

Bob Maton, PhD

August 8th, 2022

Dear Planning Committee and Council:

Re: Development Proposal for 154 Wilson Street East
To be presented to Planning Committee August 9th, 2022

Since I became President of Ancaster Village Heritage Community, nearly three years ago now, we've been preoccupied with preventing the demolition of our precious Village, its heritage, and its history. We've also been trying to stop its replacement by massive buildings more suitable to the downtown of a city than to a heritage Village established in the late 1700s, much of which remains.

This is our Ancaster, with its heritage architecture and its sense of history, culture, natural landscape and place. What we've been missing is the opportunity to develop a positive vision of Old Ancaster, what should be happening there, what the experience of walking in the Village should be like - whether people are visiting, or for folks living close by in the neighbourhoods.

The Village is fragile. It needs care, for many reasons that have already been pointed out by Councillor Ferguson, and it is important not to undermine Ancaster's sense of community and its sense of being part of the city.

We need to avoid putting too much strain on the natural ecology, the infrastructure, and traffic, which are at or close to capacity. A new vision could be built on Ancaster's strengths of talented people, history, a culture of caring, and our natural landscape. I believe we should work on reviving the local economy in Ancaster by taking advantage of these strengths. Ancaster could be an important source of economic revival to the city if we go about it thoughtfully.

The development before you today might be the beginning of such a vision for Old Ancaster. The lot is difficult to develop. It is extremely long and narrow, running between Wilson Street and the Hamilton Golf and Country Club. The original proposal for the land, presented two years ago, was an apartment condo that would have filled the lot and gone up to 5 storeys at the rear, and would have overlooked neighbours on Golf Links Road and the maintenance facilities of the Golf Club. The golf club often starts up its noisy machinery at 5:00 in the morning, and we're told it had strong objections to the original proposal.

The new proposal of 10 x 3- storey townhouses, accessed by a laneway along the length of the property, is much more suitable. Setbacks protect the neighbours

from overlook, there is adequate parking, and the location is excellent, with access to retail, restaurants, recreation facilities and walking trails close by.

Nevertheless, there are still a number of concerns.

1. First, the height @ 12.6 meters is a significant departure from the Secondary Plan and from the bylaws. This will be a significant imposition on Wilson Street. I ask that the Committee require a 10.5 meter height limit for at least the first three townhomes to soften the impact on the roadway.
2. The first townhouse will be located about 2.5 meters from the new right of way, which is not adequate under the bylaws.
3. The townhouses are architecturally uninteresting and do not conform to the Secondary Plan design guidelines. I ask that the developer conform the design to the heritage context as required by the design guidelines, at least for the townhouses abutting Wilson Street.

I agree with this plan but have concerns.

Thank you,

Bob Maton