

**From:** [Richard Baum](#)  
**To:** [Meyer, Julie](#); [Schelling, Lynda](#); [McCauley, Don](#)  
**Subject:** 108/112 Abbott  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 12, 2022 5:11:42 PM

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[ **EXTERNAL EMAIL** : This message originated outside of the TOWN OF WELLESLEY mail system. **DO NOT CLICK** on **links** or open **attachments** unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns. I have had a more time to review the plans.

A little history over the past year is in order. I moved to this street with my family in 1991. I have seen a lot of changes in the neighborhood, some for the better and some for the worse. I have to say that it saddens me that the LHR committee truly marks the beginning of the conversation with the Russell's and not the culmination of discussions with neighbors.

Gordon (Buck) and Rebecca Russell (the son and his wife) bought Jack Morgan's home at 112 Abbott Rd., former Wellesley Selectman. Gordon Russell (the father) bought [Dr. Joseph Murray's](#) home who was awarded the Nobel Prize for organ transplantation. The Murray's lived in the house at 108 Abbott Rd and raised their family there. They donated a portion of their property to Centennial Park. The resulting lot at 108 Abbott Rd is small and shallow in comparison to other lots on Abbott Rd as the rear of the property is now part of the park.

Of course, Jack Morgan is a fixture in the town of Wellesley and his home was gracious and inviting. Jack and Anne and hosted many parties where neighbors and friends came together. Jack and Linda continued the tradition of bringing people together with their hospitality and inviting home. The landscaping that is on the property adds an immense and dense canopy over Abbot Road and Windsor Road, as it is a corner lot. The Morgan's also have a towering evergreen in the front yard that they used to put lights on for the holiday season. It was one of a very few houses on Abbott that used colored tree lights. Something the kids loved. The Russell's are taking this tree down.

Gordon Russell bought 108 Abbott for the express purpose of enlarging his son's lot and tearing down 108 Abbott Rd. Once this is complete, the lot at 108 Abbott will be completely devastated. The home and history of our town's Nobel Prize winner and great community member will be eviscerated. I believe that the plans for demolishing the house have already been approved, although no neighbor input was considered. To express how different it is now, let me say for years and years, neighbors and neighborhood kids have used 108 Abbott Rd as a cut through to Centennial Park. This was encouraged by Joe and Bobby Murray as they felt the park belonged to everyone. Currently, Gordon Russell has installed cameras to catch people walking too close to his property recording people walking in Centennial Park and has had at least one incident with neighborhood kids who are now accused of "trespassing" when they try to go for a walk in the Park. This is in direct opposition to what the Abbott Road community is all about and most certainly against what the Murray's had hoped for when they gave the land to the Park. We need to act as guardians to this park and to these trees for future generations to enjoy. Please let the kids go walk in the park.

There is a stream that runs behind both 108 and 112 Abbott Rd. All of the homes on the even numbered side of Abbott Rd have water to deal with as the properties cut into an underground spring. After a rain or when the snow melts, you can see the water streaming down the driveways of many homes. The Russell's claim that the stream is "intermittent". This past winter Gordon Russell removed two mature trees from the front lawn of 108 Abbott. The removal of the two trees has compounded the water issues on both properties. In the wetland review committee, the Russell's stated that they have water flowing down their driveway and into their basement *all the time*. To me it seems obvious that the stream is in fact not an "intermittent" stream but a continuous stream and the underground spring and waterways can't support the removal of more trees.

The Russell families want to clear cut all the trees from both properties so that they can create this enormous 8000 sq ft compound, only two other houses on Abbott are over 5000 sq ft. I believe the total number of trees slated to be cut so far is around 17 or 18 trees including those at 108 Abbott. Surely this will be detrimental to all the neighbors with regards to water issues. Not surprisingly, they have conveniently determined that just about all the mature trees are a hazard; despite the fact that

with proper care the trees could grace the neighborhood for another 100 years. Wellesley has been named Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation because the town has made a commitment to community forestry. The plans to plant ornamental non-native shrubs and bushes will do nothing to re-create or support the existing habitat. The "trees" proposed are not of the species needed to replace the tree canopy.

