

**HISTORIC DISTRICT &
HISTORIC PROPERTY
COMMISSION**

Allison Sanders, Chair
Lisa Pojano, Vice-Chair
Gilbert Weatherly, Clerk
Jeffrey Bendremer
Lori Fusco

Alternates
Pam Brown
Peter Gaboriault
Alice Schroeder



**TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897**

**Historic District Commission SPECIAL Meeting Minutes
Wednesday March 23, 2022
Electronic Meeting: 7:30 pm**

I. Call to order: 7:34 pm

- a. Attendance: Commissioners Sanders, Pojano, Weatherly, Bendremer and Fusco seated. Alternates Gaboriault and Schroeder present.
- b. Minutes: Clerk asks for comments or questions on March 1, 2022 minutes. As there is no discussion Chair moves to approve, Bendremer seconds. Motion to approved is carried. Weatherly abstains.

II. 8-24 Referral (MR#152) – Wilton Water Pollution Control Authority – to P&Z: Extension of sanitary sewer line from Danbury Rd. to 19 Cannon Rd. HD&PC Draft Statement: After discussion Weatherly moves to approve the draft statement, Fusco seconds and the vote to approve is unanimous. A copy of the statement and letters of public comment from Barbara Geddis/296 Cannon Road; Steven Georgeou/63 Cannon Road and Harry Clark/130 Old Highway are included in these minutes.

III. Public Comment: Barbara Geddis/ 296 Cannon Road voiced opposition to the sewer extension.

IV. Adjournment: 8:12 pm

Next regular meeting April 5, 2022
Submitted by Gil Weatherly, Clerk

Barbara L. Geddis, FAIA

296 Cannon Road

Wilton, CT 06897

March 20, 2022

Historic District Commission

Town Hall

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, CT 06897

Attention: Allison Sanders, Chair and Commissioners Pojano, Weatherly,
Bendremer and

Fusco

Re: 8-24 Referral (MR#152) – Wilton Water Pollution Control Authority – to
P & Z:

Extension of sanitary sewer line from 19 Cannon Rd to Danbury Rd:

Discussion of

Draft Statement

Commissioners and Chair Sanders,

I was glad to see this on your agenda for a special meeting this week on
Wednesday,

March 23, 2022. Its importance to our Town and our future land use policy is
far-

reaching. I have followed this closely from the February WPCA meeting where the
articulate Town Counsel clearly defined the precise authority of what an
“extension”

really means. I also listened to the Planning and Zoning Commission’s less
focused and

more diffuse commentary when it was referred to their attention. I did send
them a

public letter in advance of that meeting. P and Z needs your help.

I am hoping HDC can support clarity of what this is all about. We ask that you
recommend to P& Z that this referral be denied.

I am writing this not as a neighbor. I am writing this as a student of history
and as a

Certified Historic Architect. There are two clear bases for a recommendation to
deny:

First, the request does not arise from its current permitted use, nor does it
serve its

current permitted use. The request comes from a proposal for a fundamental
change of

zone, a major change of use and a change of density and intensification of scale
not

present anywhere in Wilton’s Villages today. This is merely a single parcel
with two-acre

zoning.

The house is noted as 1860, pre-Civil War. Like other single-family homes around
here, it

is on a septic system. Like its neighboring uses, it is within the National Historic Register

District of 1992. Like its neighboring uses, it is also part of a village district overlay called

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“Cannon Crossing.” Surely, any single-family home has no requirement for a sewer extension. It is naïve to pretend the developer’s proposal to support seventy apartments

(at least seventy toilets, seventy kitchens and additional sinks) does not come under the

purview of townland use and historical commissions.

As you all know very well, The Cannondale Historic District was listed on the National

Register of Historic Places in 1992. Fifty-eight buildings were considered contributing and

twenty-four noncontributing. This address is clearly within that district, but not specially

highlighted. Buildings in the historic district date from 1800–1940, a span of 140 years with

three distinctive styles listed: Colonial, Greek Revival and Late Victorian. In the

immediate area around the depot, the “iconic” Cannondale Village would be described by the public as Victorian.

