

July 5, 2022

To: Lindsay Sulatycki, Senior Development Planner, City of Guelph

From: Valerie Gilmor, local Guelph resident, taxpayer, concerned citizen

Re: Development Application File OZS22-007, 1166-1204 Gordon Street, in Ward 6

I understand the city's need to build both "in" and "up" in the city, to accommodate an increasing population. None of us likes urban sprawl, be it horizontal, or be it vertical.

I would first like to say I support this development application as two separate parcels of land with two separate zoning designations, one for on-street townhouses on Landsdown and one for apartments or townhouses facing Gordon. This will help to insure, that in the future, apartment buildings cannot be built on the Landsdown facing property. And this can all be accomplished, within the current zoning of Medium Density Residential. There is no need to change zoning to High Density Residential.

**My primary concern is: How will this infill project blend into the existing neighbourhood?**

**I am interested in Quality in my Back Yard. Q U I M B Y**

For me, this involves three key components

**Density & Height Traffic Green Space**

### **Density and Height**

According to the City's Official Plan, this site is designated Medium Density Residential permitting townhouses and apartments of 2 – 6 storeys with a density of 35-100 units per hectare.

The only possible reason I can see for the applicant to seek a High Density designation (a density of 100 -150 units per hectare) is to pack more units onto the land. In asking for 176 units per hectare, the applicant's ask, is actually 76% higher than the maximum allowable.

And the consequences of a 76% increase in density means creating three storey townhouses across from one storey bungalows on Landsdown Drive. It means making the apartment buildings as long and as tall as possible on Gordon Street. And in turn, this means:

- Three storey townhouses are not a well scaled height addition to Landsdown, where all the homes are bungalows. The height transition from bungalows

on one side of Landsdown Drive would best be served by two storey townhouses on the other side of the street.

- The Gordon Street face of each apartment building is 66 metres long, 36 metres more than is permitted. It is essentially a wall, a very, very long wall with windows and a central entry area, but with no step-backs to reduce massing, with no visual or pedestrian connections to the open space at the rear of these buildings or to Landsdown Drive. The city clearly calls for a people friendly streetscape. The proposed façade repels people.
- The topography of this site is higher than the land on the west side of Gordon and a 6 storey building with additional mechanics on top would, visually, be closer to an 8 storey building, definitely much higher than the apartment building or the townhouse complex opposite. Two to three storey buildings, either a townhouse complex or apartment buildings, would be significantly better scaled and consistent with the mid-rise context of surrounding buildings both on Gordon Street, directly opposite and to the north on either side of Gordon, as well as to Landsdown.
- There are 4 properties, 2 at the north end and 2 at the south end, of this site, which are homes to 4 families who have lived there for many, many years. The developer is asking for a one metre sideyard setback from the property line to permit parking. However, City Built Form Standards call for an exterior side yard of a minimum of 3 – 6 metres. 6 metres ought to be the absolute essential minimum to a gentle transition to the privacy of the single families living on these properties. But even this will never come close to the privacy and enjoyment of their properties to which they are accustomed. A two to three storey structure, 6 metres from the property line will at least minimize intrusions into their space.

## **Traffic**

Gordon Street is already a painful route, painful for cars, painful for transit and painful for pedestrians.

- This development simply adds to the pain. 176 units means 176 or more cars, not just on Gordon Street but 176 more cars on Landsdown Drive, a residential street.

With proposed access to all units from Landsdown, this means

- many more cars on this quiet street, which currently serves about 57 homes on four streets. Imagine, 176 more cars, coming and going, more often, making more noise, traveling faster and creating safety concerns. This, in addition to vehicles travelling north from the proposed Tricar development at Edinburgh and Gordon. Hundreds of cars using this street.

Guelph's Urban Design Concept Plan calls for Landsdown to be

- “a two-way residential street, not a service lane”, which is what it would become with this proposed plan. The Design Concept Plan further suggests creating a new street/streets, internal to this property.

Access to a new townhouse complex/apartment buildings on this site

- can be directly from Gordon Street, as is the case for the townhouses opposite, on the west side of Gordon and the five storey buildings to the south of Edinburgh on Gordon Street East.

## **Green Space**

In brief, green space is significantly lacking in this application.

- On Landsdown Drive, maintaining the existing by-law requirements for townhouse lot size (lot area of 180 square metres) rather than 20% smaller as proposed, and maintaining existing rear yard depths, provides minimal green space as it is, for children to play, gardens to grow and people to enjoy the outdoors.
- The applicant is providing 61% of the required amenity greenspace, most of it at the front of apartments along Gordon Street. To suggest that this is people friendly space, designed to encourage gathering, to be comfortable and inviting and usable is disingenuous. The current Zoning by-law does not permit such a ‘fake’ common amenity area.
- The open space at the rear of the buildings, proposed as a parking lot, would be a wonderful location to create a mini-park, comfortable, green, inviting, accessible and usable.
- The proposed parking at the rear of the property is a heat trap, raising the surrounding temperature and contributing to global warming. All parking could be underground.
- With no plants or mature trees, all 109 of them to be razed to the ground, there is no natural vegetation to help control air pollution by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. And new plantings will take years to grow before they can ever work to mitigate climate change and provide summer cooling.
- A paved parking lot also means oil, grease, and dirt from cars, sits on the asphalt, until rain washes it away as highly polluted water.

**What do I want as resident of this neighbourhood ? I want Quality!  
Quality in my Back Yard!**

To me this means:

- ground oriented, human scaled residential intensification in keeping with the surrounding buildings
- a sensitive transition from single family bungalows to two storey townhouses to perhaps a three storey townhouse complex or apartment buildings
- a safe neighbourhood where people can walk, where children can learn to ride a bike
- as green an environment as possible – mini-parks in new residential developments, more nearby parks so neighbours can gather, be sociable and enjoy the outdoors
- wider sidewalks and cycling lanes along Gordon Street for easy walking and safer cycling
- trees shading our streets
- places to go - a corner store, a restaurant, a flower shop

I think this particular property, 1166-1204 Gordon Street, has the potential to offer many of these attributes, but I think the proposed plan needs some rethinking, reconsidering and refining, before it can be enjoyed by future residents, as part of the existing, friendly, neighbourhood that is here.

Quality and density can work, it just requires the will and good decision making to make it so.

Respectfully submitted.