

Robert and Elizabeth Dewhirst
7124 Nancy Greene Drive
Unit 15
Whistler, BC V8E 0W9

Mayor and Council
Resort Municipality of Whistler
4325 Blackcomb Way
Whistler, BC V8E 0X5

Dear Mayor and Council,

As neighbours to the proposed 7104 Nancy Greene Drive development, we are writing to council to bring your attention to the set-backs and height of the development application. This property is currently zoned for a single residential home and changing the set-backs and height allowances to accommodate this high-density building will ensure it not only doesn't fit in the neighbourhood, but will very much encroach on neighbouring privacy and livability.

Set-backs

The set-backs being proposed in the March application from Vidorra are significantly less than what the surrounding properties were required to meet. Here is a quick look at what you are asking the neighbours to have in their backyards -

	Set-back – Front	Set-back – Side	Set-back - Rear	Height Max	Density
Current Zoning – RSE1	7.6m	3-6 m	7.6 m	7.6 m	35%
RS1 Zoning	7.6m	3-6m	7.6m	7.6m	35%
RT1 Zoning	7.6m	3-6m	7.6m	7.6m	35%
RM1 Zoning	7.6m	3.0m	7.6m	7.6m	40%
Proposed Zoning	1.5m	1.5m	3.0m	8.5m	95%

For reference attached is a map identifying the surrounding lots and their zonings.

Reducing the set-backs so drastically will result in:

- Existing large coniferous trees being removed, therefore resulting in the loss of natural screen barrier and privacy for neighbours. This cannot be replaced!
- Existing rock structure being removed and completely changing the natural landscaping!
- Loss of privacy for neighbours

Previous projects have been forced to have larger set-backs and this project should not be treated any different. For example, 5298 Alta Lake Road, the proposal saw the building set-back changed from 7.6 meters to 20 meters. This is significant! Councilor Jewett stated in February in regards to the development that “the good thing about this is it will be model moving forward for some of the other proposals we’ll get in front of us in the near future”. This development application at 7104 Nancy Greene Drive is exactly what she would have been referring to.

See article - <https://issuu.com/whistlerpublishing/docs/piquewebissue2708/16>

Consider a development such as that illustrated in attachment 'The Coops on 7104 Nancy Greene Drive. This illustrates that a building such as The Coops (in Creekside) could be built on this plot of land and would not only maintain more consistent set-backs that match the neighbourhood, but would preserve the existing mature trees and natural rock.

The 9291 Emerald Drive employee housing project was required to preserve existing trees on the property – again this should be no different. See article - <https://issuu.com/whistlerpublishing/docs/piquewebissue2706/20>

The developer himself has also previously mentioned that he would not be removing the mature trees on the site “I think the most important issue are the mature trees on the site and the setbacks from the property lines. We have completed a detailed survey of the existing trees on the site and the height of those trees. We have moved the building closer to the Highway side of the property and preserve many of those trees and the rock face that is a great feature facing 7124”. Clearly this proposal does not preserve the trees or the rock face.

Have you looked around the neighbourhood? None of the surrounding homes are built this close to their property lines (the adjacent building H at Fitzsimmons Walk is 10 meters from the property line) and their neighbours. All are separated by natural tree screening and this property should be no different. The neighbouring properties would like to see:

- the rock and coniferous trees between the proposed apartment building and Fitzsimmons walk remain and be undisturbed,
- increase the set-backs so that they are consistent with neighbouring properties – at least 15 meters.

Height

As you can see from the previously presented table, the height of the proposed development application is far greater than the neighbouring properties. It is unrealistic to think that a development with greater density and height than the surrounding properties will meet the requirement of guideline 12 in the 'Guidelines for Evaluating Private sector Rezoning Proposals for Employee Housing' dated 26 March 2019. For reference, this states; “Proposed densities, scale of development and form of housing should be appropriate for the site context. Visual impacts and impacts on solar access should be minimized.” – highlight the second part of this statement!

What would be appropriate for this site is a two-story building consistent with the low to medium density residential properties that it will be adjacent too.

I look forward to seeing council re-evaluate this development application with an understanding of how this will change our neighbourhood and the livability of it. This project is far to dense, close to properties lines and will dwarf the surrounding properties. It must be reduced in size for it to be complimentary to the surroundings in which it is being built.

Sincerely,

Robert and Elizabeth Dewhirst

Cc: RMOW General Manager of Resort Experience

Cc: RMOW Planning Department

Director of Planning – M Kirkegaard

Senior Planner – Roman Licko

Planner – Stephanie Johnson

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Dear Mayor and Council,

We are long-time residents of our community, and are writing to express our concern about the recent discussion at the May 5th council meeting and the pending decision regarding the development application RZ 1146 – 7104 Nancy Greene Drive.

