

Dear Planning and Environment Committee Members,

Secondary units have always been permissible in areas of the city where the zoning allows for higher density. Secondary units have been possible through the Committee of Adjustments and through site plan applications. Therefore, there are ample examples of the impacts of secondary units on neighbourhoods.

It is broadly understood that the idea of secondary units to diversify housing choices is aimed at low density areas such as subdivisions but the regulation is a blanket policy.

I am asking the committee to please review the fine details of how this policy is going forward because it will make a difference depending on how it is implemented across the city.

The devil is in the details.

Please find attached examples of secondary units that have been approved through the Committee of Adjustments and site plan applications in the North Talbot Neighbourhood. The city has approved secondary units that have completely overtaken green spaces and green space it what makes a neighbourhood desirably and livable. It acts as a buffer zone to provide privacy in an otherwise dense living space, but as important it maintains a tree canopy which is an integral component in any neighbourhood and more broadly a climate action plan.

The North Talbot density has been increased haphazardly with no consistency and site plan violations have never been corrected. Violators simply pay a monetary penalty and they get to keep whatever hardscaping they imposed illegally. Once hardscaping is installed it is permanent unless by-law enforcement files for restoration through a court order.

Please find attached correspondence from Heather Chapman from by-law enforcement listing the number of violations outstanding in the North Talbot neighbourhood. Residents cannot get updates because we are told that the violation is under investigation and it just goes on and on.

Therefore:

- It is inappropriate to simply pass violations onto by-law enforcement;
- It is important that the policy is clear and succinct;
- Percentage of area for secondary units beyond existing structures must be measured against a percentage of existing green space to preserve green space. **For example, not exceeding 40% of existing green space.**
- New parking limited to existing parking area or permit street parking. No option to expand hardscaping for parking.

All policies, whether you as a councillor leaning left or right, must be measured against the city's climate action plan as Climate Change is not a political issue and Londoners expect action of climate including tree preservation as tree preservation is a simple but effective method to offset the impacts of climate change especially heat. One cannot increase tree canopies without space to plant them. And preserving tree canopies are most viable in interior blocks and not just along roadways.

No net increase in parking is also part of any climate action plan. These incremental steps collectively have a big impact and its effects cannot be under estimated.

The devil is in the details. This policy needs to work across the city and needs to avoid problems that may arise from over zealous property owners. It cannot permit haphazard development of secondary units. The policy needs to be clear and succinct because it is not just about increasing available housing choices, it is about good quality housing choices - inside and outside.

Sincerely,

AnnaMaria Valastro

Images: a converted single family home to increase density through site planning

Email correspondence by Heather Chapman, Manager By-law Enforcement