

Community Association Response



November 20, 2020

Emailed to: matt.rockley@calgary.ca

RE: DP2020-6663 | 1110-1126 Gladstone Road NW | DP Amendment Application

Dear Mr. Matt Rockley,

The Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee (HSPC) would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above proposed DP and associated Land Use Redesignation (LOC2020-0122) and amendment to the Hillhurst Sunnyside Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP).

The Land Use Amendment proposal represents a departure from the 2009 ARP. This site was originally allocated a maximum 26 metre height on the east side and a maximum 16 metre height on the west side, closer to the lower-density historic homes and multi-residential buildings.

We note in the ARP that the ***"maximum densities...are not guaranteed entitlements. In order to achieve these maximums, projects will need to meet high standards of architectural and urban design quality that ensure projects make positive contributions to the public realm based on conformance to the design policies and guidelines of Section 3.0"*** of the ARP. The Applicant informed us that the Development Permit application was submitted in a staggered timeline so that the design of the building and site layout can be evaluated with the Land Use Amendment.

Comments

We have provided comments based on the vision laid out in the Hillhurst Sunnyside ARP and public consultations leading to its 2009 approval. We would further wish to see deeper clarity on increased benefits delivered to the current and future residents of the community and assurances that the proposed Land Use Amendment and Direct Control district policy accurately reflects the future development plans.

Our recommendations to City Administration and City Council are listed on the final page.

1. Built Form

- **Residents on 11th Street NW are not supportive of the design for the west side of the site due to the height and lack of setbacks. This is reflected in our final recommendations.**
- HSCA was copied on several emails from community members that supported the project proposal and from neighbours in opposition to the application. **We believe that residents concerns need to be considered when evaluating the proposal against the intention of the ARP.**
- We have provided additional historical context with regards to the proposed protection/designation of the former Hillhurst Baptist Church as a Municipal Historic Resource below.

- Initial renderings were provided by the applicant on their project website, showing a six-storey building with two interior courtyards, set in on the south side of the triangular-shaped parcel.
 - The concept drawings appear quite monolithic; a podium and stepbacks would be an effective way to help minimize the building massing at street level. At-grade patios and entryways would further integrate the large building with the human scale of our turn-of-the century, pedestrian-oriented community.
 - We are unclear about the distribution in density and Floor Area Ratio, where the eastern part of the site already has an FAR of 5.0 and how the density would be shifted if the Church were to be included in the comprehensive development of the site.
 - It is unclear how the applicant will demonstrate a softer interface between the Church building and the larger building when viewed from 10th Street.
- Because the application represents a greater height that is shifted across the entirety of the site, we expect that the applicant demonstrate sensitivity to neighbours through an appropriate interface at the north alley side, towards 11th Street and on the west side of the block with the two remnant parcels that are not a part of the development site.
 - We request wording added to the Direct Control district rules to push the building massing inward at the upper floors, as would be consistent in the Land Use Bylaw for the proposed Mixed Use 1 district (M-U1), where property lines abutting the lower density Multi-Residential Contextual Grade Oriented (M-CG) districts immediately to the west, north and south are to be set back and tiered back as appropriate.
 - In keeping with the General Rules for Mixed Use Land Use Districts (Bylaw 20P2017), the *street wall* definition under the Municipal Development Plan is defined as a 1:1 or 1:2 ratio of building height to road right-of-way to comfortably enclose the street on the podium level. In this case, the south building frontage on Gladstone Road should measure approximately 11 metres, curb to curb.
 - There is a strong preference from neighbours and HSPC to further step down the building closer to the interior residential part of the community. Community members cited the positive precedent set by the St. John's Condo building built in 2011, which is 8 storeys facing 10th Street and steps down to 4 storeys and further broken down to 2-3 storeys along 10A Street. Careful consideration was given to the interface between the larger building and the existing fabric of smaller scale single-family and multi-residential homes.
 - While development on the south side of 5th Avenue can reach a maximum 16m height closer to 10th Street under the ARP, sensitive redevelopment is still an important aspect to consider for current neighbours.
 - A shadow study would help evaluate the building's impact on adjacent neighbours.
- At Development Permit stage, consider *crime prevention through environmental design*/CPTED principles, such as lighting or added "eyes" on the ground floor to increase safety for pedestrians including residents, employees and visitors along Gladstone Road, the alley, and a more active 10th Street frontage.

