

Schedule 5 to the Minutes of the  
Public Hearing meeting of  
Richmond City Council held on  
Monday, July 18, 2022.

To: Mayor & Each Councillor  
From: City Clerk's Office  
Materials Relating to an Agenda Item  
Meeting: Public Hearing  
Date: July 18/2022 Item#: 5

**MayorandCouncillors**

**From:** MayorandCouncillors  
**Sent:** July 12, 2022 2:36 PM  
**To:** 'Jose G'  
**Subject:** RE: Submission for Spires Road Tenancy proposal at July 18 Public Hearing

**Categories:** - TO: MAYOR & EACH COUNCILLOR / FROM: CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

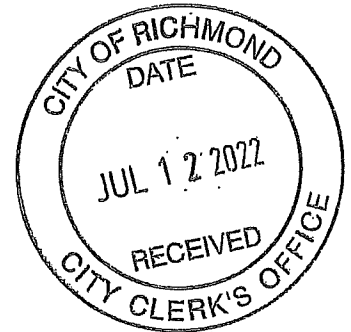
Good Afternoon,

Thank you for your email. Please note that your comments will be provided to the Mayor and each Councillor. In addition, your comments have been forwarded to appropriate staff.

Sincerely,

Claudia

Claudia Jesson  
Director, City Clerk's Office  
City of Richmond, 6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1  
Phone: 604-276-4006 | Email: [cjesson@richmond.ca](mailto:cjesson@richmond.ca)



**From:** Jose G  
**Sent:** July 12, 2022 12:26 PM  
**To:** CityClerk <CityClerk@richmond.ca>  
**Cc:** MayorandCouncillors <MayorandCouncillors@richmond.ca>  
**Subject:** Submission for Spires Road Tenancy proposal at July 18 Public Hearing

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Good day, Attached are my concerns about the July 18 Public Hearing agenda item # 5, "OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN BYLAW 7100, AMENDMENT BYLAW 10190" .

I will be present at the Public Hearing and am interested in registering as a delegate.

City Clerk: I would appreciate if you could also send my submission to the department at the City of Richmond which is responsible for clearing the ditches of plant growth since this hasn't been done in our area more than 2 years and I want to ensure our neighbourhood does not flood during this coming Fall's rain.

Thank you,  
... Jose Gonzalez

July 5, 2022

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I am Jose Gonzalez and my family has lived in Richmond since 1986. We lived in the Thompson area and then in Steveston before moving to 8935 Cook Crescent in City Centre over 25 years ago. I have been an active community member in Richmond for most of those years, including various executive positions in the City Centre Community Association and participation on a City Transportation Advisory Committee. This letter states my personal views as a local resident and not on behalf of any organization.

I'm writing regarding concerns about the Spires Road Rental Tenancy Policy at the July 18 Public Hearing. While our neighbourhood is changing, we still have many long-term residents, such as two of my immediate neighbours. We love living in our neighbourhood and were shocked that homeowners were called "gamblers and speculators" at the June 21<sup>st</sup> Planning Committee.

My main objections to the proposed Policy are its damage to livability in Richmond, specifically:

1. Inadequate current bylaws will result in current rental problems multiplying dramatically throughout Richmond. City bylaws already do not protect nearby residents against negligent landlords and tenants. Here are examples that continue despite my raising them at previous Public Hearings for local developments over the past 3 years and repeatedly with City staff. City staff in bylaws, transportation and other departments have all told me that none of these problems can be addressed under current bylaws.
  - a) **Houses with massively overgrown brambles and bushes.** Staff say that tall grass around houses can be addressed, but current bylaws do not deal with overgrown brush, blackberry brambles or other abandoned growth on residential properties. Several rental houses have these unsightly brambles which infringe on adjoining properties as well as neighbourhood boulevards and ditches. They are safety hazards since ditches are clogged and will flood the properties when the Fall rains start. **The City has not cleared local ditches in more than 2 years** and no-one cares that these tenants do zero yard work and the landlords are too cheap to pay for yard maintenance. City staff should track and address repeated concerns about the neglect of properties. Why do bylaws allow owners and tenants to abandon maintenance on their landscaping when the City's mission includes "The development of a unique and beautiful city"?
  - b) **Tenants who wreck local boulevards.** Staff say that no bylaws will require tenants or landlords to repair the mud pits they create when parking on local boulevard grass areas. One landlord (Harry, who owns several houses in the Spires area) has been ignoring one-foot-deep mud ruts where his tenants park and then track mud all over the road. The City takes pride in planting flowers and beautification, so why is priority not given to creating bylaws to require property owners to maintain the boulevards that the City creates?
  - c) **Questionable houses which cause problems for neighbours.** One run-down house in City Centre has continued to have new expensive cars pull up, one man gets out and goes into the house, then comes out 10-15 minutes later and drives away. The cars are different ones