While we understand there is a great need for resident housing in Whistler, this must be as the Whistler Official Community Plan (OCP) states, “designed and managed to be sensitive to the surrounding environment”. The current proposed project has many shortcomings for it to meet these criteria.

I would like to bring the attention of the Council to the following two points of concern:

- Density of the proposed project; and
- Privacy issues with the current proposal

Density:

The current proposed density of the project at 7104 Nancy Greene Drive is very high for such a small site. The site is only 2,816.6 square meters and the developer is proposing 38 units and a Floor Space Ratio of 0.95, by comparison this is:

- A smaller lot size over 1000 meters square than the neighbouring Fitzsimmons Walk WHA land (3,912 meters square) where there are only 36 units – see attached GIS Mapping.
- Triple the density of proposal RZ1144 – 2077 Garibaldi Way – with a current proposed Floor Space Ratio of only 0.32. Please remember you rejected the previous application of this site when the Floor Space Ratio was 0.40 for the reason it had too high a density.

I would also like to remind council that this development site has been evaluated previously for residential housing rental in the workshop and subsequent report completed in 2004 and documented in ‘Comparative Evaluation of Potential Resident Housing Sites in Whistler’ – attached. This report identified this site would be appropriate for townhouse rental properties and a site maximum of 5 units. The current proposal is far exceeding this recommendation which was made by a host of personnel including municipal staff, WHA staff, Environmental professionals, Civil Engineers and Resort planners.

To build something that is such high density in a neighbourhood that consists of primarily low-density zoning and buildings is not ‘sensitive to the surrounding environment’ nor does it consider the “...locational characteristics...” of the neighbourhood as per your guidelines documented in ‘Guidelines for Evaluating Private Sector rezoning Proposals for Employee Housing’ as attached.

Privacy

With such a dense development being proposed, the residents of 7124 Nancy Greene Drive are concerned about the significant reduction in privacy, especially those in Building A and H of Fitzsimmons Walk.

Persons on Nancy Greene Drive purchased and choose to live where they do with the understanding that on the 7104 Nancy Greene Drive site, there would-be single-family home or something comparable built as per the zoning. We believe that the council is not using their best judgement in considering a four-story building (parkade that is above Fitzsimmons walk elevation, plus 3 stories of residential) and the impact on our quality of life and privacy as neighbours to such a development. This proposal would mean that everyone in this building will be overlooking our property. The developer may be proposing a vegetal buffer, but it will take over 10 years for this to grow in. This is not acceptable.

Please take the time to really consider what is being proposed here. The high-density proposal, while helping to fulfil the mayor's task force of finding more bed units, will only create significant issues for the future. The council must reject this proposal and ask the developer to consider a smaller development on this site.

Sincerely,

Robert and Elizabeth Dewhirst

Cc: RMOW General Manager of Resort Experience

Cc: RMOW Planning Department

Director of Planning – Mike Kirkegaard

Senior Planner – Roman Licko

Planner – Stephanie Johnson

Attachments:

- GIS Mapping of Fitzsimmons Walk WHA buildings
- Comparative Evaluation of Potential Resident Housing Sites in Whistler – refer to Appendix B page 1
- Guidelines for Evaluating Private Sector Rezoning Proposals for Employee Housing

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Dear Mayor and Council,

As a member of the Whistler community, I have been following the progress of the development and rezoning application for RZ1146 – 7104 Nancy Greene Drive. Council needs to reject this proposal now and only consider a much smaller development.

The development is not only being too dense for the parcel of land it will be on but, it also has the following flaws:

- Inadequate storage for residents of the complex
- Inadequate availability of parking for residents and visitors
- It will significantly increase traffic congestion

The high density that is being requested for this parcel of land results in the above issues. We therefore need to reconsider how many LIVABLE units can be built on this parcel of land. The 'Comparative Evaluation of Potential Resident Housing Sites in Whistler' study and workshop estimated five rental townhouses. This could look like something such as The Coops (see attached transposition onto the proposed site). If we abide by this professional and thoughtful report, the issues I am bringing to your attention would not be issues at all.

Storage

As Whistler residents, we love to play. Most of the sports/activities that we participate in, skiing, mountain biking, rock climbing, hiking etc., require the use of equipment. This equipment needs to be securely stored in our own residences. The proposed development for 7104 Nancy Greene Drive includes a bike storage room for 60 bikes but does not include any in-unit storage OR storage assigned to the unit.

