

Community Association Letter

LOC2019-0097 RC2 to RCG 3802/ 3804 4 Avenue SW

Spruce Cliff Community Association 2019 July 22

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute comment to this application.

Background – Spruce Cliff has seen significant growth since 2006 in the range of 68% in population and 74% in unit intensity – we are at peak population - a community that is managing change. We have the RCG built form under DC zoning - 14% townhomes/rowhouses. (2014 stats). Part of the community is in the Westbrook TOD radius (600 M), this site is outside of that radius and north of the intersection at Bow Trail / 37th; the current Mainstreet project street improvement boundary.

Context

This is a corner site, an identified condition by City Planning for RCG developments. It does not meet the *ideal site* and there is not a lane.

The lack of lane presents design challenges to manage vehicle access to the site without increasing the danger to those who walk and cycle – curb cuts, and with garage doors street facing less “eyes on the street” with active living exposures. For a community that has bad pedestrian accident stats this is a concern.

This site is across the street from our 4th Ave east/west engineered walkway (on the applicants submission attached map - between units at 504 & 426) ; the route that takes resident active mode travelers to the community parks, child’s playgrounds, local shopping, and the link to the street bike lanes along Spruce Drive and entrance to the Bow River pathway (recreation and commuter).

The west side of 37th Street, this sites east exposure– is the side of the street that does not have above grade utilities making it a desired location for canopy trees planting (that will not be brutally pruned) to help with traffic calming on a street. 37th Street has increasingly become a cut through route for the adjacent community to the west, those leaving the higher speed artery of Bow Trail; traffic that increased when the added sound wall blocked direct Bow Trail access to that community at several streets.

A factors of community support of density increases replacing the current form: is that with the new development correction of past planning errors will occur, and the new development will do everything reasonably possible to improve the public interface adjacent to the sites.

Applicants attachments to this LOC application pages

It is not clear why this information (DP) was attached to the LOC as this is not identified as a Concurrent application.

We are responding to this information for the file so there is no confusion that our comment to the RCG Land use change is not construed as support of the attached RGC design.

The text (which usually takes priority to sketches) indicates 4 units at 2260 sq. ft of living with vehicle parking in attached garages, all accessed from 4th Avenue with additional sidewalk conflicts of curb cuts and extensive hard surfaces to the non built areas on the site.

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Redevelopment of a corner parcel, especially where density of the site increases, leads to an expectation that at least one of the units will face each street with the “front” elevation.

The attached site plan – shows all units facing 4th Avenue – with a side yard design facing 37th. This is not our understanding of an acceptable proposal for a “corner” RCG project.

Attached garages increase building mass; with no lane at this site – creative answers to this condition need to be found.

The site plan also shows extensive double wide curb cuts for access through the active mode routes. We have seen other solutions that side by side units share a curb cut single width then branch on the site for the garage access – this is positive in two ways – reduces active mode risk, reduces hard surface (non permeable) areas on the site, and allows more area adjacent to public sidewalks & streets to plant canopy trees.

The site plan also shows no change to the current negative public realm condition of a fence running along the 37th street frontage, contributing to the perception of drivers that there is less risk to speed and reinforcing that this east building elevation is a side, not a front. Redevelopment is expected to fix past mistakes – these conditions are not good design and should not be repeated with redevelopment likely to exist for the next 50 years.

As identified, tree canopy along the west side of 37th is seen critical to the public realm, as the east side of the street is impeded by an above grade utility corridor and the apparent evolved over time more restriction conditions on what can be planted in proximity.

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