

To: Technical Advisory Committee, City of Portsmouth
From: Fran Berman, owner, 349 Hanover Street #3
Re: Plans for 361 Hanover Street
Meeting date: April 1, 2025

I am an owner and resident of unit 3 in 349 Hanover Street (Hanover Place Condominium Association or HPCA). I am an immediate abutter to 361 Hanover Street. I have been watching the evolution of the plans for 361 Hanover Street closely and have significant concerns about the impact of this project as proposed on traffic, safety, and emergency vehicle access.

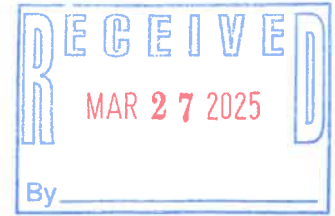
Hanover St. is a narrow one-way street in front of my building, and pedestrians often walk in the street here due to snow and ice on the sidewalks, shrubs that overhang the narrow sidewalks, and trash receptacles left for pickup on the sidewalks. My deeded parking space alongside 349 Hanover Street requires that I back out into Hanover Street with very limited sight lines due to cars parked right up to the edge of my driveway. Additional foot and vehicular traffic from the new residents at 361 Hanover will further reduce safety under the current plan, both for pedestrians and drivers. If this plan goes forward, I request that parking spaces be redesigned along Hanover Street so cars parked on Hanover St. do not block views from our driveways.

Hill Street, which does not even show up on the traffic studies, is a two-way street that runs behind 349 Hanover and ends at the edge of 361 Hanover St. It is a private way at this end of Hill Street, owned by the properties on either side of the street. A **right of way** included in our deeds ensures the residents of HPCA must have vehicle access from Hill Street through the property at 361 Hanover to Hanover Street. The plans presented here do not acknowledge or address this right of way, which appears on the deeds of all of the residents of HPCA. The right of way is especially important to the HPCA residents whose deeded parking spaces are along Hill Street behind 349 Hanover or those whose driveways are accessed from Hill Street. Furthermore, our owners' deeded parking spaces along Hill Street are not shown on any of the 361 Hanover maps, but they significantly reduce the turning radius and street width for any vehicles entering or exiting 361 Hanover from Hill Street. Those vehicles and their location do, however, show up on the site photo included on page 311 of your packet. Even though the main access point for 361 Hanover is shown as Hanover Street in the plans presented here, a secondary access and egress is shown to/from Hill Street. Given the narrowness of that roadway, emergency vehicles (fire trucks, ambulances) and snow plows may well be unable to drive through when our vehicles are parked in their deeded spaces. I believe that this is a major design flaw in this plan and requires a redesign.

I understand that the TAC's oversight is focused on matters of technical concern, but I want to close by stating that the scale and style of this project, and especially of Building D, does not fit with the character of our neighborhood along this part of Hanover Street, which is made up of two- and three-story residential buildings with flat or peaked roofs. The four-story Building D, with its mansard roof, will dwarf the buildings beside it, blocking our light and views. A three-story building on the northwest corner of the lot would be a much better fit with the neighborhood.

Thank you for your attention to these issues.
Fran Berman
349 Hanover St., #3

Meeting: Technical Advisory Committee
Date: April 1, 2025
Re: 361 Hanover St



Dear Members of the Technical Advisory Committee,

As usual "just the facts ma'ma, just the facts".

Traffic:

Comparing the 01/22/25 to the 04/01/25 (pg 76-309 packet) Traffic Report there are some interesting differences.

https://files.portsmouthnh.gov/files/planning/apps/HanoverSt_361/Hanover_St_361_BOA_012225.pdf

The key difference is in January the traffic report states there were 51 proposed units, creating 262 trips, 20 AM and 22PM; in April there are only 48 proposed units creating more trips: 384 trips, 38 AM and 41 PM. The existing trips remained the same: 510 trips, 54 AM and 42 PM. The "accurate counts" seem to confirm the high traffic volume on this "Neighborhood Slow Street" in Islington Creek. No matter how the statistics are run, adding this development per the April report, will create a 75% increase in daily trips, a 70% increase in AM trips and a 98% increase in PM trips.

The January report shows that the intersection of Bridge and Foundry Place will have no change in the Level of Service or issues if all the traffic enters/exits onto Foundry Place. In April it states the report does not include a Foundry Place entrance/exit but still includes the intersection. Both reports state there will be no change in Level of Service for the intersections that were measured. HOWEVER, there were no numbers calculated for the intersection of Pearl and Islington, likely a high use intersection.

