

From: Annette-Barbara Vogel
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 10:43 PM
To: Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>
Cc: Hopkins, Anna <ahopkins@london.ca>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] concerns /request to add a topic to Sept.24 meeting agenda
(Fwd: concerns regarding building permits -stacked townhouses)

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

Thanks,
ABV

Begin forwarded message:

From: Annette-Barbara Vogel
Subject: concerns regarding building permits -stacked townhouses.
Date: September 20, 2024 at 22:40:50 EDT
To: mayor@london.ca, hmcaster@london.ca, slewis@london.ca, pcuddy@london.ca, sstevenson@london.ca, jpribil@london.ca, crahman@london.ca, slehman@london.ca, ahopkins@london.ca, pvanmeerbergen@london.ca, sfranke@london.ca, dferreira@london.ca, shillier@london.ca

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed bylaw permitting four-storey stacked townhouses on neighbourhood connector streets. While I understand the need for urban growth, this decision feels rushed and lacks the necessary time for thoughtful planning and community consultation.

Rapid approval risks hasty implementation, which could have long-lasting, detrimental effects on our (heritage) neighborhoods.

Current neighbors reliant on Boler Road are already experiencing increased traffic issues. It's not hard to envision how much worse this would become, not only during construction but especially after the project is completed. Aesthetically, the proposed housing units would clash with the existing landscape of the Byron area, disrupting its charm and the overall cohesion of the neighborhood. Simply placing a development like this would diminish the character that makes this community special.

Existing homes are structurally sound and contribute to the distinct charm of these areas. Since very few (if any) empty lots are available, we can assume that developers will be purchasing houses for demolition. Demolishing homes would disrupt the streetscape and add unnecessary waste to our landfills, contributing to environmental damage.

Additionally, the largest structures will require extensive paving in backyards to allow for parking, which could lead to increased flooding due to reduced permeability and greater stormwater runoff.

I urge the council to consider alternative approaches, such as:
Utilizing parking lots and already vacant lots: These spaces are prime locations for new housing without displacing (heritage) homes or altering the existing streetscape.
Scaling developments to ensure that new builds are more in line with the neighborhood's aesthetic and scale, preserving the character that makes these areas attractive in the first place.

Targeted development: Instead of allowing developments on all connector streets, consider carefully selected areas where higher-density housing would have minimal impact on existing homes and obliteration or damage to natural spaces.

These alternatives offer a more balanced approach, supporting growth without compromising the unique qualities of our neighborhoods. Once our homes are demolished, they are lost forever. Is this the lasting legacy that this council wishes to leave behind?

Sincerely,

Annette-Barbara Vogel
Professor
Western University