

Community Association Letters




Mon 12/3/2018 4:05 PM

Planning Director <planning@brccalgary.org>

[EXT] Re: LOC2016-0193 proposed DC

To  Leung, Christine N.

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Action Items

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Thank you for circulating this DC to us.

We were not aware JEMM was applying for a DC. We assumed it was MU stock district. There has been no engagement on a DC and its implications or rationale for why they are going that way - especially with no concurrent DP. It is very concerning to us that they have no visitor or commercial parking. The risk to the developer is on the residential parking. However the risk to the community is on the commercial and visitor side. We firmly believe parking is still essential for retail to be successful here and the community to not be adversely impacted. Especially since they are already asking for substantially less parking for residential and a height and density increase that is so substantial with no DP. Do they have more bike parking? We are lacking sufficient information to support this and support the City's recommendations for refusal at this point.

Furthermore permitted uses were also a sticking point we thought we negotiated with the developer. We didn't want any non-active uses in this location such as medical - see our letter about this.

It seems the information has changed quite significantly since we last spoke to the development team and hope you can take these concerns forward to CPC on our behalf.

Community Association Letters



Planning Committee
917 Centre Avenue NE Calgary AB T2E0C6
brcacalgary.org

20 Nov 2018

Circulation Control
Planning, Development & Assessment #8201
The City of Calgary
PO Box 2100 Station M
Calgary AB T2P2M5

Attn: CPAG.Circ@calgary.ca
cc: Christine Leung, File Manager (christine.leung@calgary.ca)
Ali McMillan, BRCA Planning Director (planning@brcacalgary.org)

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: LOC2018-0193 (950 McPherson Square NE)

Thank you for the opportunity to update our last letter on this file which we submitted in August 2018. The applicant held an open house this month in the community. Our updated comments reflect feedback from our Planning Committee as well as a general sense of what BRCA has heard in and around the community with respect to the captioned application for a Land Use Amendment. We have not conducted any fresh engagement of our own since the date of the Applicant's open house. Please read this letter in concert with our previous letters to ensure you have the full picture of community feedback to date. This letter is not intended to replace feedback in previous letters but is a supplement.

The strongest design statement we might make is that there is some general support for a "less monolithic" design (for lack of a better way of expressing the point) and a related sense that the 50m height is more appropriate. That said, there are still those in the community who feel the building is still too tall and out of scale with the original Bridges Master Plan and existing buildings. And the broader context, of course, is some awareness within the community as well about the other active proposal by Bucci for two 50 m towers also in Bridges. Depending on what happens with that other application, some feel that the nearby sense of scale should be reconsidered; again, conversely, though, there are those who think that the same debate about appropriate height and the original vision for the Bridges should apply to that Bucci project just as it should for this proposed project, too. Speaking contextually, we have also heard some make the suggestion that the height profile of Bridges should take into consideration the 60m Calgary Housing tower to the southwest of Murdoch Park. Suffice to say it will be important to consider the scale of all of these buildings in relation to one another when looking at this application and what will best fit.

There is a knotty problem built into this file, which is that FAR goals are necessarily driven by price / land value. At one point in recent history, Real Estate and Development Services approached BRCA advising that it was proposing to apply for a higher FAR for this site to make its sale more attractive at

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the listed price. There was discussion about a need to get this fallow land into development (a point about which all agree). Then the applicant appeared on the scene and responsibility for the FAR application was transferred from REDS to the applicant. The applicant has been very clear with BRCA throughout that the proposed FAR is needed to support its conditional deal with the City at the pricing levels assumed, and that it would struggle to achieve the applied-for FAR except via a “monolithic” approach, and thus changes in height and parking are being proposed. It bears emphasis, however, that all of this conversation about height and parking being driven by commercial FAR assumptions commences with City-led expectations or assumptions about pricing. The City as landowner obviously controls its asking price and expectations, but doesn’t it go without saying that if those expectations are set at a certain level, then the issues of FAR, height, and parking are necessarily triggered? What we have never had an opportunity to be “engaged about” in our community is what size and sort of building in this particular TOD location might best build our community, and from which the City might build its approach to price and marketing, rather than the other way around.

Shadowing on Murdoch Park, the Community Association, lands and the pathway system is a very big concern for both residents and BRCA. We understand the City has done additional shadow studies to analyze these impacts. If the massing of the tower were pushed as far to the south / closer to the train as possible that would be preferred, from a shadowing perspective.

We also continue to hear many concerns expressed from residents about the proposal for reduced parking. Calgary Parking Authority states that there is, at present, not enough demand to monetize street parking but that they will continue to monitor this issue moving forward. Our constant refrain is that street parking must be kept available for visitors to the community and there must be parking to support the commercial businesses desired in a complete community. Perhaps carshare options could be helpful.

