



**TOWN OF ANDOVER**  
**Andover Preservation Commission**  
36 Bartlet Street  
Andover, MA 01810

October 14, 2022

RE: 22 William Street, William Wood Way Subdivision Plan

Members of the Planning Board,

On behalf of the Andover Preservation Commission, I want to express concern about the proposed subdivision plan at 22 William Street, William Wood Way. This plan only recently came to our attention. Creating a subdivision for new construction within the Shawsheen Village National Historic Register District by carving out parcels from land behind existing historic homes is unacceptable for the following reasons:

- The Shawsheen Village National Historic Register District is nationally recognized by this designation. It is a uniquely planned, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, self-sustaining mill village. Every contemporary intrusion of this type will erode the District's historic integrity within Andover and consequently degrades its state and national importance.

The Historic Preservation website provides the following description of the District: Shawsheen Village was conceived as a fully planned and self-sustaining community for the executives and office workers of the American Woolen Company beginning construction in 1919 and continuing to 1924. The offices of the parent company were moved from Boston to Andover in 1923. Over two hundred residences were constructed in this period, along with the mill and supporting community facilities, including the Administration Building, Post Office, drug store and spa, an elementary school, dormitory for single female office workers, a company restaurant, creamery, a large Merchant's building, railroad station, (the mill workers were housed in nearby Lawrence and commuted by rail), two community garages (private off street parking within the Village was prohibited), a power plant, brush mill and a laundry. The original plan also called for the construction of a host of recreational facilities, many of which exist today; a football field, running track/baseball diamond, swimming pool, tennis courts, a bowling green, and west of the Village, a championship 18 hole golf course.

[https://preservation.mhl.org/national-register-properties-andover-massachusetts#Shawsheen\\_Village\\_District](https://preservation.mhl.org/national-register-properties-andover-massachusetts#Shawsheen_Village_District)

- The homes in Brick Shawsheen were designed by noted architects for the mill executives who would live in them. William Wood meticulously planned his self-sustaining mill village with emphasis on the quality of the architects, the architectural designs, subdivision plans, and materials for both residential and commercial buildings. To name this subdivision's street after him is insulting to his memory and the scope of his accomplishments. In addition, William Wood

never wanted his name on anything, including the Shawsheen School when it was proposed in 1924. The Wood family may object to this street name.

- These proposed new structures will have no design review and will very likely be incompatible with the surrounding historic architecture – a further offence to integrity of the historic district.

The protection of historically significant areas in Andover such as Shawsheen Village would be greatly enhanced by a local historic district designation as we currently have in Ballardvale.

During the late 1990's, the Preservation Commission successfully initiated the Shawsheen Village Historic District Study Committee to establish a local historic district. The proposed bylaw went to town meeting, and the required two thirds majority vote was defeated by only a few votes. This effort represented two years of hard work by the study committee. What we are now seeing proposed in Shawsheen Village could have been avoided had that bylaw passed.

The Planning Board should disapprove the application for William Wood Way It establishes a detrimental precedent for Shawsheen Village and for Andover's other historic districts.

Sincerely,



Karen Herman, Chair  
Andover Preservation Commission

cc.

Paul Materazzo, Director of Planning and Use

Jacki Byerly, Planner

Chris Clemente, Building Commissioner/ Inspector of Buildings  
Preservation Commission