2. Heritage Designation and Impacts to Existing Community

- Built in 1907, the formerly named Morleyville Road Baptist Church was once a hub in the community; the building has changed to various other well-used commercial uses over the years. We feel that the designation and protection of this building is a very encouraging aspect of the application that would add to the eclectic mix of heritage homes, apartments, condos, and newer mixed-use buildings of contextually appropriate sizes in the community.

- Not enough information was provided regarding the Church building, including the future commercial uses and how it will be renovated/restored.
 - Not enough information was provided on the activation of the public realm fronting 10th Street as a major pedestrian corridor.
- Hillhurst Sunnyside is one of Calgary's first suburbs north of the Bow River. This block was originally developed by Theodophilus Thompson, a plasterer in the 1910s. A few of those modest original homes still exist today serving as well-maintained examples of the architecture of the era, including the Thompson home at 416 11th Street NW and the two brick houses on either side.
 - Section 3.1.2 of the ARP envisions higher densities on the Main Streets; for this block, the western end was allocated a 16m or 4-storeys height limit. The heritage designation for the Church is a rare opportunity, but also an inequitable compromise, where Main Street style development directly borders the smaller scale residences off 11th Street.
- There is an opportunity to commemorate some of the most historically significant streets in Calgary: (1) **Gladstone Road** was originally an Indigenous trail that now traverses the heart of the community (2) the original name for 10th Street was **Morleyville Road**, which led to Morleyville, the oldest pioneer settlement in Southern Alberta and Treaty 7 territories.

3. Social Considerations

- The applicant indicated that this would be an approximately 140-unit apartment building. Most of the condos built to date have been catered to higher income single and dual incomes. We would like to see a greater housing mix as to encourage more family housing, such as a mix of 2- and 3- bedroom condo units; no information was provided on the number of three-bedroom, or family-oriented units.
 - **Family Co-habitation is the most effective method to increase density, this requires 2 and 3 bedroom units to be included in the design.**
 - Please note that the ARP strongly encourages family focused developments, as this supports our schools and co-habitation is the most effective means of densification.
- The HSPC supports the proposed purpose-built rental building. While several new apartment buildings have been built during the current recession, the rental rates on these newer rental buildings seem to cater to exclusively to higher incomes.
 - The ARP encourages affordable housing. Hillhurst and Sunnyside has always been a welcoming mixed-income community. We ask that the developer consider allocating "affordable" units to continue to support our proudly diverse community. This would keep with the history of the Church as a community hub, originally built by volunteers from the congregation.

4. Mobility

- This development will add significant density to the site near the Sunnyside LRT Station; more new neighbours will help support a healthy, vibrant shopping and commercial district.
- With the Graywood *Theodore* site at 427 10th Street (114 units + retail/commercial space) site now under construction and the current proposed Westrich site (140 units) redevelopment in progress to bookend the east side of Gladstone Road, we felt that this is an opportune time to request commitments from the City to improve mobility and safety. We recognize the City's challenges due to Covid-19 and believe it would be a missed opportunity if we do not advocate now. We remind City Administration and Council where ARP Section 4.3.8 states:

“Traffic management opportunities including, but not limited to, traffic optimization, access management, and traffic calming will be pursued as a part of the review of new developments within the TOD area.”

- We believe that traffic a major source of contention. Gladstone is a very well-used multi-modal transportation corridor and the only east/west connector between 10th and 14th Streets, other than 5th Avenue and Kensington Road, which is already closed to automobile traffic. Traffic already moves through the residential part of the community to avoid 10th Street and to be able to access the businesses on 10th and 14th Streets. Further, cut-through traffic from Kensington Road eastbound and 14th Street northbound will travel along Gladstone Road to access this site.
- The ARP indicates that ***“Upon completion of six significant redevelopments in the [TOD] study area, The City shall prepare a Mobility Assessment & Plan (MAP) in consultation with the Community Association to review the transportation impacts of the intensified land use on adjacent roadways, as well as pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections”*** (Section 4.3.8).
 - Six major residential projects were completed in 2017. A traffic study was approved by City Council in December 2018 and cancelled in June 2019 due to the constraints of a fiscally-challenged economy. We ask that Council keep its promises to the community and commission the Mobility Study.

