

Dr. Luis Berrizbeitia, Chair
Historic Districts Commission
c/o Heather Carey, Heather Gill, Dept of Planning, Town of Concord

January 22, 2023

Dear Dr. Berrizbeitia and members of the Commission,

I am writing in opposition to the most recent application for construction of a single family dwelling at 615 Lowell Rd.

I have previously expressed my concerns about the creation of this lot thru the ANR process utilizing the Lot Width zoning exception and ignoring the basic tenets of the Historic District within which it is located in regards to existing geographical features and historic patterns of building siting. Due to the configuration of the non-standard lot, the required building envelope will become the backdrop to the primary façade and front yard of 625 Lowell Rd, most notably while stopped at the intersection traveling southbound on Lowell Rd. The lot as configured presents a challenging circumstance to meet both the lot's zoning requirements and fulfill the District's requirement to provide an historically appropriate pattern, scale, and style of architectural development. The current application fails to meet these combined requirements.

The historic neighborhood at Hildreth Corner is most notably established by the 4 architecturally significant homes at the corners of the intersection of Lowell and Barrett's Mill: the JONATHAN HILDRETH HOUSE, ca. 1750; the THEOPHILUS MASON HOUSE, ca. 1895; the F. and A.B.C. DAKIN HOUSE, ca. 1830; and the HIRAM WORTHLEY HOUSE, ca. 1900. Neighboring properties built between 1719 and 1880¹ firmly establish the 18th and 19th centuries as the defining period of significance for this locale.^{2, 3}

The current application for 615 Lowell Rd. demonstrates no architectural relevance to the period of significance. The design, as proposed, is an asynchronous amalgam of architectural details and volumes creating the Geography of Nowhere⁴. In an attempt to disguise the significant volume of the structure, the design cuts the mass into frenetic bits and pieces with varying rooflines, dormers, roof pitches, canopies, porches and bloated gambrel volumes. Window size, arrangement, and lite configuration reference multiple styles and eras of construction. Siding materials and detailing are varied and bear no relevant historic reference, merely aiming to break down façade scale.

The proposed construction trivializes the historic context of this site by trying to gaslight the general public into believing that plastering a range of popular details onto a building makes it historically appropriate. The location of this lot and awkward proximity to the significant building at 625 requires that the proposed design be sober, subtle, and historically innocuous. The current application before the Commission does not meet these basic principles.

Based upon my concerns expressed above, I respectfully request you deny the current application for Historic Appropriateness for 615 Lowell Road.

Sincerely,
Brooke Whiting Cash, 1114 Lowell Road

¹ See attached reference map

² *Historic Resources Masterplan of Concord, Massachusetts*. Concord Historical Commission, 2001.

³ Forbes, Anne McCarthy. *Narrative Histories of Concord and West Concord*. Concord Historical Commission, 1995.

⁴ Kunstler, James Howard. *The Geography of Nowhere*. Simon & Schuster, 1993.

616 Lowell Rd
F. and A.B.C. DAKIN HOUSE, ca. 1830

625 Lowell Rd
THEOPHILUS MASON HOUSE, ca. 1895

648 Lowell Rd/25 Barnes Hill Rd
HIRAM WORTHLEY HOUSE, ca. 1900

685 Lowell Rd
EPHRAIM FARRAR HOUSE, ca. 1792

702 Lowell Rd
CHARLES FLINT HOUSE, ca. 1750

8 Barretts Mill Rd
JONATHAN HILDRETH HOUSE, 1750

44 Barretts Mill Rd
WILLIAM G. BARRETT HOUSE, ca. 1880

71 Barretts Mill Rd
ABISHAI BROWN HOUSE/TAVERN,
1719-1750



Hildreth Corner: Historically Significant Buildings: 18th/19th c.