

LYNDA TEBORG (WRAPd) Presentation to City Council first reading Bylaw Amendment July 27, 2015

After three months of intensive study on a referral motion to “control building height and massing” what really are you voting on today:

BUILDING HEIGHT

In 2006 Tranquille Place residents petitioned to protest 2.5 storey houses that overlooked the neighbourhood and for all purposes had the appearance of three storey houses.

In 2008, in exact opposite of what was requested, the overall building heights were increased 5 feet to 10.5 for 2 and 2.5 storey houses.

Subsequent citizen’s pleas for relief from building massing were ignored.

Today in 2015, we currently are looking at an amendment with no change to the double height standard [of 5.0m (16’4”)] and no change to the 2.5 storey house height [of 10.5m (34.5 feet)]. How does this effect “control of building height and massing”?

You are looking at an amendment to only lower the 2 storey height [to 9.0m (29.5 ft.) to peak]. No other municipality distinguishes height between 2 and 2.5 storey houses because this half storey is supposed to be tucked within the roof line.

I have no problems with 2.5 storey houses if they are restricted to properties with a view, on farmland, or overlooking green spaces. They do not fit within the character of a single family neighbourhood. And if they are permitted, windows and dormers should face toward the front streets rather than towards the back and side neighbours. We feel this proposed amendment will lead to more 2.5 storey houses within subdivisions rather than less and safeguards must be put into place to mitigate this potential result.

DOUBLE HEIGHT

The proposed bylaw amendment retains the current standard of 5.0m (16’4”) for double height calculation so there will be no relief to building massing from this control either.

The City’s own Advisory Design Panel commented that “*the maximum height definition of a storey to remain at 5m but not allowing drop ceiling, is susceptible to manipulation by the builder*” “*is too generous even for big houses*” and “*the proposed 3.7m maximum ceiling height is more appropriate*”.

Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey all use 3.7m as their standard. Citizen’s support and City Staff recommended 3.7m. On the basis of such overwhelming support to change the standard to 3.7m how can you justify no change to the double height standard and still say this amendment effects “control on building massing “.

## CEILING Definition

City staff says we have ambiguity in the double height bylaw and propose a definition change. Thru the lead up to this bylaw we have been given material defining the height of a storey as the **top plate of the wall supporting the roof structure.**

The new definition in this bylaw is supposed to remove ambiguity. Top of wall plate has been substituted for: *"underside of the floor joist or underside of roof joist or underside of the bottom chord of a structural truss"*

Vancouver uses top of roof joists, Burnaby uses top of wall plate.

At Planning Committee on July 20, 2015 we discussed the calculation of ceiling height in the open beamed Anderson Room as an example of the ambiguity that can continue to result in using interior space for double height calculation. Builders were even confused by this and the Planning Committee requested something more definitive. Staff was requested to provide clarification. We do not see any changes in this proposed Bylaw. We need to eliminate ambiguity not contribute more ambiguity.

My big question remains ...at what point in the enforcement process of this proposed bylaw amendment is the double height construction to be checked against the plans submitted? Is it at the framing inspection? Or when it is too late or too expensive to mandate correction, at the final building inspection?

The dropped ceiling height in this Council chamber is approximately 14 ft.... an institutional space designed to hold 100 people.

The George Massey tunnel has a height restriction to 4.15m (13'6").

You are proposing a Bylaw to permit the standard construction of several interior spaces (living, dining, family rooms and entrance foyers and staircases) in single family houses to be higher than this Council chamber.

You can drive a semi trailer truck thru these houses and park them in the back yard and you can drive a truck thru the bylaw you are proposing.

The ceiling definition needs to be tightened, the double height standard needs to be reduced to 3.7m and a 2.5 storey house does not belong within the confines of existing single family neighbourhoods.

Rescind this motion and instead pass Bylaw amendment 9278 with a reduction for 2.5 storey houses. Serve your citizens well, uphold your campaign promises, and be true to the Official Community Plan.

## ATTACHMENTS

Schedule 1 Advisory Design Panel minutes – comments on double height 2015-05-21

Schedule 2 Wayne Craig Planning Committee Report - ceiling height definition 2015-06-10

Schedule 3 L. Terborg Presentation - Planning Committee Bylaw amendment proposals 2015-07-21

Schedule 4 10- Years of Deflected Concerns - Westwind Town Hall Meeting 2015-04-29

## Advisory Design Panel

Thursday, May 21, 2015

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Place: Rm. M.1.003  
City of Richmond

Present: Grant Brumpton, Chair  
Tom Parker  
Xuedong Zhao  
Michael Mammone  
Jane Vorbrod  
Jubin Jalili

Also Present: Diana Nikolic, Planner 2  
David Brownlee, Planner 2  
Suzanne Carter-Huffman, Senior Planner/Urban Design  
Barry Konkin, Program Coordinator-Development  
James Cooper, Manager, Plan Review  
Gavin Woo, Senior Manager, Building Approvals  
Rustico Agawin, Auxiliary Committee Clerk  
  
Lisa Jones – Auxilliary Architect, Building Approvals Division

Absent: Matthew Thomson  
Paul Goodwin  
Steve Jedreicich  
Cst. Barry Edwards

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m.

### 1. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

It was moved and seconded

*That the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held on Thursday, April 16, 2015, be adopted.*

**CARRIED**

**Advisory Design Panel**  
**Thursday, May 21, 2015**

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- like the variety of different architectural styles; appreciate the idea of extended planes; however, it could be further extended throughout the proposed development to tie together the different architectural styles; consider extended planes of materials other than glass, e.g. concrete, brick, etc.; proposed pillar does not appear to work with the idea of extended planes; consider design development;
- the west tower's curved wall does not appear dynamic in the model; consider applying the idea of extended plane to the curved wall or other measures to make it more exciting;
- Pearson Way (south) elevation/frontage needs more attention; streetscape character with street trees in metal grates is not successful; enhanced landscaping may be an effective way to tie together the different architectural elements and make the street more pedestrian friendly; consider further landscaping treatment, e.g. introducing pockets of greens and shrubs to add layering;
- 
- appreciate the well-resolved programming at the podium level; appreciate the green roofs in the upper levels; however, look at access to the green roofs for maintenance work; and
- review the proposed colour (white) and cladding for the affordable housing units and consider long-term maintenance issues.

