

January 7, 2022

Zoning Board of Appeals  
City of Newburyport  
64 Pleasant Street  
Newburyport, MA 019150

Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals:

I am the direct abutter to 22-24 Olive Street. I have attended all the NHC and ZBA meetings and read all the documents related to this project, including the most recent letter dated December 30, 2021 submitted by Mr. Sarkis. I would like to address a few statements made in that letter and add some observations of my own:

1. **We are not opposed to change.** The objections we have to this proposal have nothing to do with “freezing the neighborhood in time.” To the contrary, within the last 5 years, the neighborhood supported 3 developments on this very block. As Mr. Sarkis himself said, “the decision of any Board should be governed by the thoughtful review of reasonable, compliant proposals.” We completely agree. Unfortunately, Mr. Sarkis, who has now come before the ZBA on 3 occasions through his attorney, has yet to present a reasonable, compliant proposal. To give an example of those projects that were supported by neighbors:
  - (i) 16 Olive Street added 312 sq ft.
  - (ii) 21 Olive Street added 450 sq ft
  - (iii) 19 Olive Street added 180 sq ft
  
2. **Size matters.** There is a big difference between the proposal submitted by Mr. Sarkis and those that were supported by neighbors. Mr. Sarkis intends to turn the current structure into the equivalent of a “McMansion” (nearly 5,000 square feet) -- which would completely change the integrity of the building and impact the character of the neighborhood. To reiterate some

of the concerns expressed by the ZBA about the size of this project in prior meetings:

- *“adding 1,800+ square feet is not in keeping with size, scale, mass”*
- *“Looks like it grew a second house and is very prominent”*
- *“We do have to listen to neighbors, and size, scale and mass make it detrimental”*

3. **This is more than just noise.** We acknowledge that the ZBA constantly deals with a continuous tension between the property rights of the applicant and the interests of neighboring property owners and its city as a whole, as described on the ZBA home page. It is a difficult job. But under that description, it is important to consider the amount of noise of those opposed to a project – not to change, as Mr. Sarkis wrongly states, but to a project. In this case, 100 people signed a petition expressing their concern about the size and scale of this project and that is significant.

This project is hardly what one would consider “a modest proposal” and risks the future of this very special property and the neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Carol Zamprogna  
20 Olive Street