

Subject: 8 Mitchell Street Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment File OZS24-011, 2024-445

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I am writing to request a pause in the development of the 8 Mitchell St project. While I fully support the densification of this property, **I believe it serves everyone's interests to send the current proposal back for reconsideration** and further planning.

When my family moved to Guelph in 2020, we were drawn by its historic charm and vibrant city atmosphere. On a fine day that May, we walked along the river, through Arthur Street, and into Wolfond Park. We were captivated by the old-world character of this area—not another same-same subdivision, but a relaxed community neighborhood where modern life is interwoven with a rich history, reminiscent of fine European cities and true to the founders of Guelph's vision of a city fit for royalty.

In March 2021, we bought a property on Mitchell Street, a 1903 red brick classic worthy of care and preservation. It took us 18 months to design a home that complemented its character. Our modern addition was intentionally placed well back and to the side, allowing the streetscape to retain its form.

For 8 Mitchell, while I would have preferred for Spruce Living to repurpose the church—as is often done in Europe—I **would support any development that truly fits the character and potential of this site**. Unfortunately in my view, both the plan and the revision fail to do so. Moreover, this proposal appears to fall short of its potential to meet Ontario's population growth goals, while simultaneously furthering challenges with resident parking and likely endangering neighboring mature trees, some well over 50 years old.

I don't like to criticize, but this proposal feels like a missed opportunity. Few sites like 8 Mitchell exist so close to downtown. Rezoning the site to RL.1 has presupposed it to semi-detached structures with ADUs, limiting both parking and design flexibility. This constrains what can be achieved. This property is uniquely suited for a higher-capacity, mixed-use, and community-focused development with affordable units and adequate parking, not only for the complex being built but to add rental parking lots for neighboring properties that lack them. And adding those four parking spaces on Mitchell, per the revision, does not help given that any additional ADUs would get priority.

I recognize that the developer needs to make a profit, and I am confident there are better ways to enhance profitability. I don't think it's unreasonable to still honor the needs of the community in light of the rezoning of the plot from community to private zoning. Taking the time to create something larger, more thoughtful, and with enduring character can benefit Spruce Living's rental income, honor the neighboring community, and serve the goals of the city and province as a whole.

For example, a wide, low-rise building with underground or side parking, coupled with a generous front garden, could achieve higher density while preserving the neighborhood's

character. There are excellent precedents for the structure in Guelph, like 1 Delhi, a simple yet elegant design that blends functionality with aesthetics. A similar approach could work here, as could consultations with other industry players. I believe the community has the motivation, professional skills and insight to collaborate with the developer to make it happen.

In closing, like the care we took in our planning of our own home and the accomplishments of our builder to bring it to life, I believe Spruce Living and Mezcon could become proud of their accomplishments by truly achieving something the area needs, provides superior income, and that the city can be proud of.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Martin Cleaver

Recommendations to Council:

That Guelph City Council defer the decision regarding the 8 Mitchell Street Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment File OZS24-011, 2024-445 and request the applicant work with the community to consider alternative solutions to issues related to building design, tree preservation and parking; and

That Guelph City Council restrict on-street parking on Arthur Street North to residents with permits only; and

That Guelph City Council undertake a heritage conservation district study to be led and funded by the Wolfond Residents Association; and

That, in accordance with Section 40.1 (1) of the Ontario Heritage Act, Guelph City Council pass a by-law to designate the area bounded by Delhi Street, Eramosa Road, the Speed River and Spring Street/the Homewood property as a heritage conservation study area for a period of one year in order to halt the erection, demolition or removal of buildings or structures in the heritage conservation study area.