**Panel Decision**

It was moved and seconded

*That DP 14-662341 be supported to move forward to the Development Permit Panel subject to the applicant giving consideration to the comments of the Panel.*

**CARRIED**

*(At this point, Jubin Jalili rejoined the Panel and participated in the Panel's consideration of Item No. 4)*

**4. PANEL REVIEW OF PROPOSED REVISIONS TO SINGLE FAMILY ZONES/  
ZONING BYLAW TO ADDRESS HEIGHT AND MASSING CONCERNS**

PROPOSER: City of Richmond (Planning and Building)

## Advisory Design Panel

Thursday, May 21, 2015

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### Staff's Presentation

Barry Konkin, Program Coordinator-Development, advised that as per Council's referral to staff in the April 20<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing, staff is seeking the Panel's analysis and comments on the proposed package of measures to control the overall building height, massing and interior ceiling height of single-family homes. Mr. Konkin clarified that staff proposals labelled as Future Considerations regarding revisions to existing building envelope regulations included in the package circulated to Panel members will still need further study and analysis and will not form part of proposed Zoning Bylaw 8500 amendments to be recommended by staff to Council.

James Cooper, Manager, Plan Review, provided background information regarding the trend in construction of large infill single-family homes and noted the concerns raised by existing single-family. Mr. Cooper mentioned that the goal of the proposed revisions to the existing zoning bylaw is to provide the appropriate controls in overall building height and vertical building envelope to ensure compatibility of new single-family developments within existing single-family neighbourhoods.

Mr. Cooper highlighted the following proposed modifications to the single-family zoning bylaw that would significantly impact on the height and massing of single-family homes:

- for 2-storey construction on lot widths less than 18 metres, reduction of (i) maximum overall building height from 10.5 metres to 9 metres, (ii) vertical perimeter wall height from 6 to 5 metres,;
- for 2 ½ -storey construction on lot widths less than 18 metres, (i) maximum building height is 9.0 metres measured to the midpoint between the highest ridge and eave line and 10.5 m to the peak of the roof, (ii) reduction of angle of vertical plane from 45 degrees from horizontal to 30 degrees;
- for 2-storey construction on lot widths more than 18 metres, reduction of (i) maximum building height from 10.5 metres to 9 metres to roof peak, (ii) vertical perimeter wall height from 6 metres to 5 metres, (iii) angle of vertical plane from 45 degrees horizontal to 30 degrees, and introduction of second-storey setback; and
- for 2.5-storey construction on lot widths more than 18 metres, (i) maximum building height is 9.0 metres measured to the midpoint between the highest ridge and eave line and 10.5 metres to the roof peak, (ii) reduction of angle of vertical plane from 45 degrees from horizontal to 30 degrees, and (iii) introduction of second-storey setback.

## Advisory Design Panel

Thursday, May 21, 2015

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Mr. Cooper added that the above proposals are intended to lower the height of single-family building and transfer the mass away from the neighbours to the middle of the buildable volume.

Also, Mr. Cooper presented (i) three options on maximum height definition of a storey to address concerns on building bulk due to high floor to floor heights, (ii) proposed changes to attached garage construction to control height and massing, (iii) proposed changes to limit the massing and required setbacks of detached accessory buildings with an area of 10 square metres or less, and (iv) massing and setback requirements for detached accessory building greater than 10 m<sup>2</sup> in area, limited to a maximum of 40% of the rear yard, and a maximum size limit of 70 square metres. . .

*(Jubin Jalili left the meeting at 6:15 p.m. and did not return)*

### Panel Discussion

*Comments from the Panel were as follows:*

With regard to the three options presented by staff regarding proposed changes to the current Zoning Bylaw 8500 height definition of a storey, a Panel member commented that (i) Option 1, which allows the maximum height definition of a storey to remain at 5 metres with the height defined to top plate of wall supporting the roof structure but not allowing drop ceiling, is susceptible to manipulations by the builder, (ii) the proposed maximum ceiling height of 5 metres is too generous even for big houses, and (iii) the proposed 3.7 metre maximum ceiling height is more appropriate.

With regard to the proposed amendments to the current Zoning Bylaw 8500 to control the massing of single-family homes, a Panel member noted that the goal can be achieved through a simpler formula which provides flexibility, not stifle creativity, and not cause uniformity of design of single-family homes.

A Panel member noted that staff is going in the right direction and expressed appreciation for their efforts to investigate the design implications of proposed amendments to current Zoning Bylaw 8500. Also, support was expressed for the staff proposal for a maximum building depth of 50 percent of the lot depth. In addition, it was noted that the staff proposals for the secondary vertical building envelope and wall plane articulation to control massing may result in homogeneity of house design.

Panel commented that more time is needed to study and provide their comments regarding the proposed amendments to Zoning Bylaw 8500. In response to the comment of Panel, Mr. Konkin advised that Panel members are welcome to submit their written comments to staff.

**Advisory Design Panel**  
Thursday, May 21, 2015

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**5. ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved and seconded

*That the meeting be adjourned at 6:50 p.m.*

**CARRIED**

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Design Panel of the Council of the City of Richmond held on May 21, 2015.

