

TAB N

12-6

**Subject:** Comments concerning the Salisbury Affordable Housing Project for the Holley Block

**From:** Sarah Morrison <morrison.sarahk@gmail.com>

**Date:** 11/5/2020, 1:17 PM

**To:** Abby Conroy <aconroy@salisburyct.us>

To Salisbury Planning and Zoning Commissioners:

As a resident of Lakeville, I wish to add comments regarding the proposed Salisbury Affordable Housing Project at Holley Block. I recently signed the group letter submitted to you earlier this week. I agree and support the important issues and conclusions raised in that letter, and also with many of the comments raised in letters sent by others. I will try only to add observations that I don't believe have yet been made.

Thank you for your consideration.

All best,

Sarah Morrison

### **Lakeville Historic District**

The 10-acre Lakeville Historic District was accepted on the National Register of Historic Places for its significance in architecture, industry, transportation and commerce. The purpose in obtaining the designation was the preservation of the historic character within the village center and the architectural integrity of the buildings. The Historic District is surrounded by a much larger area containing many other historic structures, all which seemingly extend the perimeters well beyond the District. In fact, one can drive from National Registered Historic Districts of Millerton, Lakeville and Salisbury and enjoy an almost uninterrupted parade of historic buildings from similar time periods.

### **Historical Context**

From the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s, Lakeville owed its existence, growth and prosperity to the iron industry. Formerly known as Salisbury Furnace and Furnace Village, Lakeville developed within proximity to an important waterpower source at the eastern outlet of Lake Wononscopomuc. Community leaders such as Ethan Allen, Colonel Joshua Porter, Luther Holley, John Holley and Alexander Holley were intimately associated with the industrial activities at this site, and noteworthy figures in local, state, and national affairs during important eras of American history. Those eras included development of the

rural colonial iron industry before 1775, production of armaments during the American Revolution, and the water-powered factory-based Industrial Revolution of the early and mid-19th Century. The Lakeville Historic District owes its industrial significance due to the fine, surviving assemblage of mill buildings associated with the Holley Manufacturing Company.

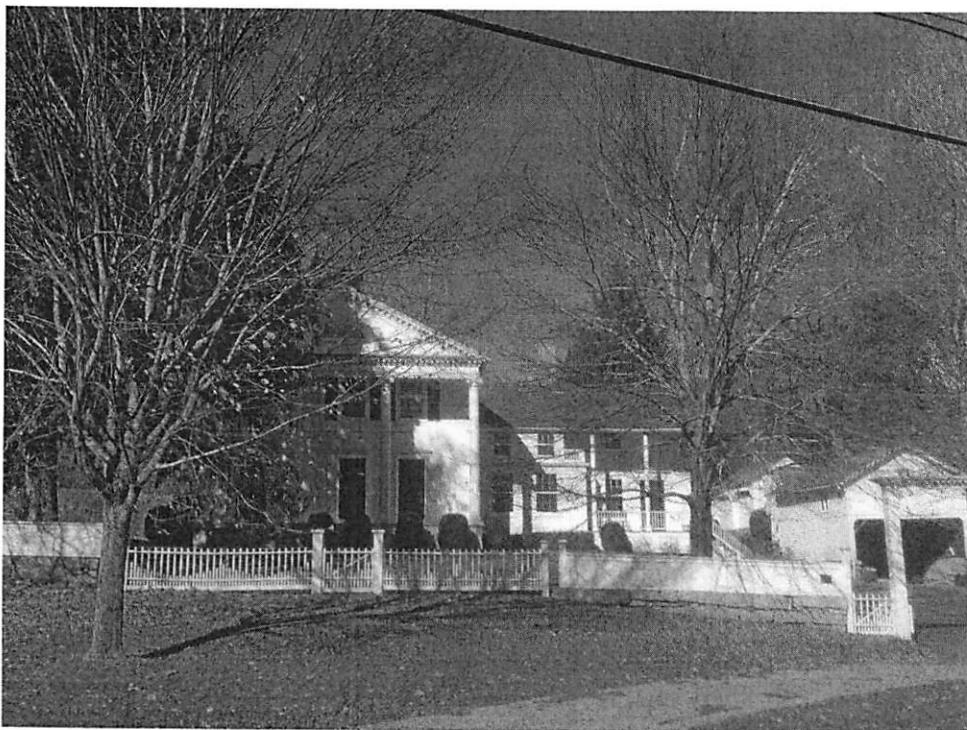
The forge and furnace operations employed many workers, as well as, provided livelihoods for area miners, teamsters and charcoal burners while the Holley Manufacturing Company was the largest employer in mid-19th Century Lakeville. The area's principal stores, recreational venues, financial institutions and newspaper were clustered there.

