

## Secondary Suite Recommendation

Currently in the City's zoning regulations/policies there exists a restriction that is negatively affecting many homeowners rights when it comes to being permitted to build a secondary suite.

A little background: for many years the City has had a unique permitted use within its "single-family" zoning which allows for existing dwellings to be converted to multiple units if the existing structure is of a certain age and the exterior remains unaltered. I don't have the exact details here but something like a pre-1932 house can be 3 or more units depending on square footage of existing structure and pre-1972 dwelling to become 2 units if no exterior change to existing structure. There are many examples of the pre 1932 conversions of 3 or more units throughout the City and in the majority of cases this has been a very positive and innovative housing option. However there are very few examples of the pre 1972 housing option to create duplexes likely for the following reason: mainly the fact that most housing built between 1932 and 1972 is fairly modest in size so with no exterior changes permitted, creating two equal size/quality housing units within the existing structure is just not economically or structurally viable.

More recently when the City adopted its secondary suite policy, namely, that any single family dwelling is permitted to have a secondary suite up to a max of 900 sq feet, I believe the inappropriate application of the above policy concerning conversions became applied to secondary suite applications. The result is that many homeowners, who would like to do a renovation to the existing dwelling, plus at the same time, add a secondary suite to help pay the costs cannot do so. Currently they would have to do the renovation and then wait 5 years before applying to build a secondary suite. I'm not sure all members of Council know of this restriction or really understand its implications.

Firstly, the vast majority of the housing built in Victoria neighbourhoods between 1932 and 1972 were post second world war and due to the economics and need at that time were rather modest in size and simple in design ...ie a typical raised bungalow of between 1100 and 1300 square feet on the main. The other fact is that most of these were built on, at the time, "suburban lots" of between 6000 and 9000 square feet. This resulted in the house occupying very little of the site, say under 15% when perhaps 30%- 40% is more normal for site coverage with new housing.

Fast forward to today and you have many of these existing pre-1972 homes being sold and, in my view, the much needed new owners for these homes have to be young families who bring new energy and vitality and help keep our inner City schools and parks relevant and well used. The problem lies with today's taste and lifestyle vs the post WWII baby boom. Almost all of these modest raised bungalows have 2 or maximum 3 small bedrooms and 1 bathroom on the

main. With today's high costs of inner City neighbourhood housing the only way to allow these new owners to even modestly expand the floor area of the home (likely at least to increase master bedroom and add a second bathroom) is for the new young owner to be able to pay for the reno by adding a secondary suite. BUT ...this is currently not allowed! So who wins?, certainly not the neighbourhood or the city as what often happens is the would-be owner chooses to move to outside communities to get more housing for their dollar. The person who then buys it is often just a small investor who holds for future development and who doesn't put the same care and energy into it as an owner occupant likely would. The city loses the revenue from increased housing value that new renovations would bring on and also the much needed secondary suite space to add to the affordable housing inventory.

When you consider that a new house on the same lot can have perhaps 4000 feet of livable space including a new suite of 900 square feet not allowing a homeowner to say add 5 or 600 square feet onto their modest bungalow plus develop a secondary suite in the basement at the same time is very unequal treatment for the same zoning.

If the City merely passed a motion to remove the restriction that if a homeowner decides to renovate his existing residence and at the same time add a suite he wouldn't have to wait 5 years to do so, it would solve this inequality.

If Council does this you will rejuvenate neighbourhoods, bring in more young families, increase building activity, create increase tax revenue and increase number of secondary suites....all for no cost to the City! You certainly will not have to give a \$5000.00 incentive to create a secondary suite. The demand and self interest will take care of it.