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Grant Brumpton  
Chair

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Rustico Agawin  
Auxiliary Committee Clerk





# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee Planning and Development Division



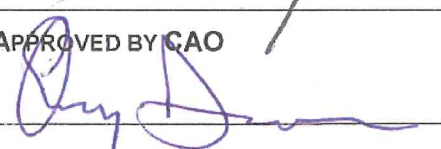
**To:** Planning Committee **Date:** June 10, 2015  
**From:** Wayne Craig **File:** 08-4430-01/2015-Vol 01  
 Director of Development  
**Re: Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendments to Regulate Building Massing and  
 Accessory Structures in Single-Family Developments**

### Staff Recommendations

1. That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9249 to amend the zoning regulations for building massing and accessory structure locations within single-family, coach house and two-unit dwelling zones be introduced and given first reading;
2. That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 9249 be forwarded to a Special Public Hearing to be held Monday, July 6, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at Council Chambers at Richmond City Hall; and
3. That staff report back to Planning Committee in one year on the implementation of the proposed zoning amendments to regulate building massing and accessory structures in single-family developments.

*Wayne Craig*  
 Wayne Craig  
 Director of Development

GW/BK/JC:blg  
 Att.

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>
Law	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b> 	<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b> 



08-4430-01/2015-Vol 01

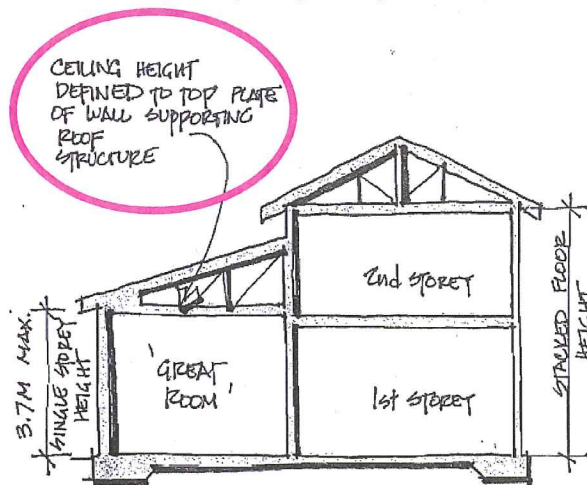
June 10, 2015

In recognition of the importance the building community has placed on tall interior ceiling spaces, the proposed bylaw amendment would allow additional 15 m<sup>2</sup> of higher ceiling area – up to a maximum height of 5 m (16 ft.) located internally to the building to be counted once (rather than double) towards the maximum floor area. This 15 m<sup>2</sup> space must be set back an additional 2.0 m (6 ft.) from any required interior side yard or rear yard setback. This 15 m<sup>2</sup> exception is in addition to the 10 m<sup>2</sup> exception for exclusively entry and stair purposes.

Exterior Wall Ceiling Expression: Recent house trends, including the general increase of the height of the top ceiling plate which has resulted in tall building facades. Proposed Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500 Amendment Bylaw 9249 would address this issue by requiring that no exterior wall that fronts onto the required rear or interior side yard setback can have an eave line or other exterior expression taller than 3.7 m above the finished floor, if the construction takes advantage of the exceptions for interior ceiling height (i.e. 10 m<sup>2</sup> exception for entry and stair purposes and the 15m<sup>2</sup> general exception for ceiling height between 3.7 m and 5 m). This proposed amendment would not preclude a ‘traditional’ two-storey house design with two (2) stacked floors.

A simplified cross-section of how this revised provision would be implemented is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 –Interior Ceiling Height Regulation (Recommended)



Staff are of the opinion that the combination of the reduced interior ceiling height of 3.7 m (12 ft.) from 5.0 m (16 ft.) before the floor area is counted twice for density purposes, in combination with the proposed additional setbacks for the additional 15 m<sup>2</sup> (215 ft<sup>2</sup>) permitted exception will result in reduced massing on the exterior of the house and should address a number of the concerns raised by Council and members of the public.

We note for Council that these proposed amendments do not prohibit the construction of a ceiling higher than 3.7 m (12 ft.), but rather, establish the limit in terms of internal ceiling height and clarification of the potential area for exceptions for calculation of floor area of the house.

LYNDA TERBORG (WRAPd) Presentation to Richmond Planning Committee, July 21, 2015

(1)

Proposed Building Height and Massing Bylaw Summary			Height		Accessory Buildings	
Double Height & Massing & Accessory Buildings	Amendment Bylaw #	Control	Control	No Change	Increase	Control
1 Residents option	9278	Double Height Standard	2 storey house	2.5 storey house	Max Area	Setback from front lot line
2 Staff recommendation	9279	12.1 ft (3.7 m)	29.5 ft (9 m)	34.5 ft (10.5 m)	753 ft <sup>2</sup> (70 m <sup>2</sup> )	65.6 ft (20 m)
3 Builders option	9280	12.1 ft (3.7 m) 16.4 ft (5.0 m)	∅	161 ft <sup>2</sup> (15 m <sup>2</sup> )	∅	

(2)

Proposed Building Envelope Bylaw Summary		Control	
Building Envelope	Amendment Bylaw #	Control	Amend Frontage Lot Widths
4 Staff recommendation	9281	3 different lot envelopes: (1) 'status quo' < 41 feet (2) 41 to 59 feet (3) > 59 feet	
5 Builders option	9282	2 different lot envelopes: (1) 'status quo' for lots < 59 feet (2) amending for lots > 59 feet	

(3) **Bylaw Future Considerations \*\*\*Council must direct staff in order for the following reviews to proceed\*\***

Through the consultation held July 8 and July 9, 2015, several issues were raised by the public which, with the benefit of more time, might warrant additional analysis. These issues were:

- Maximum depth of house
- Rear yard setbacks to house
- Front Rear yard setback for larger detached accessory buildings
- Interior side yard setbacks
- Projections into required side yard setbacks
- Secondary (upper floor) building envelope

**Bylaw Amendment Concerns**

**No Change to FAR requested**

-Additional Bonus FAR' not disclosed at public workshops or on story boards

-Why give a free bonus? What will the new house give back to the neighborhood in return? (deeper setbacks?, preserve all mature trees?)

