

**To**

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Members of City Council  
Clerks Department: clerks@guelph.ca  
December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

**on**

**AMENDMENT to ZONING BY-LAW No:OZS24-001  
8 MITCHELL STREET, GUELPH**

**by**

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[REDACTED] Mitchell**

# PROPOSED ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT for 8 MITCHELL STREET

## GENTLE DENSITY – WHAT NONSENSE

The existing resident population of the block bounded by Mitchell, Eramosa, Arthur and Norwich is approximately 45 adults, +/- 5 children, a few cats and several dogs. If Spruce Living's proposed development has 48 bedrooms ( and this is unclear even in the Staff Review and Planning Analysis ) ... in one single step, the population of the neighbourhood block will more than **DOUBLE**. This is not **GENTLE DENSITY!** This is an **ENORMOUS CHANGE** and the neighbourhood has an absolute right to be concerned about what this means. The frustration is that Spruce Living is hiding behind a flawed planning process that allows a residential development company to force a zone change without clarifying any of the technical details of their proposal:

- How many people will be living in their development? They don't know.
- How many bedrooms will there be? They're not sure.
- How will parking actually work? They don't know.
- How many trees will they replace in lieu of those removed? They're not sure.
- How will garbage be handled? They're not sure.
- How will snow removal be addressed? They're not sure.

Since the province has overridden the local planning process and authority, the purpose of 'site planning' has been marginalized to be meaningless. Once the current zone change is complete, Spruce Living has an **as-of-right** position that allows them to initiate yet another Zone Amendment. If the City tries to resist these on the neighbourhood's behalf, the City's position is that they will lose through the provincial Tribunal Process, making any local control over the future of our neighbourhoods and our city non-existent. **A FLAWED PROCESS!!!**

## PRECEDENT SETTING

The problem for the Wolfond neighbourhood, and the adjoining neighbourhoods on the south side of Eramosa, is that there are a **number of redevelopment opportunities**, similar to #8 Mitchell, throughout both of these neighbourhoods. If the Spruce Living proposal goes through unopposed, unchallenged and unchanged, every other mediocre development project will demand a similar outcome. This is a nightmare scenario! The ADU idea is in its early stages and the impact of this type of residential planning is, at a minimum experimental, and in the extreme, the death of existing neighbourhoods particularly ones with heritage value. It would suggest to any rationale person that #8 Mitchell should test the process by limiting intensification to a modest solution to access if this type of development enhances neighbourhoods or destroys

access if this type of development enhances neighbourhoods or destroys neighbourhoods!

## **RESIDENTIAL AS A BUSINESS**

Spruce Living is **not** coming to the Wolfond neighbourhood as a new friendly neighbour. Just the opposite. They have no altruistic motive to provide affordable accommodation, quality housing or to make any contribution to the well-being of the existing neighbourhood. **Spruce Living is coming as a BUSINESS.** They are absentee landlords, who live some place else, and will not be personally impacted by what they create, build or operate. The driving force behind what Spruce Living does .... is **PROFIT** ... profit based on a business strategy of the least amount of capital investment and the highest possible rental return.

They see an opportunity in an established, well-functioning community, where past and current residents have made an **enormous effort and investment** to preserve, maintain and upgrade a wonderful historically significant neighbourhood. They see a neighbourhood that is family-friendly and safe! They see all of the advantages, but without any intention of contributing to a **neighbourhood-building process** that the existing residents have nourished for decades. Spruce Living had a choice. It could have purchased the former church property, built five single family dwellings, with 5 associated ADUs (thus meeting the City's **GENTLE DENSITY** goal), and turned a tidy profit. **Not their business model.** The proposal put forward to date, is **four rooming houses**, disguised as cheap shoddy semi-detached buildings, jammed with as many people as possible and making zero contribution to the wonderful neighbourhood around them.

If Spruce Living was any other business ... **any other business** ... they would have to explicitly describe and quantify **the impacts** they are inflicting on their immediate neighbours. They would also have to clearly demonstrate, to the existing neighbourhood's satisfaction, how they intend to **ameliorate those impacts!** Instead, they are hiding behind an ill-conceived planning process, which allows them to move forward with a second-rate proposal, with no understanding or any assurance that everything is going to work out OK in the end.