Council needs to reflect on how many bikes their own households have – this will be no different for people moving into this development. On average a Whistler resident has 2 bikes - one for valley trail riding and one for trail riding. The neighbouring Fitzsimmons Walk property conducted a survey. Of the 67 residents living onsite (in 36 units) at any one time, there is 153 bikes. How do these fit in a storage room designed for 60 bikes? This will result in balconies being used for storage, which poses its own security concern, but means the balconies will not be used for outdoor enjoyment as intended.

At the neighbouring Fitzsimmons Walk property, all 36 WHA units have in-unit storage, an assigned locker of 60sq ft per unit AND a dedicated bike storage room. Let me tell you, all of this space is used to its full capacity. Consider, if you lived in this proposed space, where would you store chariots, suitcases, hockey nets, kids scooter, skis and tires for cars...all the things that people in Whistler, including members of council, own and need to store! Storage is an issue in this proposal!

Parking

The developer is requesting a reduction in the number of required parking spaces in the proposed development. How can we allow this?

Council in their May 5th, 2020 meeting suggested that residents that live close to the village and a supermarket would not have a need for a vehicle. This could not be further from the truth! Life is not solely lived in the village or shopping solely done at Nesters. Residents of Whistler use vehicles required for work, to access hikes around the valley, to travel along highway 99 and to visit friends. As residents of Fitzsimmons Walk, we would not even consider catching a bus to Cheakamus to visit friends, as it is inconvenient having to catch a bus from Nesters, to the village and then wait for the next bus going south. Then having to do that on the way home.

Leniency was granted for parking allocations in both the Cheakamus and Rainbow projects. Look at the mess these neighbourhoods are now – cars parked everywhere. Cheakamus has the most frequent bus service and everyone still has a car or two. This is not what we want for our neighbourhood.

Residents of Whistler OWN cars! In the neighbouring Fitzsimmons Walk property (that is just as close to the village and Nesters as the proposed development) we have 56 assigned parking spaces and 16 visitor parking spaces. We use ALL these spaces! The developer is expecting 2 persons per bedroom in this proposal. This is 128 people expected to be living onsite (Fitzsimmons Walk is assigned 126 bed units). 41 parking spaces, because let's face it the accessible parking space and loading dock can't be considered general parking, that is being proposed is severely lacking! This lack of parking will result in people using the Fitzsimmons walk guest parking. This doesn't even consider the 'street parking' that will pop up causing safety issues. We can't have another Cheakamus or Emerald parking mess.

The 2019 Community Life Survey of Whistler (attached) found that over half of the residents said that their preferred method of transportation to/from work is by personal vehicle with one occupant. This does not indicate that people want to be carless in their lifestyle choices. The council must enforce zoning and parking bylaws to avoid another congested neighbourhood.

Traffic Congestion

As residents living on Nancy Greene Drive, we observe considerable confusion and congestion on the section between the highway 99 intersection and Blackcomb Way. It is an accident waiting to happen. Adding additional vehicles due to a high-density building is an issue that Council needs to avoid.

For example, at any one time at the intersection of Nancy Greene Drive and Blackcomb Way, there are vehicles travelling along Nancy Greene Drive, cars entering Nancy Greene Drive from either Blackcomb Way or Fitzsimmons Walk driveway, or other driveways. Compound this issue by having the valley trail coming from Spruce Grove and branching in two directions along Blackcomb Way and beside highway 99. Vehicles also travel down the hill from highway 99 (usually with considerable speed) with bikes, strollers pedestrians, e-bikes and school children making this transition along the valley trail. Who has the right of way? The high volume of traffic on this section cannot sustain an increase resulting from a high-density development! It will become a serious safety issue for not only motorists, but pedestrians.

Refer to your 'Guidelines for Evaluating Private Sector Rezoning Proposals for Employee Housing' item 17 (attached) and you will see this development proposal does not meet these criteria.

As you can see, this proposed development and rezoning poses not only livability concerns, but also safety and security concerns. The severe lack of storage and parking makes these places unlivable for residents of Whistler that love to enjoy the outdoors. This requires access outside of the bus network and personal equipment. The increase in density will result in significantly more pedestrian and vehicle congestion along Nancy Greene Drive and is a serious safety concern!

Council must reject this proposal and only consider a much smaller development!

Regards,
Robert and Elizabeth Dewhirst

Cc: RMOW General Manager of Resort Experience

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Attachments:

2019 Community Life Survey of Whistler

Guidelines for Evaluating Private Sector Rezoning Proposals for Employee Housing

The Coops transposition