



Your Community, Your Association, Your Voice

May 25, 2015

Mayor Nenshi and Members of the Calgary City Council
700 Macleod Trail S.E.
Calgary AB T2G 2M3

Dear Mayor Nenshi and City Councillors:

Now that we have had time to ruminate a bit further on the proposed changes which will accompany the Amendment to Allow Secondary Suites in Wards 7,8,9 and 11, **we have noted another serious concern. This is in regards to the removal of the maximum suite size. There are therefore 2 changes that we specifically oppose as part of the proposed amendment:**

1. **Removal of the minimum lot widths for secondary suites**—this will have a huge detrimental impact on our unsubdivided/un-redeveloped R-C2 properties; changes to R-C2 are not being openly discussed and are unnecessary at this time (even setting 9 m as a minimum for all secondary suites would limit the impact)
2. **Removal of the maximum suite size**—this will have a huge negative impact on our R-C1 properties (see argument below); discussions have not focused on allowing “duplexes” on R-C1 lots, so a change to a maximum suite size of 75 square meters would be a good compromise

Neither of these 2 changes are necessary in order to provide the affordable suites people have been asking for. Affordable suites are typically created in the basement of an existing home, not by decimating existing housing stock to develop infills.

There is ambiguity in the wording for semi-detached dwellings (and in the wording for single detached dwelling with secondary suite given the proposed changes) which would allow for side by side “duplexes” to be built on R-C1 properties if the maximum suite size was removed. The definition for semi detached dwelling can actually be read as - the term semi detached dwelling means a building which contains 2 dwelling units OR a secondary suite within a dwelling unit. (In much the same way, as there was ambiguity when creating the new R-CG land use district as to whether or not a Secondary Suite or Backyard Suite would constitute a Dwelling Unit when calculating density. Although the proposed definitions of Backyard Dwelling and Secondary Suite no longer expressly refer to each of those uses as being a Dwelling Unit, they now mirror the wording used in the definition of Dwelling Unit, so it seems pretty clear to us that both would be considered to be types of Dwelling Units. Even the requirement that a Secondary Suite be located within a Dwelling Unit would not be sufficient to prevent a Secondary Suite from being considered to be a type of Dwelling Unit, as that is exactly the case now.)

However, what does "located within" really mean. Why would a basement suite, which is located entirely below the main residential unit, or an upstairs suite, which is located entirely above the main residential unit, both be considered to be "located within" the main residential unit?



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Similarly, what if the 2nd dwelling unit is made a few square feet smaller than the first dwelling unit -- would that not be sufficient to make it "secondary to the main residential use". In public discussions around removing the maximum suite size, Rollin Stanley has said that a suite could potentially be the same size as the main residential unit. He has also stated that it did not matter if the units were above and below each other, or beside each other in the same building.

Then, what if the builder made sure that the party wall separating the two units did not go all the way to the roof, such that the building clearly did not satisfy the definition of a Semi-Detached Dwelling?

Given these considerations, **why couldn't a semi-detached dwelling** (particularly one with 1 unit slightly smaller than the other, and maybe a party wall that stops short of the roof) **be characterized as a Single Detached Dwelling with a Secondary Suite for the purposes of 1P2007, especially if both dwelling units were clearly completely within the same building envelope** and presented as having only 1 front entrance?

At this point, we are not prepared to wait for the dust to settle and developers to make the semantics work for them. The maximum suite size can be adjusted (up to say 75 sq m) or maintained the way that it is. Removing the maximum suite size altogether is not necessary in order to provide the affordable secondary suites that people have been asking for—these are typically built into the basement of an existing home.

Removing the maximum suite size and the minimum lot widths are intended to open up housing stock for developers in the inner city (as opposed to providing affordable secondary suites), and accordingly do not need to be included in the secondary suite amendment. Tearing down existing homes and redeveloping does not build affordable suites—it fills our landfill sites and destroys our urban canopy.

If Council insists on removing the maximum suite size and the minimum lot widths for secondary suites, **we continue to respectfully request that the community of Rutland Park be removed from Suites Area 1 of Map 2.1 Suites Area Map for the Policy Amendment—Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 Amendments for Secondary Suites and Backyard Suites in Wards 7, 8, 9, and 11.**

Thank you for your time and serious consideration of these issues.

Regards,

Leanne Ellis

Rutland Park Community Association VP Development and Traffic