

May 10, 2021

Zoning Board of Appeals

Dear Members of the Board,

My name is Tara Cederholm and I reside at 20 Fruit Street. I am writing to you today regarding the application for an appeal by Caswell Restaurant Group, Inc., c/o Lisa Mead, of Mead Talerman & Costa LLC, that the property located at 17-21 State Street is subject to the Downtown Overlay District.

As a new resident of this city I can say that we were drawn to Newburyport precisely because of its historic character with a remarkable surviving architectural fabric from the 17th to the early 20th century. State Street - on which this property is located - but also the greater downtown area is a treasure trove of high style as well as vernacular commercial and residential buildings. The wealth created in the late 18th and 19th centuries allowed this town to flourish and grow, but like so many New England cities the 20th century brought economic challenges and hardships for the residents. These hardships also preserved the town's architectural fabric through the lack of development.

The passage of the Downtown Overlay District (DOD) zoning law in 2014 was prescient for Newburyport. At a time when development was beginning and a push for "revitalization" of vacant downtown areas was threatening to level downtowns across New England, this city was preservation minded and forward thinking in enacting zoning regulations to protect its most vital and precious asset – its historic buildings.

The mere suggestion that this zoning does not apply to this structure because it was enacted nearly 200 years after the building was completed strains credulity. The zoning was enacted for the expressed purpose of protecting historic structures, their facades, windows, dormers, signs, and fences, for all future generations. I urge you to deny this appeal.

Newburyport's rich past has made our city what it is today, don't let our future slip away.

Thank you,

Tara Cederholm