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To: Westport Historic District Commission  
Re: 188 Cross Highway/ February 24, 2021 Pre-Application Hearing

Dear Commissioners;

I am writing in **support** of the **revised plan** for an addition and other alterations to the western gable facade of c.1728 saltbox dwelling house at 188 Cross Highway.

For the Commission's convenience, on page three of this letter I've included a WPA 1930s photo of the original c.1728 saltbox which directly shows the western gable facade at issue. Currently, almost 100 years later, all of the exterior architectural elements shown in that photo remain. The revised plan retains the architectural features of the historic facade as shown in the photo, with the exception of one window original to the house - the window which is partially hidden behind the tree at the bottom right of the western facade in the photo.

I'll discuss the removal of this one historically significant window more fully below, but I believe that the overall plan for renovating the saltbox and colonial revival sections of the house (as presented at the February 9th hearing with the revisions prepared for the February 24th hearing) does a sensitive and conscientious job of preserving the multitude of historically significant exterior and interior features of these sections of the house - especially in light of the design constraints presented by preserving the abundance of historic features. Therefore, I believe that the previous plan, as revised by the new plan for the western gable facade, should receive a positive recommendation from the HDC to the P&Z.

More specifically addressing the revised plan for the addition, for the P&Z to approve an application under §32-18, any alterations to a Historic Structure

must comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment for Historic Properties. The applicable Secretary of the Interior's Standards for additions are the "Standards for Rehabilitation." I believe the revised plan complies with those Standards for the following reasons:

(1) **Standard #9** provides that: **"New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment."**

I believe that the revised plan complies with the standard set forth in the first sentence because it retains the historic "musket-ball hole" entry door and the three c.1820 double-hung windows. Although the one bottom right window is proposed to be removed, as long it is not "destroyed", but rather documented and stored for future possible replacement in its original location, I believe removing this window can comply with the Secretary's standards. The standards are meant to be applied "reasonably", and in light of the design constraints presented by all of the other significant historic features of the saltbox and colonial revival sections, I think it is reasonable that the Fields be able to have an exit from their kitchen to the back patio on condition that the removed 300-year-old window is documented and stored.

With respect to the second sentence of Standard #9, the revised plan for the addition looks compatible to me in general. More specifically, I think that by leaving a space between the historic saltbox roof and the back roof of the new addition, the revised plan better differentiates the new work from the old and is therefore an improvement over the original design.

(2) **Standard #10** provides that: **"New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired."** I believe that the revised plan complies with this standard because under this plan if the addition is removed in the future the historic western gable facade can be restored.

Taking the WPA 1930s photo shown below as the record of the historic western gable facade, that facade can be restored in the future because the historic entry door and c.1820 windows will have been left in place, and the 300-year-old window will have been documented and stored for future replacement to its original location.

In conclusion, I believe the revised plan complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, and therefore should receive a positive recommendation from the HDC to the P&Z. I thank the Fields and Mr. Storm for their sensitive changes to the design to bring it into compliance, and the Commission for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Wendy Van Wie



1930s WPA Photo of 188 Cross Highway, Westport, Ct.