

Proposed Zoning Changes to regulate Low-Rise Residential Infill in the General Urban Area

ADDENDUM

Further to the Zoning Strategy Paper (April 2019) that was sent to all stakeholders https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/default/files/low_rise_infill_discussion_en.pdf and uploaded to the City's webpage <https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/public-engagement/projects/monitoring-infill-i-and-ii>, staff met with both the Federation of Citizens' Association and with the Greater Ottawa Homebuilders Association to consider their comments. As a result of these meetings, staff has prepared this addendum for public consideration. The addendum introduces an alternative to driveways and attached garages that would be better in retaining the highest amount of soft landscaped area on-site, enabling new dwellings to have wider entrances and more habitable area on the first floor, while increasing the amount of soil needed for trees.

The Mature Neighbourhoods were built prior to the commercialization of the automobile, where most were not designed for cars. For decades, the City has struggled to find a way to introduce on-site parking on streets where the lots are narrow as a result of infill-related severances and the front-facing garages are not used for parking purposes.

With the eventual mass production of autonomous vehicles becoming more likely along with societal shifts away from car ownership and towards car and ride-sharing services such as Uber, Lyft and Vrtucar, as well as additional transportation options in the inner urban area with dedicated and safe cycle routes and expanding transit opportunities through transit service and the introduction of the LRT, now is the time to reconsider how to allow new development where the car is no longer the focus, in the same way as the mature neighbourhoods were developed without the car being a factor. In this scenario, there won't be as much need for on-site parking, leaving more front yard area for incidental uses of lands other than driveways and parking spaces, where the dwelling will be able to provide more gross floor area for its residents, and present a more desirable façade as viewed from the street.

Is it better to see parked cars in driveways that lead to garage doors, where the garage is not used for parking, or is it better to see no attached garages or carports on streets where these are not dominant? Either way, residents are choosing to park in their "driveways" leaving "garages" for indoor storage. In doing so, they are parking in the front yard, in front of the house, which is currently prohibited. Passersby see garage doors and parked cars.

Might there be another way of providing for some on-site parking while prohibiting the attached garages and carports? In such cases, the entirety of the face of the dwelling visible on the street will be of a home, with more habitable floor area available along the length of the dwelling's face. Porches could be wider lending to a more visually-aesthetic, animated interaction between the street and the home.

Staff propose a change in the proposed Mature Neighbourhoods Overlay zoning regulations that will result in new development being more compatible on the street, while recognizing the current wants of those new residents who are requesting on-site parking.

Discussion

Many streets in the Mature Neighbourhoods Overlay are developed with houses that do not contain an attached garage or carport. Driveways run down the interior side lot line that is not shared with an attached dwelling unit, to rear yard surface parking or to a detached garage. This is the dominant character of most of the streets in the Mature Neighbourhoods Overlay.

The Strategy Paper (April 2019) proposed to prohibit attached garages and carports on streets where these are not the dominant pattern. On-site parking would be limited to:

- side yard surface parking
- side entry integral garages
- rear yard surface parking, or integral garages on the rear façade, or detached garages
- and, in the case of a lot with access via an open and travelable rear lane, access is restricted to being only from rear lane, resulting in no driveways permitted to pass through the front yard, and where a private approach by-law would not be granted for a new curb cut

For purposes of this discussion, an integral garage is integrated into the entirety of the dwelling. For example, in the case of a semi-detached dwelling, it is located next to and shares a common wall with the other garage serving the other half of the semi-detached dwelling. It has the dwelling unit's main entryway next to it with gross floor area above it. The side-by-side garages are "front and centre" on the original lot. These are accessed via side-by-side driveways that resemble double-wide driveways which is out of character on a street with single driveways. This is distinct from semi-detached dwellings where the entrances share the common wall and the attached garages are to the exterior side of each dwelling unit, resulting in separation of the two garages and two single driveways, which is the more dominant character on those streets in the urban area.

On narrow lots, such as two 7.5 m wide lots for a semi-detached dwelling, recent infill has consisted mostly of integral garages. Their location on the site is prominently in the middle between both dwelling units, with side-by-side driveways accessing each garage.