5. Parking

- This is an excellent opportunity to create a truly Transit Oriented Development (TOD) due to its location and proximity to the Sunnyside LRT station and city’s Primary Transit Network.
 - Car-sharing and secure bicycle parking is encouraged to reduce automobile traffic so that excess parking does not spill into the community and to help contribute to a more climate-resilient Calgary.
 - The applicant indicated that there will be a 1:1 parking to unit ratio. We note that parking stalls in the proposed M-U1 district can be relaxed and allow for a .75 stall per residential unit ratio. A combination of alternative transportation and local amenities can help reduce the need for automobile ownership and mitigate the impacts of more vehicles in a densifying neighbourhood.
- We request that the following ARP policy be enforced by City of Calgary Roads/Calgary Parking Authority and have policy written into the Direct Control bylaw to ensure compliance:
 - ***“Dwellings in new multifamily developments are not to receive parking passes regardless of their off-street parking provisions”*** (Section 3.4.3).

6. Public Benefits

- This proposal’s notable intrusion into a lower density residential neighbourhood should be paired with equally notable improvements to the public realm, both on- and off-site.
- Bylaws 19P2015, 27P2012, and 86P2018 state that applications exceeding the base density may contribute to the Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Amenity Fund (HSCAF) or an Urban Design Improvement. It is not unusual for applicants to contribute funding to both.
 - At the time of writing, the Community Amenity Fund contribution is set at \$18.14 per square metre over the base density; recognized in the 2014 City/Coriolis report to be a lower rate than other areas experiencing significant redevelopment; HSPC wishes to see an equitable benefit for a community going through major intensification and change.
- There have been longstanding concerns and discussions around an expanded public realm and streetscape improvements along Gladstone Road. Past ideas for consideration include:
 - Limiting traffic to one-way only along sections of Gladstone Road

- Implementation of a traffic calmed “shared street”
- Closure of sections of Gladstone to vehicle traffic
- The applicant is encouraged to make other improvements to the general area, such as to the laneway, Gladstone Road, and the streetscape/public realm in consultation with the community.
- HSCA requests that the developer consider all opportunities for recycling and re-purposing any elements of buildings that will be razed to make room for this proposal.
- We would ask that the developer consider an HSCA membership package for the future building tenants. We encourage all new residents to become engaged in community life.

7. Community Engagement

- The applicant presented to the HSPC at our outdoor meeting on August 11, 2020. The meeting was well-attended by members and a handful of neighbours (about 18 people). We appreciate being informed early in the process and hearing the developer’s vision for the site prior to finalization of any plans and so we may inform and encourage community members to get involved in the planning process.
- There was a subsequent engagement with the most-affected neighbours and HSCA on Nov. 10th
- Through the engagement process, we understand that concerns were raised from adjacent neighbours about the proposal. We have endeavoured to offer a balanced application review through this letter but recognize that not all neighbours are affected equally.
- There was general support expressed at the Applicant’s initial presentation. Comments were received regarding the preservation of the former Hillhurst Baptist Church building and the current applicant’s direction to reduce the height on the eastern parcel. Due to COVID-19, an open house was not conducted, however information was sent electronically, and the applicant has an online platform to collect comments. Despite this reduced public engagement, we have received a notable volume of letters. Affected neighbours have organized and provided independent letters to the City and applicant.

Key Recommendations

As current, the application increases the ARP height/density on the west side of the site from 16m to 20m and from 2.5 to 4.0 FAR. We have concerns that any changes to the ARP through this application will and could carry forward to a different developer/applicant, should the current 2020 application lapse. For example, the 2018 ARP amendment from a previous developer had successfully increased the allowable height from 26m to 32m on the east side of the block; this previous developer has since released their interest in developing the site.