This 1860 home directly across from the train station is certainly part of the character

and scale of nineteenth century Cannondale. As the 1992 nomination states “The cluster of buildings around the depot continue to exhibit the scale and texture of a

small late 19th century commercial center.” As early as the 1860’s when this house was

built, the area “constituted a town school district, and it was served by a single post

office, which adopted the present name Cannondale in 1915.

As you also know very well, this is not a local historic district and prior attempts to create

such a local historic district did not succeed.

By no means am I arguing that this residence ought to be landmarked. I merely note as

an intact 1860 structure, it is eligible. As such, at the very least, it ought to have

consideration and dialogue before allowing demolition.

Second, the request has nothing whatsoever to do with Cannondale as a

district. Master

planning for Cannondale is planned soon. I hope 2023. In the POCD's call for master

planning, Cannondale Village's boundaries surely need better definition. The National

Register boundaries include Danbury Road and Seeley Road, The Cannon Crossing overlay does not. There is no question that it is confusing to all.

The POCD has an overarching theme of three closely intertwined and balanced factors: the natural and historical environment (fragile in Cannondale Village), the

human and economic environment (which protects low density where it is established

and investigates ingenious housing options in certain designated areas of Wilton that

can support it) and the Built Environment (which specifically references the unique

design and historical character of the Cannondale Area's nineteenth century, History includes "SCALE." It is not at all about absolute height. It is not at all about

selecting details from a past period and using an applique in 2022. It is about the overall

building to land to depot to village scale

Among these criteria set aside by this request are five (5) that directly refer to history or

infer a historic context.

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- 3.1 Conduct a master planning process for Cannondale. This will start sometime,

Visioning for this area will engage the community in an important conversation about economic stimulus, blends of use including some residential uses that will

reinvigorate this iconic part of Wilton. Will sewer extensions be recommended to

support such a master plan? That is quite possible that a public sewer extension,

properly sized for planned density, would be part of an orderly plan. This includes

the goal to "establish zoning incentives for preserving historic structures."

- 4.0 Preserve Wilton's Rural Character, Historic Resources and Cultural Landscapes. This plan would essentially "obliterate" a gateway site to

Cannondale Village across from the station just off Danbury Road.

- 6.2 Strengthen the economic viability of the Cannondale area while protecting its

unique design and historical character. This proposal is radically dissonant from

the unique design and historical character of the 1856 Cannondale Village.

- 7.1 Water and Sewer goals that reflect land use goals. “Extensions of sewer and

water should be limited to those that address risks to environmental and/or public health or as requested by the property owners of a certain area in accordance with the recommendations of this Plan and the Town Water and Sewer Plan.” (Page 910) How does this tightly defined limitation apply to this one

two-acre site up here?

- Cannondale Node: “Densities should be lower than the Greater Wilton Center are and should align with the gradual decrease in density north of Cannon Road.” This is clearly stated and this plan of thirty-five units an acre on a small lot

of two acres is more than double digit times over the very densest areas of Wilton. This is one of the most important guiding principles.

The size of this private infrastructure extension presumes a fundamentally different scale

and character of a future, invigorated Cannondale Village.

This “working village” by a mill and river and local spur train station is distinctly different

from Wilton Center and even from the quite different industrial mill scale of the also

intriguing village of Georgetown.

That is why it is on the National Register. Its mill “brand” and a vernacular offer many

examples from other nineteenth century mill riverfronts that have been vital, desirable

places to work, to live, to visit, to dine, to celebrate and be together.

It is patently obvious that Cannondale Village will not survive this kind of development’s

density and fundamental misfit of “scale.”

I am on record a half dozen times about promising innovative ideas for Cannondale.

There will be a lively public dialogue about this important area where history meets

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transportation. Surely, your Commission will undoubtedly have an important voice in this

community-wide conversation.

This is an important moment for your Commission. We trust you all to weigh in.

Best,

Barbara

Barbara L. Geddis, FAIA

STEVEN GEORGE OU 63 Cannon Road Wilton, CT 06897

Historic District & Historic Property Commission Town Hall 238 Danbury Road Wilton, CT 06897

Chair Sanders and Members: Re: 19 Cannon Road

By way of this letter, we are expressing our opposition to the unrestrained development proposed for 19 Cannon Road and request that the Commission recommend against it for the following reasons:

The historic nature of Cannondale is unparalleled in Wilton and has remained relatively unchanged. One simply needs to read Cannondale A Connecticut Neighborhood by Wilton Historical Society or Wilton Connecticut by Bob Russell to appreciate how all of Wilton's growth and history is embedded in Cannondale.

