

Re: file 0ZS 21 – 011 151 Bristol Street Guelph

My name is David Hopkins and I have lived with my family at [REDACTED] since 1994. I have many concerns about the proposal to rezone the 151 Bristol Street property from “Residential Single Detached” (R.1B) Zone to “Residential On-Street Townhouse” (R.3B) Zone. My first introduction to the proposed five townhouse development was back in April when I looked out my home office window and saw the boom of a large crane, heard the whine of chainsaws and saw an arborist up about 20m in one of large mature trees on the property. Work continued for a couple of days and in the end the arborist removed 27 trees from the property. In talking with some of the neighbors later they indicated that they were told that there was going to be five townhouses on the property and that the tree removal was being completed as part of the project. Oddly enough, the “Tree Preservation Plan” was not completed until **after** the trees had been removed and the plan does not show the location of several of the large mature trees that were removed. The Pictures below show how the tree removal has altered the landscape of the neighborhood. This makes it difficult to imagine how the rest of the project will maintain the character of the neighborhood. Although the developer may not have broken any rules by removing the trees, this certainly undermines my confidence that the rest of the project will result in anything that is aesthetically pleasing or enhances the character of the neighborhood.

Before the Tree Removal



Property Today



When you look at the existing house and lot while walking along Bristol Street is obvious that at least one more house could be accommodated under the R1 zoning. However, we never imagined that someone would propose five townhouses with driveways fronting on to Emslie Street. Currently most of the property is level with Bristol Street and there is a natural stone outcrop which rises up about 3 m on three sides of the property ending up approximately level with Emslie Street. As geologist, I have always found the property to be quite interesting with the outcrop marking the still visible limits of the Emslie Quarry from which some of Guelphs most iconic stone buildings were built. The 2007 Publication *Quarries and Quarrymen: The Limestone Industry in Guelph* describes the quarry as follows:

Emslie and Morrison's Quarry

Perhaps the most visible evidence of early quarrying activity today is found along Bristol and Essex Streets, where exposed limestone forms the natural grade between the streets. Robert Emslie was a stonemason by trade, but acted as a contractor for major projects. Stone was quarried for his commissions from a limestone ridge extending along Bristol Street between Yorkshire Street and Edinburgh Road. Stone used in the construction of St. James the Apostle Anglican Church was quarried here.

The proposed five townhouse development has driveways which front onto Emslie Street. This would require approximately 3 to 4 m of fill for a distance of about 6m back from the street to bring the Driveways and front yards level with the street and would completely obscure the outcrop which is one last remaining examples of one of Guelph's historical quarries. Under the current zoning, building one or two houses fronting onto Bristol would not require any fill and would preserve the face of the quarry. The edge of the quarry is clearly visible in the photo below.



I'm not a planner, but I believe the five townhouses proposed are not consistent with the character of the neighborhood. The excerpts below are from the June 2021 City of Guelph Official Plan:

9.3.1.1 Development Criteria for Multi-Unit Residential Buildings and Intensification Proposals

The following criteria will be used to assess development proposals

for multi-unit residential development within all residential designations and for intensification proposals within existing residential neighborhoods. These criteria are to be applied in conjunction with the applicable Urban Design policies of this Plan.

- 1. Building form, scale, height, setbacks, massing, appearance and siting are compatible in design, character and orientation with buildings in the immediate vicinity.*

2. *Proposals for residential lot infill will be compatible with the general frontage of lots in the immediate vicinity.*
3. *The residential development can be adequately served by local convenience and neighborhood shopping facilities, schools, trails, parks, recreation facilities and public transit.*

Section 4.2 of the The 2018 City of Guelph Document “*Built Form Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings and Townhouses*” provides guidance on infill sites “*Infill sites are located in established areas of the City. Infill can include the redevelopment of vacant or underdeveloped sites through more intensive development forms. Considerations for redevelopment on infill sites include:*

- *Appropriate site organization, including setbacks between buildings on adjacent properties, and consequent overlook, privacy and shadow impacts; and*
- *Existing trees, vegetation and grades.*

The proposed townhouses will be three stories high at the rear of the lot closest to Bristol Street. It is difficult to see how this will not result in overlook, privacy and shadow impacts on the immediately adjacent properties. Also, the grade on the site will need to be raised by about 3m to bring the front yards to the same elevation as Emslie Street. The developer has removed 27 trees and since the tree preservation plan was prepared after these trees were removed makes it obvious that consideration was not given to existing vegetation. As indicated above, the fill required to raise the grade will forever bury one of the last remaining visible reminders of Guelph’s quarries.