The Lakeville Historic District is one of architectural significance because most of its buildings are well-preserved examples that embody distinctive characteristics of particular architectural periods and styles. Most of the structures in the District retain their original form, materials, and detailing. Some have been documented in the Rachel D. Carley report previously submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commissioners. The District includes 22 structures and 3 sites, many that are contiguous. Together, they capture a sense of the historic character of our town. Trees and landscaping, and/or recessed entryways make for space and separation between most of the structures and the street. The buildings and streetscapes are complementary and on a human scale, unlike the proposed project.

### **Holley - Williams House**

The Holley-Williams House on Millerton Road (1768/1808), is located directly across the street from Holley Block, and is the northern anchor of the Lakeville Historic District and an outstanding example of an early 19th Century Federal-style residence. Its owners and residents were associated with both the blast furnace originally responsible for the development of Lakeville, and the Holley Manufacturing Co., the state's first pocket knife and cutlery factory. The earliest part of the house was built in 1768 and was the iron's manager's home, from which he could keep watch over the blast furnace from his home, or quickly go to the site if need be.

The Salisbury Historical Society operated the Holley-Williams House as a museum from 1971 until 2010 when the cost of trying to maintain it became



The iron master's house was the 1768 section of the Holley-Williams House. He could keep watch over activities at the furnace a short distance away. Large granite blocks form a retaining wall and support for part of the fence.

### **Holley Block**

*The Holley Block with its Bicentennial Park contributes significantly to the historic character of the village center and the architectural integrity of the buildings that were and are at the heart of the Lakeville Historic District.*

The Holley Block Building c. 1895 was razed in the late 1960s, but part of its foundation was preserved in the retaining wall that surrounds Bicentennial Park and the adjacent parking area. From the upper corner of Holley Block, one has a panoramic view of the Holley Manufacturing Company and its related buildings, parts of Factory Pond and its public park, the nearby Victorian homes, Lake Wononscopomuc and the Victorian railroad station. It allows the related historic structures to be seen and understood in their original relationship and context and it promotes a sense of harmony that is rare and extraordinarily pleasing. The parking area is used by the commercial businesses and their customers, without which those businesses would suffer financially.

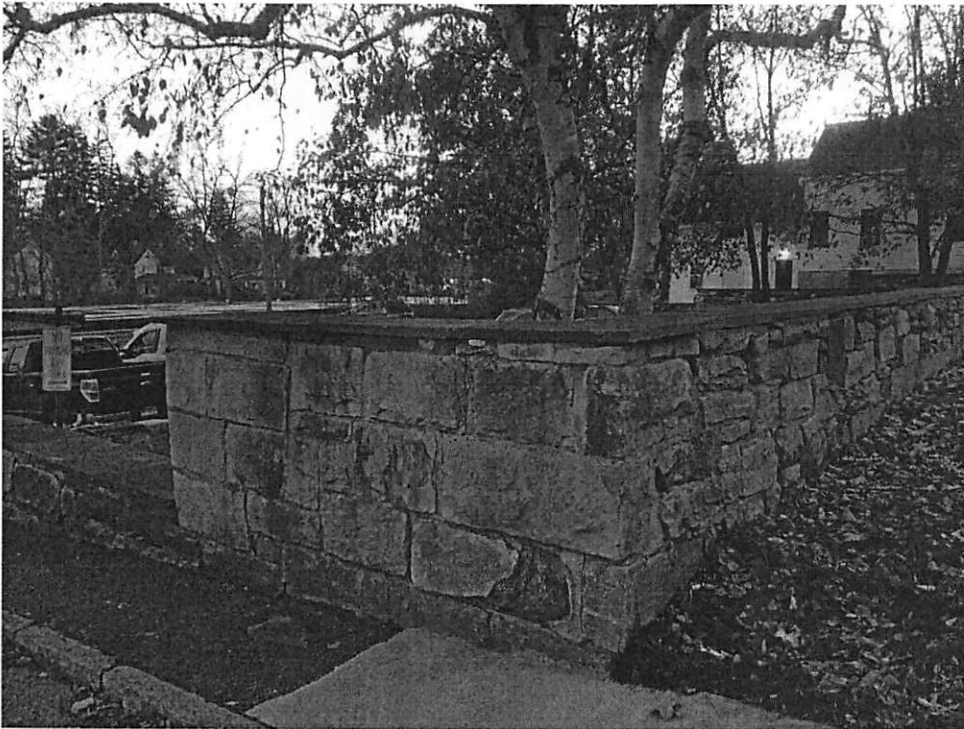
The Holley Block, it is not an "empty" space that needs to be filled with something else. It is an integral part of the Lakeville Historic District and useful and important to those who live and/or do business there, or who pass through. Holley Block



