

From:
To: [Committee of Adjustment \(SM\)](#)
Subject: Application# 2024-96 Wood St.
Date: Friday, September 13, 2024 11:53:36 AM

You don't often get email from [redacted] . [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear City of Kitchener Planner,

Re: ##### 2024-96 Wood St

I am writing to express my significant concerns regarding the proposed redevelopment of 96 Wood St., which seeks approval for an eight-unit, four-story building with a rooftop patio. While I support the City's objective to enhance development around major transit stations, particularly within 800 meters of the ION, I urge the Committee to consider the broader impacts of this proposal on our neighbourhood's cultural heritage, infrastructure, and overall quality of life.

1. **Building Height and Design:** The proposal to construct a building with a height of 12 meters, exceeding the bylaw limit of 11 meters by 1 meter, is more than a minor adjustment; it represents a significant shift that disrupts the established character of our neighbourhood. Key concerns include:

- **Visual and Environmental Impact:** The additional height will significantly alter the visual harmony of our area, which is characterized by single-family homes and smaller multi-unit buildings. The proposed building's height will overshadow neighbouring homes, particularly those on the south side, leading to:
 - **Loss of Natural Light:** The increased height will cast extended shadows, diminishing the amount of natural light reaching adjacent properties and affecting the enjoyment of outdoor spaces such as gardens, patios, and backyard areas.
 - **Privacy Invasion:** Higher structures can intrude on the privacy of neighbouring homes, overlooking private backyards and living spaces, thereby reducing residents' sense of privacy and comfort.
 - **Overwhelming Aesthetics:** The visual mass of a four-story building can overwhelm the existing smaller-scale structures, leading to a jarring contrast and disrupting the neighbourhood's aesthetic cohesion.
 - **Architectural Harmony:** While the specific design details are not yet available, the final design must harmonize with the existing architectural styles of our neighbourhood. This includes:
 - **Material and Design Integration:** Using traditional materials such as brick or stone, and incorporating design features like pitched roofs and front porches, can help maintain a visual and historical continuity with the surrounding area.
 - **Mass and Scale:** The overall massing of the building should be designed to complement rather than dominate the surrounding structures, preserving the neighbourhood's balance and scale.

2. **Parking Congestion:** Parking is already a significant issue in our area. The current situation is exacerbated by:

- There is a high demand from various sources for parking spaces on Mt. Hope, Wood, and York Streets and are frequently occupied by:
 - **Hospital Staff, patients, and Visitors:** The nearby hospital generates substantial parking demand, with staff and visitors occupying spaces day and night.

- SunLife Employees and nearby businesses: The adjacent office building adds to the parking strain, contributing to a shortage of available spaces.
- Residents of Nearby Multi-Unit Buildings: The parking needs of residents in nearby multi-unit buildings further stress the available parking resources.
- Impact of New Development: As a neighbourhood, we have witnessed firsthand the adverse impacts of other new builds that, with their limited parking, increased number of residents, and greater heights, have negatively affected existing homes, backyard spaces, privacy, and the treed landscape. The proposed eight-unit development will likely:
 - Exacerbate Parking Shortages: The additional units will increase the number of vehicles competing for already limited street parking, leading to heightened congestion and inconvenience for current residents.
 - Strain Existing Infrastructure: The current parking infrastructure is already under strain, and the added demand will likely lead to increased conflicts and enforcement issues, affecting the quality of life for everyone in the area.

3. Trees and Landscaping: The removal of mature trees on the property raises several concerns:

- Aesthetic and Environmental Impact: Mature trees are essential for the neighbourhood's visual appeal and environmental health. They provide shade, improve air quality, and support local wildlife. Their removal will:
 - Diminish Neighborhood Beauty: The loss of mature trees will negatively impact the area's aesthetic value and reduce the sense of natural beauty that characterizes our community.
 - Disrupt Local Ecosystem: Trees are critical in supporting local biodiversity. Their removal could negatively affect various species that rely on them for habitat.
 - Need for Comprehensive Landscaping: To mitigate these impacts, the Committee should require the developer to submit a detailed landscaping plan that includes:
 - Tree Replacement: A commitment to plant new trees of equivalent or greater size to replace those removed, ensuring the preservation of the neighbourhood's green character.
 - Sustainable Practices: Incorporation of landscaping strategies that support biodiversity and ecological balance, such as native plantings and wildlife-friendly designs.

In summary, while I understand and support the need for increased housing, the proposed project in its current form presents substantial challenges to our neighbourhood's character, infrastructure, and environmental quality. I respectfully request that the Committee deny the requested variances for building height and other related requests, and instead consider a development plan that respects and integrates with the unique attributes of our community.

Thank you for your careful consideration of these critical issues. I trust that you will make a decision that balances the need for development with preserving our neighbourhood's heritage and quality of life.

Sincerely,
MaryBeth Reynolds and Nathan Majury