The National Register of Historic Places lists 15 buildings on Cannon Road as part of The Connecticut SP Cannondale Historic District. Though not included in this designation, No. 19 was built in 1860 — over one hundred sixty years ago.

8-30g is an ill conceived legislation that treats all transit locations equally regardless of the historic value of the neighborhood and strips local governments and organizations like the

Historic District and Historic Property Commission of its powers to protect historic buildings and neighborhoods.

Cannondale residents recognize the importance of preservation and specifically the need to protect Cannondale. In 2008 Cannondale neighbors brought to a vote the establishment of a historic district along Cannon Road and seventy-four percent of the property owners voted in favor of the historic district.

This desire to protect Cannondale from excessive development was also evident by the letters submitted by Cannon Road residents and attendees at the P&Z virtual meeting on March 14, 2022.

It is clear that the property owners of Cannondale have spoken recently and consistently in the past that Cannondale is a unique Wilton neighborhood, worthy of sensible development that recognizes its history, architecture and cohesiveness.

Sincerely, Steven & Tina Georgeou

Harry Clark 130 Old Highway Wilton, CT 06897

3/9/22 Members of the Historic District Commission,

You have received an "8-24 referral" with regards to a proposed sewer extension to the property located at 19 Cannon Road. I ask that you recommend to the WPCA that they deny the application.

The scale, density, and form of the proposed development to be served by this extension is not in compliance with the 2019 Plan Of Conservation And Development, and as such, should not be a candidate for sewer line extension. In addition, the **scale** of the project, including site coverage, FAR, and building mass, would severely compromise the "historic" nature of the Cannondale, listed on the National Register Of Historic Places. This high-visibility property is directly along the "gateway" to Cannondale, and would forever impair the historic status of the neighborhood.

Here are the specific goals, called out by the 2019 PCOD, that this proposal is in direct conflict with.

Page 39-40 Goal 4: *Preserve Wilton's Rural Character, Historic Resources and Cultural Landscapes.* Mentioned specifically is the Cannondale National Historic District. The scale, design, and form of the project does not adhere to this goal. *A single, monolithic building of this size violates all three of the goals. Certainly, it's out of scale in a historic district.*

Page 49 Goal 1.1: *Increase the Availability of Multi-Family Housing and Smaller Housing Units.* This section sets very specific guidelines and goals that limit large scale building like the one proposed to Town Center and Danbury Road, south of Cannon Road. "Abutting transition areas" such as 19 Cannon Road, which clearly transitions from busy commercial Danbury Road to the single family neighborhood in Cannondale, are specifically called out as areas of opportunity for "smaller, mixed use" buildings, and "smaller single family homes". *Again, from a historical perspective, smaller homes would be the form traditionally built near rural stations, not a single large building.*

Page 68-70: (Cannon Road as a transition point) Cannon Road straddles two zones as outlined in the Plan; neither one specifies large, multi-story buildings (more appropriate on Danbury Road and in Wilton Center, as outlined in the Plan) Instead, the two zones outline "commercial, residential, and mixed-use development that emphasizes transit-oriented development, community, and village design character and connections to Wilton Center." "Evaluate form-based zoning approaches" for the zone south of Cannon Road, and "Maintain existing low-density, rural development patterns, except in approaches to and within the Georgetown node... enhance the utility and clarity of Adaptive Use regulations that are often used in this area... enable commercial and residential development at limited densities that can be supported by on-site infrastructure" for the zone north of Cannon Road. *Requesting a sewer extension is NOT using on-site infrastructure, nor is this proposal mixed-use.*

Page 70 Goal 3: *Strengthen the economic viability of the Cannondale area while protecting its unique design and historical character.* The proposal clearly does neither of these things. The "economic viability" of Cannondale is an ill-defined goal, and certainly the style and scale of the building is neither unique nor historical. *Additionally, the builder has not proposed any commercial component, offering no economic enhancement.*

Page 91 Goal 7.1: *Ensure water and sewer policies reflect land-use goals.* The sizing of the sewer extension is out of scale with the lower densities laid out in the Plan, and will serve to encourage more large-scale developments on adjacent lots, in direct contradiction to the Plan. *This property will be the first of many over scale proposals we will see for this neighborhood.*

