

January 22, 2021

Mayor and Members of the Council of The Town of the Blue Mountains, Town Clerk and Planning Staff

From the neighbours surrounding 20 Alice Street East

Re: 20 Alice Street East, Committee of the Whole, January 12, 2021 PDS.21.010

We have been following this application since the Public Meeting on September 16, 2020 where many of us spoke and submitted comments for all parties, including the applicant, the Planning staff and Council to consider as they manage this application. We read the Staff Report and listened to the discussion which took place at the Committee of the Whole on January 12, 2021. We commend members of the Committee for not approving the recommendation (2 for and 5 against) as proposed by staff.

While we are not aware of any further submission provided by the applicant, we felt the need to summarize and provide Council with our key concerns collectively. We understand that this will alleviate the need for multiple parties to register as delegates to your meeting.

Size, number and affordability of the apartments

We believe that 20 Alice Street is a beautiful historic home that our community can be proud of. We appreciate that the applicants are planning on maintaining the physical appearance of the house, however the number and size of the apartment units is a major concern. The lack of interior common areas combined with limited outdoor amenity space, will increase outdoor noise and disruption.

There was discussion during the meeting on January 12 about a “650 square foot 1 bedroom” apartment. We feel it may be helpful to recall that the actual proposed design includes:

- (i) Convert Existing Garage to 4 Bachelor Pads of 252, 252, 267 and 285 square feet
- (ii) Main Floor – add 3 Bachelor Pads of 361, 376 and 242 square feet
- (iii) Second Floor – add 2 Bachelor Pads of 335 and 422 square feet, plus 1 Bedroom 416 square foot apartment.
- (iv) Third Floor - maintain one 2 Bedroom 804 square foot apartment.

These nine new bachelor pads will have murphy beds installed. Our concern is who will they attract. We doubt professional staff or long-term residents as indicated by the applicant will be interested. While the applicants are linking this proposal to the Blue Mountains Attainable Housing initiative (BMAHC), we note that BMAHC does not include small bachelor apartments in their Gateway facility. They are proposing one bedroom units of approximately 600 square feet.

The applicant [REDACTED] in an e-mail to the neighbourhood on November 3rd said: “Finally, it is clear that the number and type of units is the primary concern. The reason for trying to maximize units related to the point around financials. Fewer units means higher rents, and higher rents pushes the project further away from attainable. However, our team has continue discussions with the BMAHC to see what can be achieved to meet everyone’s needs, and we are working with our architect to see how we can reconfigure the project to decrease bachelors, and include more 1-bedroom units.”

We are disappointed that the applicant's proposal and response to the public comments for Council did not reflect these promised changes. And as discussed at the meeting on January 12, there is no guarantee that if the application is approved that these apartment units will be either attainable or affordable. The BMAHC will have no control over this private initiative, either currently and/or in the future.

Finally, in previous correspondence with the neighbourhood, the applicant made reference to Blue Mountain Village's needs for staff housing. Using 20 Alice Street for temporary housing for seasonal employees is of great concern to the neighbourhood. The reference to provide housing for Blue Mountain employees has been confirmed by others in the community. If this is actually the intended use for the property, the vailed proposal to support locals and provide an affordable place of residence for "local employees" is not being achieved. Therefore, the residents in and around 20 Alice will NOT support any development.

Parking and Traffic Concerns

At the meeting of January 12th, there was much discussion about our traffic and parking concerns. This concern was confirmed by the staff report from the operational departments recognizing that Alice Street is already faced with traffic and parking concerns in connection with Erinrung, and that the street is a dead end forcing the cars in and out onto Bruce Street.

As discussed at the Public Meeting, the funeral home has not been active for the past few years, but prior to that its street parking was very short term and pretty respectful in nature. Obviously, there was no long term or overnight street parking.

We worry that the apartments will significantly increase day and overnight parking and traffic.

And to consider converting Alice Street to a standard road utilizing the existing road allowance to potentially support this development, would not be supported by the residents of Alice Street East.

Intensification within the Subject Blocks

We understand the Provincial and Municipal goals as it relates to intensification. And we understand that taking this proposed development into account still keeps the units per hectare under the guidelines, however we would suggest that the two blocks under study in the Planning report are "over contributing" as it relates to other blocks within the Bruce Street/Marsh Street Corridor. These blocks house, Erinrung, Maple Villa, Lemon Court, and the existing R3 apartments next to the Dam Pub, and the Trillium Apartments.

Staff did a density study on the subject blocks, which are detailed on 12 and 13 of the staff report. It is stated that the current number of units is 126 which calculates to 11 units per hectare. Density targets are 20 units per hectare. This is significantly understated.

In a quick count of all single family homes within the subject blocks, and adding the units of Erinrung (60), Lemon Court (24), Maple Villa (36), and the two Zone 3 units of 6 and 7 respectively. Our estimated calculation is 203 units, which equates to 17.8 units per hectare, which is 89% of density target currently.

The concern of the neighbourhood is that within these blocks there is still development land available, which would further increase the density.

To summarize, the following residents support this letter and its contents.

Lynn and Tom Horlor

Kevin Wright

Jenifer Glover

Jennifer Roberts

Don Green

Paul Wright and Wendy Eller

Scott Smith and Darcy McCarney

Gary and Lori Carscadden

Yvonne Weitch and Ted Sivell

Jamie and Michelle Green

Additional submission from Don Green

Mr Mayor and Councillors I wish to object to the present application re 20 Alice St E and make the following comments.

1. I as do the folks on Alice St E concur with the comments of above from the residents surrounding 20 Alice Street East.

2. Putting 11 units in this building of the size proposed is not compatible with the neighborhood which is single family

I note that the Gateway Project has no such units and if they are not on that site then I submit they do not belong on Alice St E.

3. I believe the attainable housing designation does not apply to the proposal. Attainable does not mean transient. Units of this size will attract temporary residents. I believe the attainable concept is based on giving people, be they single or married, a place to settle and become part of the community.

The size of the units proposed are really no more than motel units with some cooking facilities. I note there are two motels in Thornbury, both on the main highway.

4. I refer you to the old Trillium Restaurant building. The building now has 6 apartments and I believe all are occupied by people living in town, not just passing through.

The building at 20 Alice St E being smaller than the Trillium building could accommodate four similar units. Those would house people settling in the area and making a home here. The building would stay the same and there would be adequate parking off street.

These comments I ask you to consider and along with those of from the other residents and make the appropriate decision to reject the plan presented.

Yours truly.

Don Green