



CALGARY  
HERITAGE  
INITIATIVE



ADVOCACY

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To: Office of the City Clerk  
The City of Calgary  
PublicSubmissions@Calgary.ca

From: Calgary Heritage Initiative  
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**RE: Calgary Heritage Initiative Supports C2017-1249 Secondary Suite Process Reform**

First, I would like to introduce the Calgary Heritage Initiative Society (CHI). We are a city-wide, grassroots heritage group founded in 2005 and granted society status in 2006. One of our main areas of focus is advocating for the preservation of buildings and sites of historic and architectural interest. We support and collaborate with like-minded organizations such as The City's Heritage Planning business unit and the Calgary Heritage Authority.

Secondary suites have a history of not only generating a much needed income, but also are affordable places to live. For example, many Calgarians put suites in their homes during the Great Depression. The Prairies were one of the hardest hit regions in Canada and farmers migrating to the cities needed housing. Everyone had to find a way to survive. Mount Royal mansions had secondary suites and prominent families like the Lougheeds lost their home because of unpaid taxes.

On behalf of CHI board, I am writing in support of Secondary Suite Process Reform for secondary suites as discretionary uses within the R-1, R-C1, and R-C1. Many of the communities impacted by this proposed land use amendment have heritage properties. We believe this amendment benefits a number of key stakeholders: heritage homeowners and homebuyers, tenants and heritage communities as well as helping to preserve heritage homes.

Secondary suites in communities with heritage homes offer the following benefits:

- Heritage homeowners can use their rental income to help with restoring and maintaining their property.
- With the proper development permit, a homeowner could put in a suite for a bed and breakfast. Many tourists prefer heritage homes with bed and breakfast as these are often in an inner city community, close to a variety of attractions and viewed as quieter and cozier than hotels.
- Seniors owning a heritage homes could add a caregiver suite enabling them to stay in their home. If they add a rental suite, they would have income to offset higher property taxes and utility rates. As well, having someone nearby often adds a certain level of security in case of an emergency.
- Rental income can help homebuyers with both qualifying or paying down their mortgage. Additional income from a secondary suite makes purchasing a heritage home in an older community affordable because often land values are high.
  - A recent example: Matthew Kennedy and Mark Erickson from Studio North Design & Build purchased the Withrow Resident, a designated heritage home in Parkdale.
  - The project offered an opportunity to save one of Calgary's heritage houses while building an affordable, compact living space in the inner city. They refurbish the residence to rent to a tenant and built a laneway house, a backyard suite, along the back alley and above the garage where they plan to live.
- Heritage homes are often a source of affordable housing when comparing rent for new build in an inner city community to renting a secondary suite in a heritage home. Tenants would have access to more affordable rentals as well as choice and location. Living in a heritage home also means enjoying the amenities of an established heritage neighbourhood such as schools, transit, parks, local shopping etc.
- Heritage communities would benefit from secondary suites as it allows for a modest density increases while respecting the community's scale and character, unique streetscapes and mature trees and landscaping.

I have attached a copy of the article from the *Heritage Preservation: Making it Economically Viable* by Lorna Corderio. This article appeared in the March 2018 Hillhurst Sunnyside Voice on pg 22.

It details how Rob Froese, an owner and developer in the Sunnyside who was concerned how the character that makes Sunnyside so special is at risk because of large developers with little understanding or long-term interest in the community are focused on large, high-end buildings.

Rob decided to purchase two red brick 1924 Arts and Crafts brick bungalows on 2nd Avenue, which are in the TOD (Transit Orientated Development area of Sunnyside that allows for greater density), with plans to renovate and rent houses at a reasonable rate and redevelop them over time in a more sensitive manner with a focus on moderately priced 'Middle Housing' (transition housing between large mid-rises and single family homes).

Rob's vision for both homes is to make them economically viable by adding a legal basement suite and small laneway suite to each. An enabler of this plan is the current M-CG zoning which allows for a legal basement suite OR a laneway suite. *To make the properties economic and to prototype small laneways*, Rob would like see if he can get zoning for both.

