

Letter from Park Hill Community Association

Re: LOC2018-0260
3833 Parkhill Street SW, Calgary
Response from the Parkhill Stanley Park Community Association
(Received 27 December, 2018)

The Parkhill Stanley Park Community Association strongly opposes Mr. Wieczorek's (the "Applicant") application for rezoning of the lot located at 3833 Parkhill Street SW (the "Property") from RC-2 to RC-G. The rezoning is not in the best interests of the Parkhill Stanley Park Community (the "Community") nor the City of Calgary and the only party that would be positively impacted by the requested change in zoning is the Applicant, who admits that a large part of the rationale for the rezoning is for his own financial gain.

We acknowledge that the Applicant did consult with the Community prior to his application. He met with the Community Association and held a further question and answer at the Community Centre. He was very communicative and responsive to questions.

The City of Calgary website indicates that the Calgary Planning Commission shall take in to account the relevant plans and policies, context, the rationale of the proposal and sound planning principles. The Applicant's application meets none of these criteria.

The Parkhill Stanley Park Area Redevelopment Plan ("ARP") was initially approved in 1994 and was created with an understanding that Parkhill Stanley Park, through thoughtful development, could play a critical role as an inner city community, close to public transit by appropriately balancing single family dwellings amongst low and mid density multi-family dwellings. The Applicant's contention that the ARP is outdated and does not reflect the growth that the City of Calgary has experienced in the last 10 years is inaccurate and fails to consider the purpose of an ARP. An ARP is a foundational document that provides generations of guidance on the development of a community. Certainly, circumstances do change, and the Parkhill Stanley Park ARP has been amended on several occasions (notably most recently in 2017) to reflect same. It permits homeowners and developers alike to have comfort in the community and its future. It is inappropriate for the Applicant to take the position that because the ARP is 25 years old it should not be observed and does a disservice to the very purpose of an ARP.

The ARP was developed through careful consideration of how to best balance a variety of lot densities within one fairly small community. This is not a case of 'Not in My Backyard'. We have welcomed many projects in recent years that have removed existing single family homes and replaced them with multi-family dwellings, including but not limited to the multi-unit complex on 40th Avenue and Parkhill Street SW and multiple side by side dwellings that are accessed from 42nd Avenue SW. In addition, there are several mid-level apartment buildings found on the streets closer to the C-Train station, allowing for increased density near public transit. These projects have all respected the ARP and allowed increased density in an appropriate way. Managing multiple densities in a community cannot be done on an *ad hoc* basis. It must be done with planning and intention.

While Parkhill Stanley Park appears on the surface to be an eclectic community, which may suit the proposed rezoning, upon careful consideration of the ARP it is clear that the eclectic look and feel is purposeful and founded in strong urban planning principles. One-off applications, such as the Applicant's, without consideration as to how the redesignation fits in to the ARP erode the foundation of the Community.

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The Applicant has taken the position that rezoning the Property for a higher density dwelling than can currently be supported on the Property is not inconsistent with the rest of the street. That is inaccurate. As indicated above, the ARP carefully contemplated the effective mix of densities, which is to layer the denser zoning closer to Macleod Trail and move to a less dense zoning as one moves West. The Application, if granted, would upset the delicate balance that was deliberately struck by the ARP. Under the current zoning, with an appropriately sized lot, the Applicant could build a duplex. The problem is that the Property is too narrow to meet the standards that were established long before the Applicant purchased his lot. The Applicant makes it clear in his application that one of the major reasons he feels that his request should be granted is that it would allow him to see the highest financial return for his investment in the Property. The Planning Commission cannot allow property developers to simply capitalize uncontrollably. Rezoning and subsequent development is a very significant change and ought to be carefully planned and applied, not impulsively or opportunistically.

The proposed zoning of RC-G has been used most effectively in Calgary on multiple consecutive lots to create 'row housing'. That is not possible with the Property. The Property is flanked by relatively newly built homes. If the zoning was changed on the Property, it would be completely inconsistent to the neighboring properties.

In addition, to the proposed rezoning permitting a second (and possibly third) dwelling on the Site, the reduction of parking from 2 to 1 stall per unit, is a significant concern for the community. Parkhill Stanley Park already suffers from a parking shortage and narrow streets. Adding congestion on one of the narrowest and most harrowing streets for driving in the Community is met with fervent opposition.

The Applicant makes certain representations about the dwelling he intends to build. At this stage, his proposed plans are not relevant. A zoning change to RC-G would open up a variety of different dwelling possibilities now and in the future, regardless of his current intention. His promises of low impact to the Community should not be considered as a supporting feature of his application. The application should be reviewed on the merits of moving from an R-C2 to an RC-G zoning, agnostic of the actual dwelling that is being proposed.

The Applicant has failed to consider sound planning principles and has not provided any credible rationale to rezone the Property. His personal economic gain should not and cannot drive the urban planning process. The Parkhill Stanley Park Community Association strongly opposes the Application for the reasons set forth above and intends to appear at all opportunities through the application process to reinforce its position.