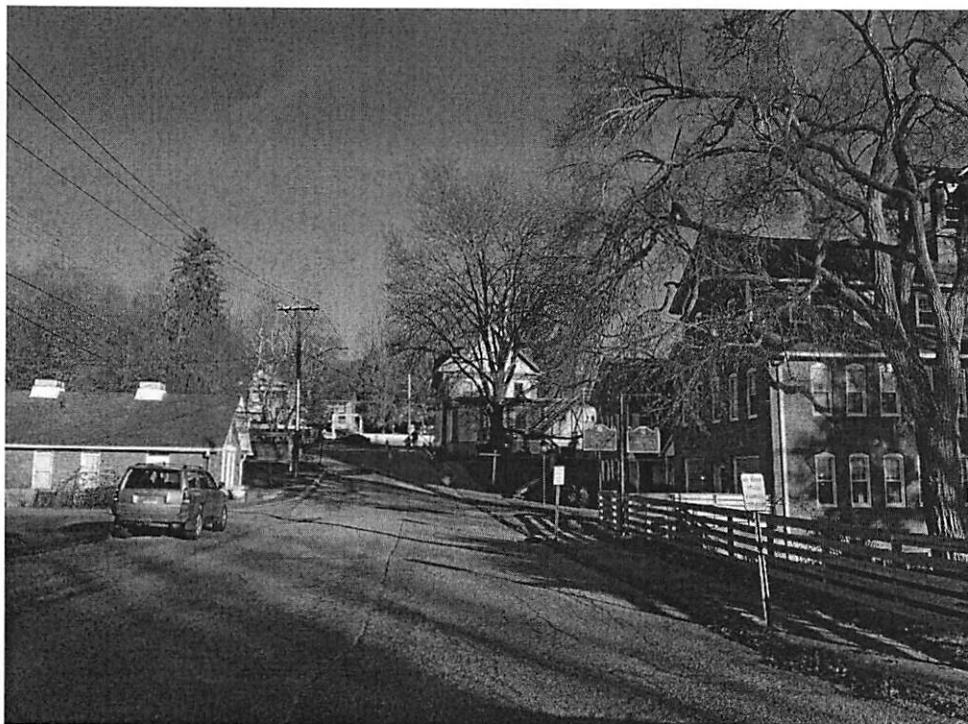
provides a tangible connection to Lakeville's heritage and the beauty of the landscape and historic structures that surround us - many buildings in the District are outstanding examples of their particular architectural style.

Just as a pause in a symphony can be, or lead to, the most dramatic part, it also intrigues and engages a listener who stops for the brief moment and takes notice of the space between notes.

The Holley Block is the ideal place to pause and take notice of the full effect of the Lakeville Historic District and the iron industry that not only shaped it, but was its keystone.



Large blocks from the Holley Block Building were preserved in the retaining wall of Bicentennial Park. They are similar to those in the Holley-Williams House retaining wall and can be found elsewhere in the district.



View from the foot of Holley Street towards the Holley-Williams House. Today there is an unimpeded view up and down the street from the top from Holley Block or this lower end. The H-W House would be blocked by the proposed housing project.

### **Additional Parking Issues**

-The P & Z Commissioners may not be aware that there is an unimproved roadway behind the commercial buildings next to Holley Block. For the commercial businesses, parking to load or offload supplies at the front entrance is often impossible. In such cases, the current parking lot becomes a thoroughfare to a roadway behind the buildings resulting in more traffic in and out of the parking area than may be realized.

- How would someone plow the parking area when it snows? There is little available parking space along Holley Street, and less so when it snows and certain spaces cannot be used.

### **EXISTING PARKING**



People cut through the existing lot to load and unload supplies to an unimproved roadway when parking is not possible along RT44. The roadway is at the end of the parking lot beyond the pillar.



