

2024-01-09

Introduction

The home at 39 Ross Avenue is a two storey single family home with a secondary dwelling unit. It's located in a well established, walkable neighbourhood. The front of the home features a walkout basement and a single storey addition constructed roughly 20 years ago. The new addition will upgrade and refresh the front façade of the home.

Proposed Development

The proposed second floor addition will be built above the existing one storey addition, which was permitted by a minor variance in 1999. The footprint of the new addition will follow the existing, so the mix of hard and soft landscaping in the front yard will be unaffected by the work.

Application Summary

Minor Variance

In order to construct second storey addition in the front yard the following relief is needed from the zoning by-law;

- a) To permit a front yard setback of 1.99 m, whereas the by-law requires a minimum front yard setback of the average of the two neighbouring lots, or 4.93 m.

Site Context and Surrounding Uses

The surrounding community is largely comprised of single family homes on narrow lots. The setbacks from the street are wary from lot to lot. There are different styles of projecting porches, however first and second floor setbacks tend to match. Ross Avenue runs between Scott and Wellington. The neighbourhood has excellent proximity to transit and services, making it an ideal location to maintain family friendly dwelling.

Policy Framework

Official Plan

The subject property is located in the Inner Urban Transect per section 5 of the Official Plan. Urban transects generally promote small areas of soft landscaping which support trees. There is also support for a minimum of two storeys. The proposed addition will move the front wall of the second storey to align with the first floor. This will make the second floor more prominent in the appearance of the home in keeping with the intended height of buildings in the Official Plan.

Section 2.2.1 provides support for development that is healthy and inclusive. The policy intents include maintaining a range of housing options, such as family homes. The proposed addition reflects this intent by upgrading the existing spaces to better service the family. By making the alterations to the second floor, the existing secondary dwelling unit is maintained, providing even greater housing flexibility within the neighbourhood. The design of the addition, and matching refit of the first floor façade makes for an improved interface with the public realm, while preserving the street trees.

Section 4 goes on to provide additional guidance for development review. Per this section, the proposal maintains and improves existing housing stock. In 4.2.1.(b) the Official Plan will “promote diversity in unit sizes”. As referenced in relation to 2.2.1, this proposal provides for flexibility for the principal unit, while at the same time maintaining the secondary dwelling unit.

Tree Protection By-law

By limiting the extent of the addition to the second floor following the outline of the existing first floor, there will be no impact on the tree, 3.75m away. Fencing will be provided during the work as per Part VI of the By-law.

Regulatory Framework

City of Ottawa Zoning By-law 2008-250

The subject property is zoned R3T. The purpose of this zone is to “allow a mix of residential building forms ranging from detached to townhouse dwellings.” The existing home is permitted by the zone, and provides for “additional housing choices” via the secondary dwelling unit in the basement.

The proposed addition will maintain the home’s compatibility within existing development patterns along the street. The consistency of the first and second floor will enhance the character of the home, by removing the substantial setback of the principal building from the addition. The surrounding homes typically have matching first and second floor setbacks, so this change will be more in keeping with the surrounding homes.

Mature Neighbourhood Overlay

The property is located within the boundary of the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay, while no elements managed under the MNO are altered as part of the proposal, a Street Scape Character Analysis has been filed with BCS per those regulations. The photo survey is included for reference.

Rationale/The Four Tests

All applications for a minor variance must be weighed against the ‘four tests’.

First, the proposal is minor, as it neither proposes a large change to the performance standards, nor does it deviate from established characteristics observed on the street. The footprint follows the outline of the already established front façade. The proposal does not create a new building typology nor a pattern of development that would elevate its importance.

Second, the proposal meets the intent of the Official Plan. The addition will maintain and improve an existing dwelling unit, within the inner urban transect, making use of developed infrastructure. By building over the established building footprint, there will be no impact on the soft landscaping or site drainage. The existing secondary dwelling unit will be also unaffected.

Third, as noted above, a single family dwelling is a permitted within the zone. The varied setback is in keeping with the established streetscape. Additionally, bringing the second floor façade out to match the existing first floor, the completed home will also be more consistent with the surrounding buildings.

Finally, the proposed development is both appropriate and desirable use of the subject land. This project serves to enhance the functionality for the residents. The additional space improves the comfort and useability, which means an existing family home can continue within a walkable urban neighbourhood. Renovations and additions remain very low impact ways to keep existing housing stock, and the associated embedded carbon, updated and in service.

Therefore, the proposed addition meets each of the prescribed tests.