The Russell families solution to the water issues is to simply remove the stream running behind the two properties. They want to divert, fill and put it into an underground pipe which will feed directly to the sewer system. As if removing all the trees from the property were not bad enough for the habitat (the deer frequent the Murray's yard and the triangle of town land across the street), they are taking out a stream as well.

In addition to the three-car garage which faces Abbott, they are proposing a pool, pool house and other structures in the backyard which will be visible from Windsor Rd. They are also proposing a circular driveway. This will require a curb cut very close to the intersection of Windsor/Livermore/Abbott. As any dog owner knows this intersection is already difficult because it is so wide and no clear path across from Windsor to Livermore. Abbott road is frequently used by the fire department to respond to Babson College fire alarms and has many pedestrian commuters as well. And of course, cars speed down Abbott as a cut through to Washington Street. The Wellesley Police often station a police car on the road as a deterrent to speeders. Neighborhood kids are afraid to go to Centennial Park anymore from 108 Abbott so perhaps a bit less foot traffic on that front. Once the trees are gone and the snow comes, the corner of Windsor and Abbott will now have a snow mountain without a doubt. This circular driveway is a disaster waiting to happen. It will impair visibility to all who use the sidewalk. There will be accidents. Then Abbott Road and Windsor will have to be littered with all kinds of signage and eventually a stop light.

It is interesting that the plans show that the additional sq footage is "minimal". When you look at the plans holistically- the culmination of taking 4500/4800 sq ft from 108 Abbott, removing all of the trees, putting in a circular driveway, adding the pool/pool house and putting on an enormous 3 car garage on the street view of Abbott Rd- the result is that they have inserted a McMansion compound. Because this property is a corner lot, the spectacle will be magnified as it is much more exposed than other homes on the street. This will substantively change the neighborhood on both Abbott Road and Windsor Road.

Having said all this, we are ignoring what will eventually happen to 108 Abbott. No one knows what the final plans are for this property. Are we going to be back in Wellesley town committee meetings next year to try to preserve what's left of the decimated tree canopy and charm of Abbott Rd? It also begs the question who will want to buy and build next door to this McMansion compound on a reduced lot which was already small in comparison to other Abbott Road properties? The resulting house will cower in comparison to the planned 112 Abbott McMansion compound. With the known and unknown plans, the Russell families are redesigning three street facing facades on Abbott and Windsor- a substantial portion of the neighborhood.

With the proposal as is, there are just too many things that are incompatible with the neighborhood and community.

I would invite the board to request the two Russell families talk to their neighbors, learn about the history of the neighborhood, and seek input so that a beautiful graceful inviting home can be refurbished for the family without destroying what their neighbors have come to love and cherish. The Russell families chose to buy on Abbott Road for its charm, welcoming atmosphere and tree canopy, so let's get there as neighbors and community.

I would ask the Board to require: the preservation of the mature trees that sustain the canopy over Abbott and Windsor for future generations; replacement of any removed mature canopy trees with like-kind native trees which re-establish the tree canopy; a significant reduction in the amount of square footage to be added to the street frontage on Abbott Rd; a much larger set back of any addition(s) visible from Abbott Road, and the elimination of the circular driveway.

Thank so much,

Richard Baum

84 Abbott Road

Wellesley, MA 02481

[Richard65@hotmail.com](mailto:Richard65@hotmail.com)

781-237-9128

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Barbara P Morgenthaler](#)  
**To:** [McCauley, Don](#)  
**Cc:** [Jim Roberti](#)  
**Subject:** Large House Review  
**Date:** Monday, July 18, 2022 1:09:50 PM

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[ **EXTERNAL EMAIL** : This message originated outside of the TOWN OF WELLESLEY mail system. **DO NOT CLICK** on **links** or open **attachments** unless you are sure the content is safe.]

