

YOUR WORSHIP, COUNCIL, AND CITY CLERK:

I HAVE LIVED ON HICKORY STREET, IN THE CAMPUS ESTATES AREA, FOR 37 YEARS. THIS IS A SUBDIVISION THAT HAS BEEN LARGELY ISSUE FREE UNTIL NOW. HOWEVER, THE 785 GORDON APPLICATION, IN ITS CURRENT FORM, WILL MAKE A VERY WIDESPREAD AREA OF DETACHED RESIDENTIAL HOMES ESSENTIALLY UNLIVEABLE AND UNDESIREABLE DUE TO NOISE FROM THE 520 STUDENT TENANTS ON NUMEROUS TERRACES AND BALCONIES THAT FACE OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD.

THE APPLICANT HAS ERRED IN THEIR BASIC STRATEGY FOR THEIR APPLICATION. THEY ARE BY RELYING EXCESSIVELY ON THE OMB DECISION THAT THEY SUCCESSFULLY SECURED ON THEIR ROYAL BROCK HOTEL APPLICATION AT 716 GORDON. THEY BELIEVE THAT WITH THEIR SIMILAR ATTENTION TO ISSUES OF "MASSING", SHADOW ANALYSIS, AND URBAN DESIGN THEY CAN FINESSE ANOTHER OUTCOME IN THEIR FAVOUR. HOWEVER, SIMPLE COMMON SENSE IS ENTIRELY LACKING.

FOR THE APPLICANT IS PROPOSING A SERIES OF 20 SEPARATE TERRACES OR PARTY PATIOS ON THE SIXTH, SEVENTH, EIGHTH, NINTH, AND TENTH FLOOR LEVELS, FACING THE RESIDENTIAL AREAS TO THE SOUTH, WEST AND EAST. SOME ARE TO BE OFFERED TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENT TENANTS, AND THE REST WILL BE OTHERWISE AVAILABLE FOR A FEE TO ALL TENANTS AS PARTY PATIOS, BECAUSE THE DESIGN DRAWINGS SHOW PARAPETS WITH RAILINGS ATOP THE PARAPETS ON ALL 20 TERRACES. SO THEY ARE ALL MEANT TO BE USED BY THE TENANTS, EVEN THOUGH THE APPLICANT DOES NOT REVEAL THIS IN THEIR SUPPORTING MATERIALS. IN ADDITION, DOZENS OF BALCONIES ALSO FACE THESE DIRECTIONS. THE POTENTIAL NOISE WILL BE FAR BEYOND NUISANCE LEVELS, AND FAR BEYOND ANY EFFECTIVENESS OF ANY NUMBER OF BYLAW OFFICERS WHO WOULD BE FREQUENTLY SUMMONSED TO TAMP DOWN THE NOISE. AND THE USE OF TERRACES AND BALCONIES CANNOT BE PROHIBITED AT THE SITE PLAN STAGE.

THE BASIC CONFIGURATION OF , AS WELL AS THE HEIGHT OF, THE BUILDING ARE MOST UNACCEPTABLE.

SOME 32 YEARS AGO, I WAS SERVING AS A MEMBER OF THE CITY'S COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT AND HELPED ADJUDICATE IN WELL OVER 800 HEARINGS. THE ONE THAT STANDS OUT THE MOST FOR CONTENTIOUSNESS AND NOTORIETY WAS ALSO ON HARVARD ROAD, JUST A STONE'S THROW AWAY, ON THE SITE OF WHAT IS NOW THE SHAKESPEARE ARMS. BUT AT THE TIME, FOR A BRIEF PERIOD, IT WAS "THE ANIMAL HOUSE", MARKETING ITS RAUCUS AMBIENCE BY SPINNING OFF FROM THE 1978 MOVIE OF THE SAME NAME, (STARRING JOHN BELUSHI AS PLUTO, AS I RECALL.) THE ANIMAL HOUSE APPLIED FOR A ZONING VARIANCE FOR A THIRD FLOOR LEVEL ROOFTOP PATIO, OVERLOOKING RESIDENCES ALONG HARVARD AND HARROW. THE CITY RECEIVED MORE LETTERS AND DELEGATIONS IN OPPOSITION THAN ANY OTHER APPLICATION I CAN RECALL OVER MY THREE YEARS OF ADJUDICATING. SENSIBLY, THE COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT REFUSED THE APPLICATION.

SO, IT IS NOT TOO MUCH TO SAY THAT THIS DEVELOPER IS ALSO PROPOSING TO BUILD A HIGH RISE ANIMAL HOUSE ON HARVARD, BUT TIMES TWENTY !? THAT IS ABUSE OF A STABLE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD.

