

October 1, 2020

Dear Mayor Guthrie

RE: Baker District revised placement of the Library

I discovered during the Covid lock down that stock piling library books should have been on my list with the toilet paper. Reading on a device after a day of zoom meetings was not how I wanted to spend my evenings. Placing holds and outdoor pick up fulfilled a need but didn't replace browsing the stacks and displays. I don't know what I am looking for until I see it.

I am pleased to see a standalone central library. I acknowledge the compromise that a major public building does not front on a major street or terminate the vista of Eramosa Road. However, there a number of advantages the repositioning offers.

Foremost, I was always concerned about how a public library under a residential building would overcome the conflicting functions. A library is all open and welcoming, but a residence is a private fortress.

The new position allows the library to be a pavilion building with all sides being the front. The back of house functions (delivery and parking entrance) discreetly screen the County parking area. The narrow "L-shape" footprint makes mews and plaza spaces around it. They remind me of older parts of European cities where the car isn't king. A public building with this much porosity also creates the maximum amount of frontage transforming the alleyways into streets. It will scaffold the whole district. It is quite ingenious.

With the library much closer to St George's Square, with some deft urban design moves during the update of the square, the pedestrian realm would easily connect directly into the heart of downtown.

The smaller plaza on Wyndham Street would take on a different but no less important function than envisioned in the original master plan. As the downtown grows and intensifies, there will be an increasing demand for informal every day outdoor urban living spaces. The need for safe places to gather outside was certainly brought home this spring.

It is bold livable city building.

I urge you and members of council to support this project.

Sincerely,

Lisa Mactaggart

Guelph