It is commonplace to see that residents are choosing, more and more often, to park their vehicles in their driveways and use their garages for storage. As lots become narrower through severance, there is less space for garages, often leaving insufficient room to park a car in the legally-created parking space. Section 139 (12) states that a driveway loses its function when it no longer provides access to a legal parking space beyond the front

wall of the dwelling (i.e. leading to the attached garage/carport). Developments are being created with the knowledge that the garage will only be used for storage and that residents will park in what appears to be a driveway, but in fact operates in the same way as a front yard parking pad.

The City has received comments from both the development community and the Federation of Citizens' Association (FCA), suggesting that if we propose to prohibit integral and attached garages on those streets where these are not dominant, perhaps the City should allow one front yard parking space as an additional option, subject to a number of regulations.

Staff is considering the effects, of permitting one front yard parking space in the front or corner side yard, on the remainder of the front yard and on the streetscape. Staff observe the following:

- The most inner urban mature neighbourhood streets that have single driveways have been developed on narrower lots, where the driveways are used for the parking space(s) rather than using the attached or detached garage, or the side or rear yard surface parking or rear detached garage,
- When considering how residents are parking, there is a great deal of front yard parking taking place, though it looks as though the cars are merely parked in the "driveway",
- There is no visual difference between parking in an illegal front yard parking pad or in a driveway that does provide access to a parking space,
- In some mature neighbourhoods, makeshift fences cut off many long driveways which also results in front yard parking pads, though these appear to be driveways,
- For some mature lots that have not been redeveloped, the long driveways to rear yard parking are not plowed in their entirety, but only within that part of the front yard in which the driveway is located - it is more common for people to park in the first part of their driveway so they are closest to the front door as possible, and
- In the neighbourhoods at the edges of the Mature Neighbourhoods Overlay and within the remaining Infill 2 area, it is also common for residents to park their cars in driveways.

We can continue to argue against front yard parking and allow, theoretically, a driveway to access a legal parking space located outside of the front yard, but clients will want their attached/integral garages for refuse, bike storage, etc. rather than for parking. Because there is the appearance of a 'garage door' and a 'driveway', it is not clear to the passerby or staff person whether these are fulfilling their purpose or another way of allowing front yard parking spaces in front of blank garage doors that detract from the dwelling's front façade. Technically those parking spaces on pads that are not driveways by definition, are all front yard parking which has been prohibited in Ottawa since the 1980s.

Staff concludes that, subject to specific requirements, allowing a front yard parking space, restricted to locating along the interior side lot line or corner side lot line, is beneficial for a number of reasons including:

- There is more front yard area available for soft landscaping, where such would be 'front and centre' in the middle of the original lot in front of the entrances,
- the parking space would be restricted to not being in front of the dwelling, other than where a secondary entranceway might be located to the side of the dwelling,
- The dwelling's front façade will not be obstructed by driveways and parking;
- the façade will be more visible and appealing, with 100% of that part of the first floor facing the street being habitable space, with a window rather than an attached garage door;
- It would allow for wider front porches,
- It would result in the first floor being located closer to average existing grade, with fewer steps to the landing and entry unless there is a significant grade change or a secondary dwelling unit proposed in the basement,
- It would take up less land than if there were a driveway, particularly one located down the interior side lot line leading to a rear yard parking area, leaving such lands softly landscaped,
- The extra lands left softly landscaped would increase the permeability thereon, which is beneficial for on-site stormwater management,
- The extra soft landscaped yards would increase the availability of soil volume to enable a tree, either within the right-of-way or on-site,
- The smaller front yard parking space surface would take less land than a driveway would because the length and width would be restricted to that required for a parking space; and
- Once the parking space is no longer needed, it would be simpler to reverse the surface to soft landscaping rather than in the case of a long side yard driveway.

