

June 20, 2023

Variance petition ALT 065-23

This regards plans by the owners of 43 and 41 Sagamore Road to build an elevated deck on the back of their properties. We are concerned about noise, the deck's elevation and the precedent it would set for townhouses not only on Beech Tree Lane, Sagamore and Kensington roads, but elsewhere in the village.

A letter supporting the project indicates it would enhance the privacy of the properties surrounding the alley that the terrace would overlook. The Sagamore townhouses are on noticeably higher ground than Beech Tree Lane and the height of the deck's pergola would be well above the peak of the roofs of the Kensington Court townhouses. The terrace as envisioned would be an imposing structure and intrude on those who live in the nearby houses of Beech Tree Lane and Kensington Court.

As to noise. This past Saturday was graduation night at the high school. Neighbors in the Hillcrest apartments across the other side of Beech Tree Lane had a party that was not raucous in the least. But their voices from inside the building's top floor easily carried to our bedroom facing the park, a distance notably greater than the distance of our house to the back of Nos. 41 and 43 Sagamore. The voices of people speaking outdoors would easily carry further and louder, amplified by the project's height.

Allowing a first-floor terrace on a townhouse should require the consideration of nearby neighbors. It has come to our attention that the owners of Nos. 4, 5 and 6 Kensington Court, who are directly below the proposed terrace, did not receive notice of the June 27 public hearing. Such a project could set a precedent for more first-floor townhouse terraces that have little regard to both neighbors and the design of adjacent units, but all the town homes that were built by William Van Duzer Lawrence.

It is hard not to believe the terrace would stick out and impact the aesthetics of other townhouses. Two letters supporting the project have fee interests in the alley, also known as the Reserved Strip. Do they have plans to build similar structures, and do their fee interests grant them rights to greater space?

Grandeur can overwhelm. That is the sense we get from this project.

Cordially,

Roxana and Herbert Lash
10 Beech Tree Lane