

Guelph, September 24, 2024

Marcel Schlaf
Linda O'Neill
■ Arthur Street North
Guelph, ON ■

Re: Amendment to Zoning By-Law File No.: [OZS24-001](#)

Dear Sir:

We as the residents and owners of the house at the address indicated above are writing to express our severe concerns and vehement opposition to the development of 8 Mitchell Street (effectively on Arthur Street North) as planned and proposed in File No.: OZS24-001.

Our house as well as that of our neighbour at ■ Arthur Street North are located directly opposite the proposed development. Behind our two houses is Arthur Street North ■ with 6 apartment rental units connected to the street by a laneway between our house and ■ Arthur Street North.

1) **General Comments:**

As the submission states, currently “Arthur Street contains an eclectic mix of smaller single detached dwellings, townhouse dwellings, as well as 2 to 2 ½ storey dwellings. Dwellings fronting on Mitchell Street are primarily larger single detached homes ranging from 1 to 2 ½ storeys.”

The term “**eclectic**” is here used as a pretense and “*code speak*” – as in “*because it would really matter what we build there, it’s crazy and screwed-up down there anyway, so let’s just do what we want*” – to allow the construction of two new uninspired massive new buildings with no green-spaces or trees into a neighbourhood that is in fact a historic area that organically grew over the last 100+ years with its own unique character.

The proposed development consists of two large new buildings with 12 units (with 4 + 3 + 3 = 10 bedrooms/building times 2 = 40 bedrooms and new residents total !!!) with minimal set-backs and green spaces, rather than “**eclectic**” (semi-)detached single family dwellings and therefore does not at all fit the characteristics of the street and neighbourhood and would therefore **NOT** “*be a good overall fit on this eclectic street.*” Given that a total of 12 separate dwellings in a very constrained space are proposed, labelling the development as “low-density” is completely misleading and dishonest. In

fact, what we are really looking at here is high-density “student housing”.

The building elevations are not at all in keeping with the style and character of the neighbourhood and are in fact – by the own admission of the proponent – actually 3 full storeys rather than the 2 ½ storeys of the extant building for which the top ½ storeys are at most small gabled roofs.

Overall, it appears that the proposed large building are in fact designed for a south end subdivision and be located on a major street/road/throughfare (i.e., carbon copies of what was build by the same company in new South end developments, e.g., on Gordon Street), **but are completely unsuitable on what is with parking on side a spatially very constrained small one-lane side-street.** The proposed build may be convenient and cost-effective for the builder and maximize their profits, but would do so at the expense of the already present residents and their homes, i.e., very negatively impact affect our own property values and irreversibly change the character of the neighbourhood for the worse in an unacceptable way.

A more reasonable, acceptable, and possibly even welcome (!) development more fitting with the character of the neighbourhood would thus be (semi-)detached low-rise single-family homes or limited number of townhouses **in each case without ADU’s.**

In addition, we have several “technical” concerns detailed further in the following.

2) **Criticism of basic lay-out:**

Given the fact that the whole street and the lot itself are – as stated – on the flood plain and – in part – under GRCA jurisdiction, the overall proposed lay-out is in our opinion completely illogical and it is very surprising to us that the GRCA approved the development as proposed. **It would be far more logical and coherent with the mandate of the GRCA to reverse the layout for any future build, i.e., to have any new structures front onto Mitchell Street, i.e., locate any new buildings on the higher ground, 2-3 m further up from potential flooding,** which would also give any associated garden/yard/patio spaces Southern rather than Northern exposure and automatically alleviate any ingress/egress safety concerns.

3) **Serious concern: Parking !!!**

What will the street parking situation be like, both during and – more importantly – long-term after completion of the proposed build ?

Present parking regulations and restrictions for the relevant stretch of Arthur Street North allow 2 h daytime parking from 0800-1700 h and no overnight parking from November

to April, unless a special permit has been issued by the City of Guelph.

For historic reasons and like a limited but not insignificant number of houses in and around the downtown core, our house at [REDACTED] Arthur Street North as well as that of our neighbours at [REDACTED] Arthur Street North (both built ~1911) do not have a driveway or a garage. We therefore have been granted such a special permit to park on the street and pay the City of Guelph a monthly (daytime parking) and yearly (overnight parking) fee for this privilege.

However, the parking restriction are only sporadically, if at all, enforced, which effectively means that the street is often full with parked vehicles either belonging to non-residents working downtown or to residents, who actually do have parking spots but do not use them for convenience reason. Being fully aware of the lack of enforcement all these take advantage of the situation and park illegally without consequences – often all day and sometimes for days at a time. In addition, visitors to the businesses on Eramosa (Good Days Digital, Tuque Magazine, Pilates in Guelph) also park on the street again at times all day without any 2 hour limit enforcement.

This often poses a significant challenge to us and our neighbours, as we then have nowhere to go and have to park far away from our houses (at times hundreds of meters) so that others, who do not even live on the street can park illegally for free for extended periods of time and overnight. This is of particular concern in the Wintertime during the presence of snow packs that further limit the overall available space.

Notwithstanding the fact that the site-plan shows 3 parking spots for each unit, it is also clear that the two 5 m wide and thus very constrained “double” spots in front of each proposed unit will be insufficient (the average width of a car is ~ 2m), as one spot will always block access to the garage. Reasonably expecting that some tenants will have more than one car/unit, and with a total of 12 units there will potentially be 24 cars (or many more given the actual total number of bedrooms and anticipated number of tenants !!) that will have to be accommodated. The tenants will then park on the street across from the building which will create a physically and spatially impossible situation on the street. **There simply is not enough room to accommodate this many people and cars.**

Also: where would any visitors to the buildings park ?

Furthermore, I here also feel myself compelled to pre-empt possible/conceivable comments such as *“if the owners/residents of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Arthur Street North are concerned about on-street parking they should not have bought the house in the place or rent a parking spot from the city in the municipal lot at the corner of Arthur Street North and Norwich Street Bridge”*. This would be very callous, as it would mean that people who do not live and pay taxes on this street would be given preference over actual long-time residents, who by the way are the prime perpetual customers of all the downtown

businesses within walking distance.

In a wider and related context:

Provide dedicated and located on-street resident-only parking spaces for residents of historic homes without driveway in and around the downtown core with actual parking enforcement. Edmonton, Alberta does this. Frankfurt, Germany does this. London, UK does this. So why not the City of Guelph ?

... this will become really important in the not too distant future, if/when the federal and/or provincial governments make electric cars mandatory. Given our climate and Winters these will have to be plugged in into a charger overnight, which for houses without driveways will only be possible, if a dedicated and located on street parking spot is allocated by the City and enforced (... at least overnight from 1700-0800 h).

I/we would buy an electric car now, if this were to be implemented. How “green” is the City of Guelph really ? This is a litmus test for it ...

4) Fire hydrant, hydro poles and cable/telephone connection box on the North side of the street.

The proposed site plan appears to be completely ignorant of these structures that would obstruct access to the proposed driveways and garages ... ?

5) Garbage Cans

The proposed site plan does not show any provisions made for the storage of garbage cans.

In the context of the parking issues referred to above I also need to point out that the South side of the street is routinely “parked full” after 1800 h until 0900 h the next morning. This means that the residents of [REDACTED] Arthurs Street North have to put their garbage cans on boulevards on the North side of the street. Regardless of what development will occur this will have to continue.