Proposed Regulations

Staff is considering the following regulations for a front yard parking space in the case of a lot, developed with a detached dwelling or a semi-detached dwelling only, where located within the Mature Neighbourhoods Overlay:

- (i) the front yard parking space is only permitted on a lot fronting on a street where the dominant character is the absence of front-facing attached garages and carports, pursuant to the findings of the Streetscape Character Analysis,
- (ii) the front yard parking space is only permitted on a street where the dominant streetscape character includes driveways;
- (iii) only one front yard parking space is permitted per principal dwelling unit

- (iv) no front yard parking space is permitted for a secondary dwelling unit,
- (v) it is allowed in the front yard or in the corner side yard on a corner lot, but not permitted in both yards unless each unit is facing a different street.
- (vi) the parking space must be located in that part of the front yard and that part of the corner side yard that is adjacent to the interior side lot line that is not shared with its attached dwelling unit.
- (vii) Despite (vi), where there is a tree¹ that is protected by the City's Tree By-law(s) that is located in that part of the front yard in which a front yard parking space is permitted, the parking space may be located elsewhere in the front yard but as close to the non-shared interior side lot line as possible, and the same applies in the case of a parking space located in the corner side yard.
- (viii) it must be more or less perpendicular to the street.
- (ix) it must not exceed an area of 2.6 m width x 5.2 m length.
- (x) a path, no greater than 0.9 m in width that provides pedestrian access from the parking pad to the main entry, is permitted.
- (xi) a walkway of no greater than 0.9 m in width extending from the right-of-way to the main entry is only permitted on lots with widths of 10 m or more, provided it is separated from the front yard parking space by a soft landscaped strip of at least 0.6 m.
- (xii) the front yard parking space must consist of permeable material, and
- (xiii) a front yard parking space is prohibited when the lot has vehicular access via an open and travelable rear lane.

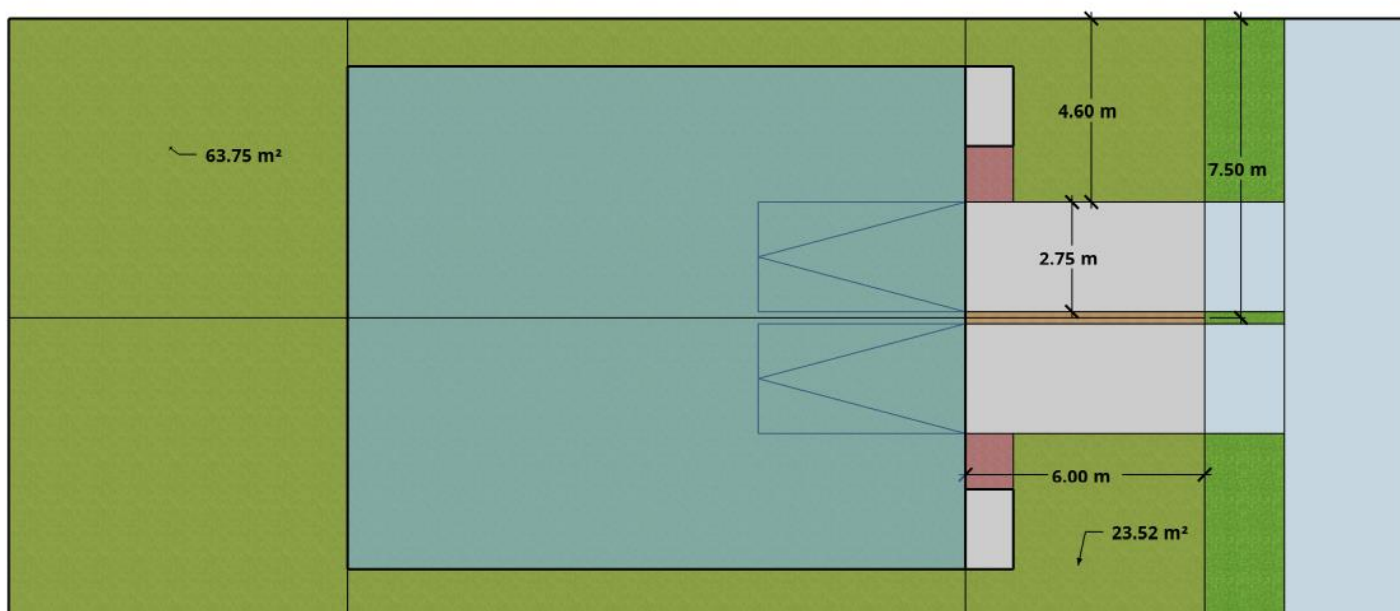
Sketches 1 through 6 show the differences in land area that would be developed with hard surface material such as asphalt or interlock for access and parking purposes, versus the area that would remain in soft landscaping. Table 1 summarizes these areas for comparison purposes. Table 1 indicates that developing a lot with front yard parking uses results in less lot area used for hard surfaces, leaving more land available for soft landscaping. This increases the opportunities for on-street and on-site trees.

