

Linda O'Neill
[REDACTED] Arthur Street North
Guelph ON [REDACTED]

Sunday, September 15, 2024

Eric Rempel, Planner II,
Mayor Cam Guthrie,
Guelph City Councillors
Clerks Department: clerks@guelph.ca

Re: Amendment to Zoning By-Law File No.: OZS24-001

Regarding the proposed development of the former church property contained within Arthur St. North and Mitchell Street, I have very serious concerns about the scope of this project, and the number of dwellings, containing additional ADU's, with very little green space. This centuries old, historic neighbourhood, located on the flood plain of the Speed River, is typically and mostly made up of single story cottages and bungalows, a couple of duplexes between Eramosa and Norwich St., two or three 2½ story houses, and a 6 suite apartment located at [REDACTED] Arthur St., directly behind our property. Closer to the corner of Eramosa there are 2 apartment buildings which are 3 story, and a triplex. The single detached homes at the bottom of the valley are historic builds, some dating back to the 1800's. Given the historical context of this neighbourhood, not all residents have driveways and home owners are compelled to purchase on street parking from the city, for daytime and overnight in the winter. Enforcement of this is sporadic. Bylaw Enforcement or Tickets are seldom issued. A big red flag here!

Second to parking, my foremost objection to this project, from what little clear information is being provided, is the number of units: 12 contained within 4 tall 2 ½ (or likely 3story) buildings which include ADU's, that are to be built on Arthur street. This development will take up most of the lot leaving little or no green space or trees. The same will be repeated on Mitchell, with one less dwelling unit due to the configuration of the adjacent lot and necessity for egress in case of flooding.

Mezcon's proposed development, according to definition is not Low Density, but in fact Mid Density Housing.

The term *low density* used for this development, particularly within the context of this historic neighbourhood is a misnomer. We already have low to *mid density* at the end of Arthur St. and Eramosa, which are apartment buildings, plus [REDACTED] which is a 2 ½ story 6 suit apartment.

A far more reasonable development, if we are to accept the term *low density*, would entail perhaps 4 two level condo's, or two triplexes, or 2 -3 single family houses. This would make far more sense, and would not cause tension by over populating and compressing a small area of the river valley. The sheer physicality of these proposed dwellings has been likened to our property at [REDACTED], and neighbours at [REDACTED], historic red brick homes, built circa 1912. Mezcons architecture is far more in keeping with modern builds in the South end, for instance, student dorms or other multiplex developments. What is proposed is a pastiche of elements that is a purported fit, but in

its artifice, will look quite obtrusively out of place. This is unwise urban planning, in all aspects of intention.

Another very major point of concern is the obfuscation of particular aspects, which are entirely unclear and repeatedly contradicted. One section of the proposal states the lots on Michell, 1, 2 & 3, will be open green space for tenants. However, further along the plan states these lots will be developed as well. Not much green space left over! Additionally the plan states 2 1/2 stories, which is compared to our house at [REDACTED] Arthur St. N. and our neighbour's house at [REDACTED]. However, further along it states 3 stories! Ditto for bedrooms in one suite 3 is stated, again further in plan it is upped to 4, and perhaps, again unclear, 4 in each which would come to a total of 48 bedrooms in all! How many people/students can be crammed into a 4 bedroom apartment? Given these are all rental properties, and could conceivably be sold to investors wanting to maximize profit, we could end up with far more people, or even used as Air B&B's which are now legal in the city.

The duplicity here is so misleading, one wonders exactly what is really happening on this site, with this developer and city planners!

Furthermore, the density proposed, which is termed *Low* but is in fact *Mid*, is incongruous within the surroundings of the neighbourhood, narrow width of the street, and available street parking. There are already a number of tenant occupied rental apartments on this corner of Eramosa and Arthur Street North, which cause problems. As few provide adequate parking for tenants, we will likely be facing frustration, chaos and conflict. There are also businesses, a Hair Salon, Toque publishing, and the Yoga/Pilates Studio on Eramosa whose clients all park on Arthur St. N.

Again, on the topic of parking, I recently learned that the Yoga Pilates Studio (in a former church), which fronts Eramosa and backs onto Arthur St., and which has space for two vehicles on the drive adjacent to the former church property, and in the front another two for a total of four, are expanding their studio into the lower level of the structure. This is to accommodate the new and steady increase of clients. These clients park on Arthur St., as do the clients for the hair salon which is in the red brick building on the corner of Arthur and Eramosa. There is only one parking spot for 3 businesses on the lower level, plus there are a number of apartments on the upper level. Additionally, there is a 5 apartment building on the opposite (west) side of Arthur which has 5 apartments and limited parking. Tenants often park on the street, especially overnight and during the winter when getting in and out of a narrow driveway which is on an incline, is very awkward to say the least. There are already a number of apartments at this corner area, with a number of tenants and vehicles, all of which require parking, often on the street. The density of this end of Arthur St. North is already significant.

