

Sept 23 2019

File: UHOPA-17-028

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter as a concerned citizen of the Westdale neighbourhood. Westdale is a well-established residential neighbourhood and is one of the oldest planned communities in Canada. It is a model of a walkable community and serves as an excellent neighbourhood in which to live, given its proximity to public schools, places of worship, shops, health care facilities and parks.

It is because of this I am concerned about the plan of McMaster University, in conjunction with Knightstone Properties, to develop the property located in Westdale between Traymore Avenue and Main St. West, bordered by Dalewood Ave and Forsyth Ave S. The height of the propose building is enormous, currently designed as up to 10 stories for most of the building with a "15 storey tower at the corner of Main St. West and Forsyth Avenue S". This rivals the height of buildings in the downtown core despite being located across the street from residential two-storey homes.

To allow the applicant Diamond Schmidt Architects to change the Official Plan designation from Mixed Use- Medium Density to Institutional would be counterproductive for the neighbourhood as a whole. Furthermore, the institutional designation would have to be made an I3 (Major Institutional Zone) to satisfy the University and Architects proposed plan, meaning that this small neighbourhood between Traymore and Arnold Streets would now be bordered by I3 zoning on two sides. This proposal serves to negatively impact property values of local residents, some of whom have lived in the area for decades.

I also have safety concerns about the number of students the University has planned for this off-campus residence, which is propose to house over 1400. This location originally consisted of 13 two-story homes constructed in the first half of the 20th century. The roadways, originally intended for low density car and foot traffic, are not well designed to handle the levels of pedestrian, bike and vehicle traffic that will come with the number of proposed residents. A sad example of how difficult the area at the southwest corner of the proposed development is to navigate occurred in early January 2018. A pedestrian crossing Forsyth Ave S heading towards McMaster Hospital was struck and killed as a car came around the blind curve in the road.

On the artist conceptual drawing, Forsyth Ave S. is depicted as a straighter road than it actually is. In reality, pedestrians and drivers must be particularly careful as the street's small size lends it an appearance of relative safety. Pedestrians may not realize that drivers do not have sufficient sightline to avoid stopping in time, especially if pedestrians are crossing at bends in the road at night or in poor weather. While pedestrians currently walk across this road to get to the Hospital or the University, the volume of foot and bike traffic would increase exponentially with this proposed development in an area poorly designed for this volume of traffic, unfortunately making accidents more likely.

There are many good reasons to limit the size of the development proposed by the University, but safety of the potential residence must be paramount in the minds of all.

Thank you,

Emily Brackenridge

p.s. Please notify me of the decision of the City of Hamilton.