This approach would reverse the longstanding prohibition on front yard parking, in favour of prohibiting attached garages and carports on streets where these are not dominant. Note the various sketches below that show the increased amount of surface that is taken up by soft landscaped area rather than by hard surfaced-driveways and parking spaces.

¹ The intent is to recognize those known currently as distinctive trees, whether City-owned or on private property, that must be retained, pursuant to the City's Tree By-laws. Staff is aware of the ongoing Tree By-law review and will ensure that the same language is used in both municipal by-laws.

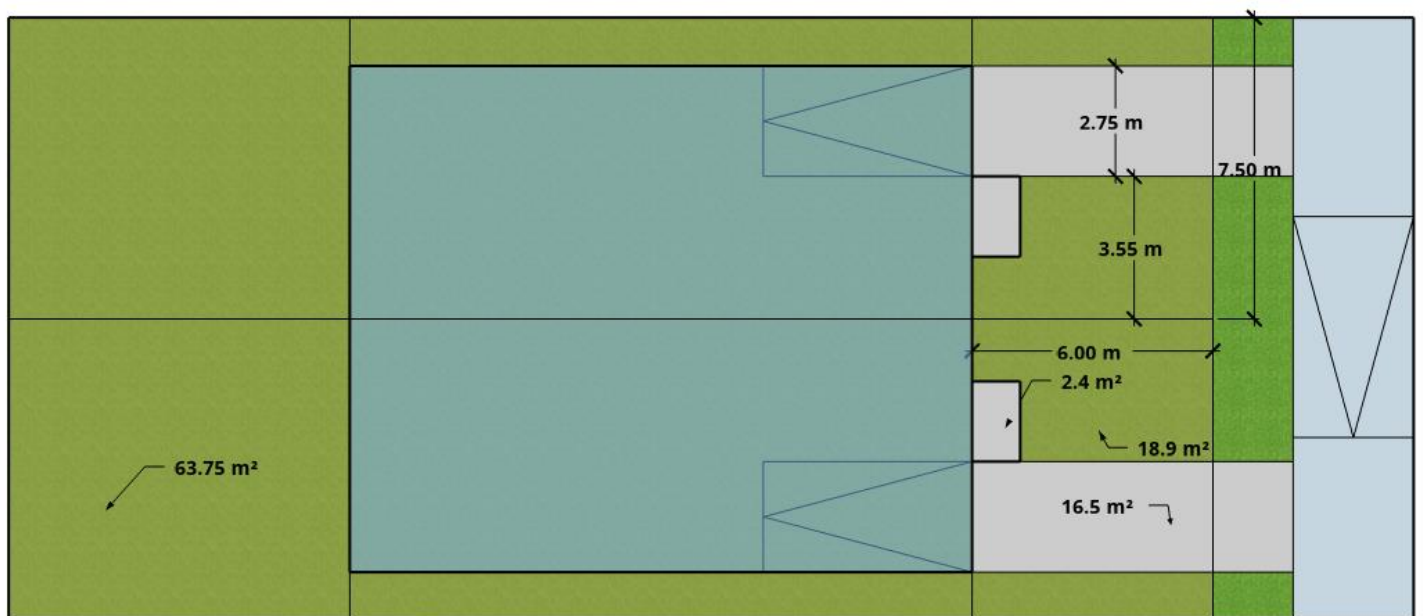
Sketch 1 shows the common side-by-side integral garages accessed by individual driveways, with the proposed small landscaped separation between the driveways to provide a visual cue that these are single driveways. This design results in sufficient soft landscaped area in the front yards, as well as significant amount in the rear yard. However, the garages and driveways are central on the original lot and remain prominent rather than the areas that are softly landscaped. Further, the infill or redevelopment has removed the on-street parking in front of this development, which would be a problem on streets where residents rely on some on-street parking either for themselves or for guests.

