

Hello, my name is Victoria Van Cappellen and my husband, my three children and I live at 21 Ellen Street West.

I am here today to re-emphasize our support of this development and to ask the Heritage Committee to approve this project as it now stands.

This plan fulfills the vast majority of recommendations and zoning requirements as set out by the 2010 Heritage plan and the City of Kitchener. My husband and I believe this plan is the best compromise we can expect for a development of this size. In fact we have been pleased so far with the developer's commitment to working with residents to maximize the amount of green space and landscaping.

Nevertheless, we are aware residents on Margaret Avenue are seeking additional changes to the design, namely the addition of step backs on the upper two floors as well as mitigation to the isolation of 54 Margaret Avenue.

We fear that these requests could trigger a redesign that would move the building back toward Ellen, reducing the rear setback to our property line.

Don't get us wrong - we are open to creative solutions for the sake of heritage - so long as it doesn't change the rear setback of the building or the height of the building at the back.

Note that our homes are located downslope from the building, making it appear taller from our properties, and stepbacks on the front will likely not be matched on the back.

Not only would reducing the rear setback reduce the developer's ability to preserve much needed green space for wildlife, this would negatively impact the backyards of not 1, but 13 heritage homes.

This most definitely will impede our reasonable use and enjoyment of our properties.

It certainly dawned on me while reading my neighbor's letter mentioning "avoiding future conflicts": Will we receive a call from by-law every time we host the Ellen Street potluck or any party for that matter outside? This hits us where we are most vulnerable - the one space we should be able to relax and let our hair down.

And these are not just any 13 heritage homes, but 13 homes with decent sized, private backyards that are attractive for families. Half of the homes on the south side of Ellen have children.

So I ask this committee to also consider as part of term "heritage" how any changes will impact the quality of Old Berlin Town's housing stock and the future sustainability of a community that's been here more than 100 years. This new development is certainly not going to offer anything for families. It's all one bedrooms and studios - so we should at least be preserving key features - I.e., backyards and green spaces - of the homes we already have.

So again, we ask that this committee approve the project, or at least make recommendations that will not change either the current rear setback or the rear height of the building.