Some of the presented facts about the neighborhood streets are debatable. It states that the one way section of Rock St is 28' wide with parking on one side and that Pearl St is also 28' wide, a two way street with parking on one side. This width is definitely questionable (pg 311). Aren't the street widths part of the calculations used to determine impact of traffic on them? It is also interesting that a decrease in the number of units would cause an INCREASE in the number of trips. Page 109 of the April traffic reports shows the previous plan sets not the current one being presented to this Committee. **This makes one question if what was entered into the program to determine these results was accurate, much less what data was used to "update" this report.**

Finally, the sight line study is interesting considering the building will sit directly on the 5' wide sidewalk of a two corner intersection. It seems the Intersection Sight Distance and the Stopping Sight Distance were not presented in spite of the high traffic volume shown from the various intersections by the driveway. The landscape plan (**see landscaping in list**) show trees being planted in the sight lines. There doesn't seem to be any sight line study for the cars coming from Sudbury onto Rock St to Hanover, at a formally highly visible corner, to one that will be blocked by 40' buildings and plants and have a driveway within feet of the turn.

Parking Spaces:

The development shows the removal of between 4 to 5 on street parking spaces comparing page 311 to page 314 of the packet. Ground level parking seems to be missing 9 guest spaces. How will the ONE guest/delivery space be regulated?

Open Space:

5%=1926.4 sf. Some areas are a mere 2' 8" in width going up to 6' 8" in width. There are bike racks shown where no structures are allowed. Is the open space requirement met by these less than open areas? Is a 2' 8" area directly next to a 36' building really an open space?

Open space

Land area vertically open to the sky, free of all **structures**, parking area/lots, **driveways** and other **uses** which preclude attractive **landscaping** in such area. **Open space** shall be predominantly pervious, may be landscaped with lawn, trees, shrubs or other planting, and may include walks and terraces. For the purposes of this definition, water areas are considered to constitute **open space**.

Landscape Plan: page 315

Shows kindred spirit hybrid oaks (QKS) next to driveway in a 5' wide area, which grow to be 30' tall. Groups of columnar juniper (JVE) blocking the sight lines on Rock St (12' high 5' wide).

Fire Truck, driveway and delivery access (321-322)

It seems to show access from the street to all the ground level parking from the parking space, not the actual lane. Building B1 has no access to parking spaces shown. Building C has an odd configuration of the parking yet only one way in is shown. Usually all Fire Truck Turning Plans are in color, very unusual. **Can a ladder be safely raised to 40' in 6' of space?** How will a delivery truck get in and out? What if the delivery space is occupied by an overnight guest?

Trash and Snow:

It states that trash will be stored for Building A on site. No trash storage is shown for Building A. (pg 323 A1.1a) and no pick up plans seem to be shown.

Where will all the snow go? There doesn't seem to be an ounce of free space on this lot. It is filled with driveway accesses which can not have snow in front of them.

Drainage:

The lack of open/green space will create a massive amounts of stormwater. Do all the roofs have gutters connected to the catch basins, not all seem to be shown? Will the grading prevent street water from entering the driveway and other areas? Are the catch basins timed with the tide? Will there be trench or channel drains especially at the garage openings and driveways? Does this new development meet the newer thresholds for stormwater management?

Roof overhang:

Metal roofs are very dangerous for roof overhang. Roof materials are not yet presented but with these structures are within a few feet of the sidewalks some less than 2'. If there is any roof overhang this could become an issue with snow, ice and even rain overflowing gutter systems during storm events.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Bratter
159 McDonough St
Property Owner

From: [Julienne Echavarri](#)
To: [Planning - Info - Shr](#)
Subject: Public Comment for TAC - 361 Hanover Project
Date: Sunday, March 30, 2025 12:48:21 PM

My name is Julienne Echavarri and I live at 34 Rock St. I am a direct abutter for this development, which means I will be directly affected by the increase in traffic, noise and air pollution and density that will be caused by the new development. I am not against development and I agree that housing in this lot is better than a parking lot; however, I do not agree with the placement of the main car entrance to the development.

The main entrance is between Rock St. (my street) and Pearl St. This will lead to an exponential increase in traffic through my street, which will lead to an increase in noise and air pollution and overall will decrease the safety off our small streets and likely decrease my property value. For this reason, the most important question I want to ask this committee is the following: **why did the developer have to seek a variance for the first floor use due to the difference in zoning between the lot and our neighborhood, but does not have to also request a variance for the main car entrance to the development since the zoning for the development is not the same zoning to the streets that they will be using for entry?** Our neighborhood streets are too small for the increase in traffic and the emergency vehicles like ambulances and fire trucks.

Finally, based on previous plans, it does not seem like the development will have enough parking for the amount of apartments and residents, not to mention visitors. This will decrease the amount of street parking available for current residents on our own streets, especially since the city decided to abandon permit parking, and the increase in congestion will also make the streets even smaller.

