



June 6th, 2025

City of Guelph
1 Carden St, Guelph
ON, N1H 3A1

Attn: Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council

Re: Ward West Heritage Conservation District Study

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,

Fusion Homes is an active home builder and owner of land within Downtown Guelph, in the area being considered by the Ward West Heritage Conservation District Study (HCD) prepared by ASI for the City of Guelph.

The purpose of this letter is to provide written comments on the HCD Study for Council and staff consideration as part of Council's Planning meeting on June 10, 2025. The recommended HCD boundary currently includes lands making up the Metalworks master-planned community located on the west side of Arthur Street between Elizabeth Street and Cross Street.

As a Guelph-based developer with deep ties to the community, our goal has always been to preserve the character and history that makes our downtown unique, while balancing this with needed and value-added growth. The Metalworks site holds deep historical significance as it was once home to various industrial and manufacturing uses that shaped early Guelph. Fusion Homes has approached the redevelopment of this site with sensitivity to that history, incorporating the original stone building from the 1800s as a central and preserved feature of the master-planned community.

Through thoughtful design and restoration efforts, the completed phases have respected and celebrated the industrial heritage while bringing vibrancy and appropriately scaled housing to the downtown core and close to transportation. This heritage-conscious

approach has been consistent across the four phases already completed, blending modern architecture with historic character.

Given our stewardship to heritage at this location, we feel further heritage protection of the Metalworks site is not necessary and may add unnecessary complexities, uncertainty, and red tape, all of which hinder our ability to build housing. Looking ahead, Fusion Homes is working on plans for Phase 5, the final and most iconic phase of the Metalworks community. This phase has been anticipated by the City for years and represents a continuation of the vision that has already been established on the site.

Phase 1 of the Metalworks community began prior to 2015, following extensive planning and collaboration with the City, and was approved through a comprehensive zoning by-law amendment for the larger master planned community and site plan approval process. These approvals laid the foundation for a cohesive and thoughtfully scaled community that integrates heritage preservation with modern urban development. Phase 5 may require additional comprehensive review with the City for additional density to address current site restrictions and meet today's housing demands.

We certainly appreciate the importance of preserving the historical value of the HCD, to which we have contributed careful architecture, design and preservation efforts at Metalworks. However, for the reasons described above, we do not feel it is appropriate for the Metalworks lands to be included as part of the HCD. Metalworks represents high-rise contemporary development that is largely built out and which has always maintained and respected the important character and history of the surrounding area. The repurposed stone building, currently home to Spring Mill Distillery, was very carefully curated to ensure representation of the historic value of the area and the sites former use will always be maintained. In addition, the building is also protected under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

While it is our recommendation that Metalworks be excluded from the HCD boundary, in the case it remains, we request the study be amended to more accurately acknowledge the site. For instance, the description of Arthur Street South on Page 87 should recognize the development that exists, and that is further planned for, on the west side of the street

which is of decidedly different character compared to the low-rise residential nature on the east side of Arthur Street.

We further request that Figure 79, which shows the Metalworks Phase 5 site as “Commercial”, be amended to “Mid-Rise/High-Rise Residential” as well as noting that the site is intended for future high-rise residential development. We also recommend the description of the Ward West Character Area (Page 27/28) be amended to acknowledge post-2014 development that has occurred in the area, including Metalworks.

Prior to the HCD Study being approved we are requesting further consultation with ASI and City staff to discuss the above noted recommendations. In the meantime, we would request that Council defer the approval of the HCD Study pending the adjustments that we feel are necessary to exclude Metalworks as a place with character distinct to what the HCD Study seeks to protect, or at least to acknowledge Metalworks as an anomalous contemporary place within the boundary, which will continue to evolve in the near future.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss our comments in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Fusion Homes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Scott', written in a cursive style.

Ryan Scott
Senior Vice President, Development & Finance