Hi:

I wanted to follow-up to my letter of July 21 regarding the 502 W. Camelback re-zoning petition.  Last week, the Medlock Place Traffic Committee conducted a meeting of interested neighbors to discuss this project.  From that meeting, additional concerns were raised, as detailed below.

As we understand it, the current C-2 zoning applies R-3 rules to multifamily residential occupancies, with the following limitations:

1. Density of 14.5 units per acre.
2. Two stories or 30 feet height.
3. Lot coverage limit of 45%.

The developer proposes an *expansion* of the entitlement to WU T5:6, with the following:

1. Density of 68 units per acre (284 units on 4.2 acres).
2. Height of 5 stories and 68 feet.
3. Lot coverage of 54% ?

Many Medlock Place Historic District residents have great concerns about the traffic impacts of the increased density.  As you may know, a recent City traffic study shows that many areas in the District already suffer from cut-thru traffic far in excess of that generated by the residents.

Medlock Place was planned as a semi-rural large-lot neighborhood *without sidewalks*.  Pedestrians must compete directly with cars for street space.  Any increase to traffic in the neighborhood will create more safety risk for pedestrians and bicycles, and will contradict the “walkable urban” goal for the neighborhood.  In addition, there is a school drop-off on Colter near 7th Avenue.  Increased traffic on Colter will pose a safety risk to school children.  The Walkable Urban Code states that: “an adequate level of access for automobiles should be maintained and their *use integrated safely* with pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users”.  The General Plan also requires “appropriate transitions/buffers between neighborhoods and adjacent uses” and that “traffic, noise or other factors should not negatively impact adjacent residential areas”.  We are also concerned about increased traffic crossing the 3rd Avenue Sonoran Bike Route.

The “Broadstone Camelback” project must mitigate the impact of the proposed density increase.  “Half Closure Entry Chokers” at Colter and Oregon Streets near 7th Avenue are needed.  There must also be egress from the project onto Camelback.

The MPNA Historic District is also concerned about compatibility with District architecture and with the adjacent mid-century buildings.  The proposed project must be compatible with the character and integrity of the neighborhood.  Underdeveloped land in the older parts of the city should be redeveloped in a manner that is compatible with existing development and the long-term character and goals for the area.  Specifically, the General Plan states:

1. Redevelopment should support and reinforce the character and identity of each unique community and neighborhood.
2. Protect and enhance the character of each neighborhood and its various housing lifestyles through new development that is compatible in scale, design, and appearance.
3. Create new development or redevelopment that is sensitive to the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhoods and incorporates adequate development standards to prevent negative impact(s) on the residential properties.
4. Ensure new development and infill that is responsive to the historic surroundings and is compatible in size, scale, massing, proportion and materials.

The Walkable Urban Code expands on the General Plan obligations:

1. All sides of a structure should exhibit design continuity and contain multiple exterior accent materials that exhibit quality and durability.
2. Visible side and rear building facades should have a level of trim and finish compatible with the front facade.
3. Monotonous building elevations should be avoided, building accents should be expressed through differing materials or architectural detailing rather than applied finishes such as paint, graphics, or forms of plastic or metal panels.

All of the historic homes in Medlock Place are constructed of masonry (brick, block, or adobe), as are all of the adjacent “mid-century” apartment buildings (plain and decorative block).  So too is the (now historically recognized) adjacent Arrive Hotel project building.

The proposed “Broadstone Camelback” project elevations must be of masonry or masonry veneer (not stucco).

The historic neighborhood character also includes many tall, mature trees.  The project needs tall, leafy trees.  Short “scrubby” desert trees are inappropriate in this area.  The tall trees also help to mitigate the increased building height.  Per the General Plan: “Promote neighborhood identity through planning that reinforces the existing landscaping and character of the area. Each new development should contribute to the character identified for the village”.

The Walkable Urban Code also states that:

1. People should be provided the opportunity to walk, ride a bicycle, or use transit.
2. People should be provided the opportunity to drive less, and to park once and walk to nearby destinations.
3. Outdoor pedestrian activities within public rights-of-way should be encouraged.

And from the General Plan: “Enhance the compatibility of residential infill projects by carefully designing the edges of the development to be sensitive to adjacent existing housing. Create landscape buffers and other amenities to link new and existing development”.

The project needs easy access to the alleyways to the east for direct bicycle and walking access to all the restaurants along Central Avenue.  This will also help to discourage cut-thru driving into the neighborhood.

We sincerely appreciate the City’s help to preserve a safe, walkable, and compatible community in Uptown.

By the way, some of the project information detail provided by the developer as condensed PDF’s is unreadable.  Would you please send us a copy of the developer’s “Project Information Form” from the Pre-App?

Sincerely,

Rick Mountjoy

Chairman, Medlock Place Historic District Traffic Committee