

June 11, 2012

Chair and Members  
Planning and Environment Committee  
City of London

Re: Great Near Campus Neighbourhoods

### Recommendations

1. Concurrent with staff's recommendations on land use, it is requested that you direct staff to revise the rental licensing by law to limit the number of rental licenses issued for areas zoned R1-7 and above.
2. Concurrent with recommendation #1, the proposed amendments be revised to limit the number of additional bedrooms to the lower of the existing number of bedrooms plus one or five in the Near Campus Area in the areas zoned R1-7 and above.
3. References to balance should be struck from the proposed amendments as they are inconsistent with other sections of the Official Plan.
4. If a local appeal body is established for variance and consent applications, at least one seat on that body be reserved for a representative from one of the neighbourhoods within the Near Campus area.

### SUPPORTING

There is much to support in this report including:

- the recommendation to curtail variances and consents that split lots into smaller and smaller parcels.
- the change to the parking area coverage
- maximum number of bedrooms
- requirement for a Neighbourhood Character Statement (though how this will work remains unclear)
- Site plan control area by-law, particularly, a public site plan review for changes to single family homes
- Urban design criteria
- Landscaped open space and outdoor living area requirements
- Controls on parking and floor areas
- More stringent side-yard setback requirements to better regulate the creation of mutual driveways
- the zoning by law changes set out on page 36 of the report.

Also, having a local appeal body for variance and consent applications rather than having them end up at the OMB is an excellent idea. If established, at least one seat at that table should be reserved for a representative from one of the neighbourhoods within the Near Campus Neighbourhoods.

### ADDITIONS SUGGESTED

While supportive of the reduction in the number of bedrooms, staff's data show that the number of single family homes that have more than 4 bedrooms in these areas is less than 4%. Why not limit the creation of additional bedrooms to just one, if the home has less than 5 and is in the R1 residential zone? If this is seen as too restrictive, then only apply to R1-7 and above. This will limit wholesale changes to mature neighbourhoods as seniors sell their properties. If this is also deemed to be too restrictive then the rental licensing by law should be amended so that a limit is set on the number of new rental licenses in GNCNs.

Council should also recommend a limit of licenses issued under the rental housing licensing by-law to make these policies work. The by-law and the zoning/land use designations work in concert. As the report points out, a cap on such HMO (Homes with Multiple Occupants)

have been used in the UK. Have they been tried in Ontario? If not, why not try a made in London solution?

## DISAGREEMENTS

The part of the Vision statement that calls for a “balanced mix of long term and short term residents” is more appropriate for cottage country than for GNCN. Strike it now - it is a Trojan Horse. The problem is that there isn't a balance in Broughdale or in Orchard Park/Sherwood Forest – but they are unbalanced in different ways. Recommending “balance” suggests that somehow there will be more long term residents in Broughdale to restore “balance” and more short term residents in Orchard Park/Sherwood Forest to make it become more “balanced” (page 35 of the report, Planning Goals, subsection ii). When the words balanced are read, it is read to be about half and half. Implementing balance would be a disaster for areas such as Orchard Park/Sherwood Forest that are still primarily occupied by long term residents. The other problem with retaining “balance” is who decides what is balanced and what mechanism exists after balance is achieved to restrict further changes? Since the “who” and the “how” of a definition for “balance” will be subjective, including balance as a vision and as a policy is not helpful and potentially destructive. If Council insists on leaving in balance, you must then limit the number of rental housing licenses issued for the Near Campus areas if you want to have a mechanism to keep the pendulum from swinging out of balance.

The challenge of implementing this policy will be determining where is appropriate for higher density. Perhaps the Wharnccliffe/Western Road corridor is appropriate. But it was clearly inappropriate for the existing Beaufort Gunn neighbourhood to have higher density INSIDE its boundaries. The development at 1 Beaufort more than anything else, was a death knell for the residential amenity. It is important to the residents to keep the residential amenity in Orchard Park/Sherwood Forest and you don't do that through “balance.” So the question is, how do you determine if an area is appropriate for higher density when it has a Low Density Residential designation in the Official Plan (OP) and the OP in sections 2.1.3(i), 2.2.1(vii) and 3.1.2(i) says to protect the neighbourhood? policy 2.1.3(i) (“our goal is to nurture community spirit and pride...”) and 2.2.1(vii) (“...recognize that neighbourhoods are the strength of the community...”). The challenge, of course, is you won't know the impact until after the purpose built housing is built. Therefore, it is unclear as to how you can protect residential amenity and strengthen a neighbourhood, if you put purpose built housing along, say, Sarnia Road. In the Low Density designation you can already put 150 units per hectare. If there is a change to the designation and zoning on say, the north side of Sarnia Road to permit a higher density, it affects the abutting homes and contrary to the goal of protecting the residential amenity. Therefore, “balance” is contrary to other sections of the Official Plan.

After all, neighbourhoods are what London is about, what keeps it strong and what attracts people and businesses to London. We don't want to become another Kingston and we don't want the changes that occurred to Broughdale and Chesham and University Hts to become the norm for all neighbourhoods around the University. We are already suffering from the closing of one of our two elementary schools and the potential loss of the green space associated with it. We know the wrong kind of development can create 150 units there. We worry that this is just one step towards the complete change to the residential amenity that has developed over nearly 60 years. As the report points out, there has been significant intensification in and around the university over the past 10 years. If you don't put a limit on the scale and form, you threaten what makes Londoners proud of their communities. We care about the long term sustainability of our neighbourhood. Council should too.

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