

Plan would risk Coors Field views

John Rebchook, Rocky Mountain News

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Bill and Paula Leake's plan to rezone their property near Coors Field is not exactly coming out of left field.

But their property, the 29-year-old Light Bulb Supply Co., 2010 Delgany St., is near the left field wall of the baseball stadium.

If they are able to rezone the site as they are requesting, a 14-story building could be built on the land. That plan has the stadium district and several neighborhood groups upset, since it would block a picture-perfect view from some seats at Coors Field.

The Denver Planning Board unanimously recommended the zoning change last week, despite objections from neighborhood groups, including the Lower Downtown Neighborhood Association. The Denver Metropolitan Major League Baseball Stadium District also opposes the plan.

There is still a long process before the proposed zoning change goes before the City Council.

Both sides hope they can reach a compromise that will satisfy everyone.

"This is sort of a Catch-22 situation for me," said Ray Baker, chairman of the stadium district.

On one hand, as a banker and a person long involved with real estate, he is pro-business and property rights, Baker said. "I also happen to know Bill and Paula (Leake) quite well," he said.

Bill Leake said the property has been under contract to two developers, but the deals struck out when they learned of the zoning problem.

"We have an obligation to protect the ambience of the experience of going to Coors Field and protecting that view," Baker said. "I think it would be detrimental to taxpayers not to do so."

The district wants to see a view plane created that would provide for an unobstructed view from a designated place in the stadium.

Baker noted that there are other nearby parcels besides Light Bulb Supply Co. that could block views from Coors Field, if built to their maximum height.

Architect Brad Buchanan is representing the Leakes. Buchanan, who also is on the planning board, made a presentation to the board last week, although he recused himself from voting.

He said he is "hyper-vigilant" in such circumstances not to communicate with other board members on

the issue or try to sway their position.

Buchanan said the site probably could handle a residential tower with 130 to 150 units that would cost about \$25 million.

"This land is the Leakes' 401(k)," Buchanan said. "They are salt-of-the-earth people. They were here before Coors Field."

Also, Light Bulb Supply Co. is three blocks from Denver Union Station, where the city is encouraging height and density, he said.

The Leakes have outgrown their current space and plan to move to a facility twice the size near Stapleton, Bill Leake said.

If Coors Field received a view plane, it would be the first one granted in Denver from a venue where people have to pay to see the view, Buchanan said.

Jack Tone, president of the lower downtown group, said they aren't against developing the site, as long as views from Coors Field are protected.

"We feel Coors Field played a big role in revitalizing what is now LoDo, as well as all of downtown," Tone said. "The view that would be partially blocked is a signature view."

At issue

- If the rezoning of property at 2010 Delgany St. is approved, a 14-story building could be built, blocking a picture-perfect view from some seats at Coors Field. The property is near the left field wall of the baseball stadium.

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