The following excerpt from the proponents Planning Justification Report attempts to justify the proposal:

The foregoing criteria are addressed by the development proposal in the following manner:

- i. **The height and appearance of the proposed townhouse units are compatible with adjacent uses which include primarily single detached residential homes and low rise apartment buildings.**
- ii. **The area between Bristol Street and Emslie Street contain a mix of units fronting on either street. The subject property will address Emslie Street for access but provide an enhanced rear building elevation facing Bristol Street.**

Item i) is somewhat misleading. The front of the townhouses on Emslie Street will be two stories high. On this portion of Emslie Street, the immediately adjacent house is only one story and almost all the houses directly across the are older bungalows. More significantly because the proposed townhouses have basement walkouts, the portion that backs onto Bristol Street will be three stories high not including the roof. In addition, all the houses on Bristol and Emslie Street are older and the modern appearance of the townhouses will certainly not be compatible with

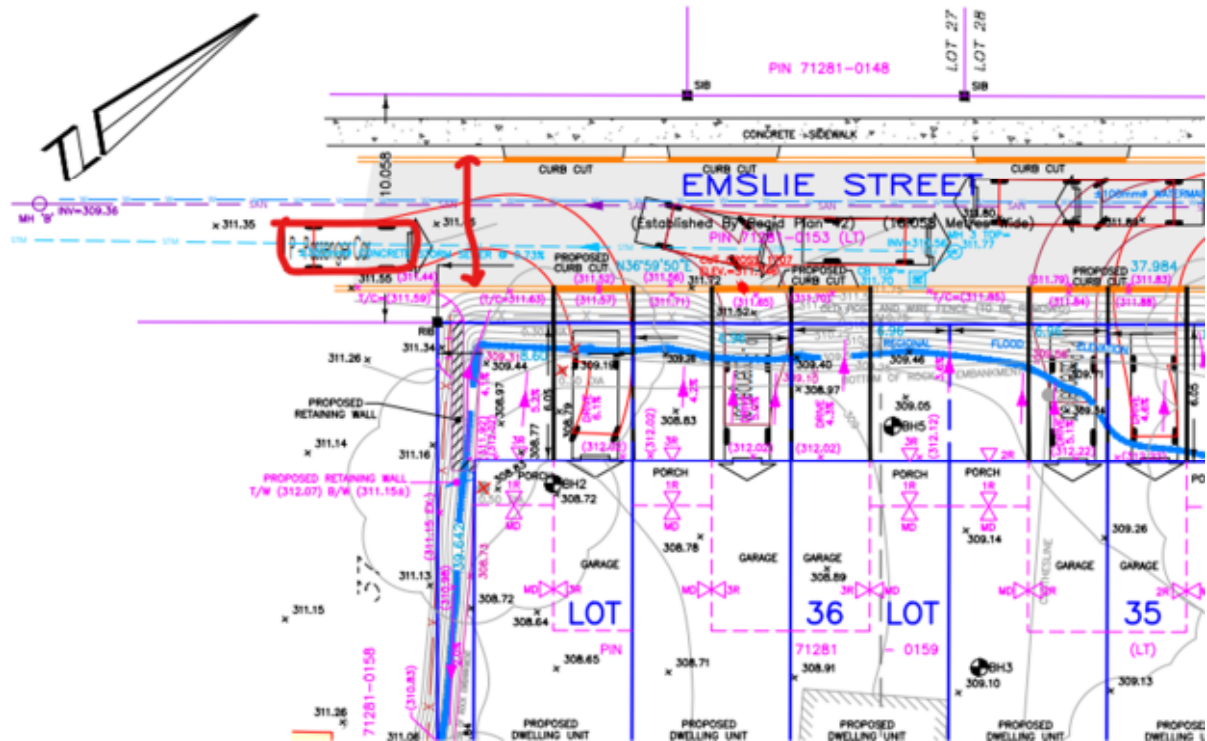
the adjacent houses. Imagine walking along an older residential street with a lush tree canopy and suddenly coming upon a three- story monolith with all of the mature trees removed from the property. Imagine living in the small bungalow next door and being used to seeing trees and an appropriate for the neighborhood bungalow next door. If this rezoning to R.3 goes ahead, the view from the houses on either side will be dominated by two stories of brick topped by another 3m of vinyl siding.