From: [MV](#)
To: [Planning - Info - Shr](#)
Subject: TAC Meeting: neighbor input on 361 Hanover Steam Factory request
Date: Sunday, March 30, 2025 8:53:25 PM

Technical Advisory Committee
City of Portsmouth
1 Junkins Ave. Portsmouth NH 03801

Regarding 361 Hanover Steam Factory LLC request for Site Plan Review Approval and Preliminary and Final Subdivision Approval for property located at 361.

Dear Members

I am a direct abutting neighbor to the 361 Hanover Steam Factory project. After reviewing the plans submitted by the group, I must register my disapproval on several points.

- 1) The Hanover Place Condo Association at 349 Hanover Street has a legally recorded access easement agreement with the property to allow access through the property from Hill Street to Hanover Street, which is not being honored and there is no indication on the 361 Hanover Steam Factory site plan how this easement would be honored.
- 2) The massive size and height of Building D does not fit with the character of the neighborhood. At more than 45 feet tall it is taller than any other building in the neighborhood of residential homes and small apartment buildings.
- 3) There is seemingly not enough space to allow for one of our property owners to be able to back out of her deeded driveway.

Thank you.

Regards,

Mark Vangel

Property owner, 349 Hanover Street Apartment 5

30 Parker Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

March 31, 2025

Zoning Board of Adjustment
Technical Advisory Committee
City of Portsmouth
1 Junkins Avenue, 3rd Floor
Portsmouth NH 03801

Dear Technical Advisory Committee Members:

As abutters to the proposed development at 361 Hanover, we have serious concerns with the packet submitted by the applicant. This plan fails to address traffic and safety issues we have flagged multiple times in the past, the provided traffic study has large oversights and errors, and other key safety issues are not addressed. As highlighted in various public comments throughout the process, we believe accessing this development via Foundry Place instead of Hanover St. would far better serve to respect and complement the existing pedestrian, parking, and traffic conditions in our neighborhood as well as allaying the majority of our safety concerns. However, this possibility has never been explored or addressed in any material way. Allowing this packet to be approved as-is would jeopardize the safety of our neighborhood and forever alter how we can use the public spaces of our neighborhood. We ask that the following be addressed:

Pedestrian Safety

- **Sight Lines**
 - **The sight lines for the entrance to and from Hanover are closer to the minimum required feet than desired number of feet (Page 100):** Given that children frequently use these sidewalks to access the playground at Rock Street Park, we would like to see the sight lines exceed the desired distance, not be barely above minimum.
 - **There was no sight line analysis done for cars at the intersection Hanover and Rock for traffic coming from Sudbury.** This is currently a very visible intersection, but with the construction of the new buildings B1 and B2, this will become a very blind intersection. Already, cars blow through the stop signs at the end of Sudbury and where Rock Street meets Hanover when moving westbound.
- **Sidewalks**
 - **Sidewalks on this lot are currently too narrow to push a stroller or use a wheelchair / walker (given the telephone poles that block them).** We can personally attest to this given we have to walk in the road to push our stroller to the playground or when walking with one of our family members who uses a

walker. How can people using wheelchairs and strollers safely use the sidewalks?

- **Trash Collection for Buildings B1, B2, C, and D will exacerbate these issues and make the sidewalks unusable.** Per page five of the application, “Solid Waste for Buildings B1, B2, C and D will be in unit collection with City of Portsmouth curbside pickup.”
- **Nothing is mentioned in this application about any new safety measures for the neighborhood:** Given the much higher volume that will be using these roadways, will the streets be painted with lane dividers? Currently none of them have lane markers given they are quiet residential roads. Will Crosswalks be (re) painted, given how close this is to the park and playground?

Traffic

- **Key Intersections are Not Analyzed:**
 - **Pearl St / Islington St intersection not accounted for (Pg 78):** Given the traffic will be using this to go to and from the development to Islington, and Islington can be difficult to turn onto, this seems like an oversight
 - **Parker St not accounted for in the traffic study.** Assuming only usage of Pearl street to get to Islington seems incorrect. Anecdotally, people don't go all the way up to Bridge to get to Islington (pg 78). Often, cars speed up Parker Street because Pearl Street can get backed up. This results in cars backing up on Parker Street waiting to turn onto Islington.
- **The Traffic Study also contains errors and questionable assumptions**
 - **The measured width of Rock Street is incorrect in the existing conditions.** From [page 75](#) of the packet, “*The one-way roadway segment is approximately 28-feet in width with on-street parking along one side*” In the one way portion between Islington and Hanover, it is much narrower than 28 feet wide.
 - **There are different numbers listed for vehicles per hour:** We have broken this out into a separate section below
 - **The Calculated number of required parking spots (page 3) assumes 40 units, but the applicant has listed between 40-48 units (page 78):** Which number of units were used for the traffic study?
 - **Existing Conditions measured in August 2024 may be artificially low due to the closure of Maplewood Avenue for Construction:** Maplewood is normally a key road to access Route 1, I-95, and the shops on Woodbury Ave. With Maplewood being closed, many in the neighborhood, including ourselves, did not use Hanover to exit the neighborhood and instead exited onto Islington to access Bartlett Street to go onward to Route 1, Woodbury, and I-95
 - **Assuming 30mph speed limit misrepresents the way traffic can move safely along these streets** (other parts of the study indicate traffic on average moves slower than this). If 30mph was used to calculate flow, this would lead to incorrect conclusions