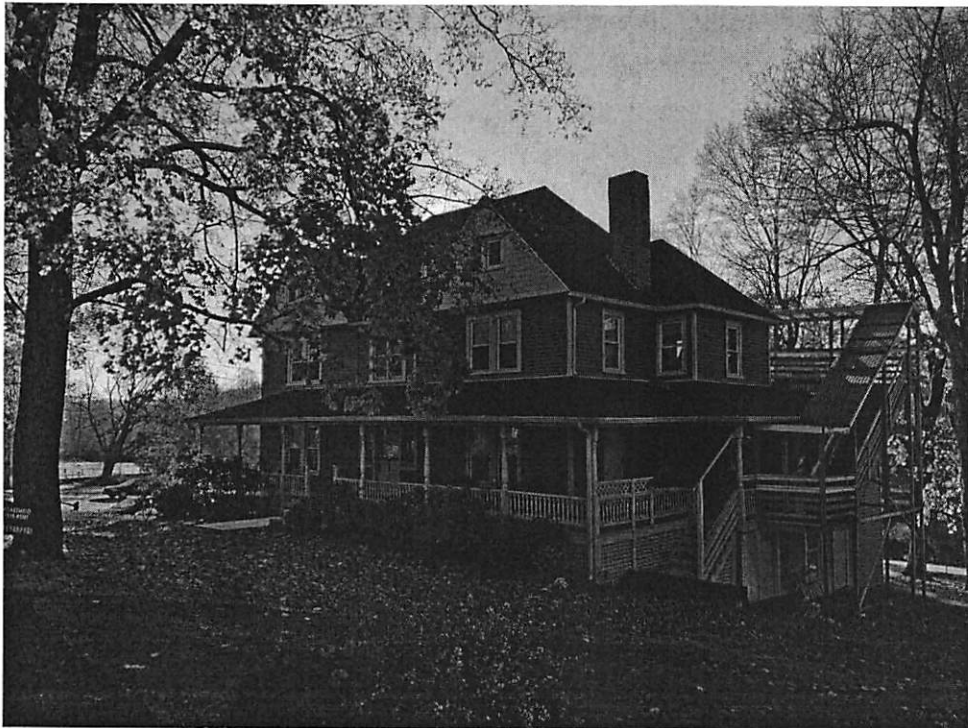
Narrow drive between the commercial building and Holley Block ends in a steep grade and sharp turn

that traffic would have to negotiate. Entering the drive from, or exiting to RT 44, are both dangerous due to poor sight lines, depending on how carefully cars are parked near the entrance on RT 44, and also the volume of traffic exceeding the speed limit.

### **Single Family Houses Converted to Apartments**

There is precedent for converting single family houses into multifamily dwellings. Today, several in or in proximity to the Lakeville Historic District have been divided into apartments.

#### **APARTMENT HOUSES**

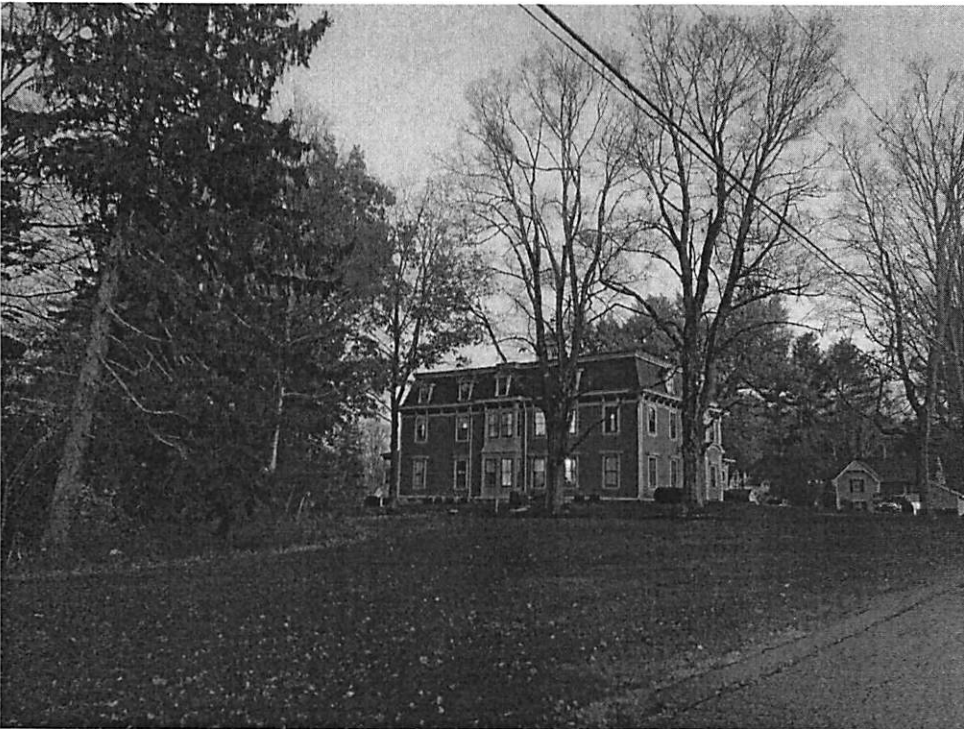


This apt is to the west of Deano's Pizza





This house located between RT 44 and Belgo Road was converted to apt., I believe it may have been built by the Rudd Family.



House south of the Railroad Station at the foot of Holley Street.