Page 95: *The Cannondale Node-* "The Town should conduct a Master Planning process to properly define the extent of the Cannondale Node. Once this is done, the Town should align its land-use policies to encourage mixed-use, residential, and commercial development of an appropriate scale and design that is transit-oriented in nature, given access to Cannondale Train Station... densities should be lower than the

Greater Wilton Center area and should align with the gradual decrease in density north of Cannon Road.” This survey, and resultant recommendations, have not yet been completed, so no large development should be approved until the Plan is updated. *Approval of this project will forever change Cannondale, before the commission and other town agencies have even outlined the borders and assessed the current and future pattern of development.*

First and foremost, you must consider if adding a sewer line extension will result in development that enhances Cannondale as a historic district. You should also ask if this project aligns with the 2019 Plan Of Conservation And Development. I contend it most certainly does not. This project is egregiously out of scale with the rest of the Cannondale neighborhood, does not reflect the scale and form of the historic buildings, and ignores many, if not all, of the recommendations of future development in Cannondale set forth in the Plan Of Conservation And Development.

Please advise the WPCA to deny this application.

Sincerely,

Harry Clark

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**TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897**

TO: P&Z

FROM: Allison Gray Sanders, Chair

DATE: March 23, 2022

RE: 8-24 Referral (MR#152) Extension of the Sanitary Sewer line from 19 Cannon Road/Cannondale to Danbury Road

The Historic District and Historic Property Commission urges, in the strongest possible terms, that P&Z advise the WPCA to deny the request for an extension of the sanitary sewer line in the 8-24 Referral.

Cannondale is small but complex area both geographically and historically. Packed into a handful of acres in a scenic valley are a river, a bridge, a railroad track and station, a mill pond, dam, old trees, stone walls, and diverse historic buildings. It has retained its authentic New England-style small village character, and would look quite familiar to Mr. Charles Cannon, whose name identifies the area. It is an irreplaceable piece of Wilton's history.

Recognized in the national program to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources, Cannondale has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1992. Cannondale National Register District documentation codifies the inventory of important buildings and features as well as providing a professional appraisal of the extent of the existing historic neighborhood.

Following the directive of the POCD, the town is engaged with master planning Wilton Center, and is already seeing the benefits of that analysis. **The POCD also calls for the town to implement a master planning process for "the Cannondale Node"** (pg. 95). A planning process would carefully and thoughtfully strive to create a plan that embraces and enhances the topography and existing historic architectural features of this undervalued resource. **The key**

point is that any sizeable projects - particularly those which require a sanitary sewer extension - should not, cannot be pursued until Master Planning is complete.

Another way to consider the issue: if P&Z chooses to support the 8-24 request, then planning options that would have been available to the town will have been forestalled. Possibilities will have been pre-empted, and the intent of the POCD will be thwarted.

Even without a master plan, there is no question that the size, density, and use of the proposed project would be antithetical to what is appropriate for Cannondale Village as envisioned by the POCD. **The POCD's Goal 4 "Preserve Wilton's Rural Character, Historic Resources and Cultural Landscapes"** (pages 39-40) states: "Wilton has significant historic assets from its rural origins, which fundamentally complement its natural environment and contribute to its character, sense of place and quality of life. Notable historical and scenic assets include [among others]: Cannondale National Register District." This is a place to "establish zoning incentives for preserving historic structures" which is in the POCD as well. A variety of incentives are already being discussed in the current master planning of Wilton Center, using the HDC-provided "Historic Preservation Tools for Commercial Buildings" report.

The recent design proposed for 19 Cannon Road would dominate the surrounding structures, and open the door to more over-scale development jammed into a small space. Overall, it would be non-compliant with POCD Goal 3 (page 70) which is to **Strengthen the economic vitality of the Cannondale area while protecting its unique design and historical character.**

When it comes to the future of Cannondale Village – arguably an area with an unmistakable New England-style sense of place and a well-documented locale in the history of Wilton and of the nation – it is impossible to justify proceeding with a sewer extension before master planning. Please advise the WPCA to deny a sanitary sewer extension for the 8-24 Referral.