

## OPINION: REGARDING THE NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION SUBMITTED BY LOBISSEY CONSTRUCTION

From LINDA GAY, RESIDENT

I have used the **40B Design Handbook** created in early 2011 as a resource to defend Upton's site and setting, the architectural elements, history, Town Planning, etc. vs the proposed Lobisser project.

The results of my research (using other state resources as well as handbook) indicate clearly that Lobisser Construction, in its PEL application submitted a **Narrative Description** that **grossly, egregiously and with intent** misrepresented the nature of the Historic District and surrounding historic homes that exist in immediate proximity to this site and in the surrounding neighborhoods.

First, there is no mention of the **Upton's National Register Historic District** at all.

The initial application was a very simple, short, narrative to get preliminary approval in the form of a PEL. It is simple, and **very misleading**. Written more as a Real Estate sales listing than an actual description of a building. The language used is a broad stroke or actually wrong.

If the project moves forward at all, it is not currently, and should not be the final description **or design for the building**. The issues related to the original description, drawings, impact, site, density are all either the same or actually, have become even more concerning.

Since the first hearing, my own efforts at communicating to the Developer the importance of the architectural depth of design found in Upton, the importance of the central location to the town, all **have been ignored**.

In 1989 members of the Historical Commission began an inventory of all of the buildings and homes throughout Upton that would meet the very high standards required to be recognized as a National Registered Historic District. The extent of the work involved, the value to a community, and result of that effort, **have been ignored**.

Lobisser continues **to ignore** the significant time and expense that the Community has undergone in regard to Town Planning surrounding the recognition and protection of the historic elements of the town. It is the leading reference made in the intro

This includes a very expensive and time consuming development of a Vision Plan that speaks directly to the importance of safekeeping the historic buildings and integrity of how Upton represents its significant history. The many aspects of how Upton has and continues to protect our history is evident in Town Meeting Votes since the original Charter in 1735.

Although not regulatory like you would find in Concord or Dover; Upton does have established design guidelines that were part of a multi-year process to create a Vision Plan. They were voted on and approved at Town Meeting. They mirror the 40b Design Guidelines.

The design, is not forward facing. The design does not mirror neighboring homes in terms of scale. In this situation building(s) should be no taller than the norm and what is in evidence which are one and two story homes. Exceptions in height in Upton would be Victorian era design elements such as Turrets.

The National Registered Historic District is a setting to which the proposed building at 47 Main will violate, simply by design.

This project, if it follows in the same "imprint" as his last at 149 Main, sets a precedent for new construction that not only contributes nothing to our aesthetic, but grossly degrades it.

The Knowlton Mill and Upton Inn have been the largest buildings in town for 300 years! 300 years! Do not let 47 Main set a precedent that 40b projects can be huge, monolithic structures that blatantly ignore the fact that **throughout centuries of growth**, the scale of building was determined with aesthetics in mind.

**For nearly 300 years**, no building, prior to the 149 Main Lobisser project, NO other project of this design and scale, has been built.

Lobisser's descriptions of Upton properties are insulting to the residents of these many homes, and the businesses, that have maintained, thru hundreds of years, their original architecture. Historic homes that to do so requires a commitment, a passion for history, and huge additional expense to maintain.

In terms of meeting the Historic Commissions very strict criteria, each building does not need to meet all of them to be approved for the National Register. A building that is vinyl sided does not change the importance of it being on its original site, or that it has a history that is important to the Nation. The National Register now considers any building prior to 1970 to be eligible to meet the criteria for age.

Lobisser refers to these homes as though they all are the same with their lap siding and asphalt roofs. Clapboard siding of any product, which of course is what most of them are, is considered one of the more charming aspects of home building, first seen in Upton in the 1600's and a design element that continues to be prevalent and unique to the Northeast.

His design submission includes comments that imply a town and neighborhood filled with homes of no significant architectural or historic elements, of low or simple construction standards. Nothing could be more false.

The Historical Commission in 1989 began to catalog every historic home in Upton, each of different architectural, and cultural heritage. Upton, tiny as it is, has a deep well of examples of homes from different eras and origin; on Main Street, and throughout the Town. Victorian, Gothic, Greek Revival; endless design influences, all in one town.

In the 1800's, world renowned architects influenced how buildings looked and constructed throughout Massachusetts and beyond. Many of the designs that were first introduced in major cities found their way to the homes, churches, Town Hall and businesses in Upton.

Obviously the State is focused on many aspects of housing, but it is the State that wrote the Guidelines. For developers to follow, in earnest. The

guidelines were in response to all of the complaints coming from Towns that were being asked to put aside all too many aspects of what make their communities unique to the Commonwealth. Upton is at the top of that list.

**Please see supporting documentation including a spreadsheet showing each home and building in the current Historic District and highlights those that surround the proposed development site.**

**Please see additional documentation regarding Upton's significant place in the History of the region, state and nation.**