To: Mr. Don McCauley, Planning Director

CC: Jim Roberti, Chair of Planning Board  
2022

Date: July 18,

Subject: 'Large House Review'

108/112 Abbott Road

Dear Mr. McCauley,

Over fifty years ago, my husband and I raised our family on Abbott Road and I still remain here. Although I live a few houses away from 108/112 Abbott Road, I am saddened to see the proposed scale of development and tree removal proposed for these two properties. I revere the sign at the entrance to Abbott Road on Route 16 which says "Belvedere-Abbott" meaning "beautiful to see." The beauty of Abbott Road has been faithfully and lovingly maintained for over 141 years with many changes to homes and surroundings but generally with respect for the neighborhood in the spirit of our forefathers.

Abbott Road is beautiful for many reasons, not the least being the predominance of the tree canopy of maples, oaks, glorious beeches (I can count three), and other very tall trees lining the street which are impossible to replace. I was pleased and surprised the other day when a worker in my yard looked up and remarked, "That tree must be 175 years old!!"

The Large House Review bylaw requires "preservation of landscape, scale of building, and construction sited in a manner consistent with the scale of other structures in the vicinity." The plans presented for 108/112 Abbott Road must be re-scaled and adjusted to comply with this bylaw. The removal of 14 large trees impacts substantially on not only the overhead canopy but the ground water absorption as well. I have seen lots of underground changes in my yard over the years with construction around me--not always for the best. The already horrendous wetlands problems in both lots will be worsened if these trees are removed. The already large house at 112 Abbott is proposed to be a much larger house and that scale of house does not fall within the intent presented by your governing laws.

Please help us to preserve the beautiful area that remains precious to us. Many current residents and those who came before us have been respectful over the 141 years of the existence of the "Belvedere-Abbott" area in Wellesley.

I appreciate your consideration.

Cordially,

Barbara Morgenthaler

71 Abbott Road

**From:** [Pamela Kinn](#)  
**To:** [McCauley, Don](#)  
**Cc:** [Mary Sandman](#)  
**Subject:** 112 Abbott Road Large House Review Application  
**Date:** Monday, July 18, 2022 3:30:40 PM

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Dear Mr. McCauley,

I would appreciate it if you would forward my letter to the members of the Planning Board of the Town of Wellesley.

I have lived at 96 Abbott Road for almost ten years. My house is several doors away from the two properties that are being reviewed.

Over the years I have noticed a great deal of runoff water on both properties following severe rain storms and also during the springtime when the snow is melting. The 108 property backs up to Centennial Park and the backyard often has a pool of water in the springtime. The property at 112 Abbott Road often has water streaming down its driveway when the Wellesley Town Forest's ice and snow are melting. I believe that the elimination of fourteen mature trees between these two properties will have a negative effect on the neighborhood's trees and habitat.

I am also concerned about the circular driveway and the increased paved surface area that is being proposed for the 112 Abbott property. These changes to 112 Abbott Road certainly will not be helping to improve the runoff problem and could seriously affect many of the properties that are in close proximity to 108 and 112 Abbott Road.

Abbott Road is a lovely street which I believe helps contribute to the town of Wellesley's charm. Over the years much thought and care has been given to this neighborhood in the hopes of preserving this iconic-tree lined street with its historic well-proportioned houses.

When my husband and I first moved to Abbott Road, we were invited by the neighborhood to get involved with the Wellesley Historical Society. In an effort to preserve the character of the street, many of the families on Abbot Road and on nearby streets, opted to have the historical society hang plaques stating what year each home was built in.

It would be a shame for the town of Wellesley to lose the historic beauty that this neighborhood has been able to preserve over the years.

Thank you so much for allowing me to voice my concerns in writing.

Sincerely,

Pamela Kinn

**From:** [David Neundorfer](#)  
**To:** [McCauley, Don](#)  
**Cc:** [Jennifer Keiser](#)  
**Subject:** Plans at 112 Abbott Road  
**Date:** Thursday, July 21, 2022 9:41:19 PM

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Dear Mr. McCauley and Members of the Planning Board,

I am writing regarding the plans at 112 Abbott Road.

I am a relatively recent addition to the community. My wife, Jennifer (Keiser) Neundorfer, grew up on Inverness Road.