-A free bonus (161 ft<sup>2</sup>) overheight space left to 'float' inside a house is difficult to administer and easy to abuse

-if at all, tie bonus extra height area to the front of the house where it belongs

**No other municipally distinguishes height differences between 2 and 2.5 storey houses. The 3rd half storey is to be tucked under the roof pitch**

**16.4 feet does not work with today's construction practices (10 ft, 11 ft, 12 ft storey heights). Vancouver, Surrey, and Burnaby have all made the switch**

-Proposed clause includes additional unnecessary defined term 'ceiling height'. This only complicates the intent of the Bylaw and is problematic.

-Richmond proposed double height control is to 'underside' of floor joist, 'underside' of roof joist, or 'underside' of bottom chord of structural truss

-Vancouver double height control is to 'top' of roof joists, 12.1 ft (3.7 m)

-Burnaby double height control is to 'top' of wall plate, 12.1 ft (3.7 m)

-Surrey double height control is floor area with 'extended height', 12.1 ft (3.7 m)



# New House Massing and Height Questions

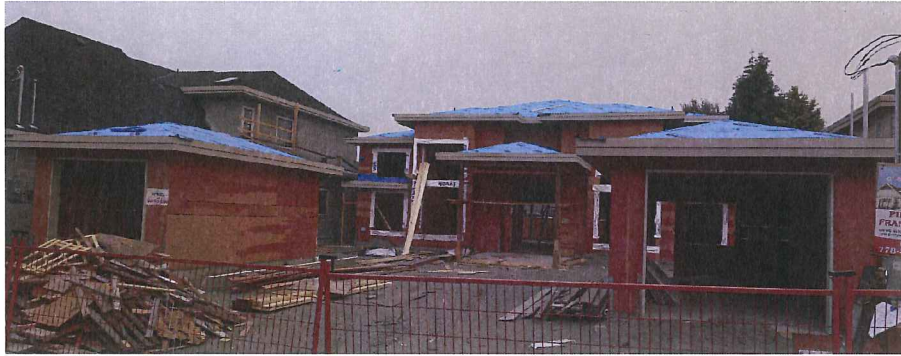
for City of Richmond workshops, Planning Committee, Public Hearing, and for a finalized Bylaw.

## Preserve current Floor Area Ratio (FSR) but control massing and height



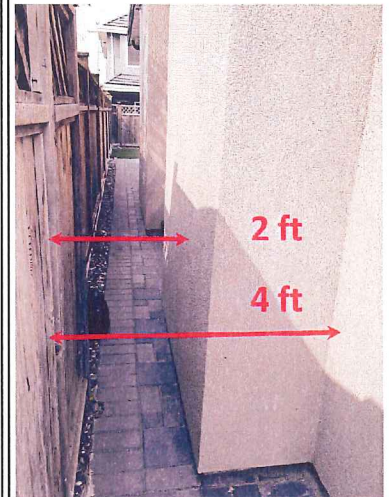
### TOO MASSIVE

- What is massing?
- Please explain double height spaces?
- What are void spaces? Are these extra rooms?
- What is back-framing? and when is it used?
- What are standard architectural massing controls?
- Why give a free bonus (161 ft<sup>2</sup>) of over height space? What will the new house give back to the neighborhood in return? (deeper setbacks?, preserve all mature trees?)
- What are habitable and non-habitable spaces and overheight spaces? And how are they calculated into the total square footage?



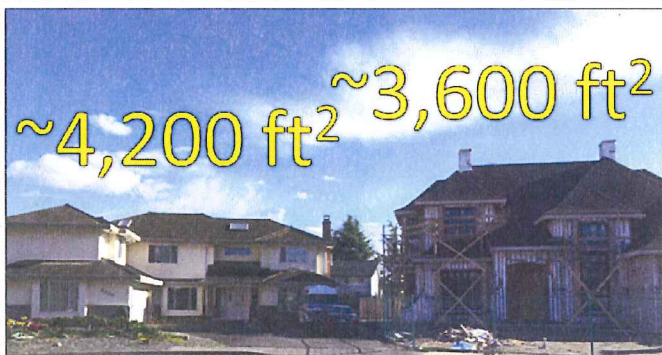
### TOO DEEP

- Will backyard detached garages respect the 20 foot rear yard setback?
- How do you propose to eliminate massing of houses in backyards?
- Why are maximum building depth (50% of lot) and limits on 2nd storey floor areas (80% of 1st storey) controls postponed for another year?



### TOO WIDE

- Why does the City allow projections into side yard setbacks?



1990 Construction

2015 Construction

### TOO HIGH

- Why provide a bonus height allowance for 2.5 storey houses when other municipalities make no distinction and the 3rd half storey is tucked under the roof pitch?
- What is a half storey and its purpose?
- Why do you measure to the midpoint of the roof to calculate overall building height and not the roof peak?
- How is building height calculated when multiple peaks, pitches, ridges, and hybrid flat/pitched roofs are combined?
- How does the building height change from 29.5 ft (in 2008) to 34.5 ft contribute to massing challenges?

West Richmond Association for Positive development  
Stay Current, Subscribe: [info@WRAPd.org](mailto:info@WRAPd.org)

[www.WRAPd.org](http://www.WRAPd.org)



1. Can you tell us what aspects of house construction make the house appear too big?

- Overall building height
- Interior ceiling height and floor area calculation
- Side-wall height
- Front yard massing
- Rear yard massing
- Other

Comments:

Houses don't just appear massive but ARE too massive for lot size. Not accurately double counting the overheight VOIDS and allowing back framing to create voids is breaching the intent of the bylaws. 22' outside wall expression is a 22 feet high single storey. Current bylaw says 16' 4" is the maximum height. Dropping a false ceiling to 16' in a 22' space doesn't reduce outside effect on the neighbours. This is a false interpretation.

2. Do you support a requirement that all interior ceiling heights be measured to a structural element within the building, and eliminating the use of dropped ceilings?