each time. These visits are daily at times. The house has tall plywood and metal fencing blocking views into the back yard, with a large "No Trespassing" sign. It's unclear what transactions happen in the house but the frequency and types of visits are unusual, and the tenants place 3 garbage bins for collection every 2 weeks. Neighbours' complaints have continued for years, regarding noise, garbage strewn in the yard, unlicensed derelict vehicles, and even a person stripping coils of electrical wires of their insulation outside the house. While the RCMP said they are aware and are monitoring the situation, the activities continue. The landlord appears to be offshore so these tenants are free to behave as they wish. Why is there no protection for neighbours against repeated problems?

- d) **Unregulated rooming houses and short-term rentals are allowed to cause problems.** Complaints to City Bylaws have resulted in staff advising that they cannot investigate until they are provided with proof of rentals which contravene bylaws. When I explained that there were at least 6 cars regularly parking at one local house, and at least 2 of these cars would be different every week, with strangers wandering from the house checking out the neighbours, I was told that Bylaws staff could only investigate if I brought direct information from a tenant in the rental house that they were part of a short-term rental or that they were one of several rooming-house tenants. These practices will foster more problem rentals throughout Richmond. Repeated complaints should be addressed by City staff.
- e) **Non-profit organizations have proven negligent with rentals at Spires Road.** A few years ago, a non-profit organization responsible for 3 low-income rental houses scheduled for future development allowed them to be vandalized and taken over by squatters. By the time residents complained, despite power and water being cut off to the houses, more than 10 squatters had taken over the properties. It was very worrisome when they would bicycle (with no helmet) through the neighbourhood, stopping occasionally to examine houses and cars. They left over 40 barbecue-type propane tanks in the derelict houses, posing a fire and safety hazard for the neighbourhood. We were told no bylaws exist to deal with squatters. The City should ensure that organizations renting properties manage them well and do not create Richmond's version of Vancouver's Downtown East Side.

2. Council should align with the City's vision and planning. The massive planned increase in residents comes without proportionate increase in green space or services. Some local schools have already been struggling with capacity for local children. Adhoc increases will put Richmond further behind with already lacking ESL and support services. From the last census, City Centre is one of Richmond's lowest income areas and one of the areas with most single parent families, as well as the highest rate of families who move after 1-2 years. These are signs of an area with significant problems, which will only get worse with the proposed Policy bringing in more residents without social and other support services.  
What other adhoc major changes will Council drive across Richmond that break the integrity of the OCP and Neighbourhood Area Plans at the whim of special interest groups?
3. The proposed "Overlay" is unclear and will have developers moving to other areas where there is clarity and simpler rezoning. The Policy will require at least 55% rentals units (ie 15% current

requirement plus the Policy's 40%) be mandatory in all developments in Spires. The minimum 2.0 FAR requiring rental units will have builders moving to develop in areas that have more flexibility. Clearly the real estate market favours owner-occupied sales over rental units. Spires homeowners will be prevented from selling to developers who just want to build 1.2 FAR residential developments.

The unclear Policy introduces more bureaucracy and delays to developments, which will stagnate development in the area. Why would a developer get into a discussion with the City about how to interpret this new Policy when they can simply build elsewhere? What feedback on the Policy been provided by the UDI or other developer groups?

