

180 Middlesex Road

February 10, 2020

As one of Darien's earliest houses, this home has remained amazingly intact since 1732 retaining its 18<sup>th</sup> century condition through families of 9 children. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we are fortunate that we do not have to live in such close quarters and expansion should be allowed, and it should be combined with, but not totally dominating, the existing old structure.

This proposal presents massive changes on every elevation with only three original windows and possibly a front door displaying early existing features of the house.

The original window style has been copied (3 over 3) but there is no identification of the type of material or actual window styles. The window trim was written as the same, but without descriptive details.

Roof. Is the total roof in wood shingle except the flat areas?

Siding. Is it wood clapboard throughout with identical exposure and overlap with original?

Plan shows the existing foundation and stud walls have been extended to the second floor except for the north wall where the second floor addition completely covers it from street view. Since the frontage of this second floor addition has removed any aspect of the cape I wonder if the only way to keep some aspects of the original structure would be to set back the addition and eliminate the bunk and closet free guest room by a change of roof pitch.

The Garage is a very good addition.

The aesthetics would be greatly improved by removing the overgrown frontage evergreen trees hiding the structure's lines.

This is such an important house, I so wish I could sing its praises as an historic renovation, but unless the addition could be set back a bit to allow for a little of the original cape to be part of the street frontage, I do not see that I could approve this as an "historic renovation".

Marian Castell, Darien Town Historian

RECORDED  
2/12/20

Darien Planning & Zoning Board  
Two Renshaw Road  
Darien, CT 06820

Dear Planning & Zoning Board:

Please find below a statement of our support for the application for a zoning variance for Mary Connell & Tyler Lifton, at 180 Middlesex Road.

We have lived across the street from the Liftons since they moved to Darien in 2009. We are pleased to support their application and agree with all of the details included in their plans to renovate their charming historic home. We live in an older home ourselves, and have a great appreciation for older homes and their place in Darien. We are pleased that the Liftons have chosen to preserve the historic nature of their house while renovating it into a 21st century home. This commitment to maintaining the character of Darien is something we are all focused on - particularly so during Darien's 200<sup>th</sup> year! It is clear that the Liftons are creating something that will allow this house to be part of the character of Darien for the next 200 years!

These are things that appear obvious from the exterior. What the Zoning Board may not appreciate fully based on the application is how charming the Liftons' home is on the inside, which is truly the heart of that house. We have attended many festive gatherings around the Liftons 300-year old hearth, which is a special moment for our family in the holiday season. We are pleased that they have oriented their plans around that beautiful chimney and have focused on incorporating all of the historic parts of this beautiful old home, rather than simply tacking a modern addition onto an old house.

Yours sincerely,



Carrie & Terrance Petti

Darien Planning & Zoning Board  
2 Renshaw Road  
Darien, CT 06820

Dear Planning & Zoning Board:

We would like to submit this letter of support of the application of our neighbors, Mary Connell & Tyler Lifton, who live at 180 Middlesex Road.

We have recently completed a renovation and addition of our own historic house. As part of that process, we also considered whether to move, or to simply tear down our home, as the obstacles we faced were large. With that perspective, we are impressed that the Liftons are undertaking this thoughtful renovation which will preserve the heart of their home and allow them to continue to live in their home for many years to come.

We understand they are requested a few limited number of small variances. Given our own experience with the challenges of doing work on an older home, we are very sympathetic to the reality that a 21<sup>st</sup> century project will not fit neatly into the existing scope of an 18<sup>th</sup> century home. We also have small children and are sensitive to their desire to bring their structure up to code and address issues of uneven floorboards, low ceilings and dangerous stairs, among other limitations. We have discussed these issues with the Liftons, as we faced many of the same challenges – how to make an older home livable for a modern family while preserving all of the charm and character that make the house special.

We know that they have sacrificed a lot in order to maintain the historic integrity of the home and we are fully supportive of the plans they have shared with us. We have absolutely no concerns about any of the variances they are requesting and in fact are very pleased that they have chosen, as we did, to work with their historic home, to maintain this charming corner of Middlesex Road, rather than tearing down as happens so often in town.

Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Yours sincerely,



Christina & Marc Amen  
175 Middlesex Road

To:  
Planning & Zoning Board  
2 Renshaw Road  
Darien, CT 06820

From:  
Diane Steinle, 184 Middlesex Road  
Date: February 7, 2020  
Re: 180 Middlesex Road Variance Application

---

Dear Planning & Zoning Board:

I received notice of the variance application of my neighbors, Mary Connell & Tyler Lifton at 180 Middlesex Road, and would like to submit this letter of support of their application.

I have lived in my house (178 Middlesex Road) for over 35 years and have known only two neighbors – the Carnahans and the Liftons. The Carnahans completed a renovation in 1995 and now the Liftons are looking to further update this charming house so that they may continue to live there for years to come.

I am fully supportive of this project, the details of which they have shared with me, for several reasons, which I would like to share with you. First, the Liftons and I have always been very collaborative about sharing responsibility for landscaping as between our houses. We are fortunate to have multiple large trees along our property line and have worked together for many years to share the cost and responsibility for their maintenance (from spraying to trimming). I know the Liftons plan to landscape their new home in a way that will allow them to maintain their privacy and which will also be attractive and an asset to my house as well.

Second, I am impressed with the care they have taken to engage an architect with a specialty in historic homes. My own home dates to 1848 and I know their home is over 100 years older than mine. I believe it is an asset to our “neighborhood” and to Darien that they are trying to preserve the scale and architecture consistent with this quasi-historic district. In fact, I understand that Mary Connell Lifton has worked with Marian Castell at the historic society to see about having this corner of Middlesex and Hollow Tree Ridge Road designated as a historic district. It is clear that their plans are consistent with an approach that will preserve this historic approach and none of the variances I understand they are requesting will encroach on my enjoyment of my own property – in fact I believe that this thoughtful renovation will actually be an asset to my own historic property.

Finally, I am very happy to have the Liftons as neighbors – I enjoy spending time with their young girls and I know that this renovation is something they have considered since they moved in 10 years ago.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

*Diane Steinle*

Diane Steinle