

Dianne Boisvert

From: newburyprt@aol.com
Sent: December 13, 2021 2:34 PM
To: Dianne Boisvert
Subject: [Ext]22-24 Olive Street

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To the Zoning Board of Appeals,

I am writing to you in opposition to the development proposed for 22-24 Olive Street and ask that you use the authority conferred upon you to deny this application.

We understand that one of the parameters involved in your consideration is the impact on the neighborhood. Please understand our plight as neighbors and abutters of this project when we say this already dense neighborhood can not support this increased density. The light, air and open area this property affords those of us surrounding it is immeasurable.

No one is suggesting that this house shouldn't be renovated or restored. It has potential for two lovely homes within it's existing footprint. The addition that was added to the kitchen years ago could be renovated in it's current size to update the living space without adding a two-story mass to the backyard. With two elegant entrances and over 3,500 sq feet of living space currently, a thoughtful renovation would allow for some modern updates while allowing for the air and space around the structure to be used as outdoor living space for the future residents. The proposed project delineates no outdoor living area which seems short sighted. Will the new owners put up a big fence in the front to use what is now a side yard as their outdoor living space, further darkening and filing this corner?

The increased traffic of additional cars (increasing bedrooms from 4-6 total for the project immediately increases likelihood of more cars, with three cars per household not at all unusual). With no on-street parking on Russia, the parking on Olive Street is at a premium. Guests or tradespeople regularly have to park on surrounding streets because of the limited space. It not just guests that can't find parking, because even with driveways, residents will often park on the street because it's easier. And when you add in some snowbanks to Russia street, getting in and out of those driveways won't be easy...to say nothing of the safety of those of us walking that road daily.

An argument is being made that in order to maintain the 'historical significance' of the interior of the existing house they need a whole new structure. The work done on this house over the years was never done with 'historical' in mind and besides the fireplace mantels, the staircase and only some of the floorboards, there is little left to "preserve", and any developer who got rid of those things would be grossly out of touch with the area. This sounds like another threat of revenge to be taken if not approved. We have also been told at every meeting what 'by right' this developer is allowed to do. Are we now just hostages to the developers 'rights' and threats?

There are so many ways this property could be lovingly renovated to blend in with the size and scope of the surrounding neighborhood, and this proposal is not one of them. When I asked the developer why he wouldn't just renovate in the existing space he told me it was 'too expensive', which we all know is cutting into his profit.

I believe we as a neighborhood, and the city as a whole, are paying the price to allow for these developers to come in from out of town to make as much money as they can. The residents you hear from in opposition are all long term homeowners and residents. We are very concerned about the livability of our city if we keep allowing this kind of thing to happen all over town. Is it possible to stem the tide that is like "open season" on backyards in Newburyport? If the 'law' allows this kind of thing, can't we as a community enact a local restriction to preserve what little air and space still around us here in town?

We appreciate your time and attention to this proposal as it impact so many residents with literally life-changing effects.

Please reject this project that seeks to add unnecessary mass and density to our very modest neighborhood.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Badger
21 Olive Street

30+ year resident of Olive Street
5+ yr resident in south end of town