

May 15, 2018

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1190 Main Street West Et Al		McMaster University Redevelopment	Open	PL180302	OMB Appeal
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**RE: Traymore Ave. / Main St. W. McMaster Student Residence Development Proposal - Objection**

In early February, I attended an informational meeting at McMaster University regarding the proposed student residence at Traymore Ave. and Main St. W.

The meeting was well-attended by Westdale residents, University Representatives, community associations, city planners and developers. The structured format consisted of a presentation from the university / developers / and planners (which seemed quite long – possibly one hour) and then there would be a total of five (5) minutes for a question and answer period from the audience. Six stations were set up at which individual questions could be asked (I assume pertaining to those stations). The format was arranged in such a way that it would be more informational rather than consist of community engagement.

The audience requested to have the question / answer period extended so that all present could absorb the information and have an opportunity to express their views and have their questions answered without the orchestrated/structured confines as laid out by the development supporters. Ultimately, some questions were answered but many more remained unanswered by meetings end within the allotted timeframe.

The proposed development is to stretch from Forsyth Ave. S. to Dalewood Ave. along Main St. W. and the entire south side of Traymore Ave. – consisting of an entire neighbourhood block. The literature provided stated that it is to be a 12 story first-year student residence. However, at the meeting, someone pointed out that the first floor height was equivalent to two stories and that the “Penthouse” was not listed – so, in fact, this was a proposed 14 story development which is not in keeping with the surrounding neighbourhood structures. This would also be at least three times the height of most neighbourhood trees. Not only will this development be seen from Main St. W. and Traymore Ave. but also for blocks around obstructing the skyline and the escarpment views from within most of the Westdale community.

This development is a joint project between McMaster University and Knightstone Capital Management. Knightstone will build the first-year student residence and the University will manage it. Ultimately it is set to house 1,400+ first year McMaster University students. Also proposed and attached to this structure are an additional 20 townhouse units (2 stories each) along Traymore Ave. for graduate students. The entire building will only be accessible along Traymore Ave. since the proposed LRT will be positioned along Main St. W.

The university currently owns the vacant land along Main St. W. and they have purchased the homes which run along the entire south side of Traymore Ave. which backs onto the vacant land. The university proposes to demolish these unique Westdale homes in order to acquire enough space for this block-long high-rise. The homes that are on the north side of Traymore Ave. (facing the south side and the escarpment) will remain and are privately owned. This means that those homes that previously enjoyed relative privacy with peace and quiet will essentially be subjected to facing a towering 14 story brick wall instead of the nice two story homes that have been there since the beginning of this 1930's planned Westdale community. Many of these homes can only be found on this street as they do not exist elsewhere in Westdale. As well, the remaining homes were purchased in good faith at a premium cost due to their relative placement to the University and their uniqueness. These people will have their properties devalued. You can only image that those homes will be difficult to sell once this development takes place. There will be 1,400+ students using the sidewalk directly in front of their homes and also peering down at their homes from this jumbo high-rise thus invading their privacy. This lack of privacy will not only affect the people on this Westdale street but also residents that live blocks away.

Additionally, the remaining home owners on Traymore Ave. (and the Westdale community) will be subjected to construction noise and dust for many months and ultimately the tearing up of their entire street for sewer lines etc. This will cause more disruption to their lives and will limit or severely disturb access to their homes and driveways. Once the building is complete, there will be ongoing traffic noise for deliveries and/or repairs to the building since this street has been dedicated as the access point to this building.

Not only that, there will be whole months in the winter when they won't be able to see the sun or very little of it. The developers have calculations and formulas that they spent a lot of time explaining regarding this shadowing effect but it comes down to a lot more sun blockage than the homes currently experience. This does not only affect the homes directly across from this development but because of the height and length, it will also affect other homes and areas within the Westdale neighbourhood.

This 1,400+ student resident has set aside 6 parking spots dedicated for staff-only parking since apparently first-year students and graduate students living in the townhouse sections "do not drive" as stated at the meeting. I'm uncertain how move-in activities are to occur or where visitors or parents to this proposed development are to park? The street is very narrow and already has limited parking - the rest of the neighbourhood also cannot support that additional amount of parking.

I assume that this will be a non-smoking building since McMaster campus has implemented such a policy and this building is to be an extension of the university. Would the smoking students then congregate on the Traymore Ave. sidewalk further obstructing the privacy of the neighbours across the street and disturbing their peace? Or, would the students disobey this policy and smoke indoors possibly causing a fire hazard?

Since this high-rise will be comprised solely of first year students, it can be assumed that some might be immature. Should there be a fire, how are the fire trucks to access the building with an elevated platform on Main St. and no building access and townhouses positioned in front of the high-rise building on Traymore Ave? Because this building is more than six or seven floors in height, ladder trucks cannot be used for rescue, so, I assume this means that the students should use the protect-in-place method. We have seen some horrific high-rise fires where this method was not successful. Is Hamilton prepared to deal with these-types of fires especially with a building that houses inexperienced students? If evacuations should occur, where would these students muster - on Traymore Ave. – already narrow?

Even when buildings are managed sufficiently, campus police are not allowed to patrol off-campus areas, therefore, they are only allowed to patrol the building itself. I assume that the city and Westdale residents will need to bear the extra cost and deal with the additional student noise within the neighbourhood and on the sidewalks? Once these additional first year students graduate, will they then seek residence within the already student saturated neighbourhood? With these additional 1,400+ students and an extra 950 students (proposed Columbia College Development) (total ~2,500 students), I fear that this may be the tipping point for neighbourhood dynamics. It will affect families, create entire neighbourhood student ghettos, and housing deserts in summers when the annual mass student exodus occurs. Is this the Westdale vision?

With the proposed LRT to run along Main St., some of the side streets that feed into Main St. will no longer be accessible. This suggests that accessing the student resident for move-in day, parents and friends visiting from out-of-town, service and delivery trucks, etc – the traffic flow will increase considerably. The additional traffic will be filtered throughout the entire Westdale neighbourhood creating traffic issues and affecting safety. Not to mention, that it will also affect the safety of the students attending Dalewood Middle School as it is situated directly across the street from this development on Dalewood Ave.

Some of the residents that attended the meeting suggested to the University that they situate this student development on the University Campus on their parking lot at the corner of Main St. and Cootes Dr. since that would be less disruptive and would minimize the impact to the entire neighbourhood. It is only one block away from this proposed development, is easier for the campus police to patrol, and can accommodate parking. Not to mention, there are not many neighbours since the conservation area is across the street. The university



responded that they had plans to build a parking ramp at that location. However, it is my understanding that those plans have been in development for many years and have not come to fruition. It is also my understanding that the university has height restrictions on campus but yet they don't appear to be concerned about height restrictions for the rest of the community?

The city of Hamilton has put a neighbourhood moratorium on monster homes. Is this not the ultimate monster home? I think that it is short-sighted to build this huge single-purpose student development in the heart of Westdale essentially dividing the community in half and restricting the neighbourhood to mostly students. Is this the future that you see for Westdale?

A single-use building is short-sighted particularly with the age of computers and learning remotely. If the future of education, especially for first year students, should change and physical attendance is no longer required, then what will become of the building with no parking? Should parking not be factored in so that it can be easily converted to apartments or other future use? I thought parking was a major consideration for any development, why is this case different?

The University is a good neighbour and a great employer but for all the reasons mentioned above, I oppose this development. It is in the wrong location, too big and too high, a single use purpose, difficult to police, provides zero parking, and is divisive and disruptive to the Westdale community. I'm sure there would be less neighbourhood objection if this student residence were to be relocated on campus just a block away.

Sincerely



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