Hillhurst Sunnyside has been partner to the City of Calgary’s long-term vision to intensify within established areas, welcome new neighbours and increase housing within the inner city. In our experience, redevelopment has not been commensurate with public improvements. Our key recommendations are reiterated as follows:

1. Setbacks to be included, as envisioned in the ARP for this situation, in the final design to account for the low-density heritage homes on 11 St NW
2. That direction is added to the Direct Control district bylaw to provide rules aligning with the Mixed Use District (M-U1) rules. The DC should state the required setbacks and stepbacks where the proposed development site shares a property line with M-CG districts adjacent to the parcel.
3. That the City and applicant work together on offsite improvements to mobility, traffic and pedestrian accessibility and safety in consultation with the community. Council is additionally

reminded of their wider commitment to the community in 2009 when Hillhurst Sunnyside became the first community to go through Transit Oriented Development planning.

4. That City Council go through First Reading of the proposed bylaw and withhold final approval (Second and Third Readings of the proposed bylaw) until the finalization of community amenities, the above three recommendations, commitment to municipal heritage designation/restoration for the Church, and that “exemplary building design” is demonstrated to the satisfaction of Calgary Planning Commission at Development Permit stage.

Please keep us updated as this important application progresses. The HSCA would like to be involved in the review of this project. Please contact the undersigned should there be any questions or clarifications.

Sincerely,

Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee
Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association

cc: Elicia Cantafio, Chair, Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee, HSCA
Ben van den Berg, Daria MacDonald, Decker Butzner, Lorna Cordeiro, Mark Beckman, Robert McKercher, Tom Dvorak, HSPC Project Subcommittee Members
Lisa Chong, Community Planning & Engagement Coordinator, HSCA
Dale Calkins, Senior Policy & Planning Advisor, Ward 7 Councillor's Office
City of Calgary Circulation Control

Appendix I: Addendum Comments

May 31, 2021

RE: Updated Comments on Amended Plans

Dear Mr. Evan Goldstrom,

The Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee and community members would like to offer our thanks to you and the Applicant's group for your time and providing updates on **DP2020-6663** at the May 12, 2021, virtual community association meeting. We have summarized the HSPC and neighbours' comments below:

General

- There appears to be very few modifications from the original design and as such, does not address the DTR and Planning Committee suggestions regarding step downs and setbacks, softening the interface, 2-3 storey townhome design at the laneway, set back from Gladstone Road, etc.
 - The modification of a setback on the 6th floor does not keep with the suggestions from the City DTR and HSPC's letter. This is insufficient in terms of developing a building that is keeping in line with the village-feel and human-scale of the community.
 - The setback has to occur at 12m; the plans show it occurring at 15m.
 - The interface between the building and low lying residential needs to be softened as per the City's DTR and the HSPC's suggestions. As suggested, townhouses or live/work can be accommodated as is precedent at the Kensington building on 10th Street and 2nd Avenue.
- The original ARP and the prior application and ARP amendment only included a maximum height of 16 metres (or 4-5 storeys) and a FAR of 2.5
 - While the current application proposes a blended height and FAR, it is important to understand that the ARP went through a careful 3-year review from 2006-2009 which weighed the potential impacts of Transit Oriented Development.
 - Significant community consultations resulted in the current ARP maximums to ensure sensitive transition from the community Main Streets to the lower density residences to the west. This context has not been demonstrated with the current proposed development.

Hillhurst Baptist Church Building

- The current state of the former LifeSport/Hillhurst Baptist Church has been neglected as the building has been deteriorating for some time, even before Land Use interests began in 2018.
 - Some of the Character Defining Elements that have been defined in the Statement of Significance on the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources have been in disrepair and particularly where the eaves and landscaping have impacted the exterior cladding.
 - We have reached out to City of Calgary Heritage Planning for more information and learned the Land Use Application is tied to a designation agreement being executed.

