

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Columbia College 925 Main St. W. Objection

From: Krysia Steinberg

Sent: September-11-18 3:33 PM

To: Johnson, Aidan; Lucas, Adam; Harrison-McMillan, Kimberley

Subject: Columbia College 925 Main St. W. Objection

Hello Aiden

Please find attached my objections to the proposed Columbia College Development at 925 Main Street West. As you well know, the residents of Westdale and West Hamilton are already inundated with students.

You have also been in attendance at neighbourhood meetings addressing concerns related to students and noise etc. How then, would you or your council even consider allowing an additional 1,025 Columbia College students along with 1,500+ first year McMaster students into the neighbourhood?

This is not a solution and only compounds the problem by ghettoizing the students - tipping the residents : student scale entirely.

Would it not be better to spread the load - a huge student development downtown would make for a more vibrant community there which would be welcomed with open arms.

Instead, you are antagonizing the remaining Westdale residents by not only increasing the number of students but by also building skyscrapers in which to house them.

Sorry for the late response, but I only received the 72-page package in the mail on Friday (Aug. 31st) after work on the long weekend.

There was not enough time for me to get time off work in order to attend the 9:30am meeting at the next available work day.

Kindly, please consider my objections carefully before making an ill-advised decision.

Best Regards

Krysia Steinberg

September 11, 2018

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Re: 925 Main St W Proposed Development - ZAC-16-029 & UHOPA-16-11.

Please remove any personal information from this communication.

In 2016, I notified the planning committee of my objections regarding the proposed development at 925 Main St. West (corner of Longwood Road and Main St. West in Hamilton). On Friday, August 31st, 2018 (Labour Day weekend), I received a 72-page package outlining the revised development information and adjustments to the original proposal. The meeting before the planning committee was to take place at 9:30am the following Tuesday. Since this was clearly too short notice for me review the information and to book off work in order to attend, I am following-up with this letter and some remaining questions.

The original development consisted of two 15-storey mixed-use buildings. My objection to the original proposal was that the height was too tall for the neighbourhood and not in keeping with the surroundings. Why then, would it be acceptable to make the height even taller - now 16 and 18 storey towers, respectively, with an additional 4 story podium. These higher structures will further impede the escarpment view for the nearby homes. Not only that, this development is quite possibly the highest structure in all of Westdale, West Hamilton, Dundas and Ancaster combined since it will end up being at least 22 stories in height.

The revised proposal has also adjusted the number of students from 910 to 1,024. This number of students, along with the proposed McMaster University student residence development approx. two blocks away, will increase the already burgeoning student population to an additional 2,400+ students.

The student population in the community is already disproportionate to the overall community makeup. With an additional 2400+ students added to the mix, is the city and the developer prepared to contribute financially towards additional resources for policing, ambulances, noise by-law officers, property destruction costs, hospital resources and doctors, and the additional impact to the Westdale community in general? Or are the taxpayers expected to foot the bill?

This is already a busy corner – both for traffic and pedestrians with the existing Columbia College school and residence, the adjacent plaza pedestrians, and the Westdale high school students (diagonally across from this second proposed Columbia College Student Residence Development). As well, this corner is to be the only designated LRT stop in Westdale. The next planned LRT stop is to be at the corner of Main St. W. and Cootes Dr. - quite a distance apart!! It can, therefore, be surmised that this will be a very busy waiting area to not only accommodate the above previously mentioned people and additional Columbia College students, McMaster University students, and Westdale and neighbouring area residents waiting for the LRT.

With this proposed development, it will be an accident waiting to happen especially since this development abuts the sidewalk with no setback. Should a car jump the sidewalk (either nefariously or by accident), the people will have nowhere to go as it is quite a stretch from end-to-end with no setback). Again, are the city and/or the developer / college prepared for the consequences should approval be granted since they ought to know that this could happen and yet gave approval anyway?

It has been rumoured that the McMaster Children's hospital will be relocating to the downtown area. If that is the case, with an additional 2,400+ students in the Westdale area, it can be anticipated that more resources will be impacted. More ambulances, paramedics, fire, and physicians would be required. Has the city factored in the additional costs of manpower and equipment? If so, will the developer be contributing to the cost or will the city / taxpayer be responsible? Especially since the majority of the occupants of this building will be non-taxpayers.

In the past, there were accidents on Hwy 403 and/or the main traffic arteries (eg. King or Main St. W.) resulting in road closures and traffic tie-ups for miles around and throughout the entire Westdale neighbourhood. With traffic calming measures in place on Aberdeen Ave. etc., this increase in pedestrian traffic may further impact ambulances destined for downtown causing additional delays to arrival time impacting the patient's health. As well, the increased student population may require more ambulances further straining resources.

Have any studies been conducted regarding the impact of an additional 2,400+students on the Westdale Village and community since there are already huge issues with the existing McMaster students and their noise and property damage? Will the management of this residence be providing additional community policing not just to the building itself but for the entire neighbourhood?

