



Visual Impact Analysis

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Purpose of the study.

The Objective of the following study is to provide information regarding the possible visual impact of the proposed development should the Area Redevelopment Plan be approved.

Introduction

The lands of the Spring Creek Mountain Village are separated from other areas of Canmore by natural creeks. The banks of both, Spring Creek and especially Policeman's Creek are lined with trees and shrubs often forming relatively dense forests, clearly visible on the aerial photograph. Thus, the area is barely visible from most points around it. Where a glimpse is possible one observes mostly mobile homes on vast areas of asphalt and gravel.

This study reviews the visibility of the area from the neighbouring public roads, trails and from private parcels. The photographs used in this document were taken between the summer of 2002 and summer of 2003.



Figure 1. Current state of the study lands: vast area of asphalt and gravel with minimal vegetation separated from the neighbouring areas by a natural green buffers lining the creeks.

Eastern Boundary.

Spring Creek Mountain Village eastern boundary is formed by a fairly thick forest followed by a railway right of way and more natural tree cover on private lands. As a result, the area is completely screened from and the future development will not be visible from Bow Valley Trail. The proposed new entry to the project will be visible from Bow Trail, however, since Spring Creek Gate winds its way into the development, the narrow vista will not reach far.



Figure 2. Location of the future new entry into the project from Bow Valley Trail. The railway right of way is not visible, the study area is completely hidden from view.



Figure 3. View from the railway right of way at future crossing: the study area is remains screened by the natural forest.

Northern Boundaries.

The boundaries of the Northern end of the area are formed by a future park, existing residences and a small pond. All these areas feature natural islands of large trees. The development will be screened from the general public's view and it will have low visual impact from the private residences in this area.



Figure 4. View from the Railway Avenue towards the future park with the silhouettes of the tallest proposed building superimposed in front. This study demonstrates that the development will be screened from view by the existing trees even before the proposed public park is established.



Figure 5. View from a private lot across the pond formed by the Spring Creek. The proposed redevelopment would have its northernmost buildings located behind the large tree stand seen in the centre of the photograph.

Western Boundary.

The western boundary of the study area is exposed almost exclusively to the rear yards of private lots. Their owners will see new trees and shrubs in the rehabilitated environmental reserve areas across Spring Creek followed by back yards of town houses set back a minimum of 20 m from the creek edge. The buildings height will be limited to 2.5 storey - in keeping with the scale of the houses lining the west edge of the Creek.



Figure 6. View from an elevated deck of a residence on the west side of Spring Creek Mountain Village. The new residential buildings across the creek will be set back by 20 m from the creek edge (further than the existing trailers) and separated by new trees and shrubs. Privacy of the rear yards on both sides of the creek will be protected.

The streets of the proposed development are aligned with the existing grid, so new buildings will not appear at the ends of the existing streets. The ends of the new streets will be separated from the creek edges by approximately 25 meters of planted and areas with new trees and shrubs. A glimpse of the roofs of the new development might still be possible from some locations, but the visual impact will be minimal.



Figure 7. At the terminus of 4-th Street one can currently observe mobile homes. The streets of the new development will be aligned with existing preserving the long vistas towards the mountain massifs.

There are new residences planned for the area bordering the south west boundary of the proposed development. Currently, in this area the trailers are separated from the creek by an asphalt road and a narrow strip of vegetation. Once the redevelopment is completed there will be matching 20m landscaped and planted setbacks on each side of the creek setting the distance between the residences at over 40 m. The visual impact of the proposed development on the homes currently planned for construction will therefore be insignificant.

Conclusion

The study area is barely visible from most points around it due to a thick tree cover lining Policeman's Creek and most of the run of Spring Creek. Where a glimpse is possible, existing trailer park presents less than appealing image: the lands are hard surfaced and denuded of significant vegetation while the mobile homes are not a very attractive building form. Once the area is re-developed into Spring Creek Village, its edge will be planted with trees and the first buildings set back a min. of 20 m from the creek edge, significantly increasing the visual separation from the neighbouring areas. The entire perimeter of the development will be lined with a combination of parks, environmental and municipal reserves and private back yards. The height limitations placed on the built form will ensure that the buildings nearest to the existing residences will be of a friendly scale and predominantly of single family use. Once the development is complete, the visual environment of the current residents is expected to be noticeably improved and the neighbours' enjoyment of their property enhanced.