

RE: Concerns and objection to the proposed Medici Development 201 10th ST NW

April 30th, 2015

Dear City Council Members,

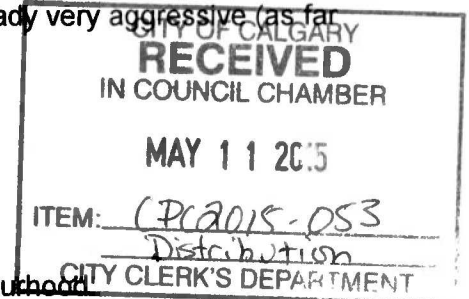
My wife and I live in the neighbourhood just ~170m from the site and I have very serious concerns about the proposed height, density, and parking relaxations for 201 10th st NW that are coming before council on May 11th, and the dangerous precedent such a request sets.

Here are just a few of the issues:

- \* The proposed height is out of context and out of character and context with the surrounding single family residential and pedestrian-oriented retail.
- \* The proposed height is out of context and out of character with the two neighbouring and recently constructed buildings (both the Julio's Barrio building [which is just 3 stories on the 10th st façade, and the neighbouring Killian Design building on Kensington Rd (which is just 4 stories). Both are respectful carefully considered and well designed buildings.
- \* There needs to be hard limits on height and density to help protect the unique single family residential mixed with pedestrian-oriented retail character of the Kensington Neighbourhood. Efforts were made at this through the ARP. There is no reason to relax these already very aggressive (as far as change to the neighbourhood) developer-oriented height limits.

An extra tall building and high-density condos here will:

- \* create a walling effect for nearby residential houses
- \* dwarf the nearby single-family residential houses
- \* shade some of our backyards from morning light and block views
- \* irreparably change the pedestrian oriented retail character of the neighbourhood
- \* create a walling effect around the residential homes blocking them off from the main streets.



The additional parking and traffic strain of this extra density is more than the narrow lanes replete with power poles and nearby young children at play. Apparently the development also is very short on parking spaces which is yet another big problem.

I understand that the rationale proposed by the developer for relaxation is that they want to build a plaza. In terms of public "plaza" spaces nearby there are already 2 plazas nearby: the plaza in front of the plaza theatre and the new (and very large) poppy plaza. While one could argue that you can never have too many plazas I don't think the value of additional plaza space warrants the dangerous precedent and walling off that the extra requested height would create. Additionally, there is already a requirement on that lot for a significant corner setback, so the developer is basically just offering to make that existing feature slightly larger. Certainly adding in a plaza will help the developer create high value retail spaces (and be able to run public seating for their restaurants, etc.). Putting in a plaza may make sense for them even without the height relaxation. The community and city should be "trading" unneeded extra plaza space at the expense of creating a new and very precipitous height and density precedent, especially when there are so many plazas nearby and the developer has to provide a corner setback anyways

Perhaps most importantly a height relaxation for this building sets a very dangerous precedent that will undoubtedly impact all future development (both on 10th st and Kensington road). Once

developers start expecting additional relaxations beyond the aggressive height limits already allowed within the ARP, and the problems listed above are likely to propagate through all pending and future developments.

Please understand I am pro development and pro-business. In a wildly fluctuating market like Calgary, developers take big risks when constructing buildings and we should work with them to have a clear consistent process. This is an additional reason why this end-run circumvention attempt needs to be stopped. This Osteria project has been enormously time consuming and stressful both on the community planning commission, and residents of the neighbourhood, the planning authority and I'm sure even the developer themselves (who are actually friends and neighbours of many of us in the community and are now going door to door asking for signatures to support their project).

Having clear unequivocal consistency about application of the planning rules will save everyone on all sides a lot of time, money and heartache. Additionally it will send a clear message that city council stands behind and supports both the volunteer community members who have put hundreds of hours into this proposal alone, and the paid public servants on the planning commission who have also dedicated their careers to community planning and have spent lots of time reviewing this very carefully. City council needs to trust these community members to perform the jobs they have been entrusted to perform and serve the long term planning interests of the community.

As an additional note, I believe it would be a very black mark for city council to go against the clearly expressed wishes of the community association, and the development and planning authority and allow this relaxation that lies wildly outside the limits within the ARP. The proposed building is wildly out of context with surrounding buildings, it has been consistently opposed by residents of the neighbourhood (not always publicly or vocally as mentioned above, it is in fact our neighbours who are applying). I believe it is important for the city council to send a message that it trusts the area plans and community associations and community members and not encourage developers to attempt these kind of end-runs around due process and community planning. Doing anything other than rejecting this application would reflect very poorly on city council, and would no doubt encourage other developers to undertake these same kind of long and painful (on everyone) process. Additionally, it would also certainly raise questions about undue influence (whether real or just perceived) over community members and others due to the threats as reported on in the Calgary Herald (Here is a link to the article:

<http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/planning-meeting-incidents-spark-police-investigation> apparently threats were made by the applicant against community members who were expressing concerns about the development.) In addition to the highly questionable web-polling results appear also to have been inappropriately influenced.

I have spoken to over 15 neighbours about this, 100% of whom are strongly opposed to allowing any height or parking relaxations on this site. Thank you for helping to ensure the ARP height and density limits and community planning processes are not allowed to be circumvented.

Regards,  
Tim & Cora Griffin  
212 11th St. NW