

To: Steven Huyke, Director, Legislative Services, City Clerk  
Darlene Joslin, Acting City Manager  
Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Regulatory Services  
Patrick Lee, Director of Policy Planning  
Deborah Giannetta, Manager of Development Site Plans  
Shelly Cham, Manager, Development Zoning  
All Councillors and Acting Mayor

Re: Richmond Hill Infill Development

Date: August 2021

As concerned residents of Sanderson and Mayvern Crescents and vicinity we are writing to protest the nature and rate of the infill development occurring in our subdivision. We believe it is incumbent on us to share our objections, particularly since we are not listed as a priority infill area according to the Official Plan (2010) and we are aware that, in addition to those already approved or in process, other such proposals will be forthcoming.

Our community is diverse and socially connected. Most residents (some of whom are seniors and have lived here for decades, some of whom are more recent young family arrivals) chose it because of its ambience, architectural character and amenities. These qualities are being eroded by the introduction of massive infill structures inappropriate for the neighbourhood. In our view, it is shortsighted to grant permits based on the sole criterion of compliance with the zoning-by law at its maximum. Indeed, we believe that continuing this trend of approving infill proposals of the dimension and scope we have seen to date, violates the rights of existing property owners like us.

The issues we are highlighting are these:

- a) These structures create a jarring architectural contrast to surrounding homes and thus destroy the integrity of the streetscape. For instance:
- flat rooves e.g. at 24 Sanderson: there are no others in our planned subdivision
  - every single large infill dwelling has a recessed sloped driveway (a detail that is available in only one model of the existing homes for the purpose of raising the roof height of that model so that it is compatible with neighbouring roof heights)
  - raised concrete porches or upper-storey balconies that overlook neighbouring yards.

The inclusion of these features is clearly for the purpose of increasing square footage and making these dwellings stand out rather than attempting to retain the neighbourhood character.

- b) Their size, height, design and closer proximity to abutting properties blocks the sunlight from front and back yards and destroys privacy thus compromising enjoyment of the homes by surrounding residents.

- c) New builds result in the loss of mature trees which grace yards, front and back, decreasing the quality of the streetscape. We can assure you that replacing them with saplings after construction does not compensate for the privacy and aesthetic pleasure lost by removing existing trees.
- d) Residential Project Guidelines are not being followed. They include potentially dangerous conditions such as:
- untraversable sidewalks due to deliveries, electrical cords and slippery mud, forcing pedestrians to use the road
  - open/unlocked gates which invite the curious to enter the construction site
  - vehicles parking on both sides of the road which impedes sightlines for current residents exiting their driveways
  - interrupted phone service upon which seniors rely for medical alert systems and cable service which interrupts the ability of those to work from home

Some of these guidelines, if not followed, have the potential to result in health and safety implications and liability issues for the builder/homeowner and the City. These Project Guidelines need to be made a **CONDITION OF THE ISSUANCE OF A BUILDING PERMIT**.

- e) The construction process alone (which in the case of 91 Mayvern took over two years) results in the reduction of the property values of existing neighbouring homes. This has been documented in our area.
- f) The new builds decrease the availability of affordable housing in our community. When an established house selling for let us say \$1.2 million is demolished and replaced by a larger one selling for \$2.5 to 2.9 million (thus far), that larger house is much less affordable. Consequently, a more affordable housing option is being removed.
- g) These types of builds have an environmental impact and represent poor use of resources. The waste from demolished houses is not recycled but put in the dump. In contrast, by renovating or upgrading or even adding an addition, the basic house is reused and adjusted to suit the family. These options mean that resources are saved and the affordability and the character of the neighbourhood are retained.

**Conclusion:**

We live in a **PLANNED** subdivision with 6 models of appropriately spaced and integrated homes. When they are demolished without consideration of the impact on the whole community, the entire planned subdivision is disrupted. It seems that the only criteria considered for these new builds are that they be grandiose and of the owner's design. This piecemeal attack on subdivision/community/neighbourhood is **TOTALLY DISRUPTIVE** with no consideration given for the existing planned community.

Furthermore, most of these houses have, to date, not been occupied by the investor/owner. All have been flipped at a profit. The motivation certainly does not seem to be valuing the kind of community

feel and character we have created over a long period of time. The only goal is monetary gain, at the expense of the current residents.

We believe that the property owner has rights – to build what they want within the guidelines of the Official Plan and the zoning by-law and the building code, in order to maintain the character and fit in the neighbourhood. However, current residents have rights also. As taxpayers and residents who have lived here for many years, do we not have the right

- to have our property value respected?
- to have our planned community retained?
- to have our privacy and light maintained on our own properties?
- to have our property value protected?

The piecemeal planning without consideration of the overall planned neighbourhood is not acceptable. THE RIGHTS OF THE NEW HOMEOWNER MUST BE BALANCED WITH THE RIGHTS OF CURRENT RESIDENTS.

In our opinion, existing residents are entitled to have their voices heard and taken seriously. By expressing our concerns, we hope you will listen and take appropriate action so that in-place documents are followed to the letter when approving proposed infill plans for our subdivision. We value our neighbourhood and want to continue living here without our lifestyle and quality of life being compromised.

Residents in our community who share the concerns described above and support this letter have provided their names, addresses and signatures in the attached documents.