



2002 and 2022 Design for the Middle Creek work-force housing neighborhood.

# Letters to Vail

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Vail Workforce Housing – West Middle Creek – Parts Three

March 25, 2024

**West Middle Creek Development:** In the early 2000s, the first Middle Creek housing project (left) was built after extensive negotiation, resulting from the public debate about the design of the project. The design approved, shown above, met design standards that use the natural landscape and terrain to articulate and integrate its architecture form within its surrounding, including a [microwave tower that had received a national architectural design award when it was built in the 1970s](#).

The topic of design was a particular concern because the land was gifted as open space to the Town of Vail (TOV) by the ski company operator in the 1970s. A 1990s Council set in motion a procedure to convert native open space to development. A procedure that remains a prospect for other open space lands within the Town that have not received permanent designation as open space.



2002- Middle Creek Apartment Project

2022 - Residence at Mail Vail

In 2002, the Town Council granted, on a portion of the open space site, development rights to the developer of the Middle Creek Apartment Project to build rental housing specifically intended for work-force occupancy. The

design of the project was contentious, and disputes were resolved when the building's design was in compliance the zoning regulations and design guidelines.

The adjacent 2022 Residences at Main Vail (right) came about as an attempt by the TOV to placate Vail Resorts (VR) by offering the building as an exchange for the Booth Heights bighorn sheep habitat on the land adjacent to the East Vail Interchange. The development site is in a prime location next to the Main Vail I-70 Interchange. The bland monolith high-rise appearance came under criticism from the TOV's Design Review Board (DRB) and the public.

The Town Council overruled the DRB's rejection of Residences at Main Vail design. After receiving public protest about the design, an attempt was made to improve the exterior appearance of the building. The design changes did not include the full range of building offsets, step-downs and amenities required of other similar sized high-rise structures in the community. And the project is, for the most part, devoid of socializing and recreational amenities.



**2024 West Middle Creek Proposal**  
**Project firms: Corum Real Estate Group, SAR+, Pierce Austin Architects,**  
**Martin/Martin Engineers and Zehren Architects**

**West Middle Creek:** The 2022 TOV Council, in the ongoing effort to placate VR in exchange for Booth Heights, converted more of the Middle Creek open space to development by rezoning the western portion of the open space tract to work-force housing. The design for the proposed West Middle Creek development does a better job at articulating its public façade. The design relies on extensive retaining walls to create enough level site area to build multiple floors of dwelling units above an expansive enclosed vehicular circulation and parking structure. The design moves parking away from public view and is more welcoming than the design of the proposed West Timber Ridge or the existing Residences at Main Vail. The West Middle Creek design makes a concerted effort to accommodate tenant needs by devoting sizable areas to meaningful social and service amenities.

Extensive retaining walls along the North Frontage Road open the opportunity to provide structural support for bridging over I-70. Covering I-70 has long been envisioned as a means of wedding the north and south sides of the community. Consideration should be given to creating open space on top of an I-70 covering reminiscent of what has been done in Denver's Central I-70 cover park. The concept is even more important now that over 1000 workers will live in close proximity across the Interstate from Vail Village and where the potential for additional worker housing is contemplated on the municipal building site, should the Vail Civic Area plan eventually proceed.

\*\*\*\*\*

VHA serves the Vail community with information, having a perspective not readily found elsewhere. Our publications and activities are funded by membership dues and contributions from paid-subscribers and readers.

By joining with VHA as a member, paid-subscriber or reader, you can add your voice to sustain what is good about our community and to shine a spotlight on important issues.

VHA strives to provide clear and concise discussion of matters affecting the Vail community in the belief that an informed citizenry will be an engaged citizenry. Our intent is to promote more citizen involvement and community discussion of issues facing the Town. If this is an issue that concerns you, please make your views known to [town officials](#).

\*\*\*\*\*

Contact:

[vailhomeownersassoc@gmail.com](mailto:vailhomeownersassoc@gmail.com)

Post Office Box 238 Vail, Colorado 81658

Telephone: (970) 331-2099 Email: [yha@vail.net](mailto:yha@vail.net) Website: <https://www.vailhomeowners.com>

Copyright: 2024