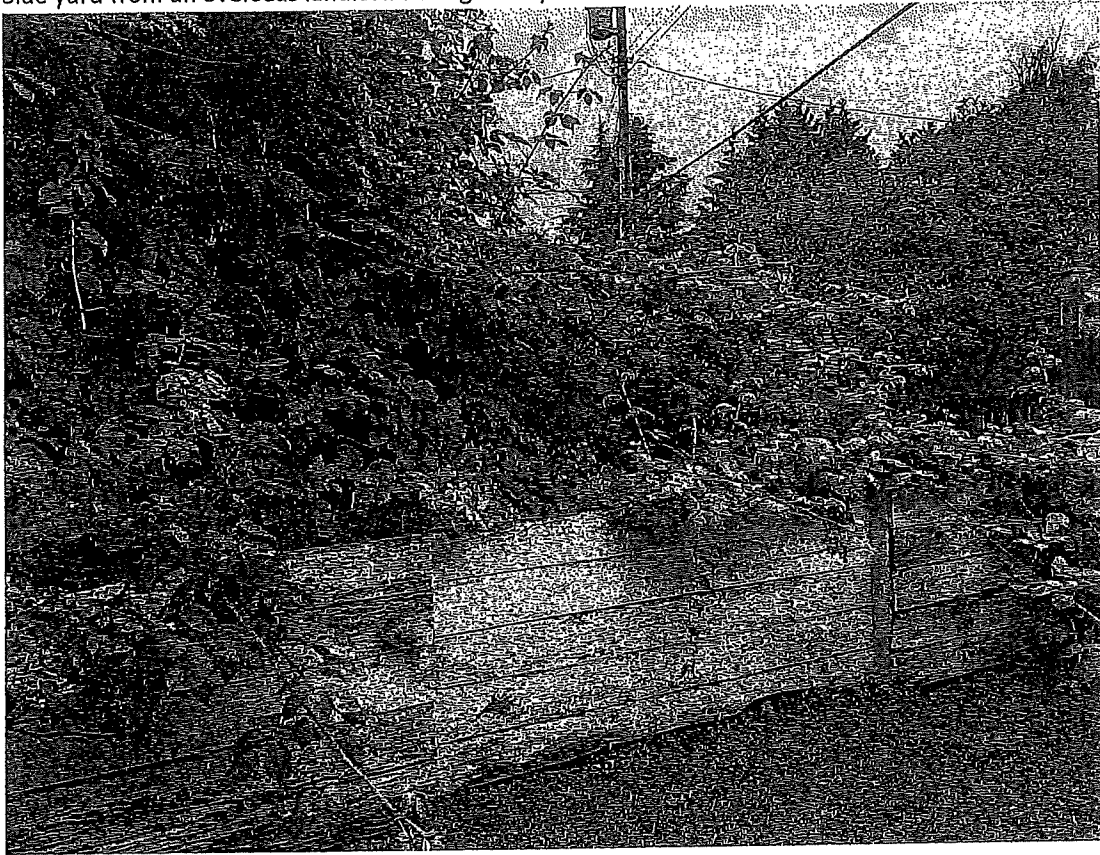
4. The public consultation that took place was not valid for the Policy that is coming forward. The consultation asked residents' opinions about increased density and increased rentals. It did not tell residents that the 1.2 FAR current zoning would be eliminated. In fact, my feedback during the consultation was that I opposed having areas that were primarily single usage, such as primarily rentals, but this did not come across in the staffs' report of the consultation comments. I am opposed to mandatory rentals but that possibility was not revealed in the consultation. This Policy is completely different from what was asked during consultation and local residents will be dismayed that the City would use our responses to justify a different proposal, particularly when the Area Plan and OCP communication and consultation processes are being railroaded despite such a fundamental change being introduced.
5. This Policy is grossly unfair to Spires area homeowners. A property currently applying for rezoning (at the corner of Garden City & Cook Road) across the street from the Spires area is required to include 15% rentals while Cook Road properties on our side of the street will be required to at least 55% rentals. Council should not penalize our neighbourhood with such a massive change across an artificial and arbitrary boundary. What other unilateral changes be made by Council. Will future changes prevent homeowners from rebuilding if their house burns?
6. How is this vision going to extend to the rest of City Centre and Richmond? Up to now, Richmond was going to have a variety of dwellings and a vision of livability across the City. Will Council tell all homeowners across Richmond that they must have 55% or more rental units in their home if they redevelop? Or will only the 24,000 homeowners in City Centre become targeted as a unique ghetto for renters?