We can appreciate the applicant’s commercial desire for additional FAR consideration and, in consequence, the applicant’s willingness to contribute to developing a superior public realm. We look forward to working with the developer to achieve this at the DP stage and work collaboratively to improve public amenities in the area.

It is unfortunate that given the variety of larger asks by the developer – greater height, significant parking reductions and increased FAR – that they are not able to submit a concurrent DP application in this case. We feel that such an approach would help build confidence within the community.

We understand the developer is considering a broader mix of unit sizes? We hope this will be pursued since the community has few 3 bedroom options in TOD condos for families.

We would appreciate if the uses permissible on the site were limited at this land use stage to preclude proliferation of non-active uses down the road. We would prefer to see land use outcomes that might encourage retail and consumer services, breweries, wineries, distilleries, outdoor cafés, restaurants, and supermarkets, etc. As previously mentioned we tend to oppose medical uses in this location given their predominance elsewhere in the community already.

Sincerely,

BRIDGELAND-RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Per: BRCA Board of Directors
Planning Committee

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20 Aug 2018

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To Whom It May Concern:

RE: LOC2018-0193 (950 McPherson Square NE)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment again with respect to the changes to application for a Land Use Amendment affecting land at 950 McPherson Square NE (LOC2018-0193).

This Land Use Application was most recently discussed at a meeting of our Planning Committee convened August 7, 2018. Notice of that meeting was given to neighbours adjacent to the subject parcel through the Condo Boards and previous concerned residents via email. Approximately 4 neighbors attended, as did many regular Planning Committee members. The applicant attended the meeting along with 02 Planning and Design and did a presentation overview. The City File Managers also attended.

In our pre-application meeting with the applicant, the applicant presented a 13 storey building concept massed to fill the entire building envelope, based on a presumed increased F.A.R. of 5.5, that the City itself (Real Estate and Development Services) had been proposing to make, apparently to increase the marketability of the proposal. Based on the monolithic massing of the proposed building shown at that pre-application meeting, and while assuming a changed F.A.R. in light of the City's own plans in this regard, we had asked the applicant to explore other architectural possibilities to reduce the heaviness and lack of character of the proposed massing as first presented.

The response by the applicant has been a 60m height design, that although most probably consider aesthetically more appealing, especially as rendered, has very significant issues with height and if built would create a landmark height visible from every point in the community. The true impact of this proposal cannot be fully determined without a

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correlating building design, and except alongside the outcome of other proposed towers in the community that would exceed in height the original intentions of The Bridges master plan. We firmly believe that given that this idea is such a departure from the original master plan, a concurrent DP is essential at the least. Further, all the massing and developer objectives are based on a F.A.R. that is proposed and not yet deemed as suitable for the site.

We feel that this developer is asking for a lot. A huge parking relaxation, a large height increase, nothing on the table by way of guarantees, and little or no benefit to the community for all the financial benefit they are looking to achieve.

Parking is always a mentioned issue in an established community's planning response, and in this instance we do not see any substantiated rationale for such a low amount of parking in an area un-served by major amenities like grocers, shopping malls and the like. Commercial or retail uses would also be starved of parking in our understanding, a problem in an area that is not a "destination" shopping area, and where vehicle access is likely. Further, we would also like to see a mix of unit sizes and ownership models for broader demographic uses.

We would like to see a Transportation Impact Assessment done for the entire Bridges area considering the applicant's request for a dramatic reduction in parking. Our main concern remains commercial and visitor parking options both on site and within the community on the street and its impacts. We are still a winter city and our experience with reduced parking in the Bridges in general has been mixed. Commuting aside, many people own cars for recreational use—to travel out of town to the mountains, etc. Further since the City has provided special permitted parking for two condos in the Bridges on McPherson Rd and Center Ave NE, there are additional limitations on street parking in the area. This seems unfair to the area as a whole.

A discussion of how this development brings community benefit has not happened. The desire for a community-scale grocery store is high but the applicant stated this is not possible on this site. How will the applicant contribute to improving the public realm/ community assets in the area?

Further we would like to limit non-active uses in the application, and see the addition of more active uses to further encourage retail and consumer services, brewery, winery, distillery, outdoor café, restaurants, and supermarkets. We oppose medical uses in this location given their predominance elsewhere in the community already.

We are also unaware of any public engagements to date. We understand the applicant is planning to undertake one in early September. We think there will need to be significant online and in person information presented for feedback to the broader community due to the broad implications the scale of this development has.

Sincerely,

BRIDGELAND-RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Per: BRCA Board of Directors
Planning Committee