

Abutters and Homeowners Against Developer Demolition of 202 Mason Terrace

September 9, 2022

TO: Mr. Elton Elperin, Chair
Brookline Preservation Commission
333 Washington St., 3rd floor
Brookline, MA 02445
via email to: Ms. Tina McCarthy, Preservation Planner, tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov

FROM: 1.) Jay Kesner, 196 Mason Terrace (*202 abutter*), homeowner for 41 years
2.) Naama Beit Arie Shlonsky and Oren Beit-Arie, 210 Mason Terrace (*202 abutter*), homeowners for 12 years
3.) Andrew Halpert and Jane Kanarek 207 Mason Terrace, Unit 1, homeowners for 11 years
4.) David Lowe and Dr. Susan Mann, 179 Mason Terrace, homeowners for 24 years
5.) James and Gwenyth Lindquist, 183 Mason Terrace, homeowners for 24 years
6.) Barbara Akiba and Kenneth Sherman, 193 Mason Terrace, homeowners for 48 years
7.) Eve and Robert Harris, 207 Mason Terrace, homeowners for 13 years
8.) Susan Stoll and Jim Lavelle, 211 Mason Terrace, homeowners for 40 years
9.) Michael Lambert and Barbara Schreiber, 217 Mason Terrace, homeowners for 37 years
10.) Heather Walsh and Mike DeLucia, 216 Mason Terrace, homeowners for 6 years

CC: Town Meeting members, Precinct 11
Shira Fischer, Co-President, Corey Hill Neighborhood Association
Heather Hamilton, Chair, Select Board
Kara Brewton, Director of Planning and Community Development
Thomas Barasso, Sustainability Director
Polly Selko, Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning
Steve Heikin, Chair, Planning Board
Tommy Vitolo, Brookline State Representative

RE: **Neighbors Urge NO to Proposed Demolition of 202 Mason Terrace**

At Issue--Application to Fully Demolish the Property at 202 Mason Terrace:

Real estate developer Yuan Gao, who bought the property at 202 Mason Terrace earlier this year, has applied to the Preservation Commission to fully demolish the existing house and garage.

Summary of Neighborhood Opposition to the Demolition:

We who live on the short stretch of Mason Terrace from street numbers 151 to 210 are already living with the noise and intrusion of year-round construction from several building projects near us, including full demolition of the property at 178 Mason Terrace (the former Les Petits Nursery School) and four other gut renovations close by, only one of which has been completed. If approved, the proposed demolition of 202 Mason Terrace will further harm the health and well-being of dozens of nearby homeowners now enduring construction activity six days a week, often 10 to 12 hours a day, including loud dumpster deliveries, heavy truck traffic, the loss of parking spaces and driveway access to contractor vehicles, and the shattering sounds of jackhammers, backhoes, concrete saws, and nail guns. If approved, the proposed demolition of 202 Mason Terrace will mean prolonging the stressful and intolerable loss of peace and quiet for many more months to come, diminishing the

Abutters and Homeowners Against Developer Demolition of 202 Mason Terrace

Page 2

rightful enjoyment of our homes and yards, as well as the character of our neighborhood. Demolition of 202 Mason Terrace will also mean the wasteful and unsustainable destruction of a solid, sound and livable house that will create many tons of toxic landfill debris, likely followed by construction of luxury multi-million dollar housing affordable only by a wealthy few. As responsible citizens of Brookline, we seek relief from this outside developer's destructive plan that ignores the rights of longtime homeowners living in the neighborhood, and we strongly urge the Preservation Commission to deny the application for demolition of 202 Mason Terrace.

Details of Neighborhood Opposition to the Demolition:

Residents in the immediate vicinity of 202 Mason Terrace have been living in a construction zone since 2020 and already have to contend with the following major building projects underway:

1. 178 Mason Terrace (former Les Petits Nursery School): Developer. Full demolition. Construction of new single-family house began spring 2022. Active, early phase.
2. 187 Mason Terrace: Owners. Gut renovation of single family house. Active, near completion.
3. 164 Mason Terrace: Owners. Gut renovation of side-by-side. Active for past year.
4. 151 Mason Terrace: Developer. Gut renovation of multi-family into condo units. Active, construction to begin September, 2022.

This list does not include an outside developer's gut renovation of 186-188 Mason Terrace into two luxury condo units completed in 2021, for which the work lasted over 16 months and was a daily source of stressful noise and neighborhood intrusion for all nearby homeowners. It also does not include a developer's full demolition of 302 Mason Terrace that occurred in 2018-19.

Harmful Effects from the Proposed Demolition of 202 Mason Terrace:

- ❖ **Noise Pollution** from nearby demolition and construction is known to significantly impact the health and well-being of both adults and children. Research shows that living in a noisy environment can raise stress, affect mental health, and contribute to developing high blood pressure, among other conditions. There are nine children and several seniors over age 75, as well as someone who is seriously ill, living within 250 feet of 202 Mason Terrace, all of whose health could be especially at risk from the effects of demolition.
- ❖ **Air and Water Pollution** from demolition causes hazardous particles that disperse during the mechanical pulverization of materials. Best practices dictate hosing the site during demolition and properly disposing of runoff, but hazardous materials may leach into the soil regardless of these measures. In addition, if these practices are not adequately followed, workers and the surrounding neighborhoods are exposed to crystalline silica dust and other hazardous materials. Demolition debris also releases greenhouse gases into the air which causes global warming, which leads to other problems like rising sea levels.
- ❖ **Ground and Landfill Pollution** from disposal of demolition debris clogs available landfills with tons of unnecessary waste, some of which could have been reused or recycled. It is estimated that demolition debris accounts for 20% of all waste in the U.S. Demolition debris dumped into

Abutters and Homeowners Against Developer Demolition of 202 Mason Terrace

Page 3

a landfill sits there forever, and affects the surrounding landscape by polluting with harmful chemicals from the construction and demolition process, such as lead paint, asbestos, and heavy metals. The chemicals can also leak into groundwater or soil, contaminating sources of drinking water for people and animals.

- ❖ ***Damage to our Neighborhood's Scale and Character*** from the demolition of 202 Mason Terrace may result due to construction of an oversized new building whose size and design sharply clash with established neighborhood standards and visual appeal, as well as from the potential loss of mature trees and plantings in and around the property.

Our Urgent Plea to the Preservation Commission from Abutters and Homeowners:

As longtime abutters and homeowners near 202 Mason Terrace, we are fed up with outside developers taking advantage and profit from our great neighborhood while suffering none of the consequences we must face every day due to their destructive business model. We are vehemently opposed to the unnecessary destruction of this perfectly good house, and we urge the Preservation Commission to reject the application for demolition of 202 Mason Terrace. Please help us to preserve and defend our neighborhood and our community from rapacious development. Thank you.

202 Mason Terrace

