

TO: Jeffrey Ribeiro, Cape Cod Commission
FROM: Leslie McDonald, 96 Queen Street, Falmouth 02540
RE: Springhill Suites by Marriott, 556 Main Street, Falmouth Village

I am writing to the Commission to share what I know about the neighborhood where the Marriott proposes to build a 110 unit residence.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION

The Fay building will be torn down, of course. This building is very much a part of the heritage of our post-war Main Street. Abutting the lots to the east is the Nye homestead built in the mid 1800's and listed on the state's Cultural Resources Inventory. Behind Dunkin Donuts is the Swift house, also on the CRI. A little further to the east are the historically designated Methodist cemetery and the Poor House dating back to the 18th century.

Across the street from the proposed buildings, behind the Mariner, is the late 19th century Cummings house. The whole block to the west of Lantern Lane (excepting Peking Palace and RiteAid) is early to mid 20th century and in that scale. The church was built in 1898. Pauls Automotive and the Rushky house (Lucky Acres) are on the Cultural Resources Inventory.

The filled lot to the east of Fay's building was a wetland where the children skated in the winter. When Joe Brown owned the Nye house next door, he sold the beautiful blue hydrangeas he propagated on this lot. Most homes in the village had at least one.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The character of this part of town evolved over the last 145 years ...post railroad to post war. It evolved from family home/business properties to auto related and entertainment businesses (with the houses moved out back) and now to bank investments. The surrounding residential areas grew to support and staff the activity on Main. These neighborhoods are threatened now by the kind of developments being encouraged on Main.

It is interesting to note that the Lantern Lane neighborhood was developed by the same Fay family that has now broken the road covenant of that subdivision. This is not the Falmouth way.

As I see the character of the Falmouth people...they are thrifty and hard working and very friendly to tourism and the businesses that support it. They are very real, not partial to facades. They want their children to be able to rent an affordable apartment in town. They do not expect to be excluded from properties that will have such a dramatic effect on their public lives.

The general consensus of the community I know is that the proposed hotel is too big for its site and its neighborhood. The question most often asked is, "why didn't they acquire the Falmouth Motel next to the Rec which has been for sale for over a year?" It seems perfect for the purposes of the Marriott. "And the traffic!!! It's already bad in that section!" It will be a lot worse with this large-scale project.

BUSINESS REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

At the time of the passage of the BRD in 2005, there were 4 lots at this end of Main where the existing business sites had been abandoned or torn down. Voters agreed with the planning board the lots should be put to good use. They liked the idea of combining commercial use with reasonably priced housing on the second floors with parking in the back.

There have been several buildings on East Main that have been constructed under the bylaw. They are easy to pick out. They are taller than the earlier buildings. There are few/no canopy shade trees and vegetation along the lot lines. Most are built with man-made materials.

This Marriott proposal will be much bigger than any of the newer developments...so large it will require the cutting down of every single tree along the property lines...so tall it will dwarf the condo complex to the west, the traditional family homes to the north, the historic 150 year old Nye house to the east and the affordable, small, beautifully kept Mariner Motel across the street...cultural resources all.

The plan is full of facades...the façade of active windows in front with faux balconies...the pedestrian scale details for the building that pedestrians will not be invited to access...the "inactive façade" which is really the raised cement parking cellar.

To shield us from the visual insult of the cement slab, there will be a "green screen". All year long? After a good storm? Forever? How many years will it take to cover the cement slab?

Along the sides and rear of the buildings, the parts we'll see driving by or through, there will be hardly any detail or visual interest...just 225 feet of bulk. And the two-level bridge connecting the two large buildings!! It is simply not true that it "incorporates, enhances and reinforces" our Main Street village character.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Leslie McDonald

508 540 0401

June 14, 2015