

Spruce Cliff Community Association Comments – 2020 April 20

LOC 2019-0199 Spruce Cliff Community - 712 Poplar Rd SW - RC2 to MCGd75

April 20 2020 - update to comment of Feb 4th Submission.

In response to a request to amend our original LOC comments to reflect activities since the closing date in February, we offer the following comment update:

The applicant requested a meeting with the CA planning committee after the LOC comment closing date in February; that took place, followed by a CA hosted open house on March 11. The CA advertised, through our social media to the broader community, and were told the applicant would do a notice drop to homes in proximity to the site.

This file has attracted more community concern than most in recent times, in part due to the outcome of the recent MCG land use / rowhouse built form on the collector adjacent parcel to the east of this site that was called RCG.

At the community open-house for this site, the applicant outlined; that their intent was to build RCG on this site, but the MCG vs RCG land use was needed to address some of the units facing the lane; which RCG land use does not allow. The CA's understanding of RCG on a corner site (if you accept the lane is street argument) is that in its built form, to reduce change impact and be contextual adjacent to low density homes: the RCG product must have meaningful "fronts -more than turning the door" to both street exposures and have step backs at any 3rd level to reduce massing and overlooking, often expressed as 2.5 stories.

There was an over arching concern from the community meeting comment about the encroachment of density MCG into the areas of the community; that in the broader community plan were outlined to be the balance of housing inventory to the high & medium density homes the community has absorbed on the east side of Spruce Drive and the lands south of 8th Avenue, the TOD zone. The apartment form measurement in the community is 73% of current total inventory, with the residual lands east & north zoned in the majority RC2 and 19 sites with RC1 zoning.

On the discussion of density targets = how much and where. Some present wanted to see the site rebuild at the doubling of density with RC2 –a two-unit outcome at a 10 M height. A discussion followed that the existing RC2 zoning could house secondary units effectively making the site 4 units today.... And it is unfair/inaccurate to community's density performance that secondaries do not count in those measurements. Community performance on density has been further reduced by a recent year's city assessment recategorizing the 1950 RC2 purpose built up-down duplexes as single family with secondaries.

The applicant when questioned said they were not interested in perusing anything less than a 4-unit (excluding secondary) build. This led to discussion of the developer committing, we think, to an outcome of the built form of RCG at **max** 11 M height, leaving a residual concern that the property could be flip with a new owner having no obligation to build less than what MCG would allows.

There was discussion of:

- the importance of the street scape along an important walking route of Poplar Road to and from the park and the pedestrian bridge over Bow Trail.

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- the concepts of site participation/ engagement of residents in community safety, with eyes on the street, and how end units of RCG often just present a wall of a unit that is designed to be a mid block setting; with claims to meet the street presence with a corner door rotation.
- given new servicing would be brought to the site; that impacts could be cushioned by lowering the site typography with a start elevation measure of the front sidewalk level.
- question of were parking permits for MCG allowed as there is restricted two-hour parking in this block, perceived need to be due to spill over parking from the Alberta Health Services site that took over the old Shaganappi library building at 8th & Poplar Rd.
- waste and recycling for this site also takes place from the front along Poplar Rd due to slope in the lane & impact of the anticipated need for on-site storage of the 12 bins not in the “front yard” or public lane.

The applicant identified that a DP was under discussion and shared the drawing state at this date. They asked for community support from those in attendance, which was **not** forthcoming because the drawings did not reflect this meetings discussion:

- Site context in the lower density area of the community and Poplar Rd street scape; with a meaningful street scape elevation & landscaping along Poplar Rd. –& not a wall with non active uses fronting in the interior uses & only a front door to the street.
- Massing / form – not build to the MAX of 12 M MCG /11 M RCG allows. RCG principles of “low density form” – meaningful step backs at any 3rd level, and obscured glass to manage overlooking to the south properties.
- Landscaping that considers design features; that positively contributes to community safety for the active mode travel along Poplar Road.

Those present chose to wait for the revised drawings expected with a DP application some time around the Easter stat holiday's; which the applicant indicated might be considered for a concurrent application to help address the MCG land use / property flipping risk the community sees, and to modify the submission to take into account the public comment.

Failing a concurrent application and considering the significant community disappointment in the outcome /impact of the last MCG / called RCG experience: we hope that if city planning / CPC / council decide a rezoning is to be approved; that they will consider an RCG land use approval with a relaxation to allow unit access from the lane – the only reason presented to the community for the MCG ask vs RCG zoning.

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