- Yes
- No

Comments:

The "structural element" & height should be defined as the top of the wall plate not ceiling and is measured on the house plan and at framing when the roof is on.... not after a decorative ceiling (with or without back framing and drops) is added. A plan checker does not see nor needs to comment on ceiling treatments (such as coffered or floating). That is the prerogative of the owner and builder, to finish inside of the house as they want.

3. What maximum interior ceiling height do you support?

- 3.7 m
- 5.0 m

Comments:

This is the best control for reducing massing. Reduce Richmond's 5 m (16'4") to 3.7m (12' 1") for single storey height. Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey all use 3.7m as their double height maximum for double counting floor area ratio. Nothing is preventing higher heights in a particular room, you just have to pay for it by off setting the area of VOID space created from the total allowable floor area ratio permitted for the specific lot.

4. We have proposed amendments to the setbacks and height for accessory buildings. Do you support the proposed height limits and revised setbacks?

- Yes *see comments*
- No

Comments:

Can't be answered simply. Yes to reduced heights, but no if habitable area can be encouraged over the garages to reduce depth of lot coverage.. No to revised setbacks if detached garages are permitted on 20 foot backyard setbacks. This setback is required to put a distance to the back neighbour. Detached accessory buildings should not be allowed on the front of the lot as this pushes the house too far back on the lot.

5. Do you support the proposed changes to building envelopes?

Yes

No

Comments:

Need to address maximum lot depth coverage, and reduce second storey floor area maximum of 80% of the first storey to let more light into yards. Massing control tools encouraged by City's Design Advisory Panel. Bringing habitable space forward over the garages eliminates the problems with knock out trusses presently being used to create illegal suites exceeding allowable floor area ratios after occupancy.

6. Please provide any other general comments you wish to make.

Comments:

NO to an additional FREE 161 sq. ft. BONUS that was offered within all three proposals to the Planning Committee June 16. This proposed bonus wasn't included in any storey board or online material, nor was it proposed or discussed in the public or the builder's workshops on July 8 & 9th. If this was to be included in the final staff recommendation to Planning on July 20, it would be seen as counter productive to the referral motion asking for "control of massing and height " and disingenuous to the process of public consultation. Need common height 9m for both 2 & 2 1/2 storey homes. No other municipality offers two heights and this added height to 34.5 feet given in 2008 has directly resulted in the escalating massing and building height problems we are experiencing in 2015. 29.5 feet to roof peak minimizes use of the third level and also illegal filling-in of third floor attic space for habitable space. Tighten regulations, eliminate void spaces, beef up enforcement. Many 22' (no drop) single storey rooms have been approved by inspectors. How is this possible?

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Thank you for your feedback.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this Comment Form and return it, to the attention of Gavin Woo – Senior Manager, Building Approvals, by **Wednesday, July 15, 2015**.

- Mail it to the City of Richmond, 6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond BC V6Y 2C1; or
- Fax it to the City of Richmond at 604-276-4052; or
- Leave it in the drop-off box provided at the Public Workshop.

If you would like an opportunity for further review of the information boards presented at today's workshop, please visit the City's website at [www.richmond.ca](http://www.richmond.ca) . The display boards will be provided at the following page:

<http://www.richmond.ca/plandev/planning2/projects/buildingmassingstudy.htm>



# 10 Years of Deflected Concerns

**\*\*Please remember we are talking about product (houses), not people.**

## **Intro**

My name is Lynda Terborg

I have been a resident of Richmond since 1973.

I started my real estate career in 1988. Over the last 27 years I have viewed thousands of homes in Richmond and in neighbouring municipalities.

I live in Westwind which is a neighbourhood composed of both Zoning and Land Use Contract (LUC) properties.

## **Statement**

We have a problem

Citizens are concerned about the building heights and massing of new houses in residential neighbourhoods.

Through my work I have seen a lot of newly constructed product on the market.

And what we are seeing is a pattern. A pattern of excessive massing on the upper floors of houses that is driving rooflines higher. We are seeing the massing escalating to the back and sides of houses.

For neighborhoods that have few back lanes and for LUC lots that are 100 feet deep at the most, the impact of new house construction on adjoining properties can be huge.

The section of the Zoning Bylaw directly addressing MASSING is not consistently applied or enforced in Richmond. Excessive building MASSING and uncounted floor area is the result.



**Last Week's Public Hearing (April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015)**

Originally we thought our problem was only with the redevelopment of LUC properties in the City.

But upon studying the proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendment discussed at the Public Hearing last week we realized that the problems of massing and height were being abused in Richmond's zoning properties. LUC's have a severed linkage to these current Zoning regulations.

Zoning properties have a serious problem with enforcement of the Bylaws that govern house sizes. Zoning Bylaws that are already overly generous when compared to our neighbouring municipalities.

New houses are being built in excess of the double height allowance and the houses are massively larger than permitted. These houses are in breach of the Zoning Bylaw. How can this be?

Citizens have been complaining loudly, when elected officials hear them, they refer the concerns to City Staff for recommendations.

Yet the same old problems continue year after year and the result of these past few years is extreme.

Some of the houses currently built in Westwind are MASSIVE and are in breach of the Zoning Bylaw.

New houses that are more blatantly abusing the Zoning Bylaw are being built in Riverdale, Maple Lane and other parts of Central and West Richmond.

And LUC properties are starting to see redevelopment.

