

**Pilon, Janet**

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**Subject:** 354 King Street West Feedback

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**From:** Barry Coombs  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 30, 2020 6:03 PM  
**To:** [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)  
**Cc:** Office of the Mayor  
**Subject:** Fwd: 354 King Street West Feedback

Attn: City Clerk

Please, add the following letter to the public record concerning the requested variance for 354 King West and share with members of the planning committee and the council.

Thank you,  
Barry Coombs

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Barry Coombs  
**Subject:** 354 King Street West Feedback  
**Date:** April 30, 2020 at 1:06:00 PM EDT  
**To:** [apaton@gspgroup.ca](mailto:apaton@gspgroup.ca)  
**Cc:** [Andrea.Dear@hamilton.ca](mailto:Andrea.Dear@hamilton.ca), [ward1@hamilton.ca](mailto:ward1@hamilton.ca)

Attn: Ashley Paton of GSP Group

My name is Barry Coombs. I live at 73 Ray Street North. Strathcona is the friendliest, warmest and most supportive community that I've ever resided in.

I'm writing to you to express support for the serious concerns raised by the Strathcona Shadow Dwellers (SSD) about the proposed changes to the Vrancor development at 354 King Street West. I've read the SSD Questions and Comments document dated April 23, 2020 and hope that the SSD will receive a thorough and detailed response from your firm.

The Strathcona Shadow Dwellers are all volunteers who have tirelessly worked for our community. Their efforts have been mocked on our community Facebook page by a tiny minority who claim that it's futile to challenge a developer who holds all of the financial cards. The nasty tone of that message was reprehensible but the content wasn't without some obvious truth. As I take my time to write this note, I understand that you will be reading and responding to it while on the GSP Group payroll.

The Strathcona Shadow Dwellers have been accused of NIMBYism. This is always an easy criticism to make. Who, however, would desire a twenty-five storey glass and concrete slab virtually abutting their back fence? A walk around our neighbourhood will reveal that the SSD lawn signs appear throughout and not just on Ray Street North. The Shadow Dwellers are very concerned about the impact of this and future developments on our entire community and have already sacrificed hundreds of personal hours to pore through documents,

organize meetings, pay for signage, educate our neighbours and communicate with city planners, our local councilor and the GSP Group.

I suggest that the Vrancor plan barely conforms to the values stated on the GSP Group website. Your site states that 'We shape great communities'. The Strathcona Secondary Plan, the Transit Oriented Corridor plan and the Urban Hamilton Official Plan were created to balance great communities with needed development. The variance sought by you, on behalf of Vrancor, is not a benefit to the Strathcona community.

Your site uses glowing language to describe your mission. For example, 'Art meets science to sculpt outdoor space and strike a balance between built and natural forms. GSP Group Urban Designers add character and charm to urban areas by shaping buildings, streets, villages and cities into memorable places.'

There is little aesthetic merit, character or charm to the development at 354 King West. Even if it featured pleasing or innovative architecture, the myriad problems pointed out by the SSD will, in no way, make it into a memorable place.

It's not my intention to insult or mock GSP Group but to highlight the glaring discrepancy between your own mission language and the very negative impact of the proposed variance that you have been employed to promote.

Currently, Hamilton has a great opportunity to convert vacant lots and parking lots into much-needed buildings, residential and otherwise, that will enhance the urban landscape and the lifestyles of it's citizens. The cynical practice of applying for 'minor' variances once construction is underway does not contribute to public trust or to a vibrant city.

Sincerely,  
Barry Coombs