

December 9, 2011

Bud Polhill, Chair,
Planning & Environment Committee
City of London,
London Ontario

Ref: Re-zoning Application
1607 - 1653 Richmond St.

Mr. Polhill:

We are writing on behalf of the Old Masonville Ratepayers Association ("OMRA") to express our full support for the pending rezoning and preliminary site plan approval for the properties at 1631/35/39 Richmond Street (site plan) and the rezoning of 1607 - 1653 Richmond St.

As you may be aware, there is a long history to this file, dating back to 2004 when the current developer brought forward an application to rezone the property at 1639 Richmond St. Simultaneously, the City initiated an application to rezone the balance of the block to ensure that all development along the street would be comparable and compatible. The rezoning approved in October 2004 enabled development of 30 units per hectare, setbacks of 7.5 m from adjoining properties, an 10.5 m height restriction and requirements to create an internal roadway and parking that was contained within the development. The OMRA supported the application, always on the understanding that the development would entail low density family focused units, with attached indoor parking.

We were dismayed in 2009 when the site plan for 1639 Richmond came forward for approval, based on 18 identical 5-bedroom attached townhouse units, only surface parking for a fraction of expected population, built to the minimum 7.5 m setback from bordering properties, with much of the vegetation bordering on the adjoining properties being removed. At that time we opposed the approval of this site plan, as did Council, however in an appeal to the OMB, the proposed development was approved. Subsequently, the same developer purchased two adjoining properties (1631/35) and has brought forward a plan to develop those properties with another 12 identical 5 bedroom townhouse units. If the site plans for the 3 properties were approved, there would be 30 5- bedroom attached units plus existing dwelling. Given that the livable area in all units would be approximately 65% dedicated to "sleeping/bedroom" space and only 35% dedicated to "living" space, it appears that the population would be minimum 155 students housed within very confined space.

Early in the summer of 2011, the Planning Department Staff initiated a meeting between the developer and community representatives, with the intent of exploring alternative plans that might be perceived as a "win:win:win". The community wanted to ensure that any alternate development was better integrated into the existing neighbourhood composition, with increased setback, and retention of more

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of the mature vegetation on the site. The community also wanted to ensure that the units were not identical five bedroom units, rather a mix of 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units, thereby enabling a more varied resident base. In return for these changes, it was agreed that the development would comprise greater density and height on the east side of the project fronting on Richmond. Over the course of this 7 year journey (2004-11), the OMRA has been integral to the discussions, has held countless information meetings with the neighbourhood and other stakeholders, expended significant resources on legal and consulting fees, and attended numerous Committee and Council meetings. Through all this, our position has been clear that we are not opposed to redevelopment of these residential properties, but our goal has been to ensure a development which respects the existing character and vocation of surrounding properties. While we have not achieved unanimity within our community, with regards to the properties at 1631/35/39 Richmond, the latest renderings submitted by the applicant, and dated December 8, 2011, confirming an estimated 150 units per hectare are consistent with the conditions and concepts agreed upon with the applicant and the Planning department over the past four months, therefore has the full support of the OMRA.

Our only outstanding concern is related to the potential for increased congestion at the intersection of Hillview and Richmond. Therefore, we support the application of a holding provision on the 1643/1649/1653 properties to ensure that a proper traffic study is completed and strategies are implemented to reduce the existing congestion at that intersection, and at the same time, avoid any additional "cut through" traffic that is already creating real safety concerns for residents of the neighbouring streets of Hillview, Cherokee, McStay, Shavian and Hillside.

We plan to attend the P&E committee on December 12th and would be pleased to further elaborate on the contents of this letter.

Sincerely,

Bill Davis,

President, Old Masonville Ratepayers' Association

cc. Michael Tomazincic, Planning Dep't City of London.