

July 7th, 2017

Chair and Members of the Planning & Environment Committee
City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, Ontario
N6A 4L9

Re: Concerns regarding Secondary Dwelling Units in the Near-Campus Neighbourhood

Dear Councillor Park (Chair) and Councillors: Cassidy, Helmer, Hopkins and Turner

I apologize for not being able to attend the committee meeting on July 17th. Please find below the comments I would have made in person.

I have been a resident in Old North London over the past 22 years. I was also worked closely with former Mayors Anne Marie DeCicco-Best and Joe Fontana in creating and spearheading the Town and Gown Committee. In then co-chaired that committee with Nancy Branscombe and then with current Mayor Brown for 3 years. Although less actively involved today, I am still connected to the efforts of the committee and am familiar with some of the progress that has been made over the past several years in improving our community, the quality of life here and the relations with our student neighbours.

One of the remaining key concerns of long-term residents in and around UWO (as defined by the Great Near-Campus Neighbourhoods Strategy and boundaries) is over-intensification of these neighbourhoods. Over-intensification went largely unchecked for decades as the demand for short-term student housing grew from 1990 to 2010. Consequently, many single family homes were bought up by rental investors looking to turn a profit by housing 6 to 8 students per single-family dwelling.

If you have not had an opportunity to learn about the history, background and all the diligent and patient work done by all stakeholders (city staff, community, politicians, students, police, by-law enforcement, planning and Western & Fanshawe College administrations) over the past decade on this issue, it is fundamental that you do so now so that you can make an informed decision on SDU's in this geography. Therefore, I encourage you to please review the following:

<https://www.london.ca/business/Planning-Development/current-topics/Pages/GreatNearCampus.aspx>

Fortunately, four things have occurred recently to stem that tide:

1. Western has added more housing capacity;
2. Developers have created more attractive apartment rentals that meet students/parent needs;
3. Prices of single family homes have soared making it less lucrative to invest in single-family-home for the purpose of student rentals; and
4. Increased by-law licencing, enforcement and fining make it less easy for the same investors to fly under the radar and operate sub-standard rental units.

Nonetheless, when studying a population density maps as produced by the city, our community (as defined by the Near-Campus Definition) still appears to be among the highest density levels in the city.

My primary concerns are these:

1. The Near-Campus Neighbourhood is already over-intensified compared to other areas in London so SDU's only would exacerbate the problem.
2. There is no mechanism or law to ensure that a SDU would remain as such (with an onsite owner-occupied unit) when a property is sold to another purchaser. It could easily be used as a 2 unit property with no onsite owner/property manager.
3. If there is a correction in house pricing in London, then both SDU's and single family homes will be targets of buy-ups by landlords wishing to again maximize their profits by increasing number of occupants without making any investments in the properties they rent to students.

Together with the city, we have as a team made some excellent even though at time slow and consistent progress, and as a result we have begun to turn the tide in some areas that have been adversely affected by an over-intensification of crowded rentals in single family dwellings. Please, let us not reverse that progress by approving SDU's for the Near-Campus Neighbourhoods.

For these reasons and because of the background and history of this issue, I am hopeful you will agree to exclude the Near-Campus Neighbourhoods in your approval of Secondary Dwelling Units for the remainder of the city.

Thank you for your careful and kind consideration of this matter.

Yours truly,

Dennis Pellarin
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