My name is Joyce Tidball and I am part of the Havendale Advisory Committee. I will speak to URBAN DESIGN, AMENITY SPACE AND PUBLIC REALM

The application from National Homes for a development at 2100 Brant St has generated considerable concerns from groups such as the Havendale Advisory Committee and citizens in the neighbourhood and surrounding areas. The Position Paper submitted by The Havendale Committee highlighted these concerns stressing that the proposal did not meet the requirements of compatible intensification.

Compatibility is an important tenet of Burlington’s current Official Plan and the new Official Plan soon to be approved by council. It refers to existing stable neighbourhoods and the need for proposed developments to comply with the policies of the Plan in regards to Urban Design, Amenity Area and Public Realm.

**Urban Design** in the existing OP refers to the organization and appearance of new builds to achieve a coherent and aesthetically pleasing visual character and form thru the use of design policies. The New OP is very similar and in fact uses stronger words and phrases such as sense of place, creation of attractive, comfortable, socially active places that will contribute to the health and happiness of new residents and the existing neighbourhoods. The need for compatibility regarding urban design compliments the policies for compatibility in land use planning. Is the proposed development compatible to the surrounding neighbourhoods and will it enhance the character of the neighbourhood? No.

Currently the neighbourhood has a mix of detached homes, semi-detached, and townhomes with varied styles and heights. What does NHs proposal offer design-wise? 233 Townhouses which are all the same in form – box-like, stark, sticks on stamps, and barracks are terms that have been used to describe this complex.

My opinion is that to live in this development and see unit after unit of sameness demonstrates lack of compatibility, does not reflect the current surrounding areas, and does not add to the beauty of the area or enhance quality of life.

Think back to the video and the shot of a car parked in the driveway with a bumper pad fixed to the brick work on the corner of the garage wall which was
obviously meant to protect the car because the garage was not quite wide enough and space outside the garage was just as limited. The video also showed a large SUV in a short driveway abutting the sidewalk. These shots were taken in a current NHs development. These examples do not make for an appealing streetscape. We ask Council to address this with National Homes and request changes in the build form.

Amenity Area. The Official Plan and the new Official Plan state that Amenity area is ‘an interior area within a residence building or an outdoor exterior space which is designed and intended primarily for the leisure and recreation of the occupants of the dwelling’. We would agree that Amenity area is important to enhancing the occupants’ quality of life. But NH is applying for major amendments to the amenity space zoning by-law.

In Table 1 on page 10 of the report compiled by the City planning dept. RM2 currently allows for a minimum of 25m²/bdrm of amenity space but the proposed amendment for RM2 is asking for 11m²/bdrm. That is less than half of what is stipulated in the existing by-law, a very drastic reduction. In the report, there are no stats at all for RM5 amenity area and we trust that council will question this.

In the OP, amenity space can include the exterior area – backyards, decks, and balconies qualify for private outdoor amenity space if the yard is fenced in and residents look to backyards for private outdoor space. If not fenced it is considered a common area for all units. We do not feel the proposed units will have adequate amenity space.
And there is the issue of setbacks. The existing by-law requires that RM2 townhouse blocks and RM5 street townhouses have a rear yard setback minimum of 9m. In NHs initial proposal the setback was changed to 6m for both zoning by-laws. In the proposal, Blocks 13, 14, and 15 are standard townhomes zoned RM2 but in the City Report of March 23rd NH is now asking for rear yard setback numbers of 3.7m, 2.7m, and 6.5m. For example the semis on Silwell Crt will have units built just 2.7m from their property line.

Blocks 1 through 12 will be zoned RM5 and NH proposes that the rear yard setbacks reduce from the existing 9m to 7m and down even further to 3m for those units fronting onto Brant St. Tables 1 and 2 show 15 exceptions requested by NH. There seems to be one reason for this, cramming in more townhouses. Council must question this and all other severe changes in the project’s dimensions as these become a very negative impact on the quality of life.

Public Realm in both OPs speak to the requirement of open and green space for common use in new developments.

NH’s application does not contain any dedicated common open or green space. The young girl in our video asked, “where will the children play?” And what is there for adults? Residents brought up the open space concern in the October Public meeting and in emails to the city staff and council.

We are encouraged by this statement from the Capital Works Dept on Parks and Open Space – ‘considering the intensification of this property Capital Works will require a minimum of 1 acre for passive recreational use.’ (1 acre = .405ha) However we feel this is not enough space for the occupants of 233 townhouses.
With the over-intensification of this development a larger open area is needed. Natural Heritage Lands can not be used as part of NHs Public Realm space.

An open space option for both young and old is the concept of a walking and biking trail along the northern, western, and southern borders of the property. Local residents use this area already so why not have NH develop it further? This would be an added feature for the new residents to enjoy the natural features around them and interact with their neighbours. Will Council and staff ask NHs to step up and do more for the new residents and their families?

We also take issue with the ‘cash-in-lieu’ statement; we strongly disagree that ‘cash-in-lieu’ should be considered. We feel this option reflects poor problem-solving that would result in completely ignoring the issue of lack of green space.

NHs proposed development does not demonstrate compatibility with surrounding neighbourhoods with regards to Urban Design, Amenity Area and Public Realm. New residents want to live in a neighbourhood not a cramped complex.

With the excessive number of exceptions to existing zoning by-laws requested by NH we ask Council and staff to step back and consider our submissions to further review this application.

Thank you.