- **Vehicles Per Hour (VPH) during peak**
 - **There are discrepancies in the packet of what the number of VPH during peak.** [Page 72](#) says 38 VPH during weekday morning and 41 in weekday evening, yet [page 79](#) says 54 VPH in the morning and 42 VPH in the evening. What are the correct numbers?
 - **The high VPH will change the walkability, safety, and character of the neighborhood.** If one assumes the higher VPH of 54 in the morning, that is a car every 66 seconds, or every minute. In the evening, 42 VPH will result in a car every less than every minute and a half (85.7 seconds). This would absolutely change the safety and walkability of this neighborhood. It would also lead to the neighborhood feeling very busy and no longer quiet and residential.

Parking

- **No Parking Study was done.** Given how tight parking is in our neighborhood, this seems to be a glaring oversight. People already speed and circle the neighborhood desperately looking for a spot.
- **People who don't have deeded spots will park in the neighborhood since there is no pedestrian access from the Foundry Place Garage to the proposed development.** Given there could be up to 96 resident cars (2 cars per unit in a 48 unit development), along with guests and service providers, and only 71 spots, this will add dozens of cars to the neighborhood competing for parking
- **Parking on Rock Street by the Park Will Become Unavailable:** Currently people can use this parking to go to the park. It seems likely these spots will be heavily contested and likely to be permanently occupied with cars from these residences (as opposed to the more ephemeral/temporary short term parking as it is used now)
- **What happens to existing parking on Hanover Street between Rock and Pearl?** Currently there is street parking on Hanover between Rock and Pearl. Does this parking remain or go away? Given the tight configurations to turn from Pearl into this new development, this seemed like it could be removed, further exacerbating parking issues.

Other Safety and Legal Issues

- **Trash Collection appears problematic:**
 - As mentioned above, Trash for buildings B1, B2, C, and D will block the sidewalks (again making it unusable for those using strollers) - Pg 5.
 - For Building A, it is not clear how the trash room is accessed. Will a trash truck fit in and out of the narrow entry from Hanover?
- **Fire Safety:**
 - Given the narrow entry from Hanover and the large retaining wall on Foundry, how does a firetruck get in there safely? Both to dog leg into the building, and inside tight courtyards. Especially to Building A.
- **Flooding and Snow:**

- There is very limited greenspace in this lot. What are the plans for drainage and disposing of storm water?
- How will snow be removed on this site?
- **This design leverages City Land that it does not actually have any legal access to:**
 - Drawings show access to building expansion (page 310) on land that is currently owned by the city. As of March 19, 2025, the applicant had not filed any proposal to the city to acquire access to this land
 - Landscaping shows trees on land along rock street that is also currently city owned

Conclusion

We remain hopeful that thoughtful development can occur that does not jeopardize the safety and character of our neighborhood. However, the current packet does not allay our safety concerns. As citizens, we have provided feedback in four separate ZBA letters and welcome the opportunity to have our feedback meaningfully incorporated by the development team (note that this design has not actually been in front of the planning board for public review - July 18, 2024 did not allow public comment). We believe this current design will do irreparable harm to the neighborhood safety, and we cannot endorse it as is.

Thank you for your time and your service to the city and its residents.

Sincerely,
Kathryn "Kate" Waldwick
Bryn Waldwick

From: wrightski@aol.com
To: [Planning - Info - Shr](#)
Subject: 361 Hanover St
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 1:56:05 PM

You don't often get email from wrightski@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Let me make this perfectly clear...again.

Regardless of the fact that I have repeatedly said this for close to 2 years, and in spite of the fact that you have paid zero attention to what I say, know that this project will be the demise of this neighborhood.

I have lived within 100 feet of the site in question for almost 40 years and, I assure you, you will look back on this with great regret.

The neighborhood CANNOT handle the density proposed and will cause most to leave that have been here for decades. You will have people from "away" buy up the homes so they can lay claim to a downtown "vacation home". They will be indifferent to the schools, the parking and the love for this city. It is likely these homes will be occupied for just a few months a year, so goes the "neighborhood".

With that said, and for the n'th time, I adamantly oppose what the future apparently has in store for this spot. I would suggest you demand the project's size be diminished by at least 50%.

I repeat...you will regret what you are doing, very much, this has been my home for many years and I am saddened by your poor decision making.

Respectfully submitted,

R. W. Wright
30 Sudbury St.

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