

To: City of Portsmouth Planning Board  
Date: Sept. 15, 2022  
From: Leslie B. Brenner Revocable Trust  
Leslie B. Brenner  
34 Hawthorne Street  
Portsmouth, NH 3801

I am Leslie Brenner, owner of 34 Hawthorne Street, where I have lived since 1982.

My house faces the property at 225 Wibird Street. Their side picket fence and grassy backyard surrounded by big old trees is my view directly across the street.

I was the young newcomer all those years ago and immediately embraced those who were mostly older neighbors at the time. Over the years, I've established longtime friendships with newcomers as well. It has been a wonderful community of friendship and camaraderie.

Properties turn over, and with new owners our little slice of Portsmouth has remained comfortably intact.

About a year ago, upon meeting the wife of the applicant as they had just purchased 225 Wibird Street, it was mentioned they had plans to build a small structure for his elderly mother. Then, this past June, Mr. O'Leary informed each of the neighbors he had plans for what he called a "small" ADU, a space for his mother. Upon receipt, I saw that the size and scale of that completely detached structure was considerably larger in footprint than described, and much taller. It was a 2-bedroom house. The zoning board agreed.

Since then, the plans have been altered to make the same structure an attached dwelling. When looking at ADU definitions, some concepts I've found describe:

“a second dwelling right on the same grounds (or attached to) your regular single-family house, such as:

An apartment over the garage

A tiny house (on a foundation) in the backyard

A basement apartment “

.... this current proposal, while now looking to be attached, is not exactly a tiny dwelling, or an apartment over the existing garage, but instead a full 2-bedroom home. It seems to be out of line with traditional ADUs. The unnecessary connector section adds to the excessiveness of this proposal.

If you allow this structure, as is, you are saying that building a full 2-bedroom house on a too-small parcel is just fine in our neighborhoods.

Knowing that Mr. O’Leary’s mother is quite elderly, it seems the future use of this 2-bedroom house is to become a rental property, and that concerns me. Might it end up as a short-term rental in our quiet neighborhood? That would be highly disruptive and completely out of character.

Will the next owners of 225 Wibird Street likely see it as an income-producing rental unit? **There’s no way this new 2-bedroom house would be considered affordable, which is what I thought the city desired.**

I read in abutter Stephen Bergeron’s strong opposition letter, submitted to the planning board, that he included the negative impact of light pollution with this proposed density. I agree, and would also add in noise pollution, on our quiet street.

Also, access to Hawthorne Street will cause additional stress on parking on our little street filled with bump-outs.

I do lament the loss of green space, happening all over. The green spaces are part of our neighborhood's charm. The resulting property will end up with barely any yard to speak of at all. How is that desirable for them?

I want to stress I am not opposed to *any* additional add-on structure, just this one, which is much too large in scope. In fact, when my next door neighbors tore down a small house and built a standard-size home within all the permissible setbacks, I had no problem with that at all. They are an awesome family and we've become good friends.

I realize that even if this 225 Wibird Street proposal falls within existing requirements the whole ADU experiment within the city may need to be reworked or at least more clearly defined.

**With this 2-bedroom house being larger in scope than what a small, one-bedroom attached ADU ought to consist of,** I strongly urge you to deny this applicant's request as stated in the abutter's notice.

Your denial will reflect that you are indeed careful stewards of our environment and our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration.

The images show land that is part of both 225 (right) and 205 Wibird St (left) after some recent rain. I am very concerned about our basement, which already has problems with water, if a large roof is added uphill of us and the driveway at 225 Wibird is enlarged. Our driveway, which is single-width, goes right up to our foundation.

Thank you,

Mike McNeilly

205 Wibird Street





## Izak Gilbo

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**From:** silversons <silversons@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 14, 2022 7:55 PM  
**To:** Planning Info  
**Subject:** Comments for 9-15-2022 Planning Board Regarding - Conditional Use Permit request for 225 Wibird Street

Please incorporate the following into the record for the planning board meeting related to 225 Wibird Street.

We request that the planning board deny this request. We are planning to present these comments at the meeting.

Thanks

Mark Anderson  
Robin Silva  
25 Hawthorne Street

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My name is Mark Anderson. My wife, Robin, and I live on 25 Hawthorne Street which directly abuts the property at 225 Wibird Street. We have lived at our home for 27 years.

This project, as a *detached* ADU, was previously denied by the Board of Adjustments due to its scale and non-compliance. In response to the concerns raised by my wife and I, our neighbors and the Board of Adjustment, this project has now been redesigned as an *attached* ADU.

Firstly we appreciate Mark O'Leary's efforts to modify the project to comply with the city ordinances and reduce the direct impact to our property.

However, we still have concerns about the scale of the proposed buildings. This is not simply an apartment over a garage. It's a house. It will overwhelm the lot and the neighborhood. We recognize that the proposed structures comply with zoning ordinances, but we do not believe that the scale of this project aligns with the intent of an ADU. Additionally, we are saddened by such a dramatic loss of open space.

Most concerning is that this project increases the density of the neighborhood by introducing a potential rental property. We are very concerned that as the city continues to debate short-term rentals, that this too might become an Airbnb destination. Despite city regulations, Airbnb locations exist in Portsmouth today. Mr. O'Leary has stated that it is not his intention to rent this property, however, what about the next owner? A rental property next door will negatively affect the value of our home.

The decision to approve this ADU will have long-term impact for our Hawthorne community. This will be forever. Introducing ADUs of this scale will erode our long-established neighborhoods. Overtime we fear that our neighborhoods will transition from communities to market-driven, revenue generators. ADUs will not solve our workforce housing problems nor reduce rents in the Portsmouth market.

Please note that we have shared our concerns with the property owner.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mark Anderson  
Robin Silva