THERE IS A RELATED FINANCIAL ISSUE THAT SHOULD CONCERN THE CITY. IF ANY APPLICATION AT 785 GORDON IS AS MUCH AS PERCEIVED BY NEIGHBOURHOOD HOMEOWNERS TO REDUCE THEIR MARKET VALUE, THERE ARE CERTAIN TO BE APPEALS TO THE ASSESSMENT REVIEW BOARD FOR ASSESSMENT AND TAX REDUCTIONS. AND THOSE APPEALS THAT SUCCEED WILL ERODE THE ASSESSMENT BASE AVAILABLE TO THE CITY. AND MOST LIKELY, THE CITY WILL SEEK TO OFFSET THOSE ASSESSMENT LOSSES BY UPWARD ADJUSTMENTS TO MILL RATES ACROSS THE ENTIRE RESIDENTIAL CLASS, CITY WIDE. SO EVERYONE ELSE PAYS.

ON PARKING, IT IS UNREASONABLE FOR THE APPLICANT TO ASSUME THAT ONLY ONE STUDENT IN FOUR WILL HAVE A CAR. PARKING PRESSURE WILL SPILL ONTO ADJACENT STREETS AND ESPECIALLY INTO THE CAMPUS ESTATES PLAZA. THIS WILL PUT PRESSURE ON THE MANY SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE PLAZA, AS CUSTOMERS WILL DRIVE ELSEWHERE TO SHOP IF IT BECOMES TOO DIFFICULT TO FIND A PLACE TO PARK.

PARKING ISSUES IN THE LONGER TERM WILL WORSEN, SINCE THE MID TO LONG RANGE DEMOGRAPHIC OUTLOOK FOR NUMBERS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IS THAT THEIR NUMBERS WILL DECLINE. TENANCIES WILL THEN REVERT TO THE GENERAL POPULATION, WHO WILL LARGELY HAVE A CAR.

ON TREES: ALL 69 WILL BE REMOVED, EVERY LAST ONE, ACCORDING TO THE APPLICANT'S VEGETATION PLAN. SOME EXCEED 35 FEET AND PROVIDE SOME LIMITED SCREENING OF ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL AREAS. THE REPLACEMENT TREES WILL PROVIDE LESS SCREENING AND LESS CANOPY COVER THAN BEFORE. JUST BECAUSE THIS IS A GORDON INTENSIFICATION PROJECT SHOULD NOT MEAN THAT A BETTERMENT IN PERCENTAGE OF CANOPY NEED NOT BE SOUGHT. AND AS A MEMBER OF THE CITY'S URBAN FORESTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, I CAN ATTEST THAT DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS THIS MOVE THE CITY FURTHER AWAY FROM ACHIEVING ITS COUNCIL-APPROVED GOAL OF A 40% CANOPY COVER.

ON STORMWATER: ENGINEERING ADVISES LIKEWISE THAT NO BETTERMENT IS SOUGHT BY THE CITY REGARDING THE QUANTITY OF STORMWATER LEAVING THE PROPERTY...THE APPLICANT IS ONLY REQUIRED NOT TO MAKE THINGS WORSE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RECENTLY REVISED ENGINEERING STANDARDS MANUAL USED BY THE CITY. THAT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH. ESPECIALLY WHEN THIS STORMWATER SEWERSHED OF NEARLY ONE SQUARE MIL HAS BEEN DOCUMENTED (AT RIVER SYSTEMS ADVISORY COMMITTEE) TO CAUSE NOTABLE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE AT ITS DISCHARGE POINT INTO THE SPEED RIVER AS WELL AS FURTHER DOWNSTREAM.

MOREOVER, MUCH OF OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK, OAK STREET PARK, IS SLATED FOR A STORMWATER DETENTION FACILITY AT SOME FUTURE POINT UNDER THE APPROVED STORMWATER MASTER PLAN. WHY SHOULD THE NEIGHBOURHOOD BE ASKED TO MAKE A MAJOR SACRIFICE IN OPEN SPACE TO LESSEN STORMWATER DAMAGES WHEN NOTHING IN THE WAY OF A STORMWATER QUANTITY BETTERMENT IS EXPECTED FROM THIS DEVELOPER?

THE BUILDING SHOULD BE APPROVED AT A HEIGHT OF NO MORE THAN 4 STORIES.

I RECOMMEND COUNCIL REFUSE THE APPLICATION.

AND I REQUEST A WRITTEN COPY OF COUNCIL'S DECISION.

BILL MUNGALL