

**Martin, Jason**

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**From:** Katherine Katrouzos <kkatrouzos@cox.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 25, 2022 6:02 PM  
**To:** Martin, Jason  
**Subject:** Historic Commission

Mr. Martin,

My wife and I live at 389 Benefit Street and have been following the development of the John and Williams lots over the course of the past several months. I wanted to add my voice to a note she sent you last month in favor of moving forward with approval on the Williams Street proposal.

It's been surprising to hear some of the negative commentary, which isn't reflective of our thoughts, our experience of the neighborhood or what we've heard from our neighbors.

The commission process has been very interesting, and we will continue to stay engaged,

Katherine Katrouzos

Sent from my iPhone

## Martin, Jason

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**From:** Joseph Furtado <jmfurtadoinc@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 23, 2022 2:12 PM  
**To:** Martin, Jason  
**Subject:** Hirsch Residence

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi Jason, hope all is well, I'm writing you on behalf of the proposed Hirsch residence on Williams Street, upon looking at the plan I think the house will make a significant aesthetic positive statement to the neighborhood, The design is very tastefully done and resembles many of the structures within the historic commission jurisdiction.

I also think the size is more than appropriate for the lot and also situated very nicely with the proximity to the street.

My personal feeling is that the Hirsch's and their architects have done an outstanding design and I hope that the commission will give the green light for this wonderfully designed home.

Sincerely,  
Joe Furtado

Sent from my iPhone

262 Brown Street | Providence, RI 02906

February 23rd, 2022

Jason Martin, Preservation Planner  
City of Providence  
Department of Planning & Development  
444 Westminster Street, Ste 3A  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Jason Martin,

My name is Courtney Goode and I am a homeowner in College Hill, adjunct professor at RISD, and landscape architect who owns a practice here in Providence. I am writing in support of the proposed new construction for a residence at 67 Williams Street (proposed by Jeff and Karen Hirsch). I have seen the plans for this new home and I think they are entirely reasonable. They fit well with the scale and historical context of the neighborhood. They have shown willingness to work with the historical commission to evolve the plans as needed. Furthermore, I believe we as a city should be supportive of projects that infill and make use of vacant lots across our neighborhoods rather than building outward as a city. College Hill and Fox Point need more housing and we should not make it so difficult for a new home to be constructed in our neighborhoods. Developing urban infill projects such as the residence at 67 Williams Street helps to increase new housing stock, it increases the tax base, and provides upkeep and care for lots that would otherwise stay vacant and unkempt.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope you allow this project to move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Goode', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Courtney Goode

## Martin, Jason

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**From:** Alan Usas <alanusas@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 24, 2022 10:48 AM  
**To:** Martin, Jason  
**Cc:** Karen Usas  
**Subject:** 67 Williams Street - Resident Comments

To: Providence Historic District Commission  
RE: 67 Williams Street

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed new construction project at 67 Williams Street in the College Hill Historic District. We have attended all of the Commissions meetings on the subject project including the Working Group session. While we admire the attention that has been paid by the Commissioners to design details presented by the applicant, we feel that the "forest has been missed for the trees" in the deliberations to date.

The *Standards and Guidelines* document calls out height, scale, and massing at the top of the list of considerations for its review of new construction. Too little time has been spent discussing these priority attributes in the meetings, and discussion of much finer design details has dominated the work of the Commission. We urge the Commissioners to refocus on the importance of height, scale, and mass relevant to this review.

I recently walked Williams from Thayer to Benefit streets, the neighborhood of the property. There are 16 residential buildings along that block including the one under construction at 59 Williams. They range from 1 story to 3.5 stories, and 44% (7/16) of them are 2.5 stories in height. Just 2 of the existing houses are 3 stories in height as is the proposed development. The applicant is asking to construct a building that is out of the norm for height in this neighborhood. As a secondary but not insignificant matter, the presence of 2 large open areas near the proposed site on the north side of Williams only serve to accentuate the excessive height of the proposed building.

Not only is the height out of character for this block on Williams, it's height equaling that of the house at 77 Williams and approaching that of the Corliss-Carrington House on the opposite side of the street invites the viewer to consider it in the same family as those substantial and historic structures. Any new construction should set itself apart from historic buildings in the area or as the *Standards and Guidelines* state, "New structures should harmonize with existing older structures, and at the same time be distinct from the old so that the evolution of the district can be interpreted correctly." Not only would a lower height at 67 Williams maintain that distinction, it would fittingly serve an important role in a desirable progression from 3.5 stories (77 Williams) to 1 story (59 Williams).

To properly evaluate how height, scale, and mass of a proposed new construction project may or may not be appropriate for a neighborhood, we believe one must physically visit the site, walk up and down the street, and imagine the presence of the new structure. We urge every member of the Commission to spend a few minutes on Williams Street before voting on any motion to approve this project.

Thank you for your diligent work to preserve our neighborhoods and for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Alan M. Usas  
Karen W. Usas  
15 John St.  
Providence, RI 02906

**Martin, Jason**

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**From:** JEFFREY LEMA <jl41166@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 26, 2022 2:38 PM  
**To:** Martin, Jason  
**Subject:** 67 Williams Street- Hirsch Residence

Dear Mr. Martin,

Having attended the 1/31/22 Providence Historic Commission meeting and seeing the plans of Mr. Jeffrey Hirsch and how he has heeded the advice of the Commission and amended his plans accordingly, it is my belief that his planned home will add color and texture to Benefit Street neighborhood. The current plans appear to be an updated take on an architectural style prevalent on the East Side of the city. As a 24 year resident of the East Side, I welcome the addition of a new building that still appears respectful of its historical surroundings yet adds subtle texture to the area.