I note that with the increase in student beds that the parking spaces have also increased from 107 to 156 vehicles. From the plans supplied, it appears that there are no above ground parking spots. How many of these 156 parking spots are set aside for store customers? This is a heavy traffic area so it is surmised that the customers will be driving vehicles. They may not necessarily be using the underground parking as this suggests longer store visits. Or, will they be parking their vehicles in the next door plaza, Westdale high school lot or in the neighbourhood? Additionally, will the underground parking be free parking or will the staff and students etc. be parking in the already congested neighbourhood to save money? Has the city made provisions to exclude people from this building from applying for neighbourhood parking permits? Currently, the city assigns on-street parking permits by zones rather than individual streets – these zones exclude the main traffic arteries. Are 156 underground parking spots sufficient for 1,024 students, staff, repairmen, deliveries, and store customers?

Even if the proposed renters (students) do not currently own vehicles that does not mean this will always be the case. The future requirements for this building may change. There may be more off-site education requirements and the need for student lodging housing may diminish. The education requirements may change, or this company may no longer be in business. So future planning, use, and parking of this structure should be a major consideration. Has Columbia College provided any financial guarantees that they will still be in business ten years from now or will the city be stuck with a large lodging home with no kitchens in the apartments and virtually no on-site parking?

Further questions and considerations for this build:

Has a wind study been conducted on the dwelling structure itself (particularly with wind changes and the global warming weather patterns)?

Since you are altering the ravine by filling it in with 1,400+ truckloads of soil, has a run-off study been conducted? How will it impact Hwy 403 below and the Westdale neighbourhood? This is especially important since we have already had several once-in-the century rainfalls resulting in flooding. Is the city / developer / and Columbia College prepared to bear the additional costs?

Will a retaining wall be built to support the additional infill to prevent a mudslide to Hwy 403? If so, who will be maintaining the retaining wall?

What impact will this infill have on the creek below? Any study?

Specifically, how many trees will be removed and how many will be replaced? What size will the replacement trees be, what kind, and where will they be located?

What impact will the construction have on Longwood Road, Main Street, and traffic flow in general? Have alternate traffic arrangements been made and how will the impact the community?

What measures will be put in place to mitigate the construction noise, traffic, and dust to the neighbourhood?

From the information that I received, it appears that this high-rise abuts the sidewalk. Should there not be a set-back from the sidewalk for the road allowance? Particularly, to accommodate future road expansion, the LRT, and bicycle lanes?

Currently, there is not a sidewalk on Longwood Road on the development side. Who will be responsible for installing the sidewalk and will the developer be compensating the city for it and future maintenance? How will this development impact the bridge over Hwy 403 on Longwood Road?

Will this building be a non-smoking building? If so, where will these people congregate to smoke (cigarettes and marijuana)?

Where will the student muster during a fire drill? What resources are available for rescuing them during a real fire since ladder trucks only reach the 10th floor or are they to muster in place?

The documents that I received state that "563 property owners within 120meters were notified of a public meeting". Aside from Columbia College next door and their existing student residence, I presume the plaza, perhaps Camelot towers (apartment building) and perhaps the high school diagonally across the street were notified. Were any actual residents notified - those people that actually have residential homes along Longwood Road (between Main St. W. and King St.), along Bond St, Mariam, and Arkell?

The report indicates that there will be sun shadow impact on properties on the north side of Main St. West between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm on March / Sept. 21st of a total of five hours with two consecutive hours between 8:00am to 10:00am. What are the times of the other three hours? The report considers this to be acceptable. However, this will directly impact the residents living in the areas that were most-likely not notified (see above streets). Five hours of shadow during the summer months may be acceptable to you but most people would consider this as a huge impact. Additionally, there will be significant impact to the residences and the Westdale high school students during the winter months from Sept. 22nd to March 1st. This winter shadowing study was not included in the package I received. Has one been done and what is the impact of that?

There are several mentions of Main Street East in the Planning Division copy that I received. I presume that you are referring to Main Street West instead.

As Westdale / West Hamilton is transitioning into a transient community, the impact of these additional students on voting and decision-making for a community that they only reside in temporarily and will then vacate is cause for concern to the long-term residents and should be a consideration. This lodging home is set to house 1,024 additional students. I presume that you know there are already approx. 500 students next door for the same school. That then would be closer to 1,500+ students impacting this community for this location alone. Plus, the McMaster proposed development of an additional 1,500+ students. What do you think the impact would be of approx. 3,000+ students to the neighbourhood – which is already saturated with students? Is this considered mixed-use? This may be the tipping-point for the neighbourhood.

Westdale is a unique area with a village atmosphere. Can the community really support another influx of students with even more challenges for the long-term residents, resources, and properties?

Is the city prepared to be sued for damages after approving this development despite the concerns of the residents? Are the planning development dollars enough to cover the future expense / impact to the community or will the city ultimately be required to expend so many resources that this will end up being a diminished return. Is the city being short-sighted and blinded by development dollars that they are missing the destructive nature and true impact of this development?

Every development in Westdale requires a variance due to the Monster Home Clause. Is this development not the ultimate monster home? This clause was put in place to discourage exactly this type of single use – mono culture build.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards

[Redacted signature]

Krycia Steinberg

[Redacted contact information]