</sup>. I should have never allowed this and went forward with the hearing figuring that Engineering would still have more than 2 weeks to review. As of September 20<sup>th</sup>, we have not received a civil package from the applicant. I take responsibility for this and again, should not have accepted this application. The Board can either review the existing submission package in relation to size, scale, design, historic resources and all other aspects of the project, or it can deem the application incomplete and not do any work on the filing. My review is below for what was submitted. This mistake will not happen again, and I'm sorry for this.

**Submission Requirements:**

1. The applicant indicated to me in person that no submission waivers would be necessary for this project. Below is a list of what was provided. *No issues* means that it was provided without deficiencies, not that I don't have issues with the plan.
2. Project Narrative- *no issues*
3. Existing Conditions Plan-
  - a. **Not stamped by a registered land surveyor**
4. Site Development Plan- *no issues*
5. Building Development Plan *no issues*
6. Phasing Plan- *no issues, as no phasing, but what about #2 performance guarantee? Not mentioned.*
7. Visual Plans- *no issues*
8. Traffic, Circulation, Parking and TDM plans.
  - a. The amount of traffic generated does not require a traffic study, but the access points should be looked at for safety around the site as circulation through and to the site could be difficult.
9. Open Space, Conservation Lands and Natural Resources Plan- *no issues*
10. Historic/Preservation Plan- *no issues*
11. Utilities Plan-**Not provided**
12. Stormwater Management and Flood Mitigation Plan- **Not provided, and therefore no comments from Engineering at this time.**
13. Housing Plan-*no issues*

**Below are my initial thoughts on the project as they relate to Historic Preservation, the Landscaping Plan, and general design/scale of the project**

**Historic Preservation:** According to MACRIS, the building at 63 Vine St has been deemed above average significance as well as marginal significance.....an inconsistency I don't understand. The house dates to the 1830s or 1840s and is "unfortunately much altered" according to the B-form in your packet. An addendum is also in your packet from John Clemson that was performed in May of 2018. The house was moved from fronting on Main Street to Vine Street sometime during the late 1920s.

According to 5.11 of the Rules and Regs for 7.3.....

If, after the effective date of this Section 5.11, a historically significant building has been demolished within five years before the filing of an application for a special permit for the same site, the Board will presume that any new construction would impair neighborhood character, including historic resources, and would have adverse effects that outweigh its beneficial impacts to the neighborhood. The Board therefore will look unfavorably on

granting a Special Permit or Variance for the site. That presumption is rebuttable by clear and convincing evidence to the contrary. Each of the following may, by itself or in combination with other factors, be sufficient to rebut that presumption in the Board's judgment:

(a) If before the demolition, the SPGA had obtained, at the development team's expense, a written opinion from an historic preservation professional who had been approved by the Historical Commission and selected by the SPGA, stating that the historically significant building had no reasonable potential for preservation and reuse; and

(b) If the proposed replacement of a historical resource has substantial beneficial impacts for the community, has been designed by a registered architect, achieves compatibility with the historical context of the CBD and will outweigh the loss of the historical resource as determined by the SPGA, the SPGA may grant the permit in accordance with the Town of Winchester Zoning Bylaw and these Rules and Regulations.

The applicant is trying to rebut the assumption that a loss of historic resource is detrimental to the neighborhood by using subsection (b) above. The most important question before the board (other than to potentially not even review this submission at this time) is to determine if the new structure achieves compatibility with the historical context of the CBD and if it would outweigh the loss of the historical resource. **The CBDRS has a split vote related to this, and therefore I would hope that the WHC could weigh in even further than the CBDRS about the historical significance of the building, and what about the building specifically made it become a "red" building worthy of preservation.**

**Landscaping Plan-** The public portion of the parcel that is landscaped as a pocket park is a nice element that I'd like to see to completion. However, the front and side façades are wholly lacking landscaped areas other than a few small shrubs on Vine Street. Such a large building **needs** some softening on the sides and front. It is rather stark and imposing without any landscaped areas.

**General Design and Scale-** This proposed structure is rather large-scale at 5 stories and 55'. However, it should be noted that the North Core subzone is the precise area where such a building should be situated. The materials used appear to be consistent with other buildings in town but

doesn't necessarily have a "subtle, timeless, and elegant" feel that lends itself to always "Feeling comfortable and inviting to the general public" (taken from page 8 of the Rules and Regs). Page 9 also describes how the building should integrate with its surroundings.

*Any part of the perimeter of new development which fronts on an existing street or public open space should be designed to complement and harmonize with adjacent existing or planned land uses with respect to use, scale, density, setback, bulk, height, landscaping, and screening.*

I am comfortable with the height of the structure, but greater effort should be made towards the front elevation. Real usable balconies should be proposed, rather than the appearance of balconies through black metal railings. Additional articulation and stepbacks at the top of the structure along Main St should be pursued. I am generally fine with the height but the massing of the structure appears out of scale with its surroundings.

### **Overall**

On its face, a 55' building in the North Core makes sense. This is the area that has been pegged for denser housing with a commercial component on the ground floor. The applicant has started the conversation, but I feel that we can make this project more inviting by the use of additional landscaped material, less massing, more articulation/stepbacks, the use of working balconies, with the goal of having a slightly less imposing large-scale structure.