Many of the 2-3 story buildings on Benefit and John Streets are in the same height range as the proposed subject.

I am confident that Mr Hirsch will continue to seek the advice and counsel of the Commission throughout the construction of his new home and look forward to his residency in Providence.

Most sincerely,  
Jeffrey Lema  
320 Wayland Ave #8  
Providence, RI 02906

Providence Historic District Commission  
Date: 27 February 2022  
Regarding: 67 Williams and 6 John Street  
From: Susan Costello, 13 John Street

Beyond the loss of a unique urban refuge, the two most disheartening parts of this process has been the shutting down of public voices in this public forum and the single consistent driving force behind the development of these parcels, making money at the expense of all else.

There is the opportunity to build a modest, graceful house set within a garden on these sites. There is the opportunity to add to this incredibly beautiful area of the Historic District, by not maximizing footprint, hardscape and heights and instead leaving much needed open space and gardens. There is the opportunity to take advantage of the sense of footprint to open space in this particular area of the Historic District and to build sustainably, acknowledge stewardship of the land as the current owners of historic homes and gardens do.

Instead the proposals push all kinds of boundaries and definitions.

### **6 John Street:**

What is a two family house?

This two family house is designed as though it was two side by side townhouses. This would require 10,000. square feet - not the square footage of the site. And does not resemble an historic two family. It is a confusing reference on John Street as there are side by side Town Houses on the street.

### **67 Williams and 6 John Street:**

The use of attached or integral garages. This seems to allow zoning privileges not associated with a detached garage. And references suburban typology, not historic urban.

In the case of **6 John Street**, the siting of the building revolves around an underground garage. Conceptual Approval should be withheld until the

garage is resolved, as the the massing and height may change and are dependent upon the resolution of entry and exit from the garage,

**6 John Street:**

The house presents a long, high wall to anyone entering from Benefit Street. It appears too high and too long. I am concerned about the eye level view of a pedestrian on John Street. What will they see? The foundation wall?

**67 Williams Street:**

This building is too high as well. The balcony/widows walk is peculiar to historic homes originally owned by wealthy merchants, generally connected to the sea in Providence. It is inappropriate and detracts from the massing of the building.  
The porte-cochere, projecting forward towards the driveway also detracts from the Williams Street Elevation and massing.

Thank your for your time, efforts and consideration.

Susan

## Martin, Jason

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**From:** Lily Bogosian <lilybogosian@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 27, 2022 5:32 PM  
**To:** Martin, Jason  
**Subject:** 67 Williams Street and 6 John Street

February 27, 2022

Dear HDC Members,

### **67 Williams Street:**

It is hoped that applicant Hirsch fully complies with the excellent recommendations made by the HDC during the sub-committee meeting, some of which appear on the new application, and many that do not. It is also hoped that sensitivity to the neighborhood's expressed concerns will be incorporated by the HDC.

The elimination of inappropriate structural components and materials proposed so far by Mr Hirsch, such as asphalt roofing, the head house on the roof and its balustrade, the porte cochere and its incoherent roof lines, and other elements like the PVC already rejected, that are neither historical nor attractive would go far in reducing neighborhood dissatisfaction prior to conceptual approval.

As noted by the commission, the developer Furtado's property wall in front of the cottage has long been planned to be either reduced or eliminated. This wall connects with the developer Hirsch's wall. It is no coincidence that the Ledbetter wall and garden, described by its installers as a Furtado project, appears continually in the application by Hirsch in spite of the request to amend the wall. Like many of the requests recommended by the HDC, this one has not been addressed and the charge that the historic wall is "elitist" is lodged by a person who has no understand or respect for the history of the neighborhood.

Frankly, the commission may wonder why the neighbors wish to speak up about the disregard for and attempted destruction of these seemingly insignificant details; but all of us are taxpayers who bought into this neighborhood because of the careful design and workmanship that went into the homes and gardens, including the fences and walls that we cherish.

Hirsch continually claims under oath that his will be the second-smallest house on the block (disregarding the yellow 1-story house that sits just one house away to the east of the cottage.) The yellow house is omitted from Hirsch's application, even on his map with arrows pointing to the selectively large square footage of houses in the area. Additionally, comparing his square footage to 2-family and multi-family houses is not a fair comparison to R-1 residences. Despite the many improvements to date, the applicant is not yet enhancing or integrating his contiguous neighbors to the east, nor the neighborhood in general.

### **6 John Street**

The John Street application is considered favorable as an architectural presentation. However, it is a massive house for a small lot size, covering every inch of buildable space, and doing so with a siting that is forceably close to the street (presumably to make the easement accessible for underground garages.) Given the easement that is zoned for pedestrian and traffic to enter the yard, one would hope to see the house moved to the north. Doing so would also enable a grand entrance without cutting the circa 1800 wall that winds its way around from Benefit Street. It is a beautiful wall, and while the architect hopes to have an entrance from the street, the house should enjoy the benefit of retaining the fabric of history in its front yard.

One additional concern; the grade of the lot is challenging. Architect Couture has slightly elevated an already steep grade in the south, and grading it to lower the proposed structure will rectify the concerns that many neighbors have about the imposing structure. By addressing these two issues, grade and placement, these changes would lessen the impact of the new property as it relates to other historic homes in its surrounds.

Conceptual drawings that include the Moses Lippitt /TF Green house at 14 John Street would be desirable in order to



demonstrate the massing of the home when approaching from the east, which will effectively block the Hoppin House views. From the west, the view of the Lippett house will also be diminished; the conceptual drawings do not indicate the degree to which these properties are diminished.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Lily Bogosian  
14 John Street