Similarly, item ii) is also somewhat misleading. It is not clear how a three-story structure can be considered an “enhanced” elevation. Looking at the conceptual plans provided with the package submitted to the city, one cannot tell how significant the height of the back of the townhouses will be compared to the surrounding houses. Staff should visit the site to get a proper sense of how significant the height of the proposed townhouses will be when viewed from Bristol Street. Although houses front on both Emslie and Bristol, there are no nearby houses on Bristol where the backyard is adjacent to the street.

I am not a traffic expert. However, the conceptual plans for the site need to be examined carefully to see how narrow Emslie Street is. The Van Harten Grading Plan below shows the right of way for Emslie Street as being about 10 m wide, however, one has to look closely to see that the actual width of the street from curb to curb as shown by the red arrow is actually 5.5 m. The passenger cars shown on the drawing would have a difficult time backing out of the proposed driveway without hitting the opposite curb. In fact on street parking is no longer allowed on Emslie Street because of the width of the road, difficulties getting emergency vehicles such as fire trucks down the street and also because of difficulties in plowing snow. Therefore it makes little sense to add five new driveways which will be entering Emslie Street. In my opinion, the turning radius showing on the drawing below is not consistent with the skills of most drivers. Since the parking ban on Emslie we have noticed a marked increase in parked cars on Yorkshire Street south. This is a busy section of street with a number of small children. The current parking situation will only be made worse by adding five new residences who will undoubtedly will have at least two cars. There is no on street overnight parking on Yorkshire or

Emslie in the winter which will be a problem for multi-car families.



As a professional Geoscientist, I am also concerned that the Phase two Site assessment did not include an investigation of the groundwater beneath the site. There was also no assessment of the outcrop face to see if there was evidence of groundwater seepage. This could be an issue if the fill required to bring the site to grade blocks the natural seepage. This may also cause problems with settlement of the fill.

Four of the six boreholes on the site had concentrations of metals above the applicable MECP Guidelines. Since metals cannot be identified by visual means, it is possible that the remaining two boreholes were not sampled at an appropriate interval which means elevated metals may also be present at these two locations. The Human Health Risk Assessment report concludes that "Residents have been calculated to have unacceptable risk as a result of potential exposure to metals and PAH's at the site, through direct contact pathways. The report proposes moving the soil to the area nearest Emslie street and "capping" it with fill. This may be an acceptable approach on an industrial/commercial site, where future excavations can be strictly controlled. Presuming that future homeowners are aware of the contaminated soil is likely not a good idea. The presence of contaminated soil might be problematic if an unsuspecting homeowner or contractor disturbs it during installation of a tree or fencepost. In addition, the potential long term impacts of leaving the contaminated soil on-site over top of the fractured bedrock aquifer (which is at surface beneath the site) has not been quantified.

In conclusion, the 151 Bristol Street property should be continue to be zoned R1 and any future residences should be required front onto Bristol Street. The quarry face is a significant neighbourhood feature and fronting single family dwellings onto Bristol street removes the need for any fill which will ensure the face remains visble in the future.

Thank You for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

David and Joan Hopkins