As far as the relief goes, I am not concerned with the setbacks or the parking space, but relief for the FAR and the height should only be granted if the proposed structure achieves compatibility with the scale and design of the neighborhood. The height is manageable, but the FAR appears to be too high for the lot. Making the condos smaller which would allow for more articulation as well as more room for landscaped areas along the perimeter should be pursued.

## Szekely, Brian

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**From:** Maureen Mansfield, ALM <maureen.e.mansfield@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 25, 2018 3:30 PM  
**To:** Szekely, Brian  
**Cc:** Maureen Mansfield, ALM @MaureenManALM; Attorney William Mansfield; Patent Attorney William A.M. Mansfield  
**Subject:** Re: Message from Suzanne Gill

Hi Brian,

I don't think I can make tonight's event due to a meeting with my alumni group in Cambridge :(, so I'm sending an email :)

As you know, I support housing to increase the number of units for affordable housing, with the big "A", in order to provide a more diverse community in Winchester and also to prevent developers from creating buildings that are not in line with the architectural ambiance of the community.

For tonight's meeting, if you could share my concerns outlined below.  
BTW, I'm confused because when we spoke last I thought there was a 3 or 4 story restriction in new buildings?

***My primary concern is the building's height.***

Could it be 3 or 4 stories vs. 5 stories? I'm afraid it will look out of place, restrict views of sunrises and sunsets, and ice will not melt as easily on the streets nor the side walks during winter time.

***My secondary concern is that building looks very sterile.***

Can someone jazz it up? What about balconies like the condo building next door. So many people comment how beautiful Winchester Center is, but this building doesn't blend in.

*We have an opportunity to showcase our great community, but this building doesn't represent well.*

Thanks for all your help, and I am looking forward to discussing this with you sometime this week, or next. I'm sure you are very busy today and tomorrow.

**Best,**

**Maureen Mansfield, ALM**

[MaureenMansfield@Post.Harvard.EDU](mailto:MaureenMansfield@Post.Harvard.EDU)

781-369-2020 (*text best*)

857.333.1876 (**#pyplaw hotline**)

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On Tue, Sep 25, 2018 at 2:45 PM Szekely, Brian <[bszekely@winchester.us](mailto:bszekely@winchester.us)> wrote:

Hi Maureen,

I got your message from Suzanne that I should call you but I'm too tied up today. I will try you tomorrow for sure!

Best,

Brian Szekely

Winchester Town Planner

71 Mt. Vernon Street

Winchester, MA 01890

(781) 721-7162

[bszekely@winchester.us](mailto:bszekely@winchester.us)

## Szekely, Brian

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**From:** Claudine Nacamuli <nacamulic@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 21, 2018 4:01 PM  
**To:** Planning Board  
**Subject:** 654 Main Steeet

This e-mail is being sent to the Winchester Planning Board in support of the proposed 654 Main Street Development Project.

A brief review of this Project and its objectives indicates that it would greatly benefit the Town of Winchester. In addition to expanding the tax base, thirty two housing units would bring additional vitality to the Central Business District. It would probably result in new retail facilities such as restaurants, coffee shops, etc. to service the residents of the Development and the Winchester Community at large.

The Central Business has a good level of activity during the day, but is rather quiet in the evening hours. Increasing activity in the evening hours would be very beneficial to the Town of Winchester.

It appears that the Development will be of high quality and probably result in a high demand for these high demand units. In addition, the Development would improve the esthetic qualities of 654 Main Street (and Vine Street) as well as its "productive" use.

We strongly support the Project, and urge you to approve same.

Ron & Claudine Nacamuli  
16 Ledyard Road, Winchester  
(781) 729-2048

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**Szekely, Brian**

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**From:** Neil Hurley <neilhurley41@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 22, 2018 12:40 PM  
**To:** Planning Board  
**Subject:** Letter of Support for Fells Hardware Development Proposal

Dear Planning Board, My wife and I are writing this in support of the Development proposal for the Fells Hardware site. We have been home owners and residents of Winchester since 1975. We have raised our family here and have enjoyed our time here.

Fells Hardware has always been a valued service provider for us and the entire Winchester Community. That was validated when Fells Hardware and the Ryan family were named Citizens of The Year by the Chamber of Commerce several years ago. Going into their store is like visiting friends who are always willing to help you out.

The town of Winchester has an opportunity to return the favor to Fells Hardware for their years of excellent service , and to approve a worthwhile development proposal for their property.

After reviewing the proposal and seeing the existing property we believe that the proposed development : enhances the physical attractiveness of the site ; provides additional housing for the town ; offers a better retail experience for Fells Hardware customers ; and is in concert with a CBD strategy that brings more activity and vitality to the CBD district. In conclusion, we enthusiastically support the Fells Hardware Development and request that you vote in favor of the proposal.

Sincerely,  
Neil Hurley  
Kathleen Hurley  
8 Town Way  
Winchester, MA

Sent from my iPhone

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You're receiving this message because you're a member of the Planning Board group.

John H. Stevens  
44 Vine Street  
Winchester, MA 01890  
781-729-3404 (cell 617-875-3905)

October 24, 2018

Planning Board  
Town of Winchester  
Town Hall  
Moutn Vernon Street  
Winchester, MA 01890

Re: Project proposed for 654 Main Street, Winchester

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

I thank the members of the Planning Board for their willingness to serve the Winchester community by accepting a position on this Board. I also appreciate the opportunity to comment on the structure as now proposed for 654 Main Street. In general, for the parcel at issue, the proposal of a mix of residential and commercial uses is appropriate.