Sketch 1



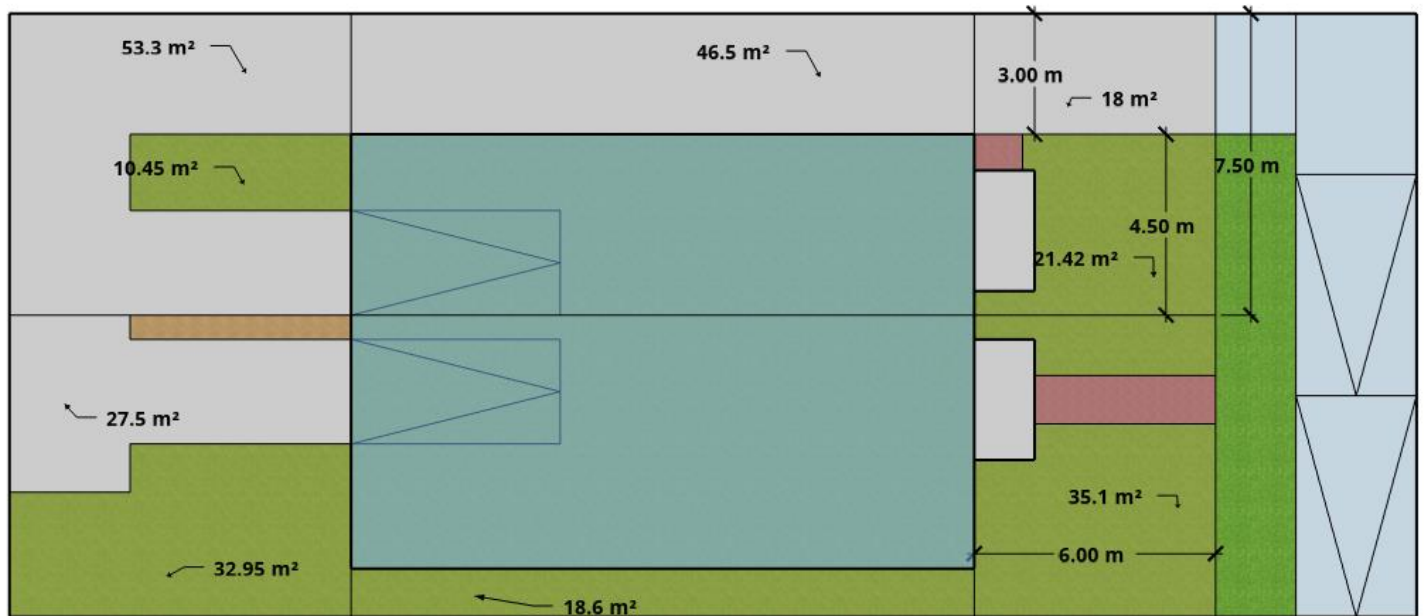
Sketch 2 shows a semi-detached with two attached garages, each accessed by single driveways leading to the parking spaces located in the garages. On a lot that is 7.5 m wide, with a 6 m front yard setback, the amount of soft landscaped area is 18.9 m². This is an appropriate design on those streets where garages and carports are the dominant character, and where the spacing of the driveways and separation of the garages is common. This is an ideal design where each unit has on-site parking, a pristine rear yard not used for parking, one on-street parking space, and a significant amount of soil volume to enable a City-owned tree in the right-of-way.

