

# The Courier-News

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## OUR OPINION

### Spare land around Van Horne house

County historians want changes in plans to realign Main Street in Bridgewater to provide access to the new Somerset Patriots baseball stadium.

As planned, and poised for freeholder approval Tuesday, the realignment might take a large chunk out of a historic site that should be enhanced and embellished instead.

The complaining historians, documenting their case with the diary of a Hessian soldier of fortune, have a compelling reason for saving the Van Horne house and surrounding land. It was the site of the April 12, 1777 Battle of Bound Brook.

The battle did not turn out well for the Colonials. Generals "Mad Anthony" Wayne and Benjamin Lincoln fled the Van Horne house "without their breeches" and scores of Americans were wounded, according to the diary of Capt. Johann von Ewald. But that is not the point.

Current plans to accommodate the baseball stadium and a shopping center on land owned by American Home Products might reduce to a sliver the former battlefield around the Van Horne house.

Desecration of a Revolutionary War battlefield is nothing that should be taken lightly by the corporate, county or township officials involved. Nor, presumably, is that anything for which the owners of a team called The Somerset Patriots — because of the county's historical heritage — would want to be blamed.

We see no reason speedy discussions could not spare more of the battleground — for an upgraded historic attraction.

The Van Horne house and surrounding grounds could become a museum of Revolutionary War documents and artifacts. And that would greatly enhance the family orientation of the planned shopping-stadium complex.

This is one of those occasions when a stumbling block should be viewed as an opportunity to be seized. Let's rework those plans for Main Street.

## U.S. can't go it alone