- We would like to reiterate Recommendation #4 in our first letter, which describes the process on the prior Land Use Designation (LOC2018-0114) to ensure that restoration and historic resource designation must occur for the application to receive full Council approval.
 - More detail is needed to articulate the Heritage Values ascribed to the site: Style, Landmark and Symbolic.
- We welcome the proposed daycare use of the building as childcare services are in great demand in the community and constitutes a community-serving use for the building.
 - While the “Child Care Service” use is not a mandated use for the future of the building, we can suggest that the DC includes the “Child Care Service” definition is moved from the list of “discretionary uses” to “permitted uses” in the proposed M-U1 District for the Land Use Amendment application.

Heritage Considerations

- The community has a unique vision for the site through the preservation, restoration, and designation of the historic Church building. However, we are challenged with developing the site responsibly while respecting the DTR feedback and ARP policy.
- We strongly agree with the neighbours that the preservation of the Church has to be balanced against the living heritage on 11th Street, and the preservation of the Church building should not be leveraged against the heritage of the low-lying residential community.
- The current Church building represents one of the last wooden churches in Calgary and thus, occupies a significant chapter of the history of our city. At the same time, we have not heard significant public engagement that supports the justification of increasing the height and massing of the proposed building so that the air rights from redeveloping the Church are shifted to the west, where there are currently heritage residences that have been meticulously maintained and loved by the current residents.

Community Context

- The plan update included initial plan renderings from the adjacent owner of the remnant parcels to the west of the proposed development site. The landowner has had redevelopment plans in the works for many years, which has yet to be realized.
 - We are uncomfortable about basing the proposed plans on a future unapproved 5-storey building (which may or may not ever be built) to the west. The City Planning Department has indicated that their decision is based on current context, and not future context. Additionally, the future building would need to apply for future Land Use & ARP amendments and design approval which it does not yet have.
 - There currently exists a one-storey bungalow on the adjacent lot. Excellent precedents have already been set within the community: the St. John’s building as mentioned and the relationship of the Victoria on Fifth/ Kensington on the Park buildings on the north side of 5th Avenue and 10th Street, just north of this development. These buildings have included careful step backs and step downs where they abut bungalows, despite the higher zoning allowances on 5th Avenue
- As discussed at the recent meeting, the rendering is not in keeping with the reality of the surrounding community

- The photo shows an image of how the proposed building would blend into the community; however, the extra space does not exist due to the presence of surrounding buildings. The concept for activating the laneway would be very challenging under the current circumstances.

Laneway

- The laneway modifications needed to support the building have not been planned for. The widening is not possible on the west end as there is an adjacent landowner that has plans for the pie shaped lot.
- The proposal indicates that the lane will only be paved 15m to the north past the “T” in the alley. The entire lane – to the west of the building – should be paved, otherwise it would transition to gravel before connecting with 5th Avenue.
- The drawings do not show how the lane will transition to the 2.9m width between the utility pole and the Thompson Barn on the west side.
- The DTR note, *"Amend the plans to provide additional setback to facilitate a functional width of 7.2m such that two vehicles can pass each other within the lane"* has not been completed. Instead, the plans show a 6.1m wide lane.
- The plans do not indicate how drainage in the lane will be handled (such as underground storm sewers, or only relying on the surface grade) and how to prevent flooding of garages as well as prevent spring runoff from flooding the underground parking garage.
- The drawings show that the utilities will be buried. However, no feasibility work was done to see if there are water or storm drainage lines. Also, the developer was unable to answer how buried utilities would be run to the homes along the lane, which currently get them from above ground poles. There is no room to move them onto west side of west laneway, or to the north side of the north laneway. The applicant has been informed at least a few times about this potential challenge. With a mature Development Plan application, we are highlighting the requisite to address this issue before plan approval.

Traffic Management

- We are supportive of the conversations from the Ward 7 office in support of curb extensions, in conjunction with the construction that is currently happening on the Theodore development on the south side of Gladstone Road.
- We appreciate that the applicant has proposed fewer vehicle parking stalls (from a 1:1 ratio to 0.75 stalls to units/home) to keep the amount of additional vehicular traffic to a minimum (as allowed in the Land Use Bylaw) and successfully realize Transit Oriented Development.

We realize that this was a very lengthy letter, but we still feel that our four points of recommendations in the original letter still applies to our current comments on the amended plans. Thank you for your time engaging with the community.

Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee
Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association