

Town of Belmont/Planning Board

April 15, 2022

Re: 261 Orchard St-case # 22-06

Dear Planning Board Members,

My wife and I live at 255 Orchard, abutting just east of the proposed construction at 261 Orchard.

We have three concerns about the proposed project.

- 1) The increase in size. This north side of Orchard Street has houses in the 1400-1900 square foot range. The proposed building will be significantly larger than this.
- 2) Loss of sunlight. The house being significantly taller and further back in the yard will mean the new expanded structure will block the afternoon light to our house and backyard. The attic area will quadruple in size from 100 square feet to 425 square feet. This means a much larger impact on sunlight to abutting properties.
- 3) Health of a shared tree. While the proposal says it will aim to keep all the trees, it is well known that trees cannot survive root damage (see footnotes). There is a very healthy 100 year-old Norwegian fir tree on our property line that I would expect to be damaged if not killed from construction damage and loss of roots. Tearing down the existing structure and increasing the footprint to the proposed size would mean heavy machinery would need to be used deep into the yard, where the tree is located. The problem with construction is that the tree often takes years to die—long after the construction company moves on.

Thanks for your time and dedication to town governance,

Jeff and Miki Matrician
255 Orchard Street

“If enough of the root system is destroyed or detached, the tree will die. As a general rule, 20% of the root system can be destroyed before the tree will show signs of injury. If 40% of the root system is lost, the tree will probably die.”

https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/maintenance/construction_damage.html

<https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/38122/20190302/the-root-of-the-problem-how-heavy-equipment-can-kill-your-trees>