Unfortunately, the structure as now proposed raises several concerns - not only the points raised in the comments of the town planner (September 25, 2018), but also issues regarding parking and traffic in "the Wedge" (that part of Winchester bounded by Main Street to the east, Vine Street - at the First Congo - to the south, the condominiums at 666 Main to the north, and Wedge Pond to the west). Of course, per the zoning map, part of the Wedge (as defined above) is in the "North Core" as defined by the zoning map. For a map of the Wedge, please see the Project Narrative, page 3.

**Project Narrative**  
August 30, 2108

The project proposes a structure with five floors - the first commercial, the second, third, and fourth with nine residential units each, and the fifth with five residential units and a "shared" roof deck, for a total of thirty two residential units. The project includes 29 onsite parking spaces.

1. "The expectation is that most of the entering traffic will approach on Main Street, turn into Vine Street, and reach the site driveway within 85 feet of the corner. Project Narrative, page 8.

The problem with this assumption is that occupants will quickly learn that it is less complicated for them (especially those occupants heading north on Church Street or west on Mt. Vernon Street or Waterfield Road, and therefore

north on Main with a left hand turn necessary to enter Vine) to enter Vine between the First Congregational Church and the Winchester Cooperative Bank, continue on Vine for two right hand turns, and then make a final right into the project. Even occupants driving south on Main may choose to avoid the right turn from Main onto Vine (a narrow street) and then a left from Vine into the project.

As for exiting, occupants heading west or east will choose to turn left onto Vine Street, continue on Vine for two left turns, and then enter Church Street southwest of the Quill Rotary from where they can go south on Church or east on either Mt. Vernon or Waterfield.

A solution would be to provide the entrance and exit for the project on either Elmwood (which is one way toward Main) or on Main itself. If there is an objection that either of these options would create traffic problems, it establishes that the assumption that occupants exiting the project would turn right on Vine (and then enter Main in eighty five feet) is simply incorrect.

2. "The street parking on Main Street will continue to meet the retail customer parking requirement. This solution has successfully served the Fells Hardware clientele for many years." Project Narrative, page 8.

Unfortunately, although such parking has served Fells, it has been an burden for the local community to the west of Fells, i.e. west on Vine Street. The Fells Hardware structure itself, given its zero setback on Main, blocks to an unsafe extent the view for operators turning from Vine onto Main.

Then too, customers (of Fells?) have the habit of parking on Main close to the corner with Vine either to the south (where parking is permitted) and to the north (where it is not), thus reducing sight lines even further. Some drivers when leaving vehicles on Main in front of Fells park so that the rear of the vehicle extends into Vine Street.

Still other drivers park on the south side of Vine (both with and against traffic) where parking is prohibited. Not only does this make Vine impassable for vehicles headed in opposite directions, it makes entering and exiting 666 Main more than just a little difficult.

As one would expect Fells often has several employees actively working at the store at any given time. With the elimination of the parking space now on the project site, these employees will be added to the current employees of downtown Winchester businesses, and customers of those businesses, who compete for the inadequate downtown parking.

Of course, many of these employees (and customers) park in the Wedge. Although parking is somewhat restricted on Park and on Vine, that section of Vine running north - south has no parking restrictions. As one might imagine, that portion of Vine with no restrictions is filled during business hours.

In addition, although 2 Elmwood, 29 Vine, and 35 Vine, provide parking spaces for occupants, those occupants often find it more convenient to park on Vine Street where parking is not restricted. Their guests find such parking convenient as well.

Finally, one Winchester business has gone to the expense of buying parking for its employees. The two lots near the Quill Rotary, which were formerly gas stations, were purchased by a local business. The former gas stations now provide parking for employees of that business.

The only real solution to the twin (and related) problems of traffic and parking is the creation of an additional half a dozen parking spaces on the project which spaces are reserved for employees of Fells and / or its commercial customers.

3. "We believe this proposed development is consistent with both the intent and the detailed requirements of the Winchester Zoning By-Law for new construction within the North Core sub-district of the CBD." Project Narrative, page 8.

In fact, for the reasons which follow below, the development proposed is NOT consistent with either "the intent" or "the detailed requirements" of the zoning by-law.

### **Memo of Town Planner for the 9/25/18 Board Meeting**

In his memo, Town Planner Brian Szekely makes several points about the proposed structure with which I agree.

1. "Such a large building needs some softening on the sides and front. It is rather stark and imposing without any landscaped areas."

Please compare the structure as now proposed, with no setback on Main or Vine, to the other multi-unit residential structures in the Wedge on the west side of Main Street. With the exception of 600 Main, each one of these structures - 2 Elmwood, 29 Vine, 35 Vine, and 666 Main - is set back from adjacent streets. And 2 Elmwood, 35 Vine, and 666 Main are also set back on the sides (and rear). As one proceeds north on Main from 666 Main to Swanton Street, every residential structure is set back in front and on the side. Even a number of the commercial structures on that section of Main are set back in front (even more if one counts parking in front). I therefore suggest that the SPGA require setbacks on Main and Vine at least equal to the setbacks at 666 Main (or at a minimum to the current set back on Vine).

2. "Relief for the **FAR** [emphasis added] and the height should only be granted if the proposed structure achieves compatibility with the scale and design of the neighborhood."