If the Community and City supports his plan, Rob will enhance the economic viability of these properties (and density of our community) with a total of six small homes (each 500sqft – 80 sqft) and also provide affordable housing to promote demographic diversity in our community.

This article is important as it details and demonstrates how many of the benefits we have listed in support of reforming secondary suite process reform could be realized in a heritage community.

On behalf of the Calgary Heritage Initiative, please let us know if we can provide you with additional information.

Sincerely,

Lindae Stokes,

Board Member -- Director, Advocacy

On behalf of the Calgary Heritage Initiative Society Board

***Lorna Corderio: Heritage Preservation: Making it Economically Viable***

*This article appeared in the March 2018 Hillhurst Sunnyside Voice pg 22.*

When our community's current ARP (Area Redevelopment Plan) was passed by Council in 2009 several recommendations to respect and enhance heritage and community character were included along with an entire section (8.0) on Heritage Conservation. Unfortunately, little has been done by the City to incentivize Heritage preservation of residential homes in our community and while not every heritage home can (or should) be preserved, there is currently little balance between profit and preservation.

However not every developer's primary focus is profit. We sat down with Rob Froese, an owner and developer in our community to discuss his thoughts on heritage preservation and whether it makes economic sense. Rob became involved in our community when he saw Kensington, being 'gentrified'. He was concerned that the character that makes Sunnyside so special would be lost as large developers with little understanding or long-term interest in the community built large high-end buildings. He decided to buy properties, some which are in the TOD (Transit Orientated Development area of our community which allows for greater density) with plans to renovate and rent houses at a reasonable rate and redevelop them over time in a more sensitive manner with a focus on moderately priced 'Middle Housing' (transition housing between large mid-rises and single family homes). Rob's vision is to find a 'balance between earning a fair return and social objectives' he also wanted to ensure that the community's preferences were taken into account with any new developments he was involved with. And over time, Rob also started to include heritage preservation in his objectives.

Amongst Rob's holdings are two red brick 1924 Arts and Crafts brick bungalows on 2nd Avenue (pictured), one which he restored the exterior and the second is currently undergoing interior restoration. Rob's first step was to work with his carpenter/furniture designer Peter Freeman to renovate and restore the homes to their original glory (or close to it). The home pictured to the left had been updated over the years with cedar and then vinyl cladding which, when removed, revealed original intricate woodwork and glass stucco detail in the gable.

Rob's restoration projects have become a bit of a community effort – when news of Rob's work spread, one of the neighbors offered Rob original storm. While another neighbor, a young carpenter tenant offered his help with basic carpentry work. The blue house pictured to its right was previously owned by a family of 3 who loved the house and when they were transferred out of Calgary they asked Rob if he was interested in purchasing the house as they wanted an owner who would treasure their house rather than immediately demolish it. The house retains all the original fir casings, interior window trim, original doors, moldings, brick fireplace, and claw foot tub.

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While some view heritage preservation as simply 'the right thing to do', in communities like ours with high land values there is a tendency for developers to build big mid-high market condos. The City can support the heritage cause by providing incentives for heritage preservation such as zoning 'friendly' bylaws that allow owners to increase the value of their properties while keeping the heritage home intact. However any such incentives that the City may be currently deliberating must come into effect soon given the pace of development in our community. Rob realizes this and in his words 'I've been working as fast as I can on my two brick houses to show there is an alternative type of economic redevelopment where you can moderately increase density and save historical homes'.

*Lorna Cordeiro is currently a member of the Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee; co-chair of the Heritage Community Task Force (a coalition of >15 Calgary communities focused on improving planning policy in support of heritage preservation) and was one of the founders of Century Homes Calgary. If you have any suggestions for future articles, please contact her via [lisa.c@hsca.ca](mailto:lisa.c@hsca.ca)*

**BEFORE**



After

