

Introduction

The home at 214 Cowley Avenue is a single-family dwelling on a regularly shaped lot. Its design gives the appearance of a one and half storey building with a predominate shed dormer, creating a second-floor space while maintaining a low height, post World War II home design. This scale is in keeping with the age of the neighbourhood. It features an attached an attached single storey carport, which, while not in the majority on the street, is characteristic of many homes in the neighbourhood.

Proposed Development

The proposed construction is an addition over the existing carport. At the same time, the carport will be enclosed to convert it into a garage. The design of the addition and reworked garage roof will maintain the one and half plus dormer scaling of the existing home. The new roof will be set slightly lower then the existing and the front wall will remain setback from the principal façade of the home in keeping with the requirements of the by-law. Those features will ensure the garage and addition do not become overpowering to the existing home. The construction will be occurring over previously developed space, carport and asphalt, so there will be no change to the stormwater impact of the lot. There will also be no impact to the ample soft landscaping and vegetation in the front or rear yards.

Application Summary

Minor Variance

In order to construct the proposed addition above the carport the following relief is needed from the zoning by-law;

- a) To permit an interior side yard setback of or 0.41 m, whereas the by-law requires a minimum interior side yard setback of 1.2 m.
- b) To permit an eave to project to 0.23 m from the property line, where as the by-law requires an eave to project no closer than 0.3 m from the property line.
- c) To permit the continuation of an attached garage or carport in the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay whereas the Dominant Character in the Streetscape Character Analysis prohibits attached garages and carports.

Committee of Adjustment
Received | Reçu le

2025-04-10

City of Ottawa | Ville d'Ottawa
Comité de dérogation

Site Context and Surrounding Uses

The neighbourhood is largely comprised of single-family dwellings, with some semi-detached houses mixed in. The homes range from one and a half and two storeys in height. While a majority of properties on the street do not have an attached garage or carport, a large number, including the subject property do include that as a feature. Homes in this neighbourhood are generally setback from the street and benefit from ample soft landscaping in the front yards. Photos taken for the Streetscape Character Analysis have been attached and illustrate this context.

Policy Framework

Official Plan

The subject property is located in the Inner Urban Transect per section 5 of the Official Plan. This particular neighbourhood has a mix of urban and suburban features found in table 6. While the side yards are narrow, and minimally functional as expected for an urban environment, this street does benefit from moderate front yards and an entrance more setback from the street. The proposed work takes advantage of the already existing narrow side yard to keep the addition from impacting on the generous landscaped areas in both the front and rear yards.

Renovations and additions, by their nature, support a number of the Official Plan's overarching policies;

Big Policy Move 1 encourages infill. By allowing existing homes to change and adapt to residents' needs, renovation projects keep existing housing stock up-to-date and help reduce pressure to find greenfield lots.

Big Policy Move 4 encourages climate and energy resiliency. Renovations help improve existing housing stock, increasing energy efficiency and preserving embedded carbon.

Section 2.2.1 is the Official Plan policy that provides direction for intensification. Intensification, by definition, includes "the expansion or conversion of existing buildings", therefore renovations and additions fall into this section. Diversity of housing is a stated goal of this section, and allowing for the continual renewal and improvement of single-family dwellings does support diversity.

Though not in a design priority area, care has been taken to account for beneficial urban design. As noted in the proposed development summary above, cues from the existing home have been continued to inform the scale and design of the addition.

Section 4 notes that "healthy communities include a variety of housing types". As for Section 2 above, single-family homes are a housing type that remains a part of a health community. The Official Plan policies provide for, and encourage, upgrades and adaptability of those dwellings.

Regulatory Framework

City of Ottawa Zoning By-law 2008-250

The subject property is zoned R2D. 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 the proposed development is in keeping with the existing patterns of the neighbourhood. Among the purposes of the R1 zone is to preserve the residential character, and proposed addition will not deviate from that established character.

Mature Neighbourhood Overlay

The property is located within the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay, and a Streetscape Character Analysis has been completed with the City of Ottawa. It was found that the existing driveway is permitted under the dominant character group, however the existing carport is legal non-conforming. While converting from the carport into a garage will not alter the existing condition, as far as the classification of the SCA, it has been included as a minor variance on this application for clarity. This will also serve to legalize the existing non-conforming condition. The conversion of the garage to a carport will have no impact on future Streetscape Character Analyses as both are treated as equivalent features in the calculations for dominate characteristics. The SCA documentation has been attached to this application.

Tree Protection By-law

By constructing over the existing carport and driveway, there will no effect on any distinctive trees. There are no distinctive trees on the subject property. An email from Urban Forestry confirming that no Tree Information Report is required has been attached to this application.

Rationale/The Four Tests

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

First, the proposal is minor, as it does not propose a large change to the performance standards. It additionally is building over existing developed land and is maintaining the existing streetscape character of the home. The relief from the side yard setback is to align with the already existing footprint of the carport.

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. Renovations to improve existing homes and extend their lifespans, maintain high quality dwellings in built up areas and provide a reduction to urban sprawl.

Third, as noted above, a single-family dwelling is a permitted within the zone. The position of the proposed addition will limit the impact on the neighbourhood and maintain the residential character. The dominant character calculation of the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay not be altered by this application.

Finally, the proposed development is both appropriate and desirable use of the subject land. This project serves to enhance the functionality of the home for the residents. The location of the addition over previously developed land preserves the prominent soft landscaping in both the front and rear yards.

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