

October 21, 2020

Dear Mayor, Council and Planning Department:

RE: Established Neighbourhoods Compatibility Study

I would like to respond and provide feedback to the Mayor's request for more information regarding (1) side yard setbacks, and (2) the reference to lot-splitting on my section of Millard Avenue (west of Forest Glen Road) and Srigley Street as raised at the Established Neighbourhoods Compatibility Study on September 22, 2020.

Please excuse any ignorance or misinterpretation of policy recommendations on my part as I am not a professional in this area. I am very pleased and proud that the Town initiated this important study and it is my hope to assist the Town in creating its plan to preserve our historical established neighbourhoods, especially as it relates to my section of Millard Avenue.

Please note, as an active and engaged resident, I have attended all public consultations on this study. In fact, during the first meeting I drew and submitted a drawing of what I love about my neighbourhood which included vast green space, large lots and mature trees. This is what I cherish about my "unique" and historic neighbourhood. I am proud to live in what I call 'old Newmarket'. Preservation of green space and mature trees is very important to me and my quality of life. My family has resided in our home on Millard Avenue for 64 years and most of my neighbours average 50+ years. We are a community and for the most part homeownership is passed-down through generations.

1) Side lot measurements (Planning Department input please): As I understand it, side yard setbacks will be dependent upon house height as defined in an existing Zoning By-Law and include a 1.8m maximum width. I propose an exemption for wider setbacks for front yards exceeding 30m frontage regardless of house height.

My reasons are twofold: 1) the Key Findings of the Study (p. 28) only acknowledges front yard widths up to 30m (90'). Lots in this section of Millard Avenue are 33.3m x 43.3m (100' x 130'); and 2) the proposed 1.8m setback in Section 6.2.2. is only 5'9". Currently existing setbacks on my section of the street vary from 4m (12') and 7.62 (25').

Section 6.2.2. of the Study proposes: "Interior Side Lot Lines Measurements have been given (ranging from 1.2-1.8m) for interior side lot line setbacks, which are dependent on height This rule retains the relationship that the side-yard setbacks for houses increase with height (of existing Zoning By-law), but uses measurement as a clearer measure, rather than storeys."

I imagine lot coverage maximums will prevent new-builds/additions from encompassing the entire yard's width, but I believe the setbacks for properties exceeding 30m should be increased to accommodate exceptional properties/lots in historical Newmarket. A setback of 1.8m is simply too narrow and would damage the cherished green space aesthetics of our neighbourhood.

2) **Lot-Splitting:** In my opinion, permitting lot-splitting of our properties must not be allowed under any circumstance. In simple terms, it goes against the very essence of the Study's intent "to preserve the character of our established neighbourhoods". It would severely and irrevocably change the character, aesthetics and quality of life in our neighbourhood. It would ruin our street's unique and historical charm.

To paraphrase the Mayor at the September meeting, "one might argue against this because of the historic characteristic of the street; that it's a really important character area in our town and we must preserve the historical context from which it was developed." - My thoughts exactly.

If the purpose of creating neighbourhood compatibility guidelines is to protect established neighbourhoods and their distinctive characteristics, one must address and preserve the very factors that contribute to the successful and harmonious nature of specific areas. Factors include: land use, heritage, lot size (including frontage and side yard set-backs), and trees. To do this Newmarket must maintain the traditional range of building-to-lot relationships by ensuring houses are in proportion to their lot size and maintaining the openness of yards surrounding the dwelling. It must preserve the lush and mature vegetation which is a key component of our character.

While one might argue that we need to minimize the impacts of restrictive guidelines for increased size and scale of rebuilds or extensions on properties to meet owners changing needs, it remains the same: lot-splitting would irrevocably change the character of the neighbourhood.

In conclusion, the potential of lot-splitting has caused much distress among my neighbours. Most of us have lived here 50+ years. We bought our homes because of the street's unique aesthetics. We have paid taxes and been for the most part, exemplary citizens through our actions and volunteering opportunities. We are a community. There is a sense of identity, comfort and safety in our neighbourhood that is cherished and is very much worth protecting.

Sincerely,
Nancy Fish
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