

Community Association Letter



June 25, 2018

Shane Gagnon
City of Calgary File Manager
Community Planning (North Team)
The City of Calgary

Emailed to: shane.gagnon@calgary.ca

**RE: LOC2018-0114 | 1110, 1114, 1120, 1124 & 1126 Gladstone Road NW | Land Use
Amendment from Existing C-COR1 f2.8h13, M-CGd72, M-CGd72 to DC/C-COR1, DC/M-
H2, DC/MC-2 (The Site)**

Dear Mr. Shane Gagnon,

In this letter, the Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee (HSPC) presents the community comments regarding the above Land Use Application made by Battistella Developments (Applicant). We use our expert knowledge of the community, within the spirit and content of the Hillhurst Sunnyside Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP).

This is an unusual application in that the Applicant proposes height and density above the ARP, intruding into the interior of the low density residential community. The Applicant presents the preservation of the Hillhurst Baptist Church (Church) as an opportunity to justify a density transfer plus additional Floor Area Ratio (FAR), when there is no clear direction from the community regarding the retention of the Church and its historical value.

Our Comments:

1. The land use and development approval process for this Site, due to its interface with the interior low-density residential community must be done with great care. We ask that The City require that the land use includes guarantees that the interface will be respectful and consistent with the current context. ARP recommendations such as streetscape, setbacks and step-backs should be reflected in the Land Use District.
2. Saving the Church is not a clear priority for the community, particularly as an equivalent trade-off resulting in pushing a significant increase in density and height into the interior of the residential community, away from the Main Streets. We have not heard from any community members in support of this density transfer at all costs. (Refer to Appendix 1 – 1. Heritage)
3. The developer's application operates under the assumption that maximum heights and densities as defined by the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) section of the ARP are a given. This TOD-justified height and density are not guaranteed entitlements. (Refer to Appendix 1 – 2. ARP Height and Density)
4. The Applicant's economic challenges should not drive a planning decision. The application states that cost of the preservation of the Church is its main justification for the increased FAR, beyond

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the combined TOD-justified FAR of the entire site. However, the Applicant has stated that it will retain ownership of the Church which means that any investment is directly to their benefit. If the Applicant chooses to sell, rent or lease it will benefit accordingly. (Refer to Appendix 1 – 3. Economics)

5. The application also requests reduction in parking in TOD areas from .9 to .55 stalls per unit to increase the Applicant's financial ability to invest in the restoration of the Church. The reduction of parking solely for profitability does not consider the impact of this reduced parking on the community at large or the parking enforcement cost to The City.
6. The Applicant's illustrations show the surrounding properties in its future vision, consistent with its view of the community and not within the context of the community as it is today. We find this approach to be misleading and not consistent with how residential development applications are required to be rendered. Again, this is another example of the proposal's insensitivity regarding the context of the community to be impacted and intruded upon. (Refer to Appendix 2 – Comparative Illustrations)
7. If concessions are granted to allow the Church to be saved, we need assurances that the Church will be saved at whatever cost to the Applicant. To this point, we request to be informed regarding environmental testing on The Site, particularly due to the Church proximity to the gas station. We have a concern that the outcome of this testing may have an impact on the Church restoration. Without this work being done before Application reviewed, there is a risk that a density transfer will be awarded, and the Church will not be salvageable on a contaminated site.
8. Per the ARP Section 4.3.8 Traffic Management Monitoring, "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." We request that this Application should not be approved or debated until this study is completed. (Refer to Appendix 1 – 4. Mobility Study)
9. We request assurances that there is future capacity within the water, sewer, flood mitigation, electrical and natural gas infrastructure and that these services as provided to the rest of the community will not be negatively affected by this and other future developments. If not done, The City will have no opportunity to require developers contribute to the costs of overall community infrastructure upgrades needed due to the continued densification of our community.

