

Community Association Response



Attn: Chloë Berezowski
RE: LOC2024-0050

May 27, 2024

The Sunalta Community Association is providing this letter in response to the land use application LOC2024-0050.

The SCA development committee has reviewed the package delivered via email; and wish to provide this letter with our response.

Our preference would be that both 1920s era houses be registered by the owner and heritage retained. Our next best option is that we would like to see every demolition in Sunalta count towards making a better community. We did have the pleasure of meeting with residents for several hours to ensure we can help articulate nearby resident concerns, as well as provide a resource to help navigate the process.

The SCA does not oppose or support the proposal as nearly all the concerns can and will hopefully be addressed during the development permit phase should we get there. The proposal fits the expectations of what the West Elbow Local Area Plan will formalize and fits within broader city-wide policy for areas near major transit routes, and is also a short block away from the the 12th Avenue cycle track.

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However, we wish to share two concerns for consideration for the land use change. The rest of our letter is then focused on our concerns that are meaningful at the development permit stage. We have already shared them with the applicant and wish to have them on the public record should the property change hands before redevelopment occurs.

Setback Considerations

The existing M-CGd72 land use provides the ability to see contextual setbacks. Since this is calculated at the development permit stage and as of the date this letter was written we would expect it to require a front setback somewhere between 4 and 5 metres more in line with the rest of the block. H-GO (and M-CG under the other circumstances) would both require 3 metres.

We view 13th Avenue's relative setbacks and mature public tree canopy as a major asset to the community. Without a concurrent development permit or certainty on a design, a relaxed setback is ultimately a concern.

We are very aware of examples elsewhere in the city where a well done contextual design could complement and improve the streetscape with the variety of setbacks on 13th Avenue. The lack of this certainty is one of the reasons we can not write a letter of support of the proposal.

Timing

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We also wish to note our concern about the application happening while we are actively undergoing the creation of the West Elbow Local Area Plan. The WELAP will be bringing tools that will impact this site – such as the heritage design guidelines as 13th Avenue is expected to be listed as a heritage design area. Additionally, there are other City led initiatives that we would much prefer to have in place such as the ones passed during the Rezoning for Housing hearing – incentives for collaboration, public engagement on development permits, and more clear row house guidelines for residents.

We acknowledge the matter of timing is often imperfect, and are well aware that applying at this time is well within the rights of the applicant. In discussions the applicant was well aware of the unideal timing, but also quite amenable to following these draft guidelines if and when the development permit stage happens.

The reason for our concern stems from the lack of certainty should the land change hands before the local area plan is passed.

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Development Permit and General Development Concerns

As mentioned before, the rest of this letter is focused on items that are relevant to the development permit stage should this redevelopment get that far. We wish to have them in the public record so we can point to them should the property change hands.

Abandoned Homes and Development Delays

Our area has been challenged over the years with a few infill redevelopment attempts resulting in heritage homes being purchased, gutted, and then left vacant sometimes with or without an active development permit. While the applicant has verbally told us this should not be the case, it is still a concern for Sunalta. Unfortunately, a development permit is not a reliable indicator of someone's intention to follow through.

We ask the applicant to please ensure no matter the outcome, the homes are well taken care of, we have neighbors to say hello to, and not create magnets for social disorder.

Contextual Street Facing Design

Given 13th Avenue's inclusion in the heritage guideline areas for the West Elbow Local Area Plan – it's important a design fits with the rest of the streetscape and incorporates the heritage aesthetic of Sunalta. For example, the style of sloped roofs, front porches.

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Other Design Elements

Should the proposal go forward with a 2 building style rowhouse with a courtyard – we strongly encourage a modestly lit courtyard with significant attention paid to ensuring the east and west ends pay consideration to the neighbors in terms of privacy impacting windows, air conditioners, among other items that will come up during the design process.

Public Tree Removal

Should this application go to a development permit stage, it's paramount the applicant is aware that asking the City for public tree removal is a non starter given 13th Avenue's heritage and the fundamental aspect how mature trees help make modestly taller homes feel more human scale.

Landscaping

We wish to urge the applicant to consider options to do more than the minimum H-GO requires for landscaping – the removal of roughly 8 mature trees on the existing lots is unideal and we would like to see a thoughtful design that builds back better.

Waste Management

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Depending on the number of units and design, a thoughtful approach to waste management is paramount. H-GO already requires screened options for bins, while Molock containers and other more creative approaches can significantly reduce the impact of the visuals and physical space needed for waste management.

Thank you for your consideration of our input to the proposal,

Micheal Jones
President and Director of Planning and Development Committee

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