



330 Lodor St, Ancaster L9G 2Z2

February 13, 2022

Legislative Coordinator, Planning Committee
Delivered by email: clerk@hamilton.ca

Re: "Applications for Amendments to the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and Zoning By-law 05-200 for Lands Located at 442, 450, 454 and 462 Wilson Street East (Ancaster Ward 12)"

I am writing to respond on behalf of Ancaster Village Heritage Community (AVHC) to the above Application for this massive development in the Ancaster Heritage Village Core. Over the past year AVHC has enjoyed the participation of 126 fees-paying members; just under 1,000 members of our Facebook page; and our Facebook posts reach thousands of people in Ancaster and elsewhere.

AVHC Recommendation

AVHC supports the City Staff recommendation to DENY this Application, and we thoroughly agree with the reasons cited by staff:

- (i) That the proposed [bylaw] amendment does not meet the general intent of the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and the Ancaster Wilson Street Secondary Plan with respect to building height, scale, massing, privacy, overlook, compatibility, and enhancing the character of the existing neighbourhood;**
- (ii) That the proposed change in zoning does not meet the general intent of the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and the Ancaster Wilson Street Secondary Plan with respect to setbacks, building height, and massing;**
- (iii) That the proposal is not considered to be good planning and is considered an over development of the site.**

Ancaster: Our Heritage, and Breaches of the Ancaster Wilson Street Secondary Plan and Our Cultural Heritage Landscape Designation

Our municipality and the provincial government are clearly moving towards cancelling all distinctions between different places, treating different towns and areas which have distinctive features, histories, and characters all the same in favour of intensification at any cost.

Defending one's neighbourhood and its history is often called NIMBYISM by government officials. This would be a terrible assumption in this case. Ancaster is distinctive, the third oldest European pioneer settlement in Ontario after Kingston and Sault Ste. Marie. Its character still reflects that history, and it is precious not only to ourselves, but to future generations. Without history, we lose our identity as a people.

The Village Core has been designated a Cultural Heritage Landscape since the 1970s, with special protection from demolition of its heritage buildings and from overdevelopment. The Ancaster Wilson Street Secondary Plan (AWSSP) was implemented in 2015, a mere 7 years ago, after years of hard work by city staff, consultations with Ancaster Residents, an Ontario Municipal Board decision in its favour, and full acknowledgment by Ancaster residents of its purpose to protect Ancaster from overdevelopment and demolition of our heritage stock.

The AWSSP as a Secondary Plan takes precedence over the Urban Hamilton Official Plan; it requires buildings to be limited to a height of two and a half stories at this location; it requires that all new buildings must be separated so as to be visible on three sides from Wilson Street; and new buildings must closely align in their architecture and character with the entire heritage neighbourhood context. This proposal, if passed, will render the Ancaster Wilson Street Secondary Plan moot and irrelevant, despite the continuing support that it has from Ancaster residents.

The zoning for these properties under Bylaw 05-200 is C5a (Exception 570). The 570 exception aligns with the height requirement set out in the Secondary Plan at 9 meters. The bylaw does NOT include a Retirement Home as a Permitted Use. The C5a zoning requires only commercial uses on the ground floor, and residential ab

This plan will not only eradicate the heritage character of the existing neighbourhood nearby, but will inevitably lead to obliteration of the historic roots of Ancaster in other areas of the Village Core as well.

The demolition of the beautiful 1860 Brandon House on this site, which was the unofficial and entirely appropriate gateway to Ancaster Village and its replacement by either a 7-storey or 6-storey building with no relation to the historic roots of Ancaster would be a travesty.

While a planning decision is not precedent setting, it can set the tone for future applications. AVHC is concerned that while there have been multiple large multi unit developments completed in recent years on Wilson Street that followed the Secondary Plan and zoning, suddenly there are two applications in close proximity seeking massive relaxations of planning requirements.

There is a pattern. The other application will also see the removal of a designated historical building, the 1840 Marr-Phillipo House, from the Wilson St streetscape and its replacement with a 2.5-acre, 8-storey condo just a few doors away at the corner of Academy.

What has happened and is happening in Ancaster, as I say, is a travesty. Precedence of course is not cited as a legitimate reason for support of another project; each project is supposedly assessed on its own merits. Nevertheless, context and character of the neighbourhood is crucial in assessments of future developments, and approval of 462 Wilson Street will destroy that context and character, and inevitably lead to “overdevelopment creep”.

Either of these plans will also direct massive increases in traffic through the heritage Maywood neighbourhood, cutting between Rousseaux and Wilson Streets along Lodor, Academy and Church Streets. Because the traffic configuration required, i.e., the left turn in – left turn out access on Rousseaux Street, is entirely inappropriate and dangerous we expect it will not be permitted if the project is approved, so we estimate based on the applicant’s traffic study that about 65% of all additional traffic generated will cut through the Maywood neighbourhood.

If the Amica development is built this would be up to an additional 1041 vehicle trips per day compared to the 5 dwellings now on the land. Some of these would be heavy vehicles and buses transporting residents, and emergency vehicles.

This is simply not acceptable; we have already been fighting intolerable cut-throughs between Rousseaux and Wilson Streets for a number of years. Our narrow streets, designed and laid down 160 years ago, are well below standard width and have sidewalks on only one side. Our streets are used by pedestrians, cyclists, dog walkers, children from local day cares, and families accessing Ancaster Square and Ancaster Green, the splash pad, children’s playground, lawn bowling, tennis courts, library, town hall and old town hall which are all accessed through the Maywood neighbourhood.

There are so many things wrong with this development that it is difficult to enumerate them all here. The main ones beside the huge overreach in massing; lot coverage; imposition on the neighbours from noise, shadowing and oversight; and architectural banality, are increased heavy traffic on already overloaded Wilson and Rousseaux Streets, and inadequate wastewater and storm water runoff infrastructure to handle the effluent from either of these development options.

According to staff, wastewater will be channeled hundreds of feet down the escarpment from Rousseaux Street to the pumping station on the floor of the Dundas valley below, and then get pumped back up the escarpment to a pipeline just a little further east along Rousseaux.

Basements of homes connected to this waste system have been flooded in the valley below a number of times. This past summer our Councillor tried to have an overflow pipe installed that would take overflow waste into Ancaster Creek, obviously to enable massive developments on the pipeline route on Wilson Street, but the motion was defeated. So the problem remains and the pressure on this waste system will only be amplified by either of these options. This concern is expressed clearly in the staff report.

The staff have done a great job on this report. And the issues seem irremediable. Nevertheless, the Report contains options that Planning Committee might choose to assist the developer in taking next steps. These options include approval of the current plan with conditions; renegotiation of the plan by staff, who would take into account the issues and concerns identified in the staff report; or developing the lands in accordance with the already existing Mixed Use Medium Density - Pedestrian Focus (C5a, 570) Zone, which permits a building with a height of 9 metres and requires a three-sided view of all buildings to be erected in the Village Core.

This is a building that simply does not fit—it is almost 3 times higher than permitted, built almost to the edge of the lot line, cannot provide safe traffic access due to its proximity to the Wilson Street/Rousseaux intersection, does not provide sufficient parking for the residents and there is absolutely no nearby parking, provides no parking for retail customers, will overpower sewer capacity, causes serious overlook and privacy issues.

The bottom line is most of these issues cannot be remediated.

AVHC requests DENIAL, and encouragement to apply as set out in Option 3: Develop the lands in accordance with the already existing Mixed Use Medium Density - Pedestrian Focus (C5a, 570) Zone which permits a building with a height of 9 metres.

Thank you

Bob Maton, PhD
President