NEW HOMES IN ANCASTER’S MATURE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Council directed staff to review the Existing Residential “ER” Zone in Ancaster as a pilot project to determine how to manage the building of new residential homes in mature areas. Ancaster is one of many municipalities facing change where larger homes are replacing smaller ones that were built decades before. Mature neighbourhoods are different from new growth areas such as the Meadowlands, not only in how they look and feel but how redevelopment is regulated.

The goal of planning is to allow for redevelopment that is sensitive to the existing and planned character of an area. The evolution of mature neighbourhoods is important and zoning regulations should address the appropriate redevelopment.

The purpose of today’s information session is to discuss the various Zoning By-law options that are available to protect the character of the mature residential areas in Ancaster and manage the change as new development occurs. Feedback from this session will be used to inform Council’s decision on new residential zoning in Ancaster and across the City.

WHAT WE HAVE HEARD

Many comments have been received through the Councilor’s office, staff meetings, newspaper articles, and Committee of Adjustment applications. These comments have helped frame the issues and allowed staff the opportunity to investigate further. Here is what we heard:

- My neighbour’s lot has too much hard landscaping and when it rains, it all runs off onto my lot
- My neighbour’s house is much bigger than mine and it casts an unwanted shadow on my lot
- Important trees are being removed
- The house at the end of my street has an odd orientation
- My neighbour’s house is too close to mine
- The highly pitched roof on that house is different than the other houses beside it
- Lot splitting is increasing stormwater runoff
- My neighbour’s rebuilt home has increased my property taxes
- I don’t like the home with the three-car garage on my street
- I am concerned that my neighbour wants to change the grade on their lot
- New homes do not complement the character of the neighbourhood
WHAT CAN AND CANNOT BE CONTROLLED

THE CITY CAN:

• Make changes to the Zoning By-law to alter setbacks from other homes (front, rear or side yards)
• Change maximum building height and/or how it is measured
• Introduce landscaping coverage requirements for lots building new homes
• Change what percentage of a lot could be covered by buildings

THE CITY CANNOT:

• Control or influence property tax rates through zoning or policy planning
• Influence architectural design (materials, colours, pitch of a roof, etc.), aside from regulating safety
• Prevent any trees from being removed; each site is evaluated individually
  ▪ A Tree Protection Plan must be submitted that allows City staff to review proposed tree removals
LOT AREA & LOT COVERAGE

LOT AREA

What is lot area?
The total horizontal area within the lot lines of a lot.

Ancaster “ER” Zone

695 sq m
Minimum Lot Area
(equivalent to 7,480 sq. ft.)

18 m
Minimum Lot Width
(equivalent to 59 ft)

What is included as part of lot coverage?
Area covered by all buildings (house, covered porch, sheds)

What is not included as part of lot coverage?
Driveways, walkways, swimming pools and decks.

LOT COVERAGE

35%
Maximum Lot Coverage (“ER” Zone)

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION (subject to Council approval)
• Maximum lot coverage can be reduced
How is building height measured?
It is the vertical distance from grade to the uppermost point of the building, not including chimneys or similar structures.

What is grade?
It is the average level of the ground along the exterior walls of a building.

Why are some homes taller than 10.5 metres?
Owners of lots have received a Variance to build homes that exceeded the maximum building height. (The home in image #3 would require a variance).

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION (subject to Council approval)
• Maximum building height can be changed
**YARD SETBACK**

*Front, Rear & Side*

What is a Setback?
The minimum distance between a lot line and the nearest part of any building.

**Front Yard**
- 7.5 m
  - Minimum Front Yard Setback

**Rear Yard**
- 7.5 m
  - Minimum Rear Yard Setback

**Side Yard**
- 1.5 m
  - Minimum Side Yard Setback

**What is a front yard?**
A yard that stretches across the full width of a lot between the front lot line and the nearest part of a building on the lot.

**What is a rear yard?**
A yard that stretches across the full width of a lot between the rear lot line and the nearest part of a building on the lot.

**What is a side yard?**
A yard that stretches from the front yard to the rear yard between the side lot line and the nearest part of a building on the lot.

**What is a flankage yard?**
A yard that stretches from the front yard to the rear yard along a lot line that touches a street. The yard then extends to the nearest part of a building on the lot.

**OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**
(subject to Council approval)
- Minimum setbacks can be increased
- Yard setbacks can be percentage of lot depth or width, rather than distances

**OR**

- 6.0 m
  - Minimum Side Yard Setback for a corner lot, on the side abutting the street that is not the front yard (flankage yard)
In the above scenario, the required front yard setback would be 9.5 metres on the “Rebuild Lot”. That is the average of the front yard setbacks on the two existing lots on the street.

**OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION (subject to Council approval)**

- The required front yard setback does not have to be the exact average of the neighbour’s; it can be required to fall into a range

- Number of neighbouring lots taken into consideration can differ

- Minimize (or limit) the difference in front yard setbacks between front doors and garages
HOMES can be built too far into backyards resulting in privacy issues.

Not every lot has the same depth (length) and rear yard setbacks should reflect this.

Require rear yard setbacks to be a percentage of the lot depth.

#1: The rear yard has a 7.5 metre setback.

#2: Using a different requirement, the rear yard is 25% of the lot depth (10 metres).

#3: The rear yard has a 16 metre setback.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION (subject to Council approval)

- The required rear yard setback does not have to be an exact percentage of the lot depth; it can be required to fall into a range.
SIDE YARD SETBACK & CORNER LOTS

SIDE YARD

ISSUE

Homes can be too close together and this can limit potential for necessary stormwater runoff

POTENTIAL CHANGE

Increase the minimum side yard setback

CORNER LOTS

ISSUE

Large homes on corner lots can result in long stretches where the side of a home is fronting onto the street

POTENTIAL CHANGE

Require homes on corner lots to face the front yard and flankage yard (both abutting the street)

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION (subject to Council approval)

• Require homes on corner lots to directly face a street (prohibit diagonal homes)

• Use a sliding scale for side yard setbacks to reflect lot widths
**LANDSCAPING COVERAGE**

What is landscaping?
Outdoor space for use, enjoyment and recreation and shall include natural vegetation areas and constructed areas such as patios, decks, playgrounds, pathways, outdoor recreational amenities, fencing, decorative architectural features and retaining walls.

What is included as part of landscaped area?
The portion(s) of the lot used for landscaping.

What is not included as part of landscaped area?
The portion(s) of the lot where there is a building, parking or loadingspace, including driveways.

There are currently no landscaping requirements in the *Existing Residential (ER) zone.*

![Diagram showing landscaping requirements](image)

The above image displays a lot where a minimum of 60% of the front yard must be landscaped.

**OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION** (subject to Council approval)
- Landscaping requirements can be introduced
- Distinction between soft and hard landscaping can be included
OTHER MUNICIPAL PROCESSES

PUBLIC PROCESSES

Severance
(Consent to sever land)

Common with corner lots, an effort to divide a parcel of land into two or more lots requires a Consent application, as do lot additions to abutting properties. Applications are circulated to landowners within 60 metres of a site.

Minor Variance Application

Any development proposal must comply with the City’s Zoning By-Law; if it does not, a Minor Variance or Zoning By-Law Amendment is required. Applications are circulated to landowners within 60 metres of a site.

NON-PUBLIC PROCESSES

Building Permit
(Ontario Building Code)

The demolition of an existing house as well as the construction of a new house or addition to a house requires an application for a Building Permit.

Site Alteration Permit

To change the grade of land, a Site Alteration Permit is required. The placing or dumping of fill and the removal of topsoil are regulated to prevent damage to watercourses and erosion.