

City Clerk's Office
City Hall, 1 Carden Street
Guelph, ON N1H 3A1

September 5, 2024

Re: Statutory Public Meeting for the proposed development of 26-40 Carden St. and 27-39 Macdonell Street

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the non-profit organization **42 Carden Shared Space**, the owners of 42 Carden Street and 41 Macdonell Street, we are submitting comments pertaining to the proposed Skyline development at 26-40 Carden Street and 27-39 Macdonell Street. 42 Carden Street is the property directly to the east of the proposed Skyline development and both our building and 26-40 Carden Street span the block between Carden and Macdonell and have storefronts on both streets.

As noted in the development application, our building, at 42 Carden Street, is not a heritage building but it is the former Acker's Furniture store and before that the former Seed warehouse built in phases between the 1860s to 1900s. We redeveloped this property in 2016 to be a vibrant and accessible non-profit community hub. Our organization is a social enterprise that generates revenue from the variety of community benefit activities that contribute to local social and economic resilience from this unique shared space - including coworking, offices, commercial kitchen and meeting rooms available to non-profit groups, small businesses and individuals. The activation of these activities is through a related party corporation, 10 Carden Shared Space, known widely as 10C.

There are a number of positives we see regarding the proposed residential development: an increased supply of rental housing; more people living and working downtown; more people using active and public transit, and more people to access the small businesses.

We also have some concerns:

- In the City of Guelph Official Plan, Policy 1.3.14 indicates "Compatibility of the proposed use with adjacent land use designations." It is assumed in the planning justification study that none of the nearby properties are likely to be redeveloped or built up. We assert that this development –as proposed– risks precluding development of any of the adjacent properties. This would undermine the long-term intensification objectives of the block.
- Our organization is concerned that should the current design and the reduction in the side yard be approved that this will limit our redevelopment potential to intensify our property. We are underway on planning an active rooftop space, and

in the near or medium term may be planning to add a further two (or three) storeys of mixed-use space to 42 Garden.

- We also have concerns pertaining to the east façade which abuts our property and with the requested reduction in minimum interior side yard from 6m to 2m for the tower. Both the east and west facing units at levels 02-04 have windows facing onto the blank party wall of each property, entirely shaded by the new balconies above, even if no future development occurs on either property. This is clearly visible in the rendered elevations. These units would essentially have no outdoor views and would have only the dimmest hint of natural light through most of the day.
- Further, the 05 and 06 level balconies will be very close to our rooftop. As mentioned, our plans are to activate the rooftop space with assembly uses and urban agriculture via a small rooftop garden and greenhouse. We are concerned about the proximity of the lower east side balconies from a safety and security perspective, as from the 05 floor one could literally hop from the balcony and access our rooftop space. It is our understanding that the City's policy on balconies is that they be recessed or integrated into the design of the building which does not seem to be the case on the east and west sides of the building. The balconies appear to be exposed concrete balconies which are not generally permitted.
- In regards to these concerns, we request that the City of Guelph refuse the application in its current form. We would like to see the design revised to eliminate east/west facing units in favour of an abutting wall condition, where units face either north and south, with the east and west elevations clear of openings in contemplation of future developments that may abut. This approach ensures the potential for ongoing intensification of the block and preserves the rights of abutting neighbours to develop their lands in the future.

This development as proposed presents possible structural risks to the adjacent properties:

- 14 storeys in the context of the surrounding properties is too high, and we are concerned regarding the impact of 14 storeys in relation to increased snow load directed to our property, and note the significant burden that such a development can impose. We request a snow load study and that the developer be held accountable for conducting thorough impact assessments and be responsible for implementing design solutions that prevent harm to the neighboring buildings.
- We are concerned about the structural impacts that may occur during the construction phase of this scale of development, with digging, drilling and other impacts to the foundations and party walls of the adjacent structures. We request that the developer conduct a structural pre-condition survey, and have a structural monitoring practice in place during and post-development. The

neighbouring properties should not inherit future structural damages from the addition of this building.

A few more issues we flag for consideration:

- We are concerned about how drop off and pick up to the building will be handled for food and household deliveries, ride services and people using accessible transit. If the building is predominantly students, as noted in the application, move-in/move-out for 200+ students will be particularly problematic, with frequent turnover of rentals. It seems highly optimistic that one loading area on the main floor off Macdonell will be adequate for all these purposes in addition to commercial deliveries, contractor servicing and garbage pick up. If not internal to the building, how will Macdonell street be configured to accommodate these uses at the main entrance?
- The drawings indicate 'student housing' and there was reference in the Planning Justification Report to this being ideal rental housing for students given its location to the proposed Conestoga College building downtown. If this is a building geared to students, we ask that the developer follow best practices and provide 24/7 on-site services to support the variety of needs that high-density student tenancies require.
- Whoever resides here, whether they are students, minimum wage workers, seniors, etc. everyone faces escalating costs in all aspects of life including rent. Given that the developer is asking for increased height, decreased set-backs, and is providing no parking, our organization advocates for the City to negotiate a long-term commitment for a percentage of below market and/or affordable rents in the proposed building in keeping with the City's Housing Affordability Strategy.

We strongly urge staff and Council to weigh all factors in coming to a decision on the appropriate scale and form of infill for this location as well as the precedent it will set for this historic area of downtown.

We look forward to ongoing communication with City staff and to opening a dialogue with Skyline to ensure that should the development go forward that we can provide input to mitigate any potential adverse impacts to our building and operations, particularly during construction, and advocate collectively for the adjacent properties which will experience significant impacts during construction phases. We can be reached at vision@10carden.ca or by phone at 519-780-5030.

Sincerely,

42 Carden Shared Space

cc Downtown Guelph Business Association