**Caravel Court (off Gary St.) - LUC**

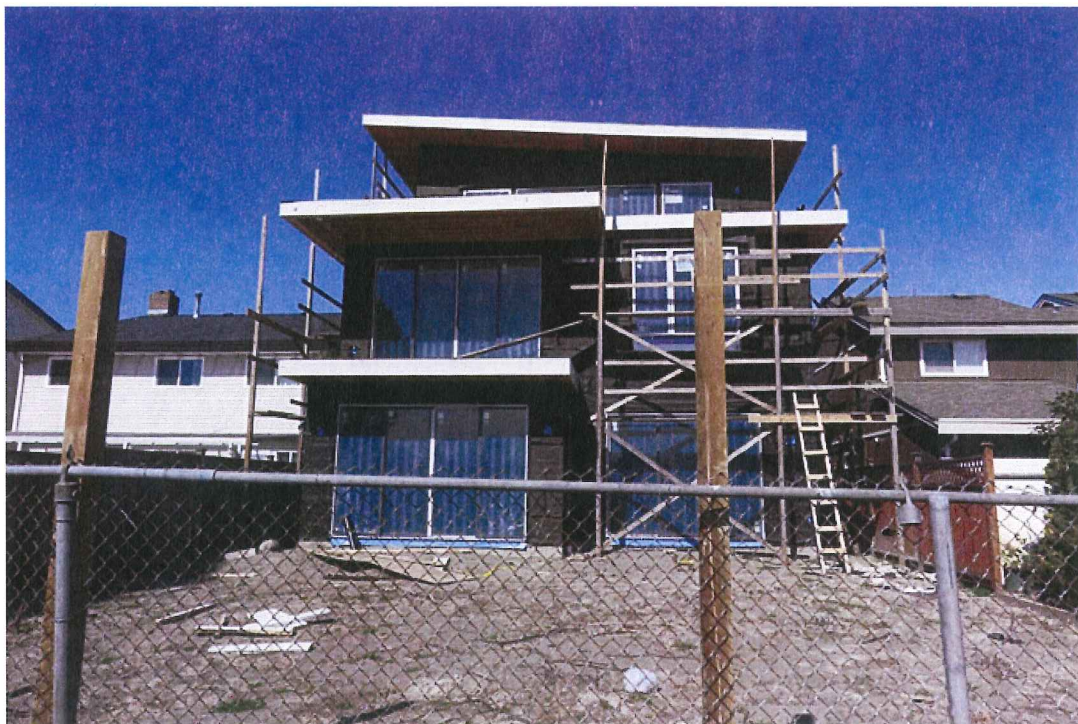


## 6400 Goldsmith Drive (front) - LUC



3

## 6400 Goldsmith Drive (back) - LUC



4



## Westwind (back) - LUC



5

### History

Between 1992 and 1994, in response to citizen's MEGA house concerns, eight separate Amendment Bylaws were passed by the Council-of-the-day with input from a citizen's task force. These actions effectively reduced the bulk and height of large boxy two storey houses.

Building height was set at 29.5 feet to the top of the roof pitch, and a double height, double count standard was set at 16.4 ft. Massive houses were finally brought under control by eight carefully written Bylaw Amendments. A period of relative calm and careful building resulted, and continued until the early 2000's.

Slowly citizens began to notice an unravelling of the controls. Houses started to MASS and bulk up again. Citizens began to complain again about the very real impacts of: loss of privacy, loss of access to sunlight, loss of plantings in gardens, especially in backyards and side yards.

By 2006 the complaints amplified and a neighbourhood petition got the attention of elected officials who asked City Staff for recommendations to address the concerns about 2<sup>1/2</sup> storey houses with balconies (6140 Tranquille Place).

LYN  
Sch:

# 6140 Tranquille Place, Richmond



## 2006 - Building Height and Massing Concerns

April 8, 2008

- 2 -

08-4430-01/2008-Vol 01

### Staff Report

#### Origin

At the January 17, 2006 Planning Committee Meeting, the following referral motion was made:

*"That the issue of the building height of a Single Family Building be referred to staff to provide appropriate changes to the definitions in the City's Zoning Bylaw..."*

#### Background

##### Neighbourhood Concern related to a 2½-Storey House at 6140 Tranquille Place

The Planning Committee referral motion was related to a neighbourhood concern about a 2½-storey single-family dwelling under construction at 6140 Tranquille Place. A number of residents submitted a letter and petition to Planning Committee citing concerns about the overall building height of the single-family dwelling under construction. Residents were concerned that the third storey of the single-family dwelling was well above the roofline of most existing two-storey single-family dwellings and the form and character of the house was no different from that of a three-storey building.

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Two years later, when the Zoning Bylaw was finally updated, Staff presented a redefinition for the third-floor ½ storey and a redefinition of **building height**.

It took over two years between 2006 and 2008 before a By-law was passed that fine-tuned the definition of 2<sup>1/2</sup> storey houses and a new method and definition for calculating building height that actually added 5 extra feet to single family dwellings!! The exact opposite of what was needed and asked for! Where is the promised review of the consequence of this action?



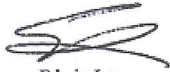
# 2008 – Zoning Amendment Bylaw 8319 Height Increase in Response to Concerns

## Conclusion

Planning Committee and Council have asked staff to examine the issue of single-family dwelling height specifically as it relates to 2½-storey single-family dwellings. Staff have reviewed the zoning provisions related to Building Height and Half-Storey, and have identified that some definitions in the Zoning Bylaw should be amended or added.

The proposed amendment to Zoning Bylaw No. 5300 will also address the potential building height issue resulting from the increase of minimum habitable elevations as proposed in the Flood Plain Designation and Protection Bylaw No. 8204.

Staff will monitor the implementations of the proposed changes to the Zoning and Development Bylaw and determine if any further revisions are required.



Edwin Lee  
Planning Technician – Design  
(Local 4121)

EL/WC:rg



Wayne Craig  
Program Coordinator – Development  
(Local 4625)

Attachment 1: Building Height and Half-Storey Building Area dated April 8, 2008



City of Richmond  
Planning and Development Department  
Report to Committee  
TO: Planning Committee  
FROM: Staff J. Jensen  
Date: June 24, 2008  
Re: Building Height and Half-Storey Building Area  
Staff Recommendation: [Blank]  
That the Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 8319 be adopted by the Council for Planning and Development.  
Submitted by: [Blank]  
Checked by: [Blank]  
Date: [Blank]

FOR COUNCIL AND DEPARTMENT USE ONLY  
Reviewed by: [Blank] [Blank] [Blank] [Blank] [Blank] [Blank]  
Reviewed by: [Blank] [Blank] [Blank] [Blank] [Blank] [Blank]

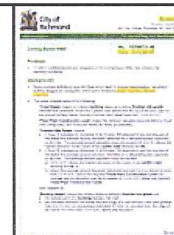
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“This was business as usual”

Two years later, a bulletin in 2010 was sent to builders/owners and designers to address new houses that were “greatly impacting adjacent properties”...