The structure as now proposed uses a floor area ratio which is essentially the maximum which the SPGA could allow even with a special permit. The current multi-unit residential buildings in the Wedge are the following: 2 Elmwood, 29 Vine, 35 Vine, 600 Main, and 666 Main. There is now under construction a multi unit residential structure on Elmwood which will provides a dozen or so residential units. The structure as now proposed for 654 Main would be at the upper end of the number

of units in each of these existing multi-unit structures. I therefore ask that the SPGA limit any grant of a special permit for the floor area ratio to a figure closer to the ratio permitted as of right than to the maximum permitted by special permit.

3. "Relief for the FAR and the **HEIGHT** [emphasis added] should only be granted if the proposed structure achieves compatibility with the scale and design of the neighborhood."

I agree that compatibility with neighbors is essential and that the structure at the height for the structure as now proposed is simply too tall for the neighborhood on the west side of Main Street. With the exception of the apartment building at 2 Elmwood (Elmwood Place), the structure as now proposed is taller than any other structure on the west side of Main Street. I therefore suggest that the SPGA deny a special permit for height greater than that of the immediately adjoining properties.

**"the purposes of the CBD Regs"**  
Zoning By-Law Section 7.3.1 (page 7-3)

The Zoning By-Law sets forth several purposes. Several of these purposes are at odds with the structure as now proposed.

- "2. Enhance the commercial and residential **tax base** within the CBD;"

This statement presumably means that the Town will collect more in taxes from a new structure than the value of the town services the new units will require. Half of the town budget goes to schools. Although the residential units in the structure as now proposed are relatively small by comparison to single family homes in Winchester, the reputation of the Winchester public schools is such that families with children will be likely be willing to accept smaller living spaces in exchange for a "free" public education in Winchester. Whether the structure as now proposed will, in fact, collect more in taxes than town expenditures is unlikely.

- "3. Improve and reinforce the livability and **aesthetic qualities** of the Town Center;"

I agree with Mr. Szekely that the structure proposed needs appropriate set back and screening from at least the bordering streets of Main and Vine.

- 4) "protect and promote Winchester center's historic resources and **small-town character** while encouraging selected development to promote 'smart growth;"

In Winchester I do not recall any mixed use structure the size of the structure as now proposed. There are more massive structures in Winchester devoted to a single use, e.g. the high school, the junior high school, the elementary schools, 200 Swanton Street, and 955 Main Street. The structure as now proposed does not fit the phrase "small-town character."

**“General standards for site plan review”**  
Zoning By-Law Section 7.3.15.5 (pages 7-19 and 7-20)

The general standards provide as follows: “[t]he Special Permit Granting Authority [“SPGA,” in this case the Planning Board] shall determine that reasonably adequate provisions have been made by the applicant for the following:”

**“1. Traffic circulation and access;”**

Traffic on Vine Street (both at the intersections with Main and Church, and also on Vine itself) is of concern now to current residents - and that concern increases when considering the structure as now proposed.

At the southeast corner of the Wedge, between the Winchester Cooperative Bank (“WCB”) and the First Congregational Church, traffic already presents problems. Parking is permitted on both sides of Vine. When vehicles are parked on both sides, usually the case during the hours the WCB is open, the street is too narrow to allow two way traffic.

In addition, drivers who want a parking space close to the WCB often drive west up Vine to either the entrance to the First Congregational parking lot, or the top of the Vine Street hill, where the drivers then turn around in a driveway or the parking lot for 2 Elmwood and head back down the hill to the east so that the drivers can park on the south side of Vine.

Toward the northeast corner of the Wedge, between 654 Main and 666 Main, traffic is no better, especially when Fells Hardware is open for business. Customers park as close to the store as possible. Customers park in areas in which parking is specifically prohibited, e.g. the bus stop, and other areas marked “no parking,” and even park in front of the store so that the vehicle extends along Main and into the intersection with Vine. Presumably the driver considers such parking acceptable because, after all, the driver intends to be in Fells Hardware for only a few minutes. The result is that vehicles entering Main from Vine whether intending to turn right or left are given a (much) less than optimal view of traffic, both south bound and north bound on Main.

The addition of thirty additional vehicles entering from, and exiting to, Vine from the structure as now proposed will add to the traffic on Vine. Not only will some drivers of these vehicles increase the use of the Vine - Main intersection, others will try to avoid that intersection by driving through the Wedge on Vine to the Vine - Church intersection. This will be true especially for those drivers who want to head south on Church or east on Mt. Vernon Street or Waterfield Road. The drivers can then avoid the Vine - Main intersection - and for those heading south on Church, they can also avoid the Quill Rotary.

**“2. Pedestrian safety and access;”**

The situations described above in #1 also present hazards for pedestrians. In addition, there is a marked cross walk just north of the intersection of Main and Vine.

**“3. Emergency vehicle access;”**

Please see the comments above regarding traffic circulation and access.

**“6. Screening, including the use of natural land features, plantings and erosion control;”**

The size of the monolithic structure as now proposed demands significant remediation with, at a minimum, setbacks from the streets (i.e. more than just the width of the sidewalks) and shrubbery. For examples of what can be accomplished, please consider the setbacks and screening at 2 Elmwood, 29 Vine, 35 Vine, and 666 Main Street, and even on the east side of Main Street at the Winchester Savings Bank and north on Main Street (both sides) between 666 Main and Swanton Street.

