Dear neighbours,

I realize as a university student, I scares you. My crazy hours, sometimes questionable acquaintances and generally habits likely displease your delicate sensibilities. You worry that my roommates will corrupt your young children and that my antics will drive your property value into the ground. Calm down.

It’s unfortunate, but many students live in a similar situation to myself. Out of the family nest, they try to find a place to call their own while working towards their degree. Those of us struggling to live in the on-campus zoo known as Lister Hall are forced into the greater community to fend for ourselves.

Thus, we rent houses, basements, apartments — or pretty much anything with four walls and a place to hang our hats between shifts at the university. Yet in North American society, because we don’t have families or own our own property, we’re looked down upon like a bunch of English soccer hooligans ready to tear apart the neighborhood at the first chance we get. London’s burning and we’re at fault.

A party at my house over the summer attracted your displeasure. I see you outside all the time patrolling in the warm weather with your family but when we wish to enjoy the summer, it’s suddenly off limits.

Sure, we were out a bit later than your 10 p.m. self-imposed curfew. But that doesn’t make us bad people.

Or, or, or, that’s what I imagine you told him on the phone, slipping high-priced scotch and using old currency to keep your furnace burning. That’s what homeowners do, right?

You didn’t even bother to approach myself or my housemates directly. Instead, you decided to inflict your wrath upon my unsuspecting landlord, whom you blame for “flooding these loathsome scoundrels upon us.” Or, at least, that’s what I imagine you told him on the phone, slipping high-priced scotch and using old currency to keep your furnace burning. That’s what homeowners do, right?

Had you come over at any point in the evening to tell us to keep it down, or that we were disturbing your sleep or even that you were jealous of our good time, we could have worked something out.

We’re not unreasonable people. But when nothing is said, we have to assume we’re causing little to no trouble.

Even my own schedule is often disrupted by my roommates’ tendency to stay up until 2 a.m. watching ridiculous movies at a volume reasonably described as “yet another Frosty.”

So I go and ask them to turn it down. If you’re looking to buy a house within walking distance of the university then you’re going to have to get used to students.

You should have realized, when you decided to settle in the “university zone” that you would likely need to share your space with just a few non-owners who are going to sometimes keep odd hours, and yes, invite people over occasionally.

Just like you, we want to live in a nice neighbourhood with quiet people. We want a place where we can bunk down and study for 12 hours straight without being disturbed, or where we can write 5,000 word research papers until three in the morning. We also want a place where we can have a good time in between all that work.

What we, like you, don’t want are bratty neighbours who are trying to make our lives a living hell.

Just because we don’t own the property and are awake at scary and unusual hours doesn’t mean that we’re seeking for that perfect moment to start burning down the neighborhood. We want to enjoy it just as much as you, and it doesn’t help anyone to treat us like a house full of misfits and convicts.

If you want to pretend that’s what we are, we can always start throwing weekly barbecues.

Love,

Your nearest pal, the friendly neighbourhood student.