

From: sandy weir

Sent: Sunday, September 22, 2024 10:13 PM

To: Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>; Trosow, Sam <strosow@london.ca>; Morgan, Josh <joshmorgan@london.ca>; City of London, Mayor <mayor@london.ca>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Permit stacked townhouses

I would like to have my letter added to the agenda regarding item 3. Scheduled item 3.6c on page 412 of the agenda from September 10, 2024: Permit stacked townhouses up to four storeys in height along all streets classified as Neighbourhood Connectors.

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed bylaw permitting four-storey stacked townhouses on neighbourhood connector streets. While I understand the need for new housing in London, I am deeply concerned by this mad rush to change the fabric of our community neighbourhoods without the appropriate urban planning, community consultation and long-term impact analysis. Rushing this decision risks a forever detrimental impact to neighbourhoods without a do-over. Side note: I have a business that benefits from the student population and I am a two degree Western grad. I am not anti-student.

I would like to address the impact of the changes to Old North. This community is a unique neighborhood that has historical significance and is populated with both permanent residents and students. The balance is a continuous struggle to manage the needs of tax paying families who volunteer, raise families, pay taxes and personally invest in the betterment of the community and students and their landlords. To think that this carte blanche to allow 4 storey development will not have detrimental effects is naive at best and irresponsible leadership at worst. The majority of this housing will go to student/transient housing and it will impact the Old North community. To pretend otherwise is ridiculous. And anyone who says this will address homelessness has no understanding of the complexity of the homeless issues. They aren't buying or moving into a four storey townhome.

There is a rich sense of community in Old North and we struggle at times with unruly student housing owned by absentee landlords who don't maintain homes and don't care about our community. The students are transient residents who are here for a good time, not a long time. O-week brings noise levels that leave our windows rattling until 1 am for a full week with complete disregard for noise bylaws. Homecoming is a nightmare for the community as we deal with vomiting students on our front lawns and busloads of non-students who transcend our neighbourhoods. Western is an important part of our community but conscious stewardship by the City is an absolute necessity to ensure that we don't allow temporary residents, and more importantly absentee landlords to trample on the rights of permanent residents who are invested in our community. Side note: I am a two degree Western grad and have a business that benefits from our student population. I am not anti-student.

Old North is a beautiful and historical community and wanting to ensure that we don't start taking a hack saw to it is a reflection of people who care about the community. Go to Waterloo and drive through what used to be cul de sacs with children safely playing and neighbourhood socials. It is now a mish mash of mid rises full of transient students who don't care about their neighbours or neighbourhood, way too many cars driving way too fast for the available space. The remaining homes are dwarfed awaiting the next builder to come in and tear them down. See attached pictures of Batavia Place in Waterloo. Families don't stay and what used to be a beautiful street is now an ugly Exhibit A of abandoned municipal planning. Is this what we want for Old North?

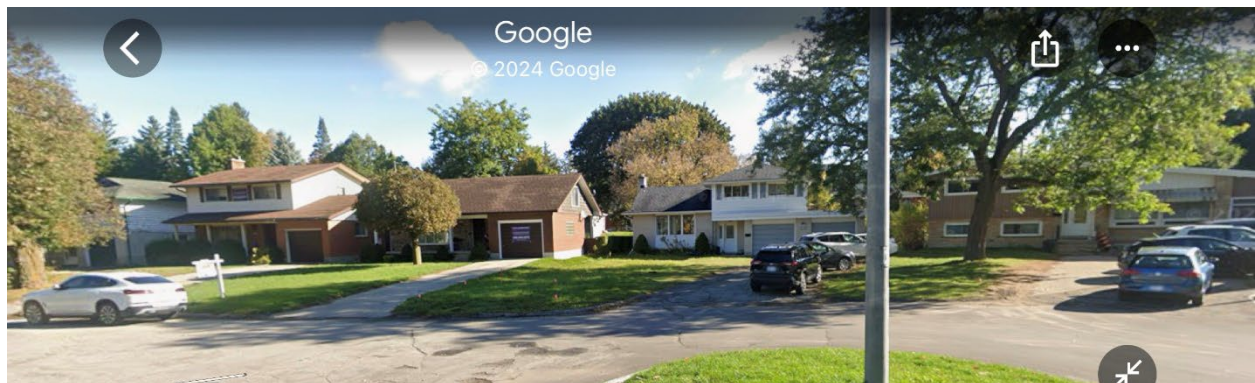
There is so much empty space and decrepit buildings that could be torn down for this if we want to build at a fast and furious pace. Why shove this in Old North which should be a source of pride for London? **Has anyone taken into consideration the massive changes the federal government is making to immigration and the very real impact that this will have on our housing needs? Leading indicators help predict the future, whereas lagging indicators give insight into past outcomes. Understanding the difference is critical and very relevant here. Before we destroy this gem of a community in London, let's give pause to this one size fits all approach. Surgical and strategic always beats fell swoops. What will be the impact to this current "housing crisis" when the Feds turn the tap off of immigration?**

Wanting to raise a family in a safe neighbourhood with a sense of community is called good parenting and citizenship by people who are invested and committed. I refuse to be accused of nimby-ism. That is an easy rock to throw without merit and a cheap attempt to obfuscate and not deal with our very real concerns. When did wanting proper municipal planning become nimby-ism? When did wanting to build healthy communities become something to be ashamed of rather than celebrated? Oodles of research support the importance of community for children and adults. Many of us have invested decades into this community, the schools, volunteering and looking out for elderly neighbours living alone. I am unapologetic for asking for thoughtful and strategic municipal planning. Raising questions and asking for sober second thoughts is a reflection of a community that cares, not elitism. Getting this wrong will have permanent consequences that cannot be fixed. Long after this council has come and gone, we residents will be living with the consequences of this. Voters will not forget being ignored.

What will your legacy be Council?

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Sandy Weir





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