

# Judge's Neighborhood News

## September 2019

Hello Neighbors,

Please take the time to read these two opinions regarding the re-zoning and development of CamelSquare. The Camelback East Village Planning Committee will hold the last public meeting in 7 days (Tuesday Oct 1 at 6:00pm at the Devonshire Center) and make its recommendation to the Planning Commission. I've heard from many of you who feel strongly about the future of this corner. To help everyone understand the issue, I am posting two letters from our neighbors....one for the project and one against it.

Both RED Development and the Neighborhood Coalition Opposing the project want to know where you stand regarding the future of this corner. If you feel strongly about this project in either direction, Please Reply to this email with a comment regarding your position. Your opinion will be forwarded to the Planning Committee and the proper organizing group. Also, please forward this email to other neighbors who may not receive this newsletter.

Thank you for your time and response.

Judge Bellamak  
Marion Estates/Short Hills Newsletter

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### Letter in Favor of the Project:

I know that there has been a lot of chatter recently in Short Hills and Marion Estates regarding the proposed redevelopment of CamelSquare, better known as the 44|Camelback project. The concern seems to largely center around the proposed height of two of the seven buildings, and how the height will affect views of Camelback Mountain from certain perspectives. While I certainly acknowledge the concern over views, the project will have no impact on views for the residents of Short Hills and Marion Estates, since we are located approximately ½ mile north of the proposed project with unobstructed views of Camelback Mountain.

I also recognize the need to be rational and logical in any evaluation of the project since it will impact our neighborhood. When I review ALL aspects of this project and consider all the compromises made by both the developer as well as the community, I am happy to support this project in its entirety, as do a number of other neighbors.

Please take a moment to consider the facts:

- No matter what happens with this case, we, as a neighborhood, should expect change for that corner, one way or another. It is inevitable! This collection of old, vacant and antiquated office buildings has been an eye soar for many years. Regardless of the specifics of that change, we should expect that views are going to be affected because the property is currently zoned for buildings to go as high as 56 feet in height, without any additional approvals required. Because of the way the developer has planned the project, the 75-foot buildings on the east and south edge of the site will not affect neighbors' views any more than 56-foot buildings would across the entire property. For

drivers on Camelback Road, who are waiting at the 44th Street intersection, anything over 35 feet will block Camelback Mountain views, so any argument about 75 feet versus 56 feet is irrelevant.

- What is great about the current proposed plan is the developer is reducing the height on the other five buildings from what is currently allowed. According to the proposed plan, 88% of the development will be under 36 feet in height. I see this as a huge win for the neighborhood, and specifically for the adjacent neighbors who would not be happy if they had towering buildings with large glass windows looking into their back yards. By extending the setback along the northern and western boundaries of the site from 20 feet to 75 feet, reducing the height of the buildings along those same edges, and proposing uses in those buildings that minimize the need for windows and balconies, the project is a major improvement for privacy compared to what is currently allowed. I see these as big wins and big compromises from the proposed development and developer.
- From my perspective, the developer has gone above and beyond to meet the needs of the residents that are closest to the property. I also see their efforts benefiting nearby neighborhoods like Shorts Hills and Marion Estates. For instance, they are currently allowed (by right, with no additional approvals) to build up to over a million square feet in leasable area. Yet, their proposal dramatically reduces the leasable space to around 660,000 square feet. This is a blessing for us all! The traffic analysis done by CivTech shows that their proposal would not add to the current traffic situations. But if they built as allowed under current zoning – we would all be screaming about the added traffic and obstructed views! In addition, they are offering a new traffic signal on 44th St., detached sidewalks, burying power lines, enhancing landscaping with 75% shade, etc. It's going to be a beautiful corner and it's going to be a major improvement over "what is and what could be" with the current zoning.
- The proposed development also reduces the intensity of the users by adding elements like self-storage and the Phoenix Sun's practice facility, which generates significantly less traffic than the proposed office, retail or hotel. The average self-storage user will use their storage facility a couple of times a year compared to the daily trips to an office building or semi-weekly trips to a retail store.
- The reality is that CamelSquare is in dire need of redevelopment and we have an opportunity as a community to support a project led by a local first-class developer that has been respectful to the adjacent neighbors and is creating a place where we can all gather, eat, shop and enjoy. I personally welcome this project to the area and look forward to its completion. It will benefit our neighborhood, increase our property values, support local businesses and create more jobs. All additional reasons to support the project.

**If neighbors agree with my assessment of the project, please have them send an email to our councilman, Sal DiCiccio, at [council.district.6@phoenix.gov](mailto:council.district.6@phoenix.gov), expressing their support of the project. We cannot let the voices of a few outnumber the voices of many who support this project.**

Sincerely,

Michael De Nitto 4102 E Solano Dr Phoenix, AZ 85018

Dear friends and neighbors: **Arcadia is in jeopardy of losing what makes it such a wonderful place to live – open spacious vistas that welcome everyone to the Arcadia/Camelback Corridor.** Camel Square on Camelback and 44<sup>th</sup> Street is now under rezoning consideration by Red Development and Sam Fox. Several of our residents attended the East Village Planning Committee Meeting on September 17<sup>th</sup>. We are deeply saddened by the 75' tall Monolithic Office Building and Hotel they want to erect **AT THE CURB** of that corner. Please look at the plan submittal closely. RED Development's proposed plan will suffocate this very important corner with an unimaginative and unattractive 75' tall rectangle box that is pushed right to the curb, crowding the intersection in both directions. It also seeks to place a boutique hotel in a zoned area that was never intended by City Planners to host such a structure or commercial activity.

