

# Community Association Response

May 19, 2023

RE: LOC2023-0102 420 37 Avenue NW

The above-mentioned application is for a land use change to DC / R-CG. Our understanding is that the Direct Control land use (based on R-CG) is intended to embed elements of the Green Priority Building initiative into the proposed rowhouse project. The conditions involved in this would include extra insulation, no natural gas for heating, and passive energy provided by solar, geothermal, or electrical. We don't fully understand why a DC land use is required to ensue that the development would conform to the Green Priority Building initiative and we are, in general, opposed to the use of DC. We also understand that the project envisioned for the parcel would come in at 75.97 units per hectare, which is slightly over the maximum allowed under R-CG.

We appreciate that the applicant's letter provided some general description of the project they wish to develop. From this description we understand the project would consist of a 4-unit rowhouse with suites and then 2 carriage units over the 6-car garage. We are aware that nearby residents have serious concerns about the proposed project. These appear to be focused primarily on (1) density, (2) front setback, (3) on-street parking of overflow vehicles and (4) building height transition.

37 Avenue NW between 3 and 4 Streets is a cul-de-sac, bounded to the north and west by James Fowler High School. This part of Highland Park is designated as Neighbourhood Local in the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan. Properties along the avenue are primarily older single detached bungalows – some with suites – and there are also a few semi-detached buildings. The property is within a short walking distance to the #2 bus route on 4 Street NW and the #38 bus route on 40 Avenue NW.

The proposed mid-block rowhouse with suites and carriage suites would see an increase from 1 dwelling unit in the existing bungalow to a total of 10 dwelling units including the suites on this block. This is an abrupt and disconcerting increase in density. This, in turn, leads to concerns about the overflow of vehicles parked on street. The south side of 37 Avenue NW in this block is served by front driveways because houses there have no back laneway. This reduces the amount of on-street parking available to residents on the block. It is unrealistic to assume that 6 parking spaces provided on the project would be sufficient to meet the demand of residents and people with vehicles looking for accommodation will necessarily have to look elsewhere. That, in itself, restricts housing choice and is problematic if people with limited means who wish to live close to downtown but who have a vehicle cannot actually find a place to live close to downtown.

With respect to the front setback, it is unacceptable that the proposed rowhouse would have a front setback of only 3 m (the minimum required) when all the buildings existing along the avenue have much larger front setbacks. For example the property to the west has a setback of 7.5 m. This defies the entire concept of "contextual" that was formerly inherent in R-CG land use. Presumably this reduced setback is to allow for the required courtyard distance between the rowhouse building and the carriage suites. However it would create a very jarring misalignment of building facades along the street.

The building height of the proposed rowhouse would also be at the maximum of 11 m. We do not have detailed plans yet, but we strongly urge the applicant to consider designs that minimize the impact of a building that is taller than surrounding residences. If a rowhouse with only a 3 m setback is allowed, then this plus the higher building height will cause shadowing impacts on the neighbouring properties. We ask that the applicant consider designing a project that would reduce the overall density and better conform to the average front setback on the block as well as adhering more stringently to the R-CG density cap. Reducing the density would also alleviate potential issues with excessive on-street parking.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [development@hpca.ca](mailto:development@hpca.ca).

Thank you.

D. Jeanne Kimber  
Development Director  
On behalf of the Planning and Development Committee  
Highland Park Community Association