**“10. Consistency with character and scale of surrounding building, CBD areas and neighborhoods;”**

The structure proposed is not consistent "with the character or scale of surrounding buildings." The structure proposed will have more bulk than anything in the immediate neighborhood on the west side of Main Street, except possibly the condominiums at 666 Main. The structure proposed will have greater height than anything in the immediate neighborhood on the west side of Main Street. And the condominiums at 666 Main have only four stories, not five; are set back from Main Street; and use plantings to provide visual screening.

**“11. Consistency with Design Review guidelines in Section 7.3.17;”**

Please see my comments below.

**"Design Review Guidelines"**  
Zoning By-Law Section 7.3.17

The “Design Review Guidelines” in the By-Law include the following statements.

**Section 7.3.17.1 Design Principles** (pages 7-22 and 7-23)

1. "The objectives of the CBD do not support isolated, individual architectural statements that relate only to themselves."

The structure as now proposed appears to be exactly that.

2. "Any part of the perimeter of new development that fronts on an existing street or public open space should be designed to complement and harmonize with adjacent land uses (planned or existing) with respect to use, scale, density, set-back, bulk, height, landscaping, and screening."

The structure as now proposed does not “complement and harmonize with adjacent land uses” on any of the foregoing eight elements. The structure as now

proposed would be more complementary and harmonious if it incorporated a) reductions in scale, density, bulk and height and b) increases in set-back, landscaping, and screening.

3. "Finally [last, but not least?], each individual project should be carefully conceived and executed to the mutual benefit of its **immediate neighbors**." [emphasis added.]

The structure as now proposed does not benefit any of the immediate neighbors on Vine Street. The garage entrance / exit for the structure proposed is immediately across Vine Street from the entrance / exit at 666 Main Street. The closest structure on the same side of Vine as the project is the single family home at 51 Vine.

4. "Therefore, attractive and inviting connections to and from adjacent neighborhoods are essential."

Vine is relatively narrow, already making it difficult to enter Vine from Main at Fells. In addition, the entrance to the Winchester Savings Bank is almost immediately across Main Street from the intersection with Vine. The addition of a garage entrance / exit on Vine close to Main will make turning from Main onto Vine even more difficult than it is now.

It is also difficult now to turn from Vine onto Main because the street is narrow, and parking for Fells blocks the view to the south on Main. Elimination of the current setback on Vine will only make the sightlines worse.

#### 7.3.17.4 **Elements of Form** (pages 7-24 and 7-25)

1. **Height**. "Height and bulk of the building should be configured to minimize their visual dominance, the extent of cast shadows, and undesirable alterations of air currents affecting the public street and open space system, bordering neighborhoods and adjacent new of planned development."

The "height and bulk of building," i.e. the structure as now proposed, does not minimize "visual dominance" or "the extent of cast shadows" of the bordering neighborhood.

2. **Scale**. "Projects must relate to human dimensions and provide a sense of intimacy in all aspects of design from building concept development to construction details. Of particular importance are the treatments of the ground plane and other parts of the projects that can be seen and experienced directly by users."

The structure as now proposed lacks the necessary setbacks on Main and Vine which would help it to "relate to human dimensions and provide a sense of intimacy."

3. **Massing**. "to break down any building type's typical massing to relate to the historic character and mass of Winchester's CBD, and to avoid a monolithic appearance."

The structure as now proposed is, in fact, monolithic.

4. **Street-walls and Setbacks.** "Specific areas (such as immediately bordering the commuter rail the Waterfield road area and along Main Street north of Quill Rotary) require setbacks as noted in the bylaw."

To the extent that the Zoning By-Law does, in fact, require setbacks, the project should comply with such.

5. **Silhouette.** "As building increase in height, they should be shaped to be increasingly slender and broken down in scale toward their top."

The structure as now proposed does not include any reduction in scale as it approaches its maximum height.

#### 7.3.20 **Parking and Loading Requirements** (pages 7-29 through 7-34).

7.3.20.2 **Required Vehicle Parking Spaces** (pages 7-30). "The SPGA may waive or adjust the requirements by special permit."

"The requirement of 0.75 spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial space shall only apply in cases where the gross floor area is expanded beyond its original dimensions. Lots that have existing areas devoted to parking shall be required to maintain and continue those areas."

Given the current problems with parking, additional parking is required whether or not the gross floor area is expanded.

For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully suggest that the Planning Board ask the applicant to revise the plans for the structure as now proposed consistent with the comments of the Town Planner and resident concerns about parking and traffic.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Cordially yours,

John H. Stevens

Main Street to the Pond,  
First Congo to the condos,  
Respect the Wedge!

## Szekely, Brian

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**From:** mctunes88@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 25, 2018 6:00 PM  
**To:** Planning Board  
**Subject:** Project for 654 Main Street

Dear Board Members,

I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically support the development program being proposed for 654 Main Street, Winchester, MA. I have lived in Winchester for 40 years and love this town that I call home. It will be a very attractive addition to that area of town. Most importantly, it will be a big boost to the Central Business District. We need to have diverse residential housing like this with such close proximity to our center to support the merchants in our downtown. Just think, the people who will live there can walk downstairs to purchase hardware. They can walk a few short blocks and have easy access to all of the fine stores and restaurants in our center. They can walk a few short blocks in the other direction to buy groceries, have clothes tailored by the best tailor in the area and find more restaurants and stores. They have a great gas / service station across the street. They will have a local bank across the street that has been dedicated to serving our community for decades. They will have quick and easy access to the MBTA to get into Boston in 18 minutes. The high school is practically around the corner. The project is a terrific idea! We will have more business traffic for all of our merchants without more car traffic. I can't think a more ideal situation. I have done the research and know that this project more than complies with the town's special permit limits. The Ryans have always been major contributors to our town. They have been named People of the Year by Winchester. Fells True Value Hardware is in its third generation of ownership by the Ryans and they obviously want to continue being our home town hardware store where "Kevin can fix anything". I am indebted to him and his staff for so many fixer upper projects in my home that it would fill a book. I am totally confident that they will be sure that this project is executed professionally and serves the community well. I strenuously urge you to approve this project.

