

## Letter: Carleton Villa project is not deserving of approval nor a state grant

Jan 3, 2025



The state Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation issued a letter stating the Carleton Villa project may impact the historic nature of the island. Watertown Daily Times

It is my understanding that the Town of Cape Vincent has applied to Empire State Development for a \$1,000,000 grant to offset a portion of the cost of stabilization of Carleton Island Villa. Stabilization of the Villa is a component of a larger project that includes a camp ground, marina and rebuild of the Villa to convert it to a hotel. The project has been under review by the Town of Cape Vincent Planning Board and the Town of Cape Vincent Zoning Board of Appeals since March 2024. It appears that reviews, court stop-work injunction and actions of the boards will not be complete for many months. Due to the many levels of approval and costs involved (\$2.3 million for stabilization, \$25 million for rebuild, court action, change to the Zoning Law [variance], Historic Preservation review, Planning Board environmental impact action, Zoning Board of Appeals approval for a Special Use, Department of Environmental Conservation review and others) THE PROJECT HAS NOT BEEN PERMITTED and is at high risk of denial. The site plan review application for the entire project does not include a binding commitment to the Town of Cape Vincent to complete the stabilization or restoration of the Villa. The facts are: costs for restoration and stabilization will be over \$26,000,000 (as confirmed in professional studies); income from the camp ground will not offset a reasonable amount of the costs. The application is incomplete and lacks adequate information. It appears to be using restoration of the Villa as a lure to get approvals of a camp ground and marina with no obligation to the Town to complete the entire project. In my opinion investing taxpayer monies in this high-risk project is not in the best interest of the taxpayers. I am certain there are other projects more deserving of the money.

Cyril Cullen

Cape Vincent