Sketch 2



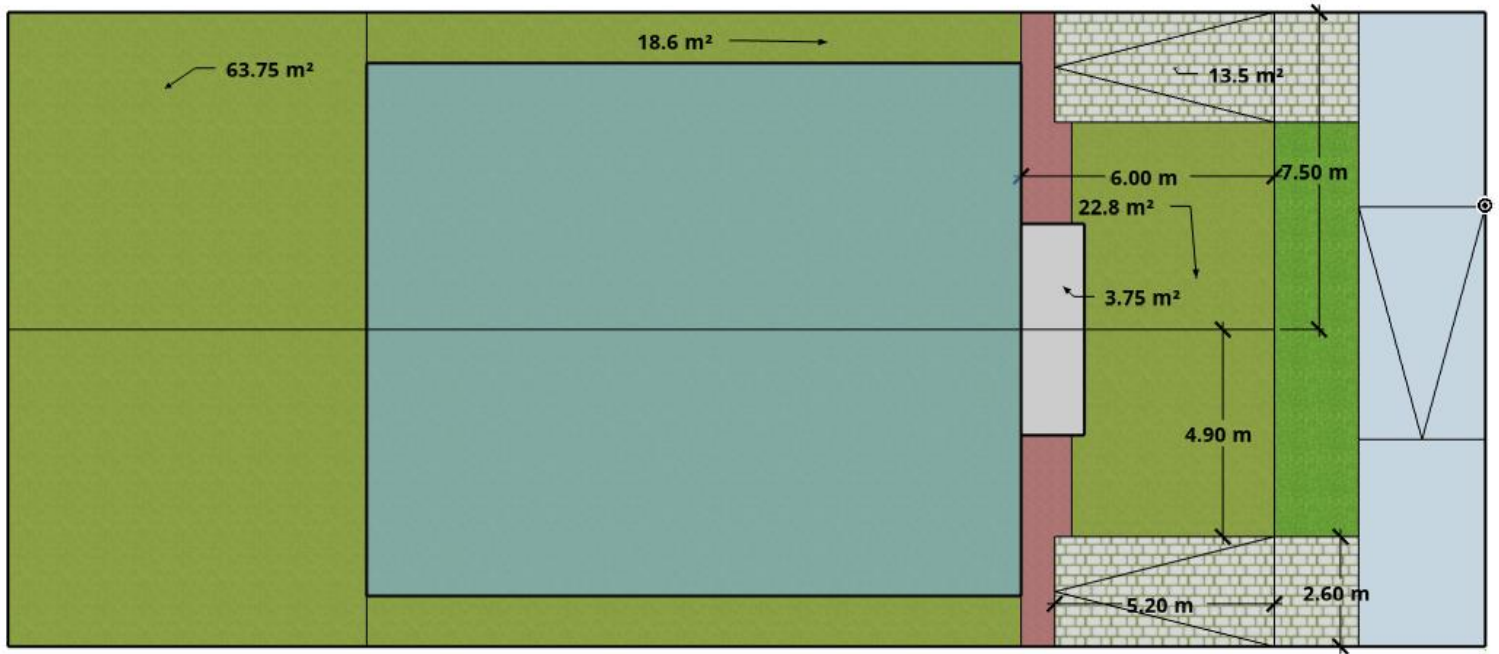
Sketch 3 shows a semi-detached with a shared driveway 3 m-wide running the length of one of the dwelling unit's interior side lot lines, to two rear-facing integral garages. Many streets in the mature neighbourhoods have these side yard driveways leading to rear yard parking, though usually in detached garages. Even though these may fit in with the character along a street, there is far less rear yard area for soft landscaping and amenity space. The driveway is long. Some residents will not clear the entire length of it during the winter, and it would be far more difficult and costly to be removed in the future. It also requires an easement permitting the second dwelling unit's owner to access the shared driveway. However, there is more soft landscaped area in the front yard, and with only one driveway, there is room for two on-street parking spaces. Adding a second walkway back from the right-of-way would not have any significant result, nor lower the amount of soil volume that would be available to support a tree. A similar design would occur if there were a shared driveway leading to rear yard surface parking or rear detached garages.