Thank you,

Mike & Christine McKenna

88 Highland Ave.  
Winchester, MA 01890

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## Szekely, Brian

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**From:** Stevens, Ashley J <astevens@bu.edu>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 27, 2018 3:21 PM  
**To:** Planning Board  
**Subject:** 654 Main Street

I write to urge approval for the proposed development at 654 Main Street. My reasons are as follows:

1. In my opinion, the development will substantially enhance the aesthetics of Main Street;
2. The proposed building is in keeping with the size of the neighboring buildings on both sides of the street;
3. It eliminates a tarmacked open lot and chain link fence, which in my opinion detract substantially from the appearance of Main Street;
4. The design and the choice of materials are both attractive and not monolithic;
5. The development maintains Fells Hardware, a business that is truly part of the DNA of Winchester, as a going concern;
6. It increases the supply of apartments suitable for long time Winchester residents wanting to downsize and age in place, who currently have few options that are convenient to shops, services and public transportation, which are in short supply;
7. The development will substantially increase the Town's stock of affordable housing, currently a major priority for the Town;
8. The development will substantially increase the Town's tax base, while most likely being attractive to older couples who will not increase the demands on the Town's school system.

In short, what's not to like? I urge the Board to approve the project ASAP before the housing market moves in a way that might make the project non-viable.

Best wishes,

Ashley Stevens  
Focus IP Group, LLC  
Winchester, MA

Office: (781) 721-2670  
Cell: (617) 251-6088

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10/27/18

Planning Board  
Town of Winchester  
Winchester, MA 01890

The following are concerns that the Trustees of Wedgewood Place Condominium (666 Main Street) have regarding the proposed project at 654 Main Street. The concerns are focused on:

- Traffic/Safety
- Access
- Parking
- Scale of the Building

The comments here are taken from two sources: feedback to the Planning Board from Town Planner Brian Szeley, and a letter to the Planning Board from John Stevens, 44 Vine Street. Both Mr. Szeley and Mr. Stevens have given us permission to use their responses.

We agree with the following:

**Traffic circulation and access;**

Traffic on Vine Street (both at the intersections with Main and Church, and also on Vine itself) is of concern now to current residents - and that concern increases when considering the structure as now proposed. Toward the northeast corner between 654 Main and 666 Main, traffic is no better, especially when Fells Hardware is open for business. Customers park as close to the store as possible. Customers park in areas in which parking is specifically prohibited, e.g. the bus stop, and other areas marked "no parking," and even park in front of the store so that the vehicle extends along Main and into the intersection with Vine. The result is that vehicles entering Main from Vine whether intending to turn right or left are given a (much) less than optimal view of traffic, both south bound and north bound on Main. The addition of thirty additional vehicles entering from, and exiting to, Vine from the structure as now proposed will add to the traffic on Vine. The situations described also present hazards for pedestrians and emergency vehicle access.

A solution would be to provide the entrance and exit for the project on either Elmwood (which is one way toward Main) or on Main itself. If there is an objection that either of these options would create traffic problems, it establishes that the assumption that occupants exiting the project would turn right on Vine (and then enter Main in eighty-five feet) is simply incorrect.

**General Design and Scale-**

Town Planner Brian Szeley makes several points about the proposed structure in his memo to the Planning Board with which we agree.

1. "Such a large building needs some softening on the sides and front. It is rather stark and imposing without any landscaped areas."
2. This proposed structure is large-scale at 5 stories and 55'. doesn't necessarily have a "subtle, timeless, and elegant" feel that lends itself to always "Feeling comfortable and inviting to the general public" (taken from page 8 of the Rules and Regs). Page 9 also describes how the building should integrate with its surroundings. (Town Planner's Feedback)

With the exception of 600 Main, each one of the other structures in the area - 2 Elmwood, 29 Vine, 35 Vine, and 666 Main - is set back from adjacent streets. And 2 Elmwood, 35 Vine, and 666 Main are also set back on the sides (and rear). We agree that the SPGA should require setbacks on Main and Vine at least equal to the setbacks at 666 Main (or at a minimum to the current set back on Vine).

Compatibility with neighbors is essential and the height for the structure as now proposed is simply too tall for the neighborhood on the west side of Main Street. With the exception of the new apartment building at 2 Elmwood (Elmwood Place), the structure as now proposed is taller than any other structure on the west side of Main Street. We therefore suggest that the SPGA deny a special permit for height greater than that of the immediately adjoining properties. The structure proposed is not consistent "with the character or scale of surrounding buildings." The condominiums at 666 Main have only four stories, not five; are set back from Main Street; and use plantings to provide visual screening.

While we are pleased that Fells Hardware will still be our good neighbor and we welcome progress in providing more residential units for this part of downtown, we hope that the Planning Board will be mindful of the consequences of going forward with this project without consideration of the concerns presented here by the residents of 666 Main Street and Vine Street.