## **PLANNING and DESIGN ISSUES:**

### **Impact #1 – Residential Capacity, Cars, Parking, and Traffic**

This problem has been raised and discussed at great length by several people in the neighbourhood. The whole idea that a proponent can put forward a commercial enterprise and not provide the most relevant and simplest of details such as a parking

strategy is absurd. The one car per dwelling unit criteria is ridiculous when every bedroom in each dwelling unit can be rented individually. The number of people living in these units translates directly into the number of cars that will be parking on-street and moving through and around the neighbourhood.

Unit #1

Primary residence: # of bedrooms	? (unclear but probably 3+)
ADU #1 basement: # of bedrooms	3
ADU #2 second floor: # of bedrooms	4
ADU #3 stand-alone/Mitchell frontage:	<u>3</u> (2 <sup>nd</sup> zone amendment)
subtotal	+/-13

Unit #2

Primary residence: # of bedrooms	? (unclear but probably 3+)
ADU #1 basement: # of bedrooms	3
ADU #2 second floor: # of bedrooms	4
ADU #3 stand-alone/Mitchell frontage:	<u>3</u> (2 <sup>nd</sup> zone amendment)
subtotal	+/-13

Unit #3

Primary residence: # of bedrooms	? (unclear but probably 3+)
ADU #1 basement: # of bedrooms	3
ADU #2 second floor: # of bedrooms	4
ADU #3 stand-alone/Mitchell frontage:	<u>3</u> (2 <sup>nd</sup> zone amendment)
subtotal	+/-13

Unit #4

Primary residence: # of bedrooms	? (unclear but probably 3+)
ADU #1 basement: # of bedrooms	3
ADU #2 second floor: # of bedrooms	4
ADU #3 stand-alone/Mitchell frontage:	<u>3</u> (2 <sup>nd</sup> zone amendment)
subtotal	+/-13

**TOTAL RESIDENTS**

+/-52 PEOPLE

**TOTAL PARKING PROVIDED**

+/-16 SPACES (including the 4 off Mitchell)

*'The requested site-specific provision would allow for a total of 8 additional bedrooms across the four lots proposed on the subject lands. Staff noted that there are no provisions regulating the maximum number of bedrooms in the main unit, so it is **not possible to calculate the total number of bedrooms permitted** in the Zoning By-law in the development.'* Staff Review & Planning Analysis, December, 2024

It's reasonable to believe that as many as three-quarters of these new residents will have cars which means +/- 40 additional vehicles in the neighbourhood. Spruce Living intends to provide 3 spaces with each unit for a total of 12 parking spaces. Since their initial submission, Spruce Living has proposed 4 additional parking spaces off the Mitchell frontage without any guarantee that these wouldn't be eliminated by the 3 possibly 4 pending ADUs that will surely follow, on the Mitchell frontage, once the initial zone change has been approved. This leaves 24 cars roaming the neighbourhood aimlessly looking for on-street parking which is already beyond capacity, most days of the week. It should also be noted that one of the proposed parking spaces is in an indoor garage, requiring one of the residents to move their vehicle every time the car in the garage needs to get out. This situation is already playing out by several existing residents in the neighbourhood with two or more cars in a single driveway. This juggling act usually means that one or both of the cars are parked on the street to ensure convenient and timely departures.

In summary, the proposed density will, without fail, exacerbate an already existing parking and traffic problem. Adding 4 spaces on Mitchell will do nothing to alleviate the current or potential problem. Based on the Staff Review & Planning Analysis, even planning staff are unsure of what the potential impact of density might mean to on-street parking and traffic. **If there is any single issue that should defer the proposed development until a better answer to the issue is found ... this is it!**