- the bulletin quoted standard definitions.
- with No mention of double height controls for MASSING, and
- No changes made or recommended for height regulations.

## 2010 – Bulletin, Definitions



City of Richmond  
Planning and Development Department  
Bulletin  
TO: Builders/Owners and Designers  
FROM: [Blank]  
Date: [Blank]  
Re: [Blank]

### Background:

- Some previous definitions have left these terms open to various interpretations, resulting in building designs not anticipated, and in some instances **greatly impacting adjacent properties.**

**“This was business as usual”**

Houses would continue to increase in mass and citizen’s concerns grew with them.

Last week, on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, City Staff’s recommendations:

- reducing the height of flat roof houses, and
- eliminating third floor balconies.
- Fine-tuning a definition of 2 ½ storey.

addressed less than 10% of the problem.

On February 17, 2015, Planning Committee passed the following referral motion:

*That staff:*

- (1) review potential amendments to the zoning bylaw to address concerns related to overall building height and massing of new two and two and a half-storey homes;*
- (2) review existing half-storey regulations to strengthen requirements that the upper half storey be fully enclosed within a pitched roof line; and*
- (2) examine potential restrictions for flat roofs on two and two and a half-storey homes; and report back.*

The concerns about height and massing of new 2 and 2<sup>1/2</sup> storey houses that was deflected in 2008 was being IGNORED again... 10 years later!

## 2015 - Amendment Bylaw 9223



The purpose of the proposed amendments is to revise the definition of a half-storey in single family and two unit dwelling zones, to address recent concerns raised by the public regarding building massing in recently constructed homes. Other amendments include a prohibition of decks and patios on any half-storey area and a maximum height limit for a two storey home with a flat roof of 7.5 m (25 ft.).

Pitched roofs occur on more than 90% of the new houses built in Richmond. A third level under the pitch of the roof with dormers and windows is still permitted. Third levels and balconies could still be built on 4,000 LUC properties.



The stories being told are confusing.



But we are not confused.... "This is business as usual at City Hall"...

Our presentations to City Council in the Monday April 20th Public Hearing pointed out the omission of the Bylaw Amendment to address the MASSING and height problems observed in over 90% of the new houses being built in Richmond.

Councillors yet again **referred** the matter to City staff for recommendations. A third lengthy process for addressing a documented concern that was raised 10 years ago.

We are frustrated by the lack of serious concern on this matter and that is why we called this Town Hall Meeting. The City should **red-letter** the April 20, 2015 date, and

- hold a moratorium on issuing any more building permits for 60 days.
- allow a complete audit of the building plan approvals department, and
- the building inspection department, to
- ensure current By-Laws are consistently enforced.

But "**business as usual**" means that City Staff will continue to study the changes, time will pass, and maybe the citizens will settle down. We can't wait for another two more years to pass like we did in 2006, only to come out with a worse solution worse than the problem.

- We can not look away any longer.
- Something is wrong at City Hall and it needs to be fixed now.
- Why do we need to petition City Hall to do their job and to enforce the Bylaws?

We do need to drop the double speak on double height. The intent of the Bylaw is to reduce the mass.

- The 16' 4" maximum height must be reduced to be in line with our neighbouring municipalities who have all come to the same hard earned conclusion about what is needed to best protect the character of single family neighbourhoods.
- Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey all use 12' 1" as their standard for double counting storey height.
- Reduce the standard to 12'1", in Richmond
- Respect our City's Official Community Plan "to protect the character of our single family neighbourhoods".

To give you some idea of the numbers, we had:

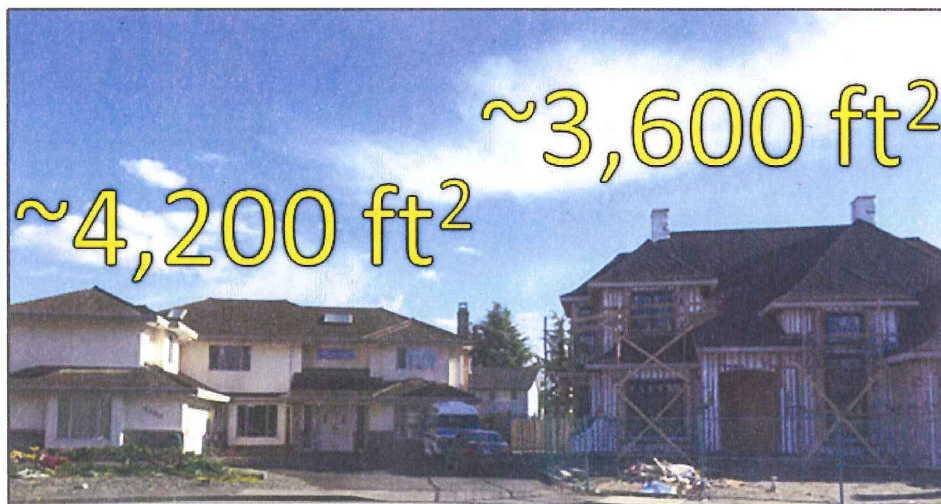
- 302 demolitions in 2013
- 464 demolitions in 2014, and
- We are projecting over 500 demolitions for 2015.

#### Families are directly affected

Long time homeowners are feeling helpless. They question the sizes being built and are told everything conforms. They are told that if they don't like it they can move. But the vast majority of new houses being built today are breaching the City's size Bylaw.

