

ITEM	16
MANAGER'S REPORT NO.	56
COUNCIL MEETING	91/10/07

TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: PROPOSED ZONING REGULATIONS FOR SINGLE FAMILY DWELLINGS

PURPOSE: To provide additional information requested by Council regarding zoning regulations for single family dwellings.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT the refinements contained in Section 3.0 of this report pertaining to detached garages be included as part of the proposed regulations affecting single family dwellings in the R1 to R5 and R9 to R10 Districts, as outlined in the Manager's Report of September 09 (Item 8, Report No. 51).
2. THAT a copy of this report be sent to:

Mr. Ronald J. Lawson
490 Eastcot Road
West Vancouver, B.C. V7S 1E3

R E P O R T

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 1991 September 23, Council, in considering the report dealing with proposed new zoning regulations for single family dwellings, adopted a recommendation establishing October 2, 1991 as the last date that building permit applications can be submitted under the current bylaw without referral to Council. Council tabled the first recommendation, notwithstanding Council's instruction that staff commence preparation of the zoning bylaw amendment and subsequently staff were requested to examine the impact of the proposal on small lots, and re-examine the issue of encouraging detached garages. This report responds to that request and also responds to correspondence from a Mr. R. Lawson appearing elsewhere on this agenda.

2.0 IMPACT OF PROPOSAL ON SMALL LOTS

The following table shows the impact of the proposed new regulations on small lots in terms of developable floor area:

Lot Size	NOW	PROPOSED		
	Maximum Floor Area	Maximum Above Ground Floor Area	Total Floor Area	Floor Area in Cellar
30 X 120 3,600 sq.ft.	2,160 (+452)	2,120	2,160 (+452)	40
33 X 120 3,960 sq.ft.	2,376 (+452)	2,192	2,376 (+452)	184
36 X 120 4,320 sq. ft.	2,592 (+452)	2,264	2,592 (+452)	328
40 X 120 4,800 sq.ft.	2,880 (2840 in R9) (+452)	2,360	2,880 (+452)	520

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NOTE: 452 sq. ft. is allowed for off-street parking and not included in the maximum floor area calculation.

NOTE: The proposal also gives a new exemption to 100 sq. ft. of floor area for double height ceilings, and stairways. In effect then, if such features are used, there is an additional 100 sq. ft. of floor area that is currently counted now, but would not be counted as floor area under the proposal.

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As shown above, the impact of the proposal in terms of developable floor area on the smaller lots is minor. Since most of the buildable floor area can be built above ground, the development of cellars will be limited, and will most likely occur only on sloping lots where a walk-out cellar is desired. Indeed, on lots that are 33 wide or less, given the exemption of 100 sq. ft. for high ceilings and stairways, the net effect is minimal in terms of floor area buildable above grade.

For lots approaching 40 feet in width, the inclusion of a cellar will be necessary if one wishes to build to the maximum floor area. This, of course, is in accordance with the objectives of the proposed changes, that is, reducing building bulk thereby encouraging the development of houses that are more "neighbourly" in terms of fitting into neighbourhoods while meeting contemporary housing needs.

3.0 DETACHED GARAGES

As concluded in the report to Council at the 1991 September 23 meeting, it recommended that a bonusing provision (ie. an extra 200 sq. ft. of floor area beyond what is permitted) for detached garages not be pursued because the allowable extra space would result in houses larger than allowed under the current by-law, which is contrary to the underlying objectives of the proposal.

However, in detailing the proposal as part of the process towards preparation of the by-law in anticipation of a Public Hearing expected to be held in mid-November, some refinements to the proposal could address Council's desired objective of encouraging detached garages, while not increasing overall maximum floor area. These refinements include the following:

- i) Allow the floor area for detached garages in excess of the 452 sq. ft. outright exemption to be assessed against the total floor area allowable, rather than from the above grade floor area.

This means, for example, if one builds a detached garage of 600 sq. ft., then the difference between the buildable floor area and the exemption (600 sq. ft. - 452 sq. ft.) will be applied to the total floor area. In contrast, if one wishes to build a bigger attached garage, the difference would come from the more restrictive above grade floor area.

- ii) In order to make the above provision attractive to smaller lots it is now recommended that maximum lot coverage be increased from 40% to 45%, only in those cases where detached garages are provided. On small lots, where a detached garage is desired, it is not possible to build the permitted above ground floor area without this increase in lot coverage. This means that on smaller lots (33 feet wide) one could maximize total floor area without building a cellar. The expanded garage could be used, for example, as workshop, storage or hobby space.

- iii) To allow the construction of appropriately sized garages on smaller lots, delete the requirement that accessory buildings be restricted in size to 10% of the lot area. For example, under current regulations, on a 4,000 sq. ft. lot, a maximum 400 sq.ft. accessory building is permitted. The maximum size of 602.8 sq. ft. for accessory buildings will remain.

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It is recognized that the above proposal could potentially result in larger houses in terms of lot coverage than that permitted under current regulations, especially on smaller lots. The building mass, however, would be broken into two structures. The principal building would most likely be not as long as buildings with attached garages, and the detached garages would be lower in profile at one storey in height.

3.0 BUILDING LENGTH

Appearing on the agenda of 1991 October 7, is a letter from Mr. Lawson regarding development potential on a lot measuring 33 feet by 132 feet. In that letter, Mr. Lawson expressed his concern that the maximum building length of 60 feet was too restrictive on small lots.

Unlike the proposed regulations affecting buildable floor area which impact larger lots, the regulations affecting maximum building length will potentially have a larger impact on smaller lots than larger lots. This is because the building envelope on small lots is inherently limited by the required setbacks and lot coverage.

Throughout the public review of the proposed regulations and during the public process regarding small lot development, a common concern was the perceived excessive length of new houses on small lots. This concern was generally related to the loss of light and privacy in adjoining back yards. Many people noted that not all small lots are undergoing redevelopment as most small lot neighbourhoods are fairly mixed in terms of the age of the housing stock.

Mr. Lawson's lot has two characteristics that are not typical of small lots; it is longer than usual and does not have lane access. The extra lot length increases the lot size, meaning that a larger (in terms of square foot buildable) house can be built. Given the narrow lot width, the building length is extended. Lane access would allow for the garage to be detached, and the principal building itself to be subject to the 60 foot building length requirement.

Planning and Building staff believe that the building envelope created on small lots provides for the construction of buildings that balance the desire to maintain the character of single family neighbourhoods and the desire to build housing of an adequate size that meets changing family housing needs according to contemporary living standards. Without the 60 foot length constraint, the new regulations would not achieve the stated objectives.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Staff believe that the proposed regulations affecting the size, shape and height of single family dwellings as outlined in the report to Council in the Manager's report of 1991 September 09 would, when applied in combination, address the concerns about the bulkiness of new houses and their impacts on neighbouring properties. With respect to smaller lots, staff also believe that the regulations will improve the 'neighbourliness' of new buildings in neighbourhoods.

In refining the proposal, staff has found that the additional measures described in Section 3.0 above could meet the desire of Council to provide for an approach that encourages detached garages on smaller lots. This means that it would be possible to maximize the total permitted floor area on smaller lots by building a detached garage and not a cellar.

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Finally, it should be noted that the proposal may still be subject to further refinement as a result of the detailed bylaw drafting process as well as submissions received at the Public Hearing. Council will have opportunities to suggest changes to the proposed bylaw through the adoption process.



A.L. Parr, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

BG/jp

Municipal Solicitor
Chief Building Inspector