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On the record

Every month, the Kitchener Citizen publishes "Notes from City Hall" which Kitchener City Councillors can use to communicate with residents.

In addition to highlighting upcoming community events, I often use this as an opportunity to present my position or invite discussion about issues that pertain to citizens.

Here is one that I think bears repeating.

The feedback I have received regarding 19-41 Mill Street has been extraordinary.

What makes this site different from many like development projects is that it is plunk in the middle of an established neighbourhood.

The proposal is like cutting a piece out of the puzzle and replacing it with something incompatible, something that displaces people and something that tears away history.

Approving it would set a poor precedent for future developments in established neighbourhoods.

Here we have a site that is currently zoned CR-1 allowing 6 storeys. The secondary plan allows 8 storeys. The developer who owns the land wants to squeeze onto it a dense, stepped structure which is 12 storeys at its highest. This piece does not fit into the puzzle, into staff's vision, nor into what is an established neighbourhood abutting a heritage district (Victoria Park), a cultural heritage landscape (the Iron Horse Trail) and a designated heritage home next door.

Height, density and heritage aside, there are issues of set-backs, transitions, drainage, loss of affordable housing, size of units, traffic increase, and loss of vegetation.

Residents and I are happy to see development in the core and close to the major transit areas. Staff put considerable work into the proposed new zoning bylaw, the secondary plans and the Urban Design Manual. What is being proposed on this site ignores these rules. The work staff did in making these rules must be respected, for after all, it was tax payers' money that paid for it.