

Reply:
Christine Archibald
Planning and Transportation Committee
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March 10, 2000

To: East York Community Council
Etobicoke Community Council
North York Community Council
Scarborough Community Council
Toronto Community Council
York Community Council

From: City Clerk, Planning and Transportation Committee

Subject: Design Guidelines and Development Standards for Infill Housing

At the Planning and Transportation Committee agenda briefing meeting on March 8, 2000, the Chair of Planning and Transportation Committee directed that the attached transmittal letter (February 23, 2000) from the City Clerk forwarding a joint report (January 31, 2000) from the Director, Community Planning, West District and the Director of Urban Design, City Planning, entitled "Design Guidelines and Development Standards for Infill Housing" be forwarded to all Community Councils for consideration and comment to the Planning and Transportation Committee.

City Clerk
Christine Archibald/caa

Encl.

cc: Commissioner of Urban Development Services
Director, Community Planning, West District, Urban Development Services
Director of Urban Design, City Planning, Urban Development Services
Councillor Flint, Chair, Planning and Transportation Committee

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

January 31, 2000

To: Etobicoke Community Council
From: Director, Community Planning, West District
Director, Urban Design, City Planning

Subject: Design Guidelines and Development Standards for Infill Housing

Purpose:

To introduce draft Design Guidelines and By-law Standards for Infill Housing for the Etobicoke Community.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

Council authorize release and distribution of the draft Design Guidelines and proposed Zoning Code Standards for infill townhouses to the development industry, ratepayer organizations and other interested parties for input and feedback;

Council authorize staff to hold an open house to discuss the draft Design Guidelines and proposed Zoning Code Standards for infill townhouses with interested parties and obtain their feedback;

Staff revise the draft Guidelines and Zoning Code standards based on the input received and schedule a statutory public meeting under the Planning Act to consider adoption of the proposed guidelines and amendments to the Etobicoke Zoning Code;

Planning staff examine opportunities for reduced-width roads with the Works & Emergency Services Department with regard to infill townhouse development; and

Planning staff re-evaluate current standards with City staff and utility companies for sizes and locations of signs, metres, transformers etc. in order to minimize the physical and visual impact of these elements on new development.

Background:

As a result of several concerns raised by members of Etobicoke Community Council about recent infill townhouse development, staff were directed to review standards for new townhouse developments and specifically freehold townhouses. Staff have examined existing by-law provisions, compared a number of built townhouse projects in various locations throughout the City and canvassed district planning staff throughout the City. Community Planning staff have worked closely with Urban Design to formulate Design Guidelines and By-law criteria.

Comments:

Existing By-law Provisions:

In Etobicoke, townhouses are subject to the zoning requirements in Group Area Fourth Density Residential (R4G) category. The R4G zoning standards have remained, with a few exceptions, virtually unchanged since their adoption in 1962. The R4G standards were designed to accommodate a block or cluster form of housing, and did not provide standards that are relevant to infill townhouses today.

The front yard setback of 13.5 m (45 feet) and landscape open space ratio of 60 percent of the lot area preclude the current predominant form of infill street townhouse development. As a result, a rezoning application for a site-specific by-law is required in nearly all instances. In addition, the by-law does not contain key performance criteria for townhouse development such as frontages, parking placement, amenity space, lot depth, building height and mass, length of townhouse block, streetscape, etc.

Site-plan, built-form and streetscape guidelines for townhouses should be established in order to facilitate good neighbourhood infill development either on large sites with new streets or intensification within an existing neighbourhood. Some amendments to the Etobicoke Zoning Code are required to achieve the site and building relationships described in this document.

Other Municipalities:

The former municipalities of North York, Scarborough and Toronto have not recently reviewed their zoning standards for townhouse development and currently deal with townhouse development in much the same way as Etobicoke does, on a site specific zoning basis. While there have been some refinements to accommodate height and frontage concerns, the matter has yet to be addressed on a comprehensive basis.

On July 29, 1999 City Council adopted a recommendation that development of freehold housing on private roads generally be discouraged. In some former municipalities, infill townhouse development would not occur on public roads because of the existing public road width requirements. Planning staff should examine the opportunities for reduced-width 'public' roads with the Works & Emergency Services Department for infill townhouse development.

In researching the question of what makes good townhouse design, several newly planned communities in outlying areas such as Markham, Oakville and Mississauga were visited, where 'new urbanism' design principles have resulted in successful developments. Essentially, the concept of new urbanism relates to designs that are less automobile oriented and provide a high level of integration between the public and private realm for a healthy and actively used public street. New urbanism achieves this by providing parking at the rear, reduced front yard setbacks, front porches, reduced street rights-of-way and community focused open space.

The attached draft Design Guidelines for Infill Townhouses apply primarily to grade-related or 'stacked' residential units organized in blocks or rows. Developments of single and semi-detached residential units share principles similar to those put forward in the guidelines for infill townhouses. A city-wide approach to single and semi-detached residential units may be developed in the future.

Recent Townhouse Development in Etobicoke:

A review of recent development activity reveals a wide variation in development standards between new developments with respect to:

frontage (ranging from 4 to 7 metres);

height (ranging from 9 to 14 metres);

block length (ranging from 8 to 12 units);

the amount of amenity area (38 to 62 percent landscape open space); and particularly,

building, site organization and parking placement.