**The plan is ill conceived. We need to raise awareness to preserve our Arcadia Camelback views and neighborhood spacious lifestyle for all of us. Once those views are gone, they are lost forever.**

Please note that we all agree that Camel Square needs to be redeveloped. We are also not opposed to Red Development or Sam Fox's involvement. ***What we are opposed to is the plan itself.***

**Camel Square was developed to host commercial office space with a maximum height of 36'.** It was zoned that way intentionally by our City Planners, in keeping with the goals of the 44<sup>th</sup> Street Specific Camelback Corridor Plan. It remained at 36' zoning until 2010/2011 when Red Development applied to redevelop the property. **But instead of honoring the existing zoning restriction of 36', which preserves iconic views of Camelback Mountain for everyone in the Camelback Corridor, Red Development pushed forth a plan that included 56' buildings – over 20 above the existing 36' height.** That plan caused considerable uproar at the time and was not well received, in part due to the increased traffic that the added density would cause. It ultimately did not move forward, but somehow the residents of Arcadia were stuck with the 56' height imposed on the community by Red Development.

**Now in 2019, Red Development again is applying to redevelop Camel Square – but this time Red Development and Sam Fox have requested buildings to soar as high as 75+' – another 20 foot overreach into our beloved views of Camelback Mountain.** The developer's placement of these buildings, just 20 short feet from the curb along both 44<sup>th</sup> St. and Camelback Roads, makes this added height even more grotesque.

**A Developer's need for higher profits should not justify such a scar of our daily landscape. Additionally, this project seeks to take views away from the community and provide them to a small number of top 1% income earners. Apparently if you are wealthy, you are entitled to choice views of Camelback Mountain while the entire Arcadia community suffers. We are sure that John Driggs and Barry Goldwater are rolling in their graves.**

**This development, if it moves forward, will:**

1. Significantly **increase traffic** and require as many as **two** additional traffic lights to regulate the additional flow of vehicles;
2. Significantly **Increase noise levels and pollution levels** throughout the Camelback Corridor;
3. Make our streets **more crowded** and **less safe** with longer commutes;
4. **Divert traffic away from major arteries because of added congestion onto our connector streets (Lafayette, Stanford, McDonald, San Miguel, 40<sup>th</sup> St.) putting our children at PCDS and Hopi at greater risk of auto injuries;**

5. **Significantly diminish neighborhood Camelback views throughout the Camelback Corridor;**
6. **Negatively impact the unique character and beauty of the Corridor – the main reason we all chose to live in this area; and,**
7. **Establish a precedent of increasing heights for the inevitable redevelopment of the other corners of this intersection and others in the near future. What’s next – a 90’ redevelopment of AJ’s? Is that progress? Is that responsible development? We think not.**

**We Are Not Downtown! This development negatively impacts the entire Arcadia community and destroys Camelback views for the enjoyment of everyone. Camel Square can be redeveloped in a manner that preserves its charm, preserves iconic Camelback Mountain views for all and does not significantly increase the density of existing traffic or noise. All one has to do is look at the corner of 44<sup>th</sup> and Indian School to see buildings at the height that our City Planners intended for this entire corridor.**

**If you agree that the current plan by Red Development/Sam Fox is detrimental not only to members of Arcadia, but to the entire Camelback Corridor, then we ask your help below:**

1. **Please communicate with your neighbors and friends and attend the final meeting of the Camelback East Village Planning Committee on October 1, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at the Devonshire Senior Center, 2802 E. Devonshire in Phoenix and make your voice heard.** The committee will be voting for approval or rejection of the plan at the conclusion of the meeting. We suggest you use Uber or Lyft as parking is limited! **Please wear yellow to the meeting to signal your opposition to the development, and sign an attendance card indicating your opposition.**
2. **Email the Camelback East Village Planning Commission at [CamelbackEastVPC@phoenix.gov](mailto:CamelbackEastVPC@phoenix.gov),** tell them that you are ***not in favor of the rezoning*** and explain your specific concerns (e.g., design, height overreach, traffic/safety/noise concerns, etc.).
3. **Email Sal DiCiccio at [council.district.6@phoenix.gov](mailto:council.district.6@phoenix.gov) and let him know you are opposed to the plan and why.**
4. **Contribute money to our GoFundMe account: **Save Arcadia’s Neighborhoods – Kill the Red/Fox Skyscrapers!** Campaign link: [gofundme.com/savearcadia](https://gofundme.com/savearcadia). Please contribute whatever you can to help save our neighborhood from irresponsible development and overreach by developers who care only about making a profit at the community’s expense.**

**If we don’t act, two 75’+ buildings and another 64’ building may be approved at Camel Square. We need to stop this plan and save Camel Square before it is too late. Our neighborhood will become less desirable, home values will be impacted, our Arcadia lifestyle will be lost, and the Camelback Corridor will lose its appeal and views of our city’s iconic Camelback Mountain. Don’t be fooled by smoke and mirrors. This is an unnecessarily bad development plan.**

If you have any questions or if you want to volunteer your time and efforts, please contact us. We want to keep Arcadia open and spacious, the way our City Planners designed it to be, not only for us and our neighbors, but also for our children and grandchildren, many of whom live in this very same neighborhood. Thank you.

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