

Kim Turner, Parks Commission Chair
27 High St.
Newburyport, MA 01950

May 27, 2021

Newburyport Historical Commission
60 Pleasant St.
P.O. Box 550
Newburyport, MA 01950

Re: Keepers House landscape at Gaol

Dear Newburyport Historical Commission:

I am writing in support of Chuck Griffin's proposal to improve his property at the old Gaol in Newburyport. I serve with Chuck on the Newburyport Parks Commission, and have not met someone more committed to maintaining the integrity of the historic character of our great City. We have worked together over the past couple years to restore the Bartlet Mall back to Charles Eliot's original vision, and his contribution to date has been invaluable.

As a landscape architect, I value not only historic and cultural preservation of open spaces, but also maintenance of view sheds, and sensitivity to ecological health. I remember when the Keeper's House was overgrown with evergreens and visually obscured from the public. The work Chuck has done to date on the property is nothing short of astounding. Visually, the Gaol property is much more connected to the historic Bartlet Mall and Courthouse, and, in my opinion, the proposed landscape changes follow that same theme.

I understand Chuck is proposing two Elm trees on either side of the front entry to the Keeper's House. These are tree species that are not only a wonderful addition to the ecology of our area, but also an historic species that once encircled the Mall, and today lines the promenade in front of the Courthouse. They are a high canopy tree, with a classic vase-shape, that allow for unobstructed views at lower levels, but a high canopy of leaf coverage that provides necessary shade and habitat. I do not believe this tree species will block the view to the front of the Keeper's House, but rather enhance the framing of the building and its entry. It is my understanding that the prominent corner of the building, which is most visible from the Courthouse promenade, will not be obscured at all.

In my opinion, these proposed improvements will only further enhance the property and its enjoyment from our City's open space.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kim Turner', written in a cursive style.

Kim Turner, ASLA
Newburyport Parks Commission Chair