

Jim Wright, 8300 Osgoode Drive, on Agenda Item 23

Mayor Brodie and Councillors,

In the proposed new Bylaw 9280 about house massing, only one piece of cleanup is essential for the future of the Garden City. Fortunately, it is a simple change.

At your recent planning committee meeting, I explained how a vestigial problem has

adverse effects for my family because our Rideau Park neighbourhood would be one of the first victims. I illustrated with this photo of a house next to mine. I'll reuse the photo to go into



detail about the conservation value of a “half-storey” above the second storey. Cleaning up Bylaw 9280 will retain that intended value, not make a mockery of it.

Please again notice the large window under the peak of the roof. It's part of clever architecture that conserved space that would otherwise have been wasted. The half-storey is very habitable as an artist's studio. Half-storeys tucked under rooflines can continue to be great for conservation and quality of life. They can be the epitome of Zero Waste.

To retain the values of half-storeys, the city just needs t to *fully* restore the earlier common-sense definition of building height that was replaced in 2008. In essence, it says that building height is the distance from the ground to the top of the roof.

In contrast, the problem that got slipped in caused building height to be measured to a point only halfway up a sloping roof, which makes no sense at all. It's like measuring people's height as the distance from a floor to their shoulders instead of the tops of their heads. With that method, tall women who are five-foot-nine in the rest of the world would become less than five feet tall in Richmond.

Bylaw 9280 would eliminate the definition problem but, bizarrely, put it back for two-and-a-half-storey houses, with the effect of making them 1.5 metres taller than other new houses. While restoring the absurd notion of height, that would defeat the purpose of half-storeys. Instead of enabling Zero Waste, half-storeys would bring in Total Waste.

The floor area and habitable space of the house would not change, but there would be a bonus of 1.5 metres of vertical space. That suits trophy houses that feature conspicuous waste of space, often with ultra-high ceilings and roofs, apparently as a status symbol. Just for that, there would be immense harm for neighbourhoods and the Garden City, as I described to the committee.

In contrast, look what happens without that problem. The term “building height” is then consistently defined as “the vertical distance between **finished site grade** and the highest point of the **building.**”

If a new two-and-half-storey building ever replaces the one in the photo, that definition would allow well over a metre of additional vertical space, mainly for the half-storey. It is simply necessary to keep to eight-foot ceilings or even a nine-foot one. Even a developer who spoke out on this issue said that he chose eight and nine foot ceilings for his own home. The effect of having a Zero Waste half-storey on the third floor would be less floor area on lower floors and therefore a smaller footprint that leaves more of the lot area for nature and gardens, which that type of family is likely to value.

If you take a stand, there will be more attempts to confuse the issue and entice you to procrastinate. Please see through them and restore the common-sense definition of building height consistently. Please reward conservation and Zero Waste, not Total Waste. In advance, thank you!