

**Feedback on Application for the
Bar Patio at 60 Ontario St.**

May 31, 2023

Trista Di Lullo, ACST
Secretary-Treasurer, Committee of Adjustment
City Hall, 1 Carden Street, Guelph ON N1H 3A1
Via email to cofa@guelph.ca

Dear Trista

My name is Dwayne Mott. I live at [redacted] Ontario St. My wife and I have been long-time residents of the neighbourhood at this address. I am submitting this letter for consideration by the Committee of Adjustment as part of the review for the application for a shared outdoor patio at 60 Ontario St. My reference is your notice dated May 23, 2023.

My request is that your committee deny this application. My family believes that the changes requested will negatively impact our neighbourhood with little benefit for the people living in the area.

We live 1 property outside the notice area for the application as per the image below. From our living room we have a direct line of sight to the property and have been unsure until now how to comment on the impact of the development.



While we commend the entrepreneurial spirit of those who make investments in redevelopment efforts, we see this application as inconsistent with the general redevelopment efforts of our neighbours. Over time we have seen significant improvements made to a number of the properties in the area. We feel these have been done in a way that consistently enhances the situation of the residents and the quality of our neighbourhood in general.

We have discussed your notice with neighbours and feel it important to document the concerns we have for the way this property is being developed. We hope that your review will reflect in a fair way the concerns raised by those who have invested in the neighbourhood well in advance of this development.

Feedback on Application for the Bar Patio at 60 Ontario St.

With the historic and ongoing development of the Lens Mill property, the larger WC Wood site development into multiple multi level condominium dwellings and the number of townhouses that have recently been added on Huron St, there has been a significant increase in the vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the area especially at the intersection where this application is focused. With the additional construction underway to add more condominium units at the Wood's site and the multi unit building being created from the legacy plant at the corner of Alice and Huron, the volume of traffic will increase well above the current level. Even without the increased traffic from the ongoing developments, there has been a sharp rise on the traffic through our neighbourhood with its close streets and the many odd corners like the intersection at Arthur and Ontario.

This increase in traffic volume must be incorporated into your review. This application must be assessed with an eye to more vehicles and more pedestrians, especially young families, being present in the foreseeable future. Sound judgement needs to be exercised to minimize the risk of accidents, especially between a vehicle and a pedestrian, in what is obviously a less than optimal street plan for the neighbourhood. This will require good judgement be applied in development in the area. I trust this responsibility is one that the Committee has embraced.

I would categorize our concerns into 3 main areas:

1. Traffic Safety based on the vehicle and pedestrian patterns in the area
2. The confusing communication during the development of the property
3. The impact of the establishment itself on our neighbourhood

Issue 1: Traffic Safety

The orientation of the intersection of Arthur St. S and Ontario St makes for some difficult sightlines for drivers approaching the intersection, especially on Arthur St. S. Even with the current open paved "parking lot", the angle of approach makes it difficult for drivers to get a good visual of the traffic approaching the intersection on Ontario St coming from Neeve St.

The acute angle formed by this intersection makes it difficult for a competent driver to turn and make the proper assessment before entering the intersection. Older drivers, drivers in a hurry or those distracted while they are driving may miss vehicles and pedestrians approaching the intersection from the irregular angles. Where pedestrians are crossing any of the crosswalks at the 4 streets making up this intersection, there is a significant opportunity for the most cautious driver to be distracted and make a mistake in what they do as they approach the intersection. Further, pedestrians tend to cross the intersections outside the crosswalks in haphazard directions due to the various paths they may be taking in any of the 4 directions.

Cyclists, especially in the warmer weather, also are common to this area. With the irregular structure of this intersection, it is common for them to dart across roads to enter another exit to the intersection. This adds another opportunity for a driver, pedestrian or cyclist to make a "mistake" as they work through the nonstandard intersection or distract others on their own journey.

All of these factors increase the probability for an accident or error in judgement by either a driver, cyclist or a pedestrian causing an injury, even without the impact of the patio being considered.

Feedback on Application for the Bar Patio at 60 Ontario St.

Adding the challenge to visibility that umbrellas or other protection for the patrons on the patio will introduce and the proposed close proximity to the street, visibility will be further impaired. It appears to us that there are fundamental principles in the sections of the City plan to avoid these exact situations. The City plan was developed with a considered set of opinions. We do not see a valid reason for the application to have these ignored. To do so seems foolhardy or short sighted to say the least.

Should the patio have any sort of activity that draws the attention of a driver away from the task of scanning the intersection, the risk of an accident again increases. I cannot see how this intersection with a patio would pass some of the most basic safety criteria that I hope your planners are using to assess this application.

Issue 2: Communication about the Development

We recognize that the property was an eye sore before the current development, much like the defunct Hammond Warehouse at 60 Arthur St.

We never had a clear understanding of what the plan for the property development was until after the coffee shop started conducting business. At one point there was the inference that a barber shop was involved. We learned of the idea for a small neighbourhood bar about the time that the striped barber pole was removed from the building. The economics of a “small stand-up bar” in this area are questionable to our way of thinking.

Given the diligence the City has shown in the past communicating on the developments that have occurred in our extended neighbourhood, the lack of clarity on what was happening with this property was a surprise. To date we have not said anything because we did not know how. With our attention been drawn to this notice by our neighbours, we feel it important that the impact of the requested change be properly vetted.

With the changes to the use of the property over the past year we are guessing that the application may be a response to a fiscal requirement to do more on the property than what the existing City plan would permit. This raises a fundamental question about the probability for success for the venture.

We believe it is reasonable to expect anyone doing this sort of project would have reviewed the number of variances required to the property as part of their assessment for the location of their venture. The application lists 6 items against a total of 11 outlined in the sections of the plan you provided in your notice. That seems an excessively high number of requests to deem the application as satisfactory. We expect that the developer would have been aware of the requirements before starting the project. These restrictions should not have been a surprise.

Issue 3: Impact on the Neighbourhood

Since its opening, we have noticed regular traffic into the bar with patrons’ vehicles often filling the space where the patio is being proposed. With the addition of the patio, it is expected that more patrons will be attracted, which means more vehicles. Given the horrific parking that is already a problem for the neighbourhood, more vehicles will contend for the inadequate volume of parking spots which is another negative aspect to the application.

The relatively low volume of patrons we observe frequenting the coffee shop on the property suggest that it will be difficult to have that aspect of the development survive. This will put more emphasis on

**Feedback on Application for the
Bar Patio at 60 Ontario St.**

the bar, possibly with another request for an increase in the growing capacity for the location. Even with best practices in place, bars lead to intoxication of patrons which in turn means excessive noise and disorderly conduct at times, often later at night when the neighbourhood is asleep. The relatively low traffic around "closing time" make the environment ripe for incidents of mischief.

While we wish no ill will to anyone, we do not see how accommodating the changes requested by the applicant can do anything but introduce a number of severe consequences for the neighbourhood. The nature of the property and the guidelines that are in place for the area existed before a decision was made by the applicant to begin their project. Commercial common sense dictates the situation should have been fully investigated before they moved forward versus expecting the local residents to accept something explicitly excluded, a licensed patio, after the fact.

We respectfully request that the application be denied.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Mott', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dwayne Mott