

Dear Steve -

I am writing to you and the Board of the Trustees in support of the application to demolish 11 Dolma Road, Scarsdale.

As you know, I spent years working with you and a small group from Village Hall and the Junior League to preserve Wayside Cottage, a truly historic home and Scarsdale treasure that was built in the early 1700's. During my years with the Junior League, I also was one of the members who gave tours of the Cottage, dressed in Colonial outfits, to share its rich history with members of the community - from colonial farmhouse to post-Revolutionary War inn, to tea shop, to the meeting place of the Scarsdale Woman's Club (when they published the first issue of the Scarsdale Inquirer!), to the home of the Scarsdale library and ultimately to the headquarters and meeting place of the Junior League of Central Westchester. I loved giving those tours including to my own children and my niece and nephew, all third-generation Scarsdale residents. I worked with the then Village historian, Irving Sloane, to re-write the tour and was part of the JLCW committee that worked to publish a children's book set in the Cottage and recounting local events around the Revolutionary War. The history of Wayside Cottage tells the history of Scarsdale in many ways as well as being tied to historic figures including Caleb Heathcote, the Varian family and multiple members of the Tomkins family. I share all of this to illustrate my deep connection with and love of Scarsdale and its history.

I have lived in Scarsdale now for over 20 years. My husband (and his sister and other relatives and many childhood friends) are among the many, many Scarsdale residents who so loved growing up here that they returned to raise their own children. I married into this town, so to speak, but have loved and embraced it and have been an active volunteer throughout our years here - first in the PTA and co-leading a brownie troop of almost 30 girls, then serving on the boards of the Junior League, the Old Scarsdale Neighborhood Association, the League of Women Voters and Scarsdale Synagogue, where I just finished serving as President in June. Another renovation project that I have been intimately involved with is under way right now at Scarsdale Synagogue where we are renovating the Sanctuary. One of the most poignant features of that renovation was the decision to carefully remove and repurpose the wood on the walls of the current sanctuary. The wood will look different in the new Sanctuary but it means a great deal to the congregation to have that connection to our history in the new space.

I also have worked in Scarsdale for almost 20 years as a residential real estate agent, representing buyers and sellers of many Scarsdale homes (including this one). I cannot count the number of homes I have been inside in this town while representing my clients, looking with them for the right home and just staying informed on inventory, easily touring a dozen homes during broker open houses every Wednesday. I feel lucky to get to see historic homes like 8 Sharon Lane, 31 Mamaroneck Road and 1020 Post Road in my work. Homes like these are similar to Wayside Cottage. I understand the rationale for wanting to preserve these special homes that truly are part of Scarsdale history. Conversely, I do not feel that preserving 11 Dolma Road contributes to the knowledge of the history of famous individuals or the history of the community or of historic homes in Scarsdale.

Although one commentator said that setting foot onto Dolma Road in front of Number 11 was like setting foot into the 1920s, I respectfully disagree. The home next door at 7 Dolma Road was built in 1955, the home across the road from 11 Dolma is currently nearing completion in 2021 as a brand new residence, 18 Dolma was built in 2005, the home built directly behind 11 Dolma is a 1946 contemporary glass and steel building with a dropped story of glass stone and steel that is not visible from the street and the home next door to 21 Dolma was built in 1950 (it being the last home which fronts on both Dolma and Birchall Drive with an address of 35 Birchall Drive). Even the homes at 19 and 21 Dolma were built in 1935. This is hardly a preserved 1920's setting. On the other hand, 99 homes built before 1930 were sold in Scarsdale in just the calendar year of 2020. Certainly, no one would claim that all of those homes, or the 100's of other homes built before 1930 in Scarsdale are all of historic significance simply by virtue of when they were built or by the happenstance of some neighboring homes being of the same vintage.

I would also point out that the home at 11 Dolma is almost completely invisible from the street due to the extensive trees, shrubs and foliage at the property.

Accordingly, I support the application to demolish 11 Dolma Road, Scarsdale.

Best regards,
Karen Chapro