

Additional Residential Units and 5-bedroom cap

The City has now posted a draft zoning bylaw amendment that proposes to make certain changes to additional residential unit regulations, and to other regulations for development near-campus including in our neighbourhood. The changes are not final and are subject to approval by City Council's Planning Committee and city council.

The proposed amendments are at: <https://london.ca/business-development/planning-development-applications/planning-applications/city-wide-5-bedroom-0>

What is being proposed?

Every lot across the city including our neighbourhood can add additional residential units (ARUs) - ie. basement apartments, granny flats, garden suites etc. Previously, two additional units were permitted. Now, the maximum is three additional units. There are some limitations including in our area which is considered a Near Campus Neighbourhood.

The broader policy change to allow three additional residential units per lot has already been approved by city council.

The zoning bylaw amendment now being considered makes related changes to implement that policy. The proposed bylaw changes broadly fall into three categories, which we've done our best to summarize (please consult the proposed amendments at the URL above for precise info):

#1 - Changes relating to detached ARUs ("garden suites" or "backyard homes")

- There remains only *one* detached accessory structure with ARU(s) permitted per lot. However, the number of units permitted in one detached structure is proposed to increase to two. Previously only one unit was permitted in an accessory building.
- Location: only permitted in rear and side yards (same as before)
- Maximum height: 19.7 ft (same as before)
 - The "height" of a detached ARU is proposed to now be calculated in the same way as it is for the primary dwelling (see p. 42 of the current bylaw [definitions](#)), which varies based on roof type. Previously it was measured to the highest point of the building regardless of the roof type.
- Rear yard setback (ie. min distance to rear neighbour lot line): 9.8 feet (stricter than before - previously could be as close as 2 ft)
- Side yard setback (ie. min distance to side neighbour lot line): 3.94 feet minimum and larger where building is taller or where windows face neighbours (stricter than before - previously could be as close as 2 ft)
- ARUs will "count" towards existing maximum lot coverage for the zone (for most of our neighbourhood this means main home and ARU cannot cover more than 35% of a given lot)

- ARUs must be connected to municipal sewers, water, hydro etc. They will require a building permit and will not be able to have septic systems for example).
- A helpful guide to yard definitions (side yard vs. rear yard etc.) can be found at p. 45 of the current bylaw [definitions](#).

#2 - Changes relating to bedroom caps for single detached family homes

- For single family homes without additional residential units, staff have proposed to keep the 5-bedroom cap
 - Your Executive has advocated for keeping this cap in near campus neighbourhoods. We are pleased to see it in the draft, though the final decision remains with council.
- The combined total number of bedrooms permitted for the primary dwelling unit and additional residential unit(s) shall increase by one (1) following the creation of one (1) additional residential unit up to a total of three (3) additional bedrooms and three (3) additional residential units.
- We are unclear at this time how this will affect homes that already exceed the proposed cap. Our expectation is that these homes should not be able to add bedrooms beyond the new applicable cap. For example, if a single-family home has 8 bedrooms already, they should not be able to add any more bedrooms even if they add ARUs. We are seeking to clarify with staff.
- Recall that the bedroom cap has been eliminated entirely for the rest of the city.

#3 - Changes relating to bedroom caps for townhomes and multifamily housing

- Units in townhomes and multifamily (ie. multiplex and apartment buildings) were previously capped at 3 bedrooms in our neighbourhood. Staff have proposed to increase this cap to 5 bedrooms per unit.
- This change came as a surprise to the executive and we are discussing it with staff. The rationale for the change seems to be that it will allow higher density housing along more major roads to be better marketed to students.
- In theory, this will not affect the R1 zone that applies to most of our neighbourhood.
- This may affect developments, however, where a zoning amendment to permit townhomes or multifamily is sought and granted (299-307 Sarnia Road, for example).

Next Steps

As you will see in on the City website, your feedback is welcomed by staff by January 12th, and you are also able to attend the public participation meeting on January 30th 2024 either in person or on line. Your executive is also available to answer questions or pass along concerns (as best as we are able).