

Addendum - Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Review – Neighbourhood Level Infill Development Amendment Package – Side Wall Area Calculation

ISSUE

This report is an addendum to the Land Use Application report called “Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Review – Neighbourhood Level Infill Development Amendment Package” and is provided in order to update Administration’s proposed development regulations for side wall area and to provide the rationale for the revised approach.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on March 29, 2022, the Municipal Planning Commission considered an amendment package with respect to Neighbourhood Level Infill Development. The proposed amendments for the maximum side wall area calculation presented in this package were:

1. Omit from the calculation:
 - a) areas set back further from adjacent properties;
 - b) areas adjacent to a flanking street on corner sites;
2. Clarification as to how the regulation is calculated regarding grade, dormers and gable end walls; and
3. Include figures to illustrate the side wall area calculation.

In addition to submitting a recommendation to City Council regarding the proposed amendments, the Municipal Planning Commission recommended Administration clarify the proposed side wall area amendments specific to gable end walls and the definition of “habitable living area”, prior to consideration by City Council.

CURRENT STATUS

[Bylaw No. 8770, Zoning Bylaw, 2009](#) (Zoning Bylaw) regulates the massing of primary dwellings in Established Neighbourhoods, in part, through the side wall area regulation. This regulation restricts the total area of the dwelling side wall and impacts the total size of the dwelling. As defined in the Zoning Bylaw:

"side wall means the external supporting or enclosing wall of [a] building or structure between grade level at the base and the coping, eaves, or parapet at the top."

The allowable side wall area for a primary dwelling includes all portions of a side wall located under eaves which face the same direction. The allowable side wall area must not exceed the area determined by a standard calculation, based on the total length of the site and distance of the dwelling from the side property line.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Under the existing regulations, gable end walls are included as part of the side wall area calculation where there is no eave below the uppermost roof line. However, where an eave is included below a gable end wall, the area of the gable end wall would be excluded from the calculation. This has encouraged the inclusion of decorative eaves on homes to increase the area that is not counted as part of side wall. This regulation has also encouraged a front-back orientation of gable roofs, rather than side-to-side, despite both situations having a comparable impact on adjacent neighbours.

In its report presented to the Municipal Planning Commission, Administration proposed to address this discrepancy by excluding gable end walls from the side wall area calculation regardless of eaves, provided the area associated with the gable is not a “habitable living area” (i.e. restricted to roof structures and attics) (see Appendix 1). The Municipal Planning Commission recommended Administration clarify the proposed side wall area amendments specific to gable end walls and the definition of habitable living area prior to consideration by City Council. In particular, the Municipal Planning Commission and stakeholders expressed concern that the proposed regulation may result in the side wall calculation being different based on the interior of the home (i.e. whether a ceiling is vaulted or not).

Administration is amending its recommendation to exclude gable end walls from the side wall area calculation in all cases, whether or not there is an eave and regardless of interior structural elements. This will provide for a consistent approach across housing styles and roof orientations.

The new regulation may encourage design choices to increase the area of gables. Administration will monitor the implementation of this regulation to assess the effect it has on an increase in massing.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social, or environmental implications identified.

APPENDICES

1. Side Wall and Gable End Walls - Illustrations

REPORT APPROVAL

Written by: Daniel McLaren, Senior Planner, Planning and Development
Reviewed by: Lesley Anderson, Director of Planning and Development
Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services