

**July 10, 2020**

Planning & Zoning Commission  
Town of Darien  
2 Renshaw Road

Re: Proposed Amendments to Darien Zoning Regulations (COZR #3-2020), Business Site Plan #225-B, Special Permit Application #312 1897 Boston Post Road  
Stephen Olvany, Chairman  
Jeremy Ginsberg, Director  
Members of the Planning & Zoning Commission

**Statement of Opposition to 1897 Post Road Project as Currently Proposed**

My name is Sheehan Murphy and I have lived at 39 Dickinson road for 9 years with my wife Karen and our kids Colin(9) and Riley(7). First I would like to note that I'm in support of a redevelopment of this property, if done in line with the scale of the neighborhood.

**Height & Scale:** I don't believe that a project of this height and scale is warranted in the Neighborhood Business zone and specifically in this location on Dickinson and the Post rd. The current commercial store is almost not visible at all from our property and has minimal impact on the neighborhood. This development however, with a proposed partial third floor and overall building height of 33-40 feet(actual visible height), will directly impact our residence and the dickinson rd neighborhood. As you can see from the picture below, our current view from the patio mostly obscures the commercial property and is appropriate for a residential setting.

It's worth noting that the current parking lot is within the 25 ft required buffer, which is appropriate for a one story commercial only building, but not a larger scale mixed use development. Although the buffer is grandfathered in, it effectively allows the building to be closer to our home. When you consider the request for a partial third floor and height variance, along with the reduced buffer, this building will be even more imposing when viewed from our bedroom and backyard.

In addition, noise levels will undoubtedly increase as you replace a standalone commercial property with a mixed use development.

**Traffic, Parking & Safety:** The current commercial tenant has very little vehicular traffic. While I understand that this will change with any development, I'm concerned about the combination of permanent residents and increased commercial traffic. There is already non residential activity related to the Noroton Fire Station and adding a project of this scale will take away from the residential nature of Dickinson road.

Additionally, the current traffic flow enters on Dickinson and exits on the post road. The developer would like to maintain this traffic flow, while moving the entrance further down Dickinson, closer to my front yard. Should the lot be full, there are very few options for additional parking on the Post road, consisting of 2-3 street spots to the right as you exit. Should those be full, drivers would likely exit and turn back on to Dickinson in search of parking. The most logical street parking would then be alongside the firehouse on the east side of Dickinson or further down the street in front of 34 Dickinson. Alternatively, drivers may choose to use the Fire Station parking lot as a turnaround and park in front of 39 Dickinson. Not only does this impact the residential nature of Dickinson road, it also presents a potential hazard to the active fire station and responding volunteers in case of emergencies.

As a residential street in a denser part of Darien, Dickinson road is routinely filled with many school aged kids including my own. Dickinson road will likely see additional traffic from the post road seeking parking or coming off of clock Ave, using Dickinson as the back door approach to this development. This added traffic on a residential street would create unnecessary risks for kids biking and playing in the street.

**Landscape Screening:** As I stated, I'm against the overall scale and height of the project. Regardless of the final height, the screening needs further review. I did have an opportunity to meet with the Landscaper Designer and Developer and appreciate their willingness to discuss screening options. After further review, my concern is that the amount of screening will not be sufficient for a building that could reach 33-40 feet at peak visible height. The proposed screening could take 10+ years to fill in. Green Giants with an initial height of 14' could be a viable option.

**Summary:** The developer is asking for approvals to increase the height of the building beyond what is allowed in the Neighborhood Zone while reducing parking requirements. Although I understand that certain circumstances require variances and changes to regulations, the Neighborhood Business zone is designed to pay particular attention to the impact on residential settings. The NB zone is unique and projects should have to meet a higher standard in this part of town. As a result, variances and amendments should not be considered routine, and the impact to a residential area needs to be considered thoroughly. In this case, the building, along with it's non conforming buffer, will be closer to a residence and therefore height is a bigger concern. A precedent set on building height in this case could impact residents in this zone on Garden City Rd and Noroton Ave in the future.

The height and scale of this project, along with a reduction in required parking, simply does not fit in this location within the NB zone. As Mr McDonald(34 Dickinson) has also stated, we would fully support a two story building with requisite parking that is within the current zoning regulations.

Thank you,

Sheehan & Karen Murphy  
39 Dickinson Road  
646-457-0410