Please contact the undersigned should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee
Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association

Cc: Robert McKercher, Chair, Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee
Members, Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee
Lisa Chong, Community Planning Coordinator, HSCA
Paul Battistella and Chris Pollen, Battistella Developments / Applicant's Team
Dale Calkins, Senior Policy & Planning Advisor, Ward 7 Councillor's Office
Circulation Control, Planning & Development, City of Calgary

Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Further Information
Appendix 2 – Comparative Illustrations
Application Notice LOC2018-0114 dated June 01, 2008

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Appendix 1 – Further Information

1. Heritage

The Church is listed on the City of Calgary Inventory of Historic Resources, but it is not formally designated nor protected from future redevelopment. Within The City there is strong concern regarding the loss of heritage buildings in Calgary, which the community understands and supports. However, within the ARP, The City classified the Church under “Other Historical Sites”, “whose significance has been diminished by poor maintenance, insensitive alteration or some other factor”. While the community supports heritage preservation in general, this requires equitable and creative solutions and should not be done at all costs.

The Applicant states “The need for a DC land use is required to modestly increase the overall site density and increase the allowable height on a portion of the site in order to preserve, restore, repurpose and municipally designate the Hillhurst Baptist Church”. This is an inaccurate statement because the DC land use is required to get approval for the ARP recommended land use, regardless of the Church.

The lack of clarity and certainty regarding the Applicant’s commitment and intention regarding the Church further weakens our support of the density transfer. The Church may be sold, leased or rented. It could be a revenue source rather than an expense for the Applicant. We note that the historic designation of the Church makes the owner eligible for municipal and provincial grants.

2. ARP Height and Density

ARP Section 3.1.5, Policy 3 states “*The maximum densities Table 3.1 (or on Map 3.2) 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 Plan.*”

ARP Section 3.2.1, Policy 2 states “*The maximum heights shown in Table 3.2 (or on Map 3.3) 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.*”

The following chart is included to highlight and clarify the additional height and FAR that the Applicant is assuming is its right:

Existing Parcels	Existing Land Use	Existing ARP	Applicant’s Proposal
1110 (Church/retail)	13 metres / 2.8 FAR	26 metres / 5.0 FAR	Restoration & Historical Designation
1114 (gym)	13 metres / 2.8 FAR	26 metres / 5.0 FAR	32 metres
1120 (apartment)	12 metres / .72 FAR	16 metres / 2.5 FAR	32 metres
1124 (apartment)	12 metres / .72 FAR	16 metres / 2.5 FAR	16 metres
1126 (apartment)	12 metres / .72 FAR	16 metres / 2.5 FAR	16 metres
Average FAR	1.4 FAR	3.3 FAR	3.5 FAR (increase of .2 over ARP and 2.1 over existing)

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We are not opposed to height in the right areas. The only site in the TOD Study area where the 32m height was granted is the isolated RBC Site (LOC2017-0393), a standalone parcel situated on the Main Street of 10th Street NW and away from the lower-density/lower-height residential interior of the community. The RBC parcel is considered a gateway into the Hillhurst Sunnyside community and Main Streets. Accordingly, the application to bring the zoning of this RBC parcel to the ARP recommendation was recently approved by City Council with support from the community. The Site (LOC2018-0114) does not meet these criteria.

3. Economics

The Applicant's plan (and required relaxations) to concentrate density and height in the center of the site also appear more economically efficient for the Applicant. If the Applicant's economics are challenging due to the shape of the site these challenges should be reflected in the land cost rather than in zoning concessions.

When asked about the potential to build height over the Church, the Applicant stated that it has no interest because of the cost.

4. Mobility Study

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).

To validate the urgent need for the City to act, the following lists the requisite six significant developments that have been completed since the TOD section of the ARP was approved:

1. Ven
2. Pixel
3. Lido
4. The Kensington
5. Ezra
6. St. Johns on Tenth

This application should not be approved until the Mobility Study is complete and we understand the impacts on congestion and safety of all the existing, proposed and potential applications. The land use taking the RBC site to 32 metres has recently been approved, without the completion of the mobility study per The City commitment. HSCA has repeatedly requested that this work be done.

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Appendix 2 – Comparative Illustrations

Applicant Rendering (from Applicant website June 23, 2018)



Google Maps Camera View (May 2017 and reflects current street view)

