

December 5, 2024

cc: Clerks Department: City Clerks

Subject: December 10, 2024 Planning Council

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

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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 and understand the need for densification, I believe it serves everyone's interests to send the current proposal back for reconsideration and further planning.

When I moved to Guelph in 1997 I was drawn to the Wolfond neighbourhood because of its eclectic assortment of historic houses, the parks, the river, the tree canopy, the narrow streets, and hills, and all the diversity I found enticingly appealing. So vastly different from Edmonton Alberta! I started looking for a house that was within my budget and I found a study red brick house built in 1912 at [REDACTED] Arthur Street North that ticked all my boxes.

Now I am greatly dismayed with the proposed build of the Arthur Mitchell property by *Spruce Living*. Firstly, let's be clear. The name here is a misnomer. There is nothing Spruce or Green in this proposal. The denotation and connotation are a total misnomer. There will be little if any green space. There will be paved over boulevards where there was once green space to soak up excess water flow from heavy rains. There will be an absence of trees where there are currently large majestic black walnut and sugar maples, as well as eventual loss of neighbouring trees that will succumb to eventual demise from their severed root systems. We will be faced with an obstructing view of modern faux stone facades, forward facing garages, concrete driveways filled with stacked parked vehicles (although not enough space to accommodate all for the number of residents) and no front gardens, trees, or shrubs.

If this does not seem out of context with the neighbourhood, I cannot imagine what does? What Spruce Living is planning on inserting into this site is the same build they do everywhere. It's basically a one style fits all, with a few minor modifications. There is no thought or consideration to the aesthetics of a community, one such as ours; no artistry or style in the design to make a complimentary build that would fulfill the requirements of density, keeping it LOW, but also site- specific, and respectful of the natural environment.

At this point in time, more than ever, we need our natural environment, our green spaces, our trees to provide shade and cooling, areas that are not paved over to soak up heavy rains (that could become increasingly heavier with climate change) just as much as we need to build more houses. There are more intelligent and environmentally friendlier ways to go about this than giving developers free rein to buy up properties regardless of whether or not they are a workable fit within the community, and allowing them to proceed ad hoc.

Added to this will be the major problem of traffic and parking on a narrow street that is already suffering from low availability due to the number of residents who do not have driveways (we at 166 included) as well as businesses, and people who park to do shopping etc. downtown. If Spruce Living proceeds with their plan to develop with 40+ bedrooms, and perhaps adds an additional 4 parking spots to the back at Mitchell (temporarily?), which would still be significantly insufficient, the parking pressure will become chaotic, disruptive, and potentially hostile. As will the traffic, especially trying to exit off onto Eramosa during rush hour traffic, which has become exceedingly heavy as of late, and is bound to become more so.

I therefore request that more information about the building designs be shared with the community with the intention to arrive at a design that contributes to the character of our neighbourhood, rather than destroying it. I believe that development on this property can be accomplished in a manner that works well for the community as well as providing increased density. **The neighbourhood is willing to work with the developers to arrive at collaborative solutions to the issues raised.**

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

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 designates areas of Arthur Street to **Resident Only Parking** 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.

Sincerely,

Linda O'Neill,

cc: Clerks Department, City Clerks

Dear City Officials;

I am writing once again to restate the critical issue of parking, which has been ongoing for some years but is about to become extremely exacerbated by the proposed Spruce Living, 8 Mitchell development (OZS24-011). This issue was addressed by my husband Marcel Schlaf and neighbour Sarah Wootton, both of whom delegated at the Oct. 8th Council Meeting.

The following is a reply received by Sarah Wootton, and Marcel Schlaf from you, Mayor Guthrie with regards to issuing resident designated parking on Arthur:

"Before permits are a policy position that council could consider, a city wide on-street parking study is required. This was already discussed publicly at a council meeting last year. To initiate this possibility, a fulsome consultation and engagement is needed, and this has been already embedded into the 2024-2027 multiyear budget. I can confirm that this work is still in the budget at this time."

The present situation on Arthur Street between Norwich St. and Eramosa, in terms of parking, has not changed. It remains insufficient to meet the needs of residents who do not have driveways and must therefore rely on street availability. Given the number of residents who do not have driveways, which are 5, and the number of apartment tenants that also have insufficient parking, as well as businesses and downtown shoppers etc., I once again advise a seriously considered rethink of the havoc, chaos, frustration and anger you will be foisting upon our neighbourhood, particularly, but not exclusively in terms of parking. This recent response Mayor Guthrie is far beyond what could conceivably be regarded as an acceptable solution to parking. Having to wait until possibly 2027 for any resolution to the situation, for those of us without driveways, and who rely on street parking, seems flippant and insensitive, as it will create an intolerable situation for many residents of both Arthur and Mitchell Streets if the Spruce Living project goes ahead as proposed.

I have lived at [REDACTED] Arthur Street since January 31 2001. The biggest change in this neighbourhood was the closing of the Norwich Street Bridge to traffic. This small community, with narrow streets was never designed to accommodate a large volume of traffic. An artifact of this era is a lack of driveways in some of the homes, particularly along Arthur St. North between Eramosa and Norwich Street. We, at [REDACTED], as well as our neighbour at [REDACTED] rely on street parking. Once Spruce Living builds their 40+ bedroom development with insufficient parking for residents, let alone potential guests, parking in this area will become tantamount to anarchy!

In our personal experience as residents, we have lived through some very trying times when by-law has been called and not enforced or insufficiently enforced. Or the enforcement has turned the tables on us resulting in vandalism to our property, our home and our vehicle. When folks become frustrated, angry, or feel they are being inconvenienced, they unfortunately resort to unseemly behaviours. I encourage the mayor and council to seriously consider exactly what they are imposing upon this neighbourhood. Exactly what the increased strain and conflict will result in when competition for limited parking spaces results in when homeowners who have lived in this neighbourhood for many years, who in the winter shovel out an area return home and have nowhere close by to park

because someone else has taken that cleared spot. Perhaps someone like me who will be 74 next month, who returns with groceries and will have to drive around trying to find somewhere convenient where I don't have to trudge too far. What about accessibility? Are there no provisions for that in this city? Is it too much to ask not to have to wait until 2027 to have some small provisions for resident only parking if modern densification moves into our compact heritage neighbourhood?

What we need to at least make this compatible:

- Resident only parking spaces
- On Street Parking should not be available to Spruce Living Tenants. Spruce Living is responsible to provide their tenants with parking, storage for bikes, garbage bins, etc.

If the city allows Spruce Living to impose upon this decidedly historic neighbourhood a build which neither fits the character of the street in any way, shape or form, nor contributes to the fabric of our community, it will create divisiveness. If the city goes ahead with the zoning approval as it stands, rather than taking into consideration the needs and social compatibility of citizens who already live, work, and contribute to this city I believe it will quite conceivably diminish your future legacy. Preservation and conservation should remain key in urban planning and development, to sustain the fabric of our lovely downtown neighbourhoods in all their historically unique and eclectic character!

Densification is necessary, but not at the cost of degradation.

If changes are not made we have no doubt that this will diminish the value of existing adjacent properties, it will detract from the lovely urban streetscape, the green space of boulevards and trees that already exist on this property and that will cease to exist on adjacent properties when the build is completed. All of this will detract from the enjoyment and future ease of living for residents therein.

Sincerely,

Linda O'Neill,

■ Arthur St. N.