As a family with 2 adult sons who still live at home, we live the pain of the current expensive housing market. We welcome a greater variety of housing choices which support diverse lifestyles and are inclusive of all people, supported by robust local services. We strongly believe the proposed Policy needs to be reconsidered so it supports the vision of Richmond and its values. **And most importantly, City bylaws need dramatic strengthening to hold tenants and landlords accountable – particularly to stop repeating problems.** The current problems with rentals will multiply dramatically with Council's plans to dramatically increase new rental units.

I've attached several photos so you can see the extent of current rental problems which will multiply.

Sincerely, Jose Gonzalez

Evidence of overgrown landscaping and brambles, including clogged ditches. Photos taken July 3, 2022  
Side yard from an overseas landlord who ignores yard maintenance.



Another view of the side yard, with overgrown bushes being taken over by ivy.



Overgrown bushes and brambles clogging a ditch facing Cook Crescent at a rental house.



Overgrown blackberry brambles and grass clogging another ditch

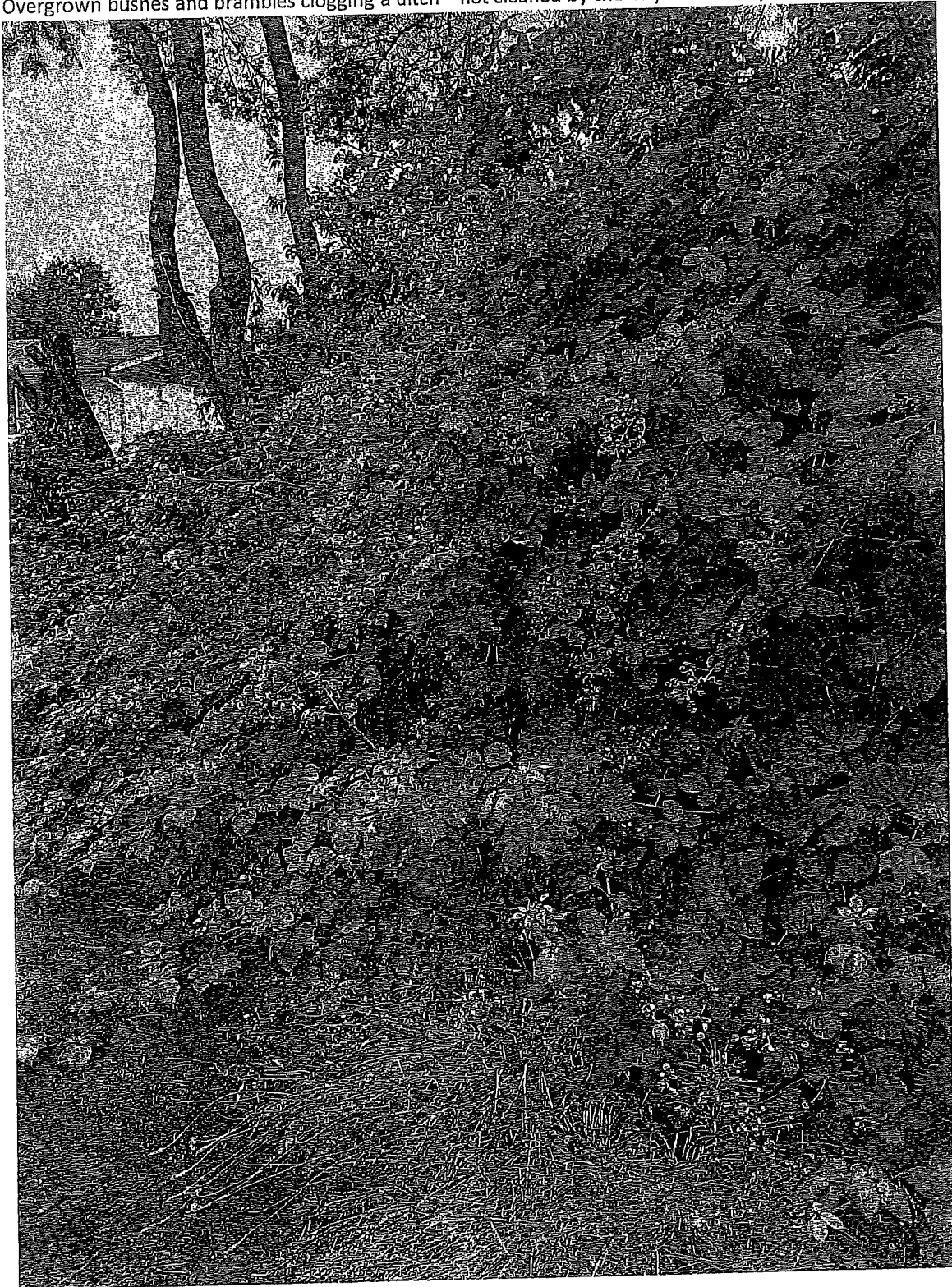




Overgrown bushes taken over by blackberry brambles at a rental house with an overseas landlord.



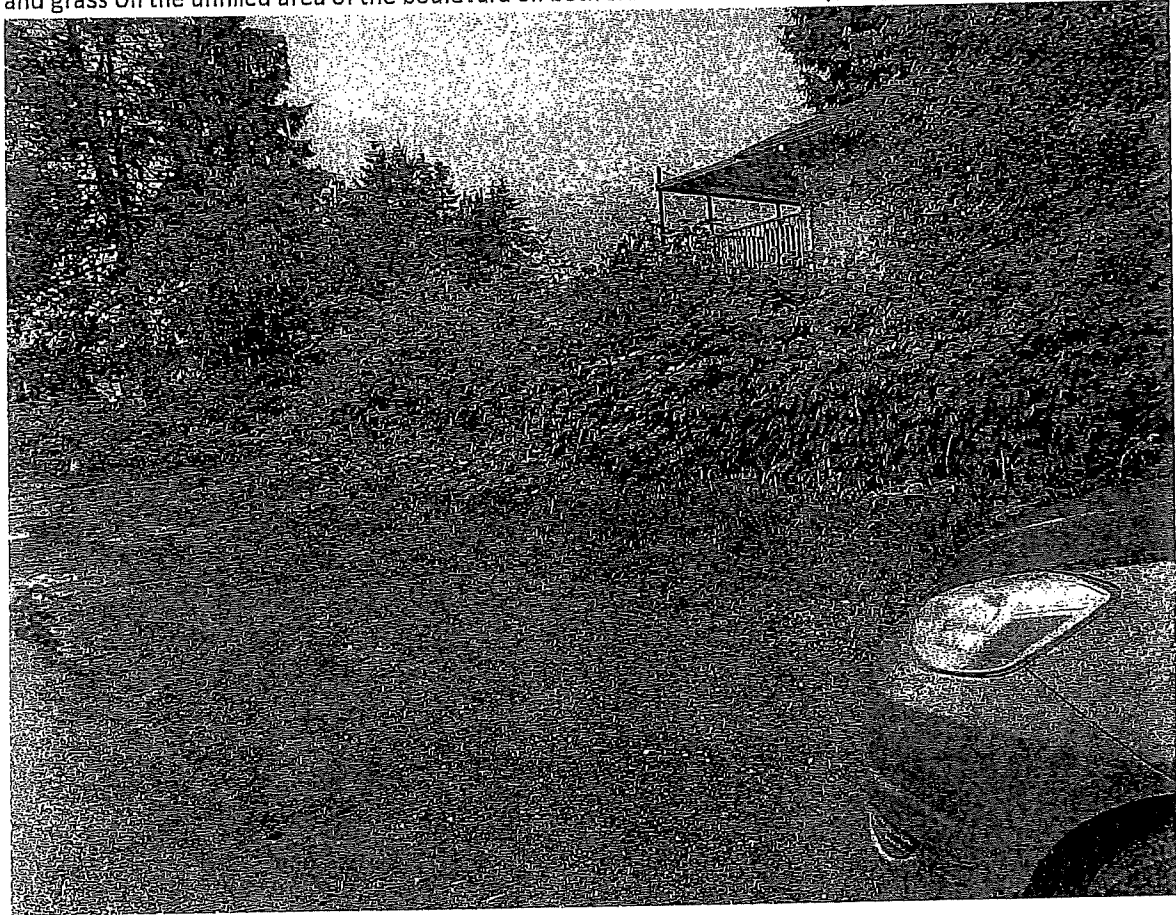
Overgrown bushes and brambles clogging a ditch – not cleaned by the City on over 2 years.