Sketch 3



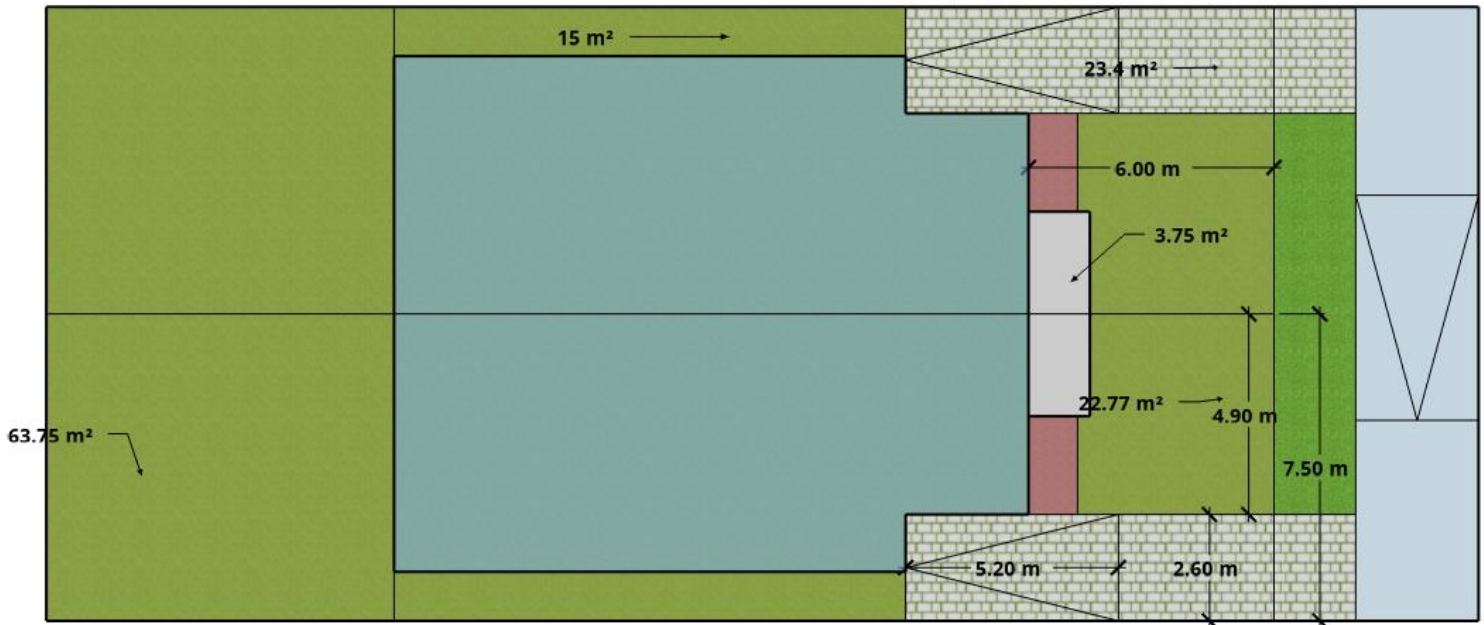
Sketch 4 shows one front yard parking space per dwelling unit located at the outer edges of the original lot, along the non-common interior side lot lines. A path between the top of the space and the dwelling unit provides pedestrian access. Walkways are not necessary and are proposed to be prohibited back from the right-of-way to the entry.

Sketch 4



Sketch 5 shows one front yard parking space at the outer edges of the original lot, along the non-common interior side lot lines. Walkways are not necessary. This design shows notches cut out of the first storey of the dwelling units to allow for the tucking in of the front yard spaces. This results in a longer parking pad, that could result in a second car being parked in tandem, though it would result in illegally parking within the right-of-way. This notched design would occur also on a lot with a front yard setback, such as 3 m or 4.5 m, that is less than the minimum length of 5.2 m required for a parking space. The notched area provides partial shelter for the car.

Sketch 5



Sketch 6 shows two front yard parking pads on a lot with a front yard setback of 3 m. In this case, there would have to be a notch in the footprint of the dwelling to enable the space to meet the minimum width and length required (2.6 metres and 5.2 metres, respectively). The design allows for partial protection of the car from inclement weather. The design also allows a prominent place for soft landscaped area in the middle of the original lot, in front of the main entranceways while leaving the rear yard free from parking. One on-street parking space is enabled.