How will additional parking requirements for 12 units with at most 8 parking spaces (not to mention visitors or perhaps overnight guests) be resolved for those of us who rely on street parking and pay for permits, without being provided a designated resident only parking space? Mitchell Street will face the same parking chaos. Does the city not recognize a serious problem here? Yes, there is transit close by. However, most, or at least many still rely on having a vehicle for transportation.

Adding to this, there are apartments on Eramosa that do not have parking and our experience is these tenants also use Arthur St. for overnight parking.

The proposed development is going to result in a parking nightmare. It is unwanted, and vastly unsuitable to this location and neighbourhood! The resulting imposition it will create on this extremely narrow street, which has parking on one side, thus making it profoundly narrow particularly in the winter, does not bode well in any way. Shoehorning an ill-fitting, unattractive project into this historic area of downtown to fulfill density requirements is going to create anger and resentment among those who will be forced to deal with this infinitely wrongheaded plan.

A far more suitable location would be in a newer neighbourhood which lends itself to the appearance and architectural style, and is located on a much wider roadway or main artery, rather than Arthur St., which in this block is short in length and narrow in width. It is without a suitable straight sightline for higher density, particularly with parked vehicles in the winter. Often when the snow plow comes through, the road is clogged with parked vehicles, putting the onus on home owners to shovel out and clear the area in front of their property. Typically the snow is moved over to the boulevard on the opposite side of the street as there is nowhere else to put it. What happens then when this boulevard is paved over with driveways for the multiplex units featured in this plan?

There is also an issue of garbage bins. On the parking side of the street bins cannot be left for pick up as there are usually cars blocking the space for the trucks to access them. Hence the bins again go to the opposite side of the street, on the boulevard, which again will cease to exist. Considering the fact that there are two obstructions where the proposed driveways are located, one is a fire hydrant, the other a large new fibre optics box, we wonder how this will be resolved.

There are numerous and serious concerns about this proposed development. Parking, although major, is not the only one.

Let's be clear in our understanding of what the intention of the project is, the scope, size, dimensions of interior spaces, number of bedrooms, bathrooms, windows and any other necessary and contingent amenities for a multiplex development. Also what is missing, and is of great concern:

- What is the price point of these units?
- Who are the intended residents – low income, supportive housing, students, the unhoused?
- Will the developer be selling any or all of these units in the future? Are there any regulations in place for this eventuality?
- Will infrastructure: water and sewer in place be enough to facilitate the large number of tenants in this proposed development, or will the street have to be dug up to upgrade and accommodate this many more bathrooms, kitchens and laundry facilities?

Lastly, how has it come to be that this large proposed development is located on the flood plain? Having lived on Arthur St. for a number of years I have seen some major flooding on the road, and in the parking lot of the church which at times became a lake. We are at the bottom of a

steep hill. Water runs downhill from Mitchell! Water coming off of Eramosa also drains down into Arthur Street. I have seen water coming up over the curbs and onto the fronts of properties at this end of the street. The sewer drains frequently become clogged with debris, garbage, leaves, snow and ice and in spring the water has nowhere to go. Additionally, cars are parked over the sewer drains, making it even more problematic.

With this proposed development we are likely to have increased flooding as densely positioned builds and mainly hard surfaces covering an area at the bottom of a hill on a flood plain, that was once somewhat capable of absorbing heavy rainfall, will increase the flooding potential.

Historically there were two two story homes on the lower part of this lot, facing Arthur Street. I am surprised and perplexed that the Grand River Authority has given the green light on this project, when other residents have been told unequivocally that footprints must remain the same.

These are all realistic and serious concerns by a property owner who lives directly across from this proposed development which will bring in a large number of tenants. We have legitimately grave apprehensions about how this will affect our wellbeing and the enjoyment of our property, as well as our property value. It's quite obvious that there will be a negative effect in all cases. Our section of downtown and along the river valley is currently bearing the brunt of the situation brought about by the numerous social agencies put in place by the County of Wellington. There are more and more disadvantaged people, unhoused, mentally ill, drug addicted, often displaying violent behaviours frequenting this area. Theft and vandalism has escalated. Just recently we had a small security camera that was positioned to monitor our front porch stolen. We ordered a newer, more high tech security, surveillance system. The very first night it recorded a hooded masked male make a bee line down our walk, likely with the intention of "liberating" my husband's bike that is secured to the side of the house. Attempted theft was recorded and foiled. This is happening on a regular basis in our neighbourhood. If social housing is one mandate for this proposed development, then I have tremendous unease over what it will do to the safety, social fabric, and property values of both Arthur and Mitchell Street, and surrounds.

Linda O'Neill,

Homeowner, Resident [REDACTED] Arthur St. North since January, 2001