

December 10, 2024

Re: 8 Mitchell Street Proposed Zoning By-Law Amendment File OZS24-011, 2024-445

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

I am writing to request that Guelph City Council defer the decision on this application to a future date. While I support the use of this site for multi-unit housing, I believe that this project would have a detrimental impact on our community due to its unsympathetic design and additional pressure on an already stressed parking situation in our neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood has numerous examples of infill, additions, renovations, and alterations that, for the most part, are sympathetic to the surrounding architecture, whereas the proposed units are not in keeping with the character of our historic neighbourhood. There are examples of multi-unit residential projects in Guelph that have safe, off-street parking. Despite repeated requests to the developer, elevation details have not been provided. The site plan, however, shows projecting garages and parking that dominates the front yard. Our neighbourhood has a special character that features buildings close to the sidewalk with side and rear driveways. Respectfully, I request that parking for the new development be contained and expanded into the side and rear yards of the proposed units, avoiding the appearance of sub-urban driveways in our historic area. Additionally, the proposal has the potential to damage and/or remove a number of mature trees that contribute to the neighbourhood canopy.

While the proposal meets minimum parking requirements according to the zoning by-law, it does not consider the heightened pressure it would place on an already over-taxed street parking. Properties directly adjacent to the proposed development have no private parking, given their historic nature, and rely on street parking that is in demand not just by these residents, but those visiting the downtown and businesses on Eramosa Road. The addition of four parking spots to the rear of the units will not be enough to provide parking for the new residents and I request that alternative solutions be considered. Restricted on-street parking for residents should also be a tool considered by the City of Guelph to help alleviate parking concerns.

Elevation drawings for this project are not available, yet based on other proposals by the same developers, this cookie-cutter development does not respond to the existing character of our neighbourhood. With no requirement for a site plan for this property, and therefore no opportunity to participate in public process, I request that more information about the building designs be shared with the community with the intention to agree on a design that contributes to the character of our neighbourhood, rather than detracting from it.

A development on this property that addresses increased density, as well as fitting the character and potential of the site, can be achieved. We, who live in this neighbourhood, are willing to work with the developers to arrive at collaborative solutions to the issues raised herein.

I reiterate my request that Guelph City Council defer the decision on this application to a future date to provide time for the developer and the community to work together, rather than place us in an adversarial position at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Further, to provide clean and consistent guidance for future development, and to conserve our neighbourhood's unique character, **I support the undertaking of a heritage conservation district study for the Wolfond Park area** and the passing of the study area by-law to restrict development for one year. Please see below for my recommendations regarding this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Ziegler
Arthur Street North Resident.

Recommendations to Council:

That Guelph City Council defer the decision regarding the 8 Mitchell Street Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment File OZX24-011, 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 Resident's 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.