Sincerely,

Vera Ossen  
Brian Goode  
Alex Kheruze  
Alice Lombardo  
Steve Riley

Trustees, Wedgewood Place Condominium  
666 Main Street  
Winchester, MA

## Szekely, Brian

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**From:** Holly Stevens <holly\_stevens@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 29, 2018 4:47 PM  
**To:** Planning Board  
**Subject:** Pls approve proposed 654 Main st development

I support the proposed development at 654 Main st. The design of the proposed building is in keeping with the scale and style of Winchester center and will look much better than the current building and fenced in lot. This is an attractive location for housing, especially for senior citizens and would make Winchester center more vibrant for all. Thank-you -Holly Stevens-Yale st

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Jamie Devol, AIA  
7 Dix Terrace  
Winchester, MA 01890  
781-721-7574 (cell 781-835-8186)  
jdevol\_AIA@msn.com

October 29, 2018

Planning Board  
Winchester Town Hall  
71 Mount Vernon Street  
Winchester, MA 01890

Re: Proposed project at 654 Main Street including house at 63 Vine Street, Winchester

Dear Planning Board Members:

I spoke briefly at the recent public hearing in opposition to the proposed project at 654 Main Street. Thank you so very much for the opportunity to speak and for encouraging further comments via email, the purpose of this letter.

First, as I and so many others stated at the hearing, the proposed building is simply too big. It is too massive in every dimension and is decidedly not compatible with the scale and character of its residential neighborhood up the hill or of Winchester Center. Unrelentingly tall and wide, this massive building will obliterate the delightful view, which we take for granted, of the closely-spaced, pleasantly-scaled houses and apartments, interspersed with greenery, mounting the hill to the white church steeple. Indeed, the proposed building not only disregards its built neighbors, but it also detracts from Winchester's topography which contributes mightily to the charm we all talk about and want to protect.

This proposed building is two stories taller and significantly larger than the sedate brick structure that houses Main Street Pizza, which, itself, seems quite large. As others have pointed out, the proposed 39-unit condominium will loom over too-narrow sidewalks, cast extensive shadows, and overwhelm the small streets surrounding it. Additionally, rooftop air handling will add a story or unwelcome clutter not shown in the renderings, which present a clean white roof. Few will use the public "park" (with its pvc pergola) situated behind the building and up a flight of stairs, one story above grade. Moreover, the large ground-floor parking garage makes for unfriendly frontage along Main Street. The building is quite simply out-of-scale, both aesthetically and practically. It appears designed to maximize profits to the developer.

Relatedly, the proposed architecture appears (to me) a collage of rote condominium "house" forms, lacking depth and dignity and genuine delight: "Victorian" towers; a French mansard "roof" (really a wall masquerading as a roof); colonial windows; an overly heavy neoclassical cornice; unrelenting flatness (even with dormers) as evidenced by the Juliet balconies; no recessed entry at the retail (like the generous sheltered entries in the Main Street Pizza building or most shops in Winchester Center); and so on. And the collage of materials also seems overwrought: painted metal, brick veneer, pvc paneling, precast stone, and fiber cement siding.

Second, and importantly, our Winchester Zoning By-Law seeks to “protect and promote Winchester Center’s historic resources and small town character.” The proposed structure not only detracts from the “small town character” of the Center, as suggested above, but it also demolishes a “historic resource,” the 1850 Greek Revival at 63 Vine Street. This house is one of Winchester’s few remaining pre-Civil War houses. It stands in a neighborhood that had several Greek Revival houses not so long ago, now demolished. This historic house befits the neighboring wood-frame houses climbing the hill and circling Wedge Pond. It serves as their buffer to commercial Main Street. The fine two-and-a-half story house-form features a gabled roof parallel to street with a gabled back wing. Greek Revival houses are dignified and simple. The vinyl siding can certainly be removed. The original siding and trim (which might be in fine shape because old growth lumber is incredibly durable) can be repaired as needed. These mid-nineteenth century houses sported few frills—just substantial corner boards, thick window sills, and simple trim about the windows, doors, and roof. The generously-sized original windows appear intact, and they, too, are easily repaired. Plenty of companies do this work. (With good storms, original windows are as energy-efficient as new windows. And these windows can be fixed part by part—no need to throw away the whole window when something breaks, as is the case with new windows.) Additionally, photos of the interior suggest mantels and door trim are intact if the new owner wished to keep them. Water damage is likely limited to the plaster and insulation since the original hefty framing members are old-growth lumber, resistant to rot and fire.

The big message here is that this house need not be a tear-down; indeed, it is an asset. It should be part of the contextual design and incorporated into the plans for this site. Full of potential, the house could be a handsome single family, two family, or perhaps three smaller apartments. It could be a specialty shop or office with living quarters above. Quite frankly, the proposed monolith that will consume this house, which has been standing for 170 years, is not worthy of its sacrifice.

Thank you very much for your consideration of these matters. Please contact me with any questions or for further discussion.

Sincerely,

Jamie Devol, AIA

(I am a former member of the Winchester Historical Commission and the Design Review Committee.)

