

May 25, 2024  
RE: Case No. 24-08, 25 Hawthorne Street

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
2024 MAY 29 AM 8:54

Dear Ara Yogurtian and the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

I am writing to strongly oppose the application for a variance by Yuzhu Jiang for the parcel of land located at 25 Hawthorne Street, Case No. 24-08. The application is asking for One Special Permit and Design and Site Plan Approval under sections 1.5.4A and 6D-2 of the By-Law to construct a two-family dwelling at the site. I am very concerned that the proposed plan will lead to a direct negative impact on neighboring properties on Hawthorne Street and respectfully ask that you vote against these permit and approval requests.

To begin, having a structure so large and dominant will potentially affect our property value. One of the appeals of Belmont is the "Town of Homes" feel rather than the more urban feel of neighboring towns. Both the curb appeal and backyard appeal of the homes near 25 Hawthorne Street will be impacted if such a large structure is allowed on such a small lot. The proposed renovations do not align with the architectural style and character of our neighborhood, leading to a loss of the unique charm and identity that attracted residents here in the first place. Additionally, replacing a single-family home with a 2-family residence will increase the population density on our quiet little street, increasing traffic and noise pollution.

It is clear that the current owner of the house intends to flip it. While nothing is wrong with that, and we are in favor of having the property renovated, they aim to reap as much value as possible in reselling the property. House flipping often results in rapid changes to property values, which can destabilize the local housing market and harm long-term residents who may struggle with increased property taxes. The neighborhood and abutting neighbors would be left with the ongoing impact of the changes while they reap the benefits and move on.

Finally, I understand applicants are encouraged to discuss proposed projects with neighbors, abutters, and those directly impacted by the project before applying. This enables issues and concerns to be discussed and possibly resolved prior to the public hearing. Unfortunately, as a neighbor of 25 Hawthorne Street, I was not notified, in writing or verbally, of the project before notice of the public hearing.

This would have been a great opportunity for the owners to connect, discuss, and even possibly resolve issues collaboratively before the public hearing.

I appreciate the time the Zoning Board is taking to consider our objections. I hope to keep Belmont as a wonderful town for all residents and to maintain the atmosphere that was present when we bought our homes here.

Respectfully,  
Nicole Cohen  
33 Hawthorne Street