This "Business as Usual" means we are seeing houses being built today that are overshadowing houses built in the 1990's.

### MASSING of houses in Richmond



5300 Lapwing Crescent  
**1990** Construction

5260 Lapwing Crescent  
**2015** Construction



We need a change because “**business as usual**” is not good enough this time. The Escalation of MASSING to the front, to side, and now to the backs of houses, is what we can no longer look away from.

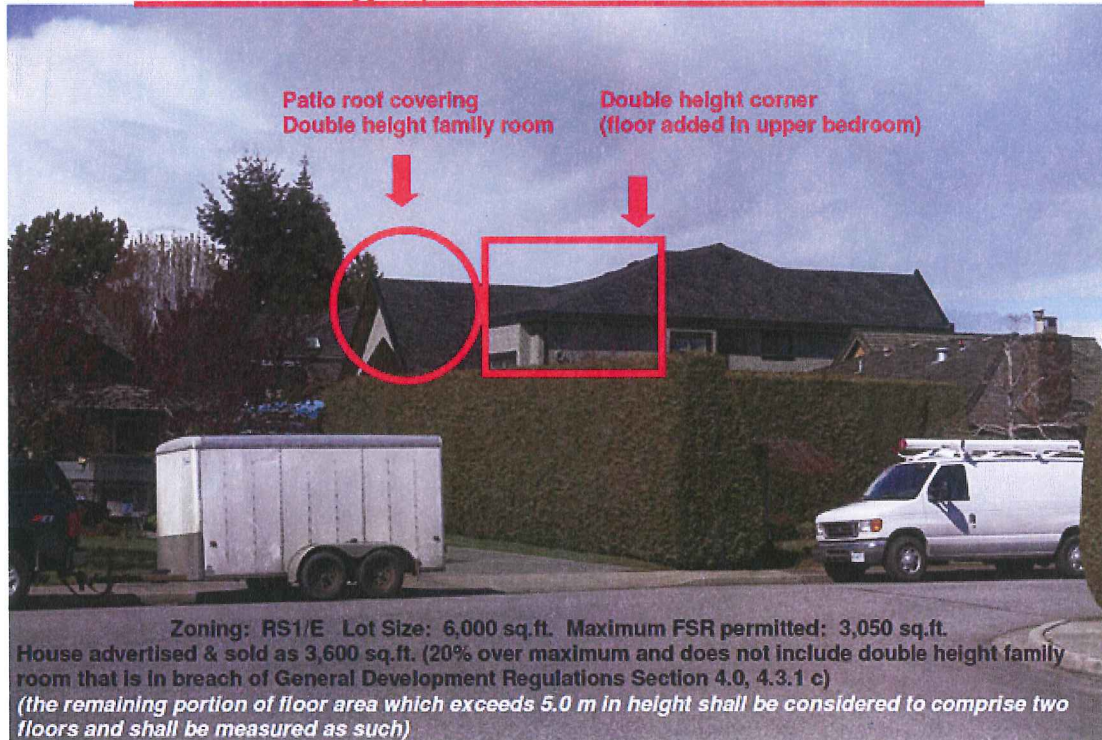
Gavin Woo, P. Eng, Senior Manager, Building Approvals Department and Wayne Craig, Director of Development in their Memo dated April 16, 2015 to Mayor and Councillors stated:

“The maximum 5m (16.4 ft) interior ceiling height is commonly met through construction of permanent, drop ceilings below the level of the roof structure. However, these ceilings are typically stout and elaborate in nature and Building Approvals staff has seen almost no incidences in the last 20 years of conversion of high spaces into additional second floor area.” A false ceiling is a false interpretation and is not a permanent structure; a floor has been added to fill in a double height void. This is a breach of the double height Bylaw and the Floor Area Ratio is in excess of the maximum permitted for the lot size. Trumpeter Drive has had a floor added to fill in a double height void, over the eating area. The new house, one year old, was sold as 3,600 sq. ft. Maximum FAR (Floor Area Ratio) for the 6,000 sq. ft. lot is 3,050 sq. ft.



# Trumpeter Drive, Westwind (back) - Zoning

## **BACK MASSING** **double height, double count not enforced**



### Summary

The Councillors want staff to consult with whom they call their "Stakeholder Group"

- Urban Design Institute (UDI)
- Greater Vancouver Home Builders Associations (GVHBA), and
- Richmond Small Builder's Group

We challenge the notion that these three named lobby groups are "the" stakeholders when it comes to changing the Zoning Bylaws that will affect the tax-paying residents to whom the City owes its primary duty.

Double check what is proposed, strengthen documentation requirements, double check what is being built, and triple check the enforcement of our Bylaws. Rules are meant to be fair to all. This is a decisive moment and we need our politicians to act.

There is public support for making the hard decisions. To investigate the reasons why we are here today with houses larger than they are legally supposed to be. This is a critical moment and citizens need to be engaged in the solutions.

We need action not more referral for study; we need audits to check how these plans are approved and how these houses are built in breach of the bylaws. We need transparency and accountability.

- The City must change its Bylaws to reduce the massing.
- 20 ft storey heights cannot be allowed to become the new 16' 4" standard.
- We need to change Richmond's double height count to 12' 1" as quickly as possible to be in line with other neighbouring cities.
- The over 4,000 single family residential LUC properties on predominantly smaller lots are the next pressure point in Richmond. We need to work together to resolve the governance issues in an open forum.

Many in our Group have intensively researched this issue for more than 6 years. We have positive contributions to make for the redevelopment and stability of our Westwind neighbourhood and the surrounding Richmond neighbourhoods. But first we need a City Council with a willingness to engage with its citizens and enforced the City's Bylaws

Thank You.

## Summary

1. There is problem
2. We will have 500 house demolitions this year
3. *"Business As Usual"*
  - Is NOT good enough
  - We can NOT look the other way

**[www.WRAPd.org](http://www.WRAPd.org)**