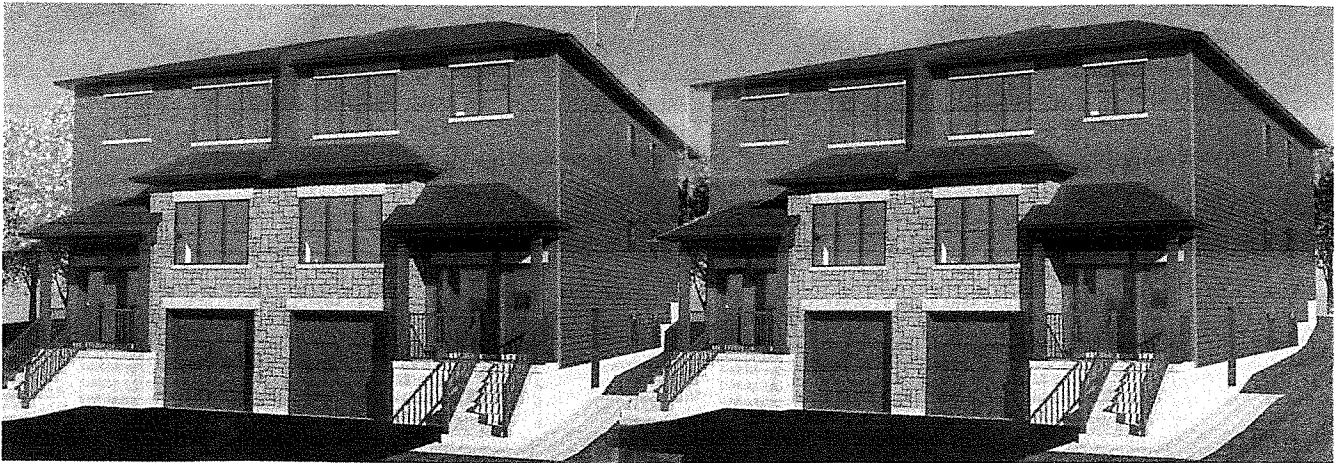
## **Impact #2 – Building Massing, Building Form, and Landscape Design**

*'The proposed semi-detached units would maintain similar form, scale, height and siting to the existing two-storey dwelling across the street from the subject lands. As the proposed structures are semi-detached dwellings, and two storeys each, the massing of the proposed structures would be larger than many nearby dwellings but would maintain the low-density character of the neighbourhood. The proposed setbacks of the dwellings would maintain or exceed the requirements of RL.1 Zoning. Notably the front yard setback of the proposed dwellings is significantly greater than that of existing dwellings fronting onto Arthur in order to comply with newer zoning requirements and to accommodate adequate off-street parking.*

*While there are notable differences between proposed structures and existing structures fronting onto Arthur Street North, staff are of the opinion that the proposed structures maintain the form, scale, height, setbacks, massing, appearance, and siting that are characteristic of low-density residential*

*neighbourhoods throughout Guelph. The proposed structures are compatible with the buildings in the immediate vicinity.' Staff Review & Planning Analysis, December, 2024*

**What utter nonsense. An offensive conclusion, OPINION and statement!!** Unless the new proposal is different from the one shown below, nothing about the proposed architecture, siting or landscape is in any way compatible with or reminiscent of the surrounding neighbourhood. At the October, Saturday gathering with Spruce Living, even the proponents apologized for how incompatible the schematics were in terms of visual character and appearance. Spruce Living referred to them as draftsman's sketches. Nothing about these schematics is informed by the existing streetscape, adjacent buildings, residential landscapes, heritage neighbourhood ... and they're **UGLY**.



Without exception, every residence on Arthur North has a little bit of green space in front of the house, some completed with exceptional creativity and design! The proposed development will have ... **an exposed parking lot**. There will be no opportunity for street trees, at least none that will survive, making the parking for 8 cars and garbage bins totally exposed to the street. The idea that this would '*maintain or exceed the requirements of RL.1 Zoning*' ... may be in area, but definitely not in character or quality.

What's bad? Everything!

- **roof-lines** – although there are some cottages with shallow hip roofs, most of the roofs on two-and-a-half and three story structures are steep +/- 45 degree roof-lines, similar to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century homes immediately across the street.
- **windows shape** - there are no existing houses with square window shapes or the modern version of a picture window.
- **side walls** – appear bland and featureless more like warehousing than

residential. These should be masonry, if at all possible.

- **pseudo porches** – although there are some small porches, most are large enough to hold a couple of chairs and columns and railings are wood not wrought iron.
- **materials** – neighbourhood materials are stone and masonry with some frame, ... no aluminum siding except on soffits, eaves and fascia. The manufactured stone is appropriate, however there are many different qualities of this material and selection is important.



The Surrey Street example above is the closest real-life example we could find that

looks like the proposed Spruce Living schematic. This may be compatible on a commercial arterial, but not in a mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century historical neighbourhood. Spruce Living can do better and a neighbourhood, which has spent millions of dollars restoring and maintaining historical homes, also deserves better.

There are several excellent examples of new infill in the neighbourhood as shown below.



Spruce Living needs to look to these for inspiration and provide a more appropriate compatible architecture than their current submission would suggest.