Sketch 6

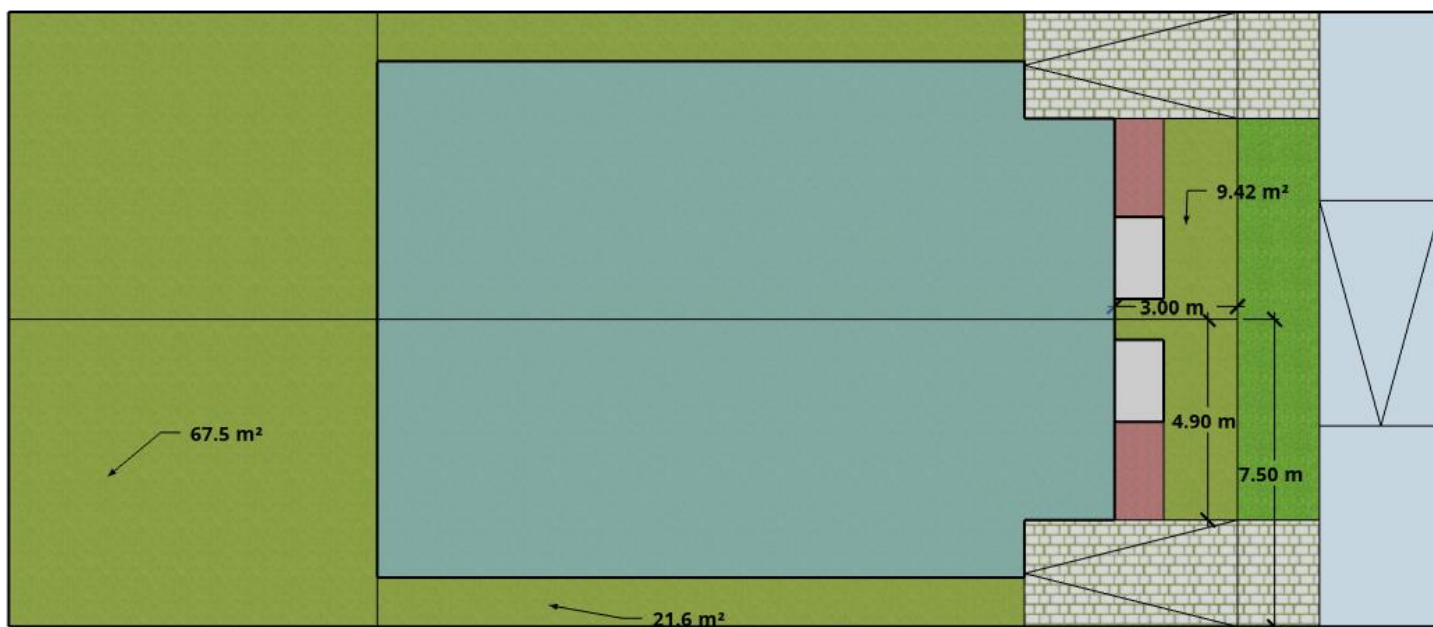


Table 1. Comparison of Areas (m²) of one semi-detached unit lot that would consist of soft landscaped area and hard driveway and parking surfaces

Sketch Number	Front Yard Soft Landscaped Area	Front Yard Hard Surface	Interior Side Yard Soft Surface	Interior Side Yard Hard Surface	Rear Yard Soft Landscaped Area	Rear Yard Hard Surface
1	23.52	16.5	18.6	0	63.75	0
2	18.9	16.5	18.6	0	63.75	0
3	21.42	18	0	46.5	10.45	53.3
Side with shared driveway						
Side without driveway	35.1	0	18.6	0	32.95	27.5
4	22.8	13.5	18.6	0	63.75	0
5	22.77	23.4	15	0	63.75	0
6	9.42	13.52	21.61	0	67.5	0