In part, variations should and do occur, depending on surrounding development and the scale of the site. Staff recognize that there is a relationship between achieving a successful street-related townhouse development and zoning standards. For example, projects with front yard parking are often characterized by excessive front yard paved surfaces, facades dominated by garages, and proportionately smaller landscaped areas, resulting in unattractive streetscapes. In some cases, grades have been adjusted to accommodate increased building heights that produce poor relationships between buildings, streets and adjacent properties. With the exception of parking supply, none of these standards are adequately addressed in the Zoning Code.

Development on narrow or smaller lots often produces buildings that are very tall, given the need to accommodate sufficient marketable living space in a limited building footprint. In addition, townhouse lots that are narrow in width rarely have enough space between adjacent lots and curb cuts to provide on-street parking.

While there are many successful examples of townhouse development in Etobicoke, it is evident that some additional performance standards and design guidelines are required. These development standards should achieve a higher and more consistent level of design that includes quality streetscapes, pedestrian amenity and integration of the development into the existing neighbourhood.

Density:

The R4G zone contains a maximum density of 37 Units Per Hectare. Staff has evaluated numerous projects within the GTA, to determine if there is a density range that generally characterizes good townhouse development.

There is no relationship between a density limit and quality townhouse development. There are many successful developments where the density exceeds these figures and are considered desirable living communities. In addition, there are projects that are under 37 UPH which exhibit few of the principles of good community planning.

Therefore, staff recommend retaining the existing 37 UPH density limits in the by-law as a general tool for reviewing proposals. Some flexibility may be employed when projects otherwise meet the intent of the proposed guidelines.

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Conclusions:

There is a need to revise the former municipality of Etobicoke's existing, outdated townhouse development standards. They do not contain necessary key performance criteria to ensure a consistently high level of design for infill townhouses. Staff have developed a number of built form and site design guidelines and proposed draft by-law standards to address problems and provide for good street related townhouse development.

Although the standards and guidelines have been developed to address concerns of the former municipality of Etobicoke, it is evident that most of these design principles and standards could be applied on a City-wide basis.

Next steps should include planning staff examining opportunities for reduced-width roads for infill townhouse development and minimizing the physical and visual impact of elements such as signs, metres, transformers etc. on new development. The draft guidelines and proposed zoning standards will be distributed to the development industry, ratepayer organizations and other interested parties for their input and feedback.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment No. 1 – Townhouse Development By-law Standards (include in Zoning By-Law)

Attachment No. 2 – Draft Design Guidelines for Infill Housing

Attachment 1 Townhouse Development By-Law Standards

The following table contains the proposed Zoning By-law amendments recommended in the draft Design Guidelines for Infill Housing.

	Minimum Lot Frontage	Minimum Required Front Yard (porches, stairs, verandahs excepted)	Minimum Required Rear Yard	Minimum Required Exterior Side Yard	Maximum Height
On a lot <i>not</i> accessed by a lane (front yard parking or garage)	6 m (20')	Main dwelling 6 m (20') to property line or inside edge of sidewalk or average of adjacent properties	7.5 m (25') from property line	1.5 m (5') from side of building to property line or centre line between blocks 4.5 m (15') to an abutting non-residential use	10.5 m (34') 3 storeys, or as per area By-law
On a lot where parking is below grade	4.2 m (14')	15 m (50') between primary faces of townhouse blocks	Same	Same	Same
On a lot fronting a public or private street with	4.2 m (14')	3 m (10') to property line, or inside edge of sidewalk, or as per area By-law	Same	Same	Same

**vehicular
access from
the rear**



Novina Wong, City Clerk

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February 23, 20

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To: Planning and Transportation Committee

From: City Clerk

Subject: Design Guidelines and Development Standards for Infill Housing

The Etobicoke Community Council at its meeting held on February 16, 2000, referred the joint report dated January 31, 2000, from the Director, Community Planning, West District and the Director of Urban Design, City Planning, entitled "Design Guidelines and Development Standards for Infill Housing", to the Planning and Transportation Committee for consideration, with a request that the Committee:

- (1) forward its recommendation(s) to all Community Councils for comment thereon back to the Committee; and**
- (2) schedule this matter as a deputation item when it is again before the Planning and Transportation Committee.**

Background:

The Etobicoke Community Council had before it a joint report (January 31, 2000) from the Director, Community Planning, West District and the Director of Urban Design, City Planning, entitled "Design Guidelines and Development Standards for Infill Housing", respecting draft design guidelines and by-law standards for infill housing for the Etobicoke community; and recommending that:

- (1) Council authorize release and distribution of the draft Design Guidelines and proposed Zoning Code Standards for infill townhouses to the development industry, ratepayer organizations and other interested parties for input and feedback;
- (2) Council authorize staff to hold an open house to discuss the draft Design Guidelines and proposed Zoning Code Standards for infill townhouses with interested parties and obtain their feedback;
- (3) staff revise the draft Guidelines and Zoning Code Standards based on the input received and schedule a statutory public meeting under the Planning Act to consider adoption of the proposed guidelines and amendments to the Etobicoke Zoning Code;
- (4) Planning staff examine opportunities for reduced-width roads with the Works and Emergency Services Department with regard to infill townhouse development; and
- (5) Planning staff re-evaluate current standards with City staff and utility companies for sizes and locations of signs, meters, transformers, etc. in order to minimize the physical and visual impact of these elements on new development.

City Clerk

Mary Casini/uip
Attachment

Item 13

- c. Director, Community Planning, West District
Director, Urban Design, City Planning