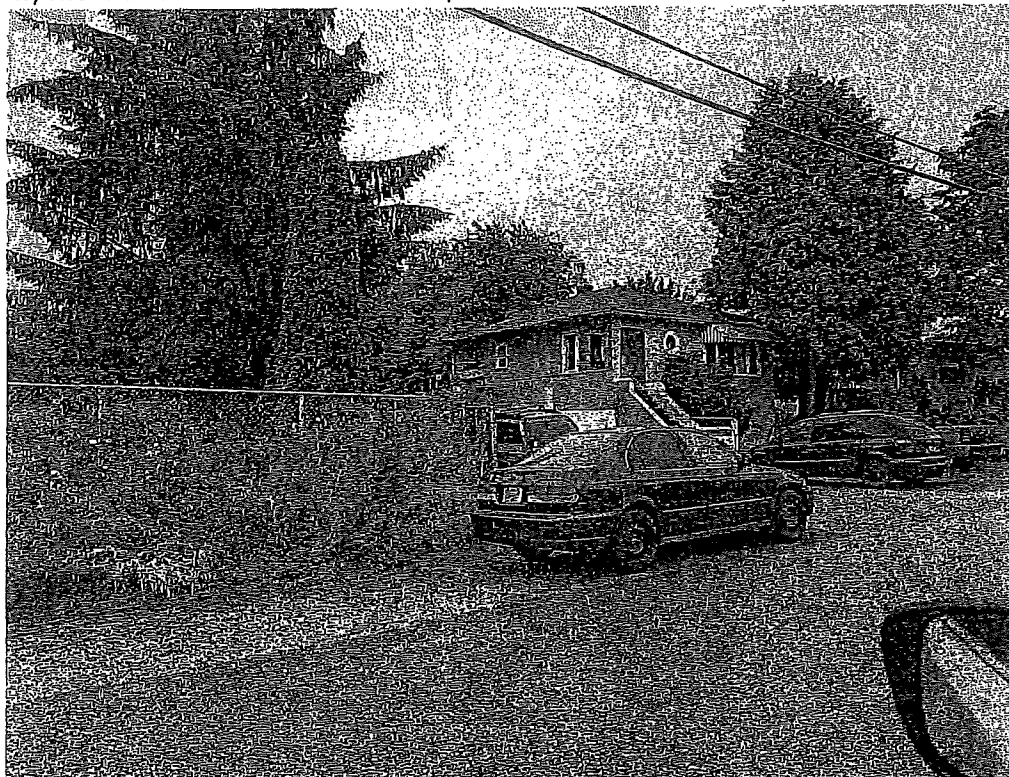
1b) The deep mudpit on the boulevard of one of the rental houses owned by Harry, on Cook Crescent.



The front of the mud-pit, which Harry filled with dirt and gravel. Note the overgrown brambles, weeds and grass on the unfilled area of the boulevard on both sides of the driveway, clogging the ditches.



1c) The "run-down" house on Ash Street, with derelict cars in the front yard. Photos taken July 3, 2022



The metal fencing and the 3 garbage bins that are placed out every 2 weeks. In addition, overnight, the tenants place bags of their garbage in neighbours' garbage bins