Abbott's giant canopy was a major draw for us to the neighborhood. It reminds me of my hometown and of course brings nostalgia to Jen who grew up biking, walking and trick-or-treating under it.

While our neighbors have outlined the environmental and ecological arguments for mature tree preservation, we want to add our voice in hopes of protecting this canopy for our kids, their families, and future generations who are similarly drawn to our forested community.

We hope that the planning board and the Russells collaborate to protect the mature trees on Abbott Road. We also request that native species are prioritized for any new trees planted on the property.

Thank you,  
Dave and Jen Neundorfer

**From:** [Tom Keiser](#)  
**To:** [McCauley, Don](#)  
**Cc:** [Tim Fulham](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: 112 Abbott Road Large House Review Application  
**Date:** Thursday, July 21, 2022 3:12:19 PM

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----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Tom Keiser** <[tom.livewireboston@gmail.com](mailto:tom.livewireboston@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Wed, Jul 20, 2022 at 10:53 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: 112 Abbott Road Large House Review Application  
**To:** <[mccauley@wellesleyma.gov](mailto:mccauley@wellesleyma.gov)>  
**CC:** Tim Fulham <[twfulham@gmail.com](mailto:twfulham@gmail.com)>

Dear Mr. McCauley,

Please include the attached letter from Elizabeth Carroll on the town website discussing the 112 Abbott proposal.

I will be out of town during the next meeting so will not be able to attend. Please know that I stand for preserving as many of the native trees as possible: With priority on the oaks. I hope that Buck and Rebecca will reconsider the circular drive as it threatens the large white oak on the street.

Best, Tom Keiser

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Elizabeth Carroll** <[ebcarroll@me.com](mailto:ebcarroll@me.com)>  
**Date:** Mon, Jul 11, 2022 at 2:38 PM  
**Subject:** 112 Abbott Road Large House Review Application  
**To:** <[mccauley@wellesleyma.gov](mailto:mccauley@wellesleyma.gov)>  
**CC:** John Carroll <[john.carroll3@colliers.com](mailto:john.carroll3@colliers.com)>

Dear Mr. McCauley,

We hope you will forward our letter to the members of the Planning Board.

Thank you.

Elizabeth & John Carroll  
[52 Livermore Road](#)

To: Members of the Planning Board of the Town of Wellesley

Re: 112 Abbott Road Large House Review Application

We moved to [52 Livermore Road](#) ten years ago and substantially renovated our home, so we fully understand the desire to modify (and expand) an older home in this neighborhood. That said, we chose this neighborhood for its beautiful, well-proportioned, historic homes and iconic tree-lined streets. We found that with thoughtful design, we were able to expand our home while preserving the integrity of the streetscape and the feel of the neighborhood, and we hope the same can be done at [112 Abbott Road](#).

We have concerns about the expansion project as proposed and the impact that it will have on our neighborhood. As importantly, we are very concerned about the precedent that it would set for future projects. Specifically, we hope the Board will consider the following:

- **Tree Removal:** Removing up to 14 mature trees is extreme. The mature trees in this neighborhood are vital to its overall look and feel and simply cannot be replaced with new plantings. If every other homeowner on the street were to do the same with the trees on their property, the street scape would be unrecognizable. Allowing the removal of this many trees sets a particularly dangerous precedent.
- **Street Facade:** The two-story addition on the left side of the house will create a very large facade facing Abbott Road that is not consistent with the neighborhood aesthetic. We hope the homeowners will consider modifying the design to allow them to get them the space they want but in a way that is less impactful to the streetscape. Similarly, the circular driveway, as proposed, is also inconsistent with the established look of the neighborhood and the addition of so much new hard surface could impact runoff in an area that already facing flooding issues.

We ask that the Planning Board require the homeowners to preserve of as many mature trees as possible and consider alternative designs that remove the circular driveway and ensure that the two-story addition minimizes the visual impact of the Abbot Road facade.

Thank you,

Elizabeth and John Carroll  
52 Livermore Road