October 30, 2018

TO: Winchester Planning Board

FROM: Winchester Historical Commission

RE: 63 Vine Street

At its Oct. 29, 2018 regular meeting, the Winchester Historical Commission (WHC) responded to an informal request from the Winchester Planning Board (PB) regarding the status and importance of 63 Vine Street as a cultural resource, a component of Winchester's early development history, and therefore a building worthy of preservation under the Regulations (the Zoning Regulations) Governing Section 7.3 Center Business District (CBD) of the Town of Winchester.

The subject building at 63 Vine Street is specifically identified as a historic resource in Zoning Regulations and on a map identifying the same. The PB's request was made in connection with its role as special permit granting authority (SPGA) under 7.3.15. No. 63 Vine Street is located within the site of a proposed new condominium development that will include the Main Street frontage at No. 654. The proposal includes the demolition of 63 Vine Street. A sub-committee of both the WHC and Design Review Committee (known as the CDBRS) created under the Zoning Regulations to advise the PB as applications for zoning variances affecting the CBD, among other things, recommended at a Sept. 12, 2018 hearing that the proposed development could proceed with conditions outlined in the minutes of such meeting. The conditions did not include any recommendation regarding the preservation or adaptive re-use of 63 Vine Street. Rather, a motion to recommend the preservation of 63 Vine Street as a condition of favorable action by the CDBRS failed by a vote of 3 to 2.

#### Background

No. 63 Vine Street, known as the Swan House, was documented in February of 1979 (Wood and Ely), June of 2013 (Chalfa), and amended with additional information in May of 2018 (Clemson). The property dates to 1853-1860 and is a legible example of the ell house form in the Greek Revival style. Despite having been moved in the mid-1920s from its original site on Main Street and some loss of building fabric, the building remains a legible feature of Winchester's 19<sup>th</sup> century past and serves as a contributing component of a well-preserved historic neighborhood lining Vine Street, Elmwood Avenue and Wedge Pond Road. This neighborhood adjoins the Winchester Center National Register District. This area could be recommended for listing if the Winchester Center District were amended in the future.

No. 63 Vine Street has been determined to be among the earliest surviving buildings in the CBD and one of only a handful constructed prior to the Civil War. It represents a rare survival of its form and type and serves as a document of Winchester's earliest phase of development as a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century suburb in the wake of the construction of the Boston and Lowell Railroad in 1835. It is a remnant of an early built environment that has largely vanished from the landscape of the CBD and remains a legible component

of that vanished landscape. Only five other buildings of this era survive elsewhere in the CBD and the loss of this building would establish an unfortunate precedent that could jeopardize the survival of the others.

#### WHC response to the PB's request for input regarding 63 Vine Street

Present at the meeting were commissioners Boswell, Clemson, Hickey and LeMenager. Current property owner Kevin Ryan was in attendance. Comments were submitted by members of the public Jamie Devol and Charlie Hopp.

Commissioner Clemson provided background information on the history and architecture of 63 Vine Street outlined above under the Background section. In response to the question from the PB as to inclusion of this property on the CBD zoning map as being "historically significant," the Commissioners agreed that its inclusion was founded on the points outlined above in the Background section. Proponent Ryan, the current owner of the property, outlined the condition of the building and his financial inability to restore or make it habitable. Mr. Ryan also provided the Commission with photos of the interior showing poor conditions thereof largely due to twenty years of not being inhabited and photos depicting needed structural support beams in the basement. Commissioners Hickey and LeMenager cited clauses in the Zoning Regulation that allow and encourage projects that provide benefits such as increased housing and economic activity to the CBD. In particular, Mr. Hickey read a portion of the Purposes provision of the Zoning Regulation regarding the promotion of "an attractive, mixed-use and active downtown;" Section 2.1.2 of Zoning Regulations.

Commissioners Clemson and Boswell cited clauses in the Zoning Regulation that strongly encourage the preservation of the historical and cultural assets of the CBD (7.3.1, 4: The purpose of the Center Business District regulations are to: 4: promote and protect Winchester center's historic resources and small-town character while encouraging selective development to promote "smart growth"). Clemson later clarified that the project was being undertaken by developer Scott Seaver, who currently holds an option to buy the property, was proposing a multi-million-dollar mixed commercial and residential development, and was asking for zoning relief from the town. The responsibility for the disposition of 63 Vine Street therefore lay with Seaver, whose resources should make possible the preservation of 63 Vine Street.

Two members of the audience, Devol and Hopp, acknowledged the historical significance of 63 Vine Street, its importance to the appropriate development of the CBD, and that its demolition would represent a significant loss to the historic and cultural integrity of the town.

#### Conclusions

All members of the WHC acknowledged the rarity, early provenance, and value as a historical and cultural asset to the community represented by 63 Vine Street. As well, the members took note of the fact that the building had been moved from its original location which fronted Main Street and that the condition of the structure externally had not been well preserved. Commissioner LeMenager reiterated

Mr. Ryan's statement that the cost of renovating the building to a habitable condition is beyond his means. He also noted that Mr. Ryan, at the Sept. 12 hearing, said that a forced retention of the building on the site would impinge on the viability of the proposed project.

A consensus could not be reached regarding a recommendation to the PB regarding its role as SPGA other than to provide this statements as to the historical significance of the building and as to the current condition. The WHC took no action regarding 63 Vine Street but resolved to convey the sentiments of the Commission herein with the goal of informing the PB's decision. The WHC agreed to convey the background information justifying the inclusion of 63 Vine Street among the historical and cultural assets of the CBD outlined above, and the views of the commission, proponent, and members of the public to the PB as a response to their inquiry.