

TO: The Middle Haddam Historic District Commission

RE: Opposition to “Application 546 - to construct a 2,100sf colonial-style home with 24’ x 24’ garage on 18+ acres.”

The Middle Haddam Historic District is unique in that it is significant to a certain period in our nation’s history (1730’s-1880’s) representing the first 150 years of maritime history of the United States. The district is small and its carrying capacity for incongruous development is low – meaning that modern infill development that detracts from its period of significance will soon act to dilute our district’s important narrative.

The development proposed for 53 Long Hill Road will do just that and should be denied on myriad grounds:

- 1) The application is misleading in that it states that only one house is to be built on the parcel, yet we know from the applications currently tabled at the Planning & Zoning Commission, Inland Wetlands Commission and Conservation Lake Commission that the objective is for eight such structures to be built, with seven driveways fronting on to Long Hill Road. If the applicant intends for this design proposal to serve as a prototype for the other seven houses then this needs to be clearly stated as context is arguably the most important criteria the Middle Haddam Historic District Commission will use when evaluating an application for appropriateness.
- 2) The development is adjacent to the former Hebron-Middle Haddam Turnpike, established in 1803, now the narrow rural Long Hill Road. This wooded property buffers the district from the noise and traffic of Route 66, serving as a peaceful scenic gateway to the village of Middle Haddam. A denuded lot with eight virtually identical cheaply-constructed synthetic houses and seven paved driveways would be aesthetically inappropriate to an historic district that is classified by our state as “rural residential.”
- 3) All houses currently within the MHHD’s boundaries are uniquely designed, comprised primarily of natural materials and in keeping with the district’s period of significance (1730’s - 1880’s). New construction has been appropriately designed not to detract from the period that the district represents, as the community has grown slowly and organically over time. The scale, design, massing and materials of the proposed development is highly out of keeping with the historic integrity of the district and the Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development which purports to value, preserve and protect our historic resources – namely those within the boundaries of the local Middle Haddam Historic District and its National Register District.
- 4) Below are the two historic resources that the proposed development will negatively impact most. The first is the Thomas Cavanaugh House (1865), measuring approximately 1,600 square feet. The second is the Titus Carrier House (1830) measuring roughly 1,800 square feet. The density and scale of Long Hill Estates will overwhelm these historic resources and dilute the narrative of the entire Historic District.



Thomas Cavanaugh House (1865)



Titus Carrier House (1830)

5) The design, massing and materials proposed for the development are incongruous to the district. It will produce eight +/- 2,100sf stock colonial-style structures with 24' x 24' garages, generically designed with no chimneys, low roof lines, asphalt shingles, exposed cement foundations, vinyl siding, vinyl windows with snap-in grills, box-store style front doors, virtually no detailing in terms of mouldings, corner boards, door and window surrounds, fascia or cornices, attached garages with vinyl doors, and 7 asphalt driveways leading on to Long Hill Road. The design, texture and visual qualities of the development will therefore highly detract from the existing historic structures and the district as a whole.

To mitigate the negative effects of the project the historic district commission should encourage the developer to decrease its density to 3-4 smaller structures set back from Long Hill Road to retain a significant wooded buffer and lessen the impact on wetlands. It should also ensure that any buildings constructed on the site be unique in their design and conform with the architectural type and materials extant in the historic district – namely wood clapboards, wood true divided-light double-hung sash windows, a brick chimney either placed centrally or double chimneys, a paneled front door with no glass inserts, regular fenestration on all visible elevations, concealed utilities, carriage-style doors on a preferably detached (or hidden) garage, stone facing on the exposed underpinnings, cedar shingle roofing (if possible), and gravel or bituminous driveways.

As a reminder, the only development ever condoned by the Middle Haddam Historic District Commission was High Point, as it was not visible from a public street, way or place when constructed and would therefore not detract from the historic streetscape. Please remember this precedent as you consider the proposal for 53 Long Hill Road.

Finally, nearly three hundred signatories to a growing petition oppose the application before you this evening. Please honor the people's will and deny application 546. Thank you -

Sincerely,

Margaret McCutcheon Faber
Middle Haddam

Correspondence for the Middle Haddam Historic District Commission Meeting to be held 22 April 2021

Included: Petition in opposition to Long Hill Estates, LLC