

Proposed 'Garden Suite' at 1245 Oxford St.  
June 11, 2018



To whom it may concern:

### Background

The above property has been owned by myself (Michael Ryan) since 1978. My wife (deceased) and I raised 2 children at this address. Lillie and Max. The kids went to local schools and university/college before moving on to other cities to pursue careers.

Like many young people who originated here, they have wanted to move 'home' and raise their families in Victoria. However housing prices have climbed well out of reach.

We think we have a solution to the housing problem for my son and his burgeoning family, (2 new arrivals in the last 3 years) and for myself as a retiree. We have proposed building a Garden Suite for myself in our back yard and to this end have been dealing with the City Planning department since the middle of last year.

All our neighbors are firmly behind the idea of providing living space for 3 generations of our family on our lot. Housing difficulties are currently much in the news.

### Request for Exception

We hired Zebra Design to create our plans and also to help get the proposal through the appropriate channels. Over the intervening year we have altered the design several times as suggested by the Planning Dept. However, the process has now come to an impasse over our wish to place a bedroom window on one or the other of two walls. (Code requires a window for egress in a bedroom). The placement of this window has been rejected by the Planning Dept.

We are asking for an exception to the Planning Depts rejection of our window placement, as is provided for in the following excerpt from the '*Garden Suite Policy and Guidelines 2017 Final*':

***Exceptions for windows oriented towards adjacent properties may be considered if design features are provided that mitigate privacy concerns. For example, windows with opaque glass that permit light into the garden suite but prevent overlook into adjacent yards, or other design solutions may be acceptable.***

Opaque glass was actually suggested to us by the Planning Dept (Jan. 4, 2018) as a solution for any privacy concerns. After agreeing to the use of obscured glass and altering our plans, the Planning Dept changed their minds and decided this was unsupportable.

Our currently proposed placement of the window (facing east) would look at an agreed upon 6 foot fence and plantings that completely obscures any overlook from the neighboring property. We have also agreed to make this window opaque. As a secondary option, the window could be placed on the south wall of the bedroom. In this location it would face an existing 6 foot cement wall that is approximately 50' from the back wall of the house to the south.

We have a signed letter from the neighbors to the east stating they are in agreement with the window facing their tiny back yard.

The placement of an opaque window on the south side of the bedroom, facing a 6' high cement wall, should also offer no concern about 'overlook'. Again, some tall plantings could help in this location. The house on this neighboring property is approximately 50' away from the boundary.

The planning Dept has suggested moving the bedroom to another location within the cottage. Our designer, Rus Colins of Zebra Design, met with City staff and explained how detrimental this major design change would be; it compromises the functionality of the whole design. Access to the only bathroom would be through the bedroom. Such an alteration would ruin the design for the kitchen, virtually eliminating a wall to support cupboards. The additional costs involved with a total redesign would be financially unsupportable.

We are hopeful the City will grant us the exception as offered in the Guidelines and permit us to install an obscured window in the bedroom.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

The Ryan family and Zebra Design.