

June 14, 2018

City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON
N6B 1Z2

Mayor Brown and Councillors:

Re. Impact of Requested Zoning Change at 809 Dundas Street “Z-8875”

LIFE*SPIN wishes to draw two matters to your attention as you consider the request for a change in zoning at 809 Dundas Street. These are:

- affordable housing; and
- the shadow that would be cast by the towers proposed for this property.

Should the question arise, let it be on the record that LIFE*SPIN favours appropriate intensification, for all the well-known reasons – notably to limit infrastructure costs and the loss of productive agricultural land. By “appropriate intensification,” we mean intensification that is balanced against other values.

LIFE*SPIN’S INTERESTS

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, LIFE*SPIN is an independent social agency that offers a range of free services to more than 5,000 low-income individuals and families, helping them improve their quality of life and move towards self-sufficiency.

Excepting summer student employment, LIFE*SPIN operates without tax dollars. Our services are funded by donations, rents from commercial and residential tenants in our heritage building on the northeast corner of Dundas and Ontario Streets, income from solar panels on the roof of this building, and a handful of miscellaneous sources.

Of particular relevance to this request for rezoning and the towers proposed at 809 Dundas Street are:

- the opportunity to add to London’s stock of affordable housing; and
- the shadowing of our rooftop solar panels, our only guaranteed source of income.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Through its routine contacts with disadvantaged persons, LIFE*SPIN is kept acutely aware of London’s deficit in affordable housing. For too many Londoners, paying market rent cuts into grocery budgets, denies many priced opportunities to children, and more. Too many people are thrown back on catch-as-catch-can expedients like “couch-surfing.”

We at LIFE*SPIN are proud of the contribution we make to filling the affordable housing gap. About half the space in our building is accounted for by ten well-maintained apartments for which we charge below-market rents. But this is obviously a long way from meeting London's overall needs.

The residential towers proposed for 809 Dundas offer an opportunity to reduce London's affordable-housing deficit. LIFE*SPIN, therefore, urges Council to:

- make the inclusion of some affordable units an element in "bonusing" this proposed development; and
- bring forward policy to implement an inclusionary zoning bylaw as permitted by Regulation 232/18 under the Ontario Planning Act, and to do so quickly enough that it can be applied to this development.

We also take this occasion to urge Council to:

- restore to the 2018 budget funds diverted from the Ontario Renovates and Home Ownership programs; and
- order a comprehensive report from its Housing Development Corporation, accounting for how the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund is being applied to create new affordable housing.

Further, as a matter of public policy, LIFE*SPIN believes that affordable units should be mixed in among market-rent units, not isolated in affordable-only buildings or zones within a building. Mixing can give low-income families valuable role-modelling that encourages movement towards self-sufficiency, particularly helpful to children.

Between bonusing and any injection of public money that proves appropriate, there is no good reason that a number of affordable units could not be included among the 480 units proposed for 809 Dundas Street.

SHADOWING

The towers proposed for 809 Dundas Street would stand 82 metres high (an increase of fully 78% over the 46 metres allowed by the present zoning) while the number of storeys proposed is 27 (an increase of 80% from 15).

With our building just a half-block away, the shadow cast by the towers would have a measurable impact on our solar panels.

LIFE*SPIN had these panels installed across the whole roof of its building with a view to establishing a new, sustainable revenue stream. It is, indeed, our only guaranteed source of funds.

(I cannot resist noting that getting this done offers, a good illustration of the LIFE*SPIN way. It was accomplished through partnerships with the Western University Career Centre, which managed the project, unpaid work by engineering and business students and professionals, and hundreds upon hundreds of hours of volunteer research and labour.)

In the four years since they were installed, the solar panels have generated 49.72 Mwh of energy, the equivalent of taking 198 vehicles off the roads or planting 851 trees. They

have also generated income of more than \$27,000 for LIFE*SPIN.

The hour-by-hour shadowing study we have been able to consult, thanks to the Planning Department, shows that the towers as proposed would shade our solar panels part of the afternoons from October to March, reducing the annual return by 13%.

Amounting to \$832, the loss of revenue may, on the face of it, seem trifling. But it equals more than 15% of our annual telephone bill, and we do regret every diversion of dollars from direct service to clients.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before closing, LIFE*SPIN wishes to acknowledge the assistance it has received in this matter from Jen Pastorius of the Old East Village Business Improvement Area and from the City of London Planning Department as well as the frank and courteous hearing extended to us by Paramount Development (London) Inc., the developers.

We also thank the Planning and Environment Committee for this opportunity to express our concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Thompson
Executive Director of LIFE*SPIN

cc Sonia Wise, Planning Services
Jen Pastorius, OEV BIA