

To: Mayor and Members of Township of Norwich Council

From: Amy Hartley, Development Planner, Community Planning

Application for Zone Change

ZN 3-26-04 – Township of Norwich (Accessory Buildings)

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- This application seeks amend the Township's Zoning By-law No. 07-2003-Z to facilitate an increased maximum permitted lot coverage and maximum permitted height for accessory structures throughout the Township.
- Planning staff are generally supportive of the proposed amendments as they are consistent with the housing policies of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and are consistent with Official Plan policies respecting the provision of uses accessory to permitted uses.

DISCUSSION

BACKGROUND

PROPOSAL:

At the February 10, 2026, Council meeting, Council directed staff to bring forward a report to summarize the nature of variances requested and approved by the Committee of Adjustment in the last twelve months related to the height of accessory structures and lot coverage.

Staff Report CP 2024-114 was presented to Council at the April 14, 2026, meeting providing information to Council relating to recently approved minor variances, a historical analysis of all approvals, and a comparison of accessory structure provisions to other municipalities in Oxford County. Based on the information contained in this report and recommendations from staff, Council provided direction to staff to submit a zone change application to amend Section 5.1.1.3 (Accessory Use Provisions) of the Township Zoning By-law to reflect the following provisions:

Provision	RE and RR Zones	R1, R2, R3 Zones	A1, A2 Zones	All Other Zones
<i>Lot Coverage, Maximum for all accessory buildings and structures</i>	<i>10% of the lot area or 250 m² (2,690.9 ft²) ground floor area, whichever is the lesser</i>	<i>10% of the lot area or 100 m² (1,076.4 ft²) ground floor area, whichever is the lesser</i>	<i>10% of the lot area or 225 m² (2,421.8 ft²) ground floor area, whichever is the lesser</i>	<i>10% of the lot area or 225 m² (2,421.8 ft²) ground floor area, whichever is the lesser</i>
<i>Maximum Height</i>	<i>6 m (19.6 ft)</i>	<i>5.5 m (18.0 ft)</i>	<i>5.5 m (18.0 ft)</i>	<i>5.5 m (18.0 ft)</i>

APPLICATION REVIEW

2024 PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT

The 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) is a policy statement issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and came into effect on October 20, 2024. The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development and applies to all decisions in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter made on or after that date. The following outlines the key PPS policies that have been considered but is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Chapter 1, Introduction, states that a prosperous and successful Ontario will also support a strong and competitive economy that is investment-ready and recognized for its influence, innovation and diversity. Ontario's economy will continue to mature into a centre of industry and commerce of global significance. Central to this success will be the people who live and work in this province.

Section 2.1 of the PPS directs that planning authorities should support the achievement of complete communities by accommodating an appropriate range and mix of land uses, housing options, transportation options with multi-modal access, employment, public service facilities and other institutional uses to meet long-term needs, improve social equity and overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities and incomes, including equity-deserving groups.

Section 2.2 provides that planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected needs of current and future residents of the immediate area by:

- a) establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households, and coordinating land use planning and planning for housing with Service Managers to address the full range of housing options including affordable housing needs;
- b) permitting and facilitating:
 1. all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and wellbeing requirements of current and future residents, including additional needs housing and needs arising from demographic changes and employment opportunities; and

2. all types of residential intensification, including the development and redevelopment of underutilized commercial and institutional sites (e.g., shopping malls and plazas) for residential use, development and introduction of new housing options within previously developed areas, and redevelopment, which results in a net increase in residential units in accordance with policy 2.3.1.3;
- c) promoting densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation; and
- d) requiring transit-supportive development and prioritizing intensification, including potential air rights development, in proximity to transit, including corridors and stations.

Section 2.3 of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) directs that prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long term agricultural use. In prime agricultural areas, permitted uses and activities include agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses. All types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards, and new land uses in prime agricultural areas shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae.

Proposed agricultural-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. Criteria for these uses may be based on guidelines developed by the Province (e.g. Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas) or municipal approaches, as set out in municipal planning documents, which achieve the same objectives. New land uses, including the creation of lots, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall also comply with the Minimum Distance Separation formulae.

In order to be considered an agricultural-related use, the proposed use shall be compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations and uses should be appropriate to the available level of services. Further, agricultural-related uses shall maintain the agricultural character of the area and should not undermine the agricultural nature of the area.

This direction also provides that agricultural-related uses shall be directly related to farm operations in the area, primarily provide produces or services that are associated with, required by or that enhance the agricultural operations in the area and such use shall be supportive of agriculture and shall directly serve farm operations as a primary activity.

The guideline document also provides a list of uses that would not be considered to be agricultural-related and includes a contractor's yard, construction companies and excavators.

Section 2.3.1, General Policies for Settlement Areas, directs that Settlement Areas shall be the focus of growth and development. Further, land use patterns within Settlement Areas shall be based on densities and a mix of land uses which:

- a) efficiently use land and resources;
- b) optimize existing and planned infrastructure and public service facilities;
- c) support active transportation;
- d) are transit-supportive, as appropriate; and,
- e) are freight supportive.

OFFICIAL PLAN

Section 6.2.1 of the Official Plan contains Objectives for Rural Settlement Residential Designations, which establishes that a supply of residential land sufficient to accommodate the projected demand for the anticipated range of new dwelling types over the planning period be supported. Furthermore, the expansion of residential development within the settlement into

appropriate areas according to availability of municipal services, soil conditions, topographic features and environmental constraints will be supported, and that expansion of residential development shall take place in a form which can be integrated with established land use patterns, consistent with servicing capacities and allocations, compatible and integrated with existing housing. Concepts of compact urban form and residential infilling in all rural settlement areas where appropriate given the level of infrastructure available will be promoted, and various forms of residential intensification shall be permitted in appropriate locations within the Serviced Villages, in accordance with the policies of the associated land use designations, and taking into consideration public services, infrastructure, environmental features and constraints and compatibility with existing or planned development. Residential growth in the Serviced Village designations will be encouraged to be accommodated through intensification in existing built up areas as a first priority.

Section 3.1.4.2 outlines a wide range of agricultural type land uses within the Agricultural Reserve designation. The Official Plan also recognizes existing non-farm rural residential land uses, together with their accessory buildings, in the Agricultural Reserve designation and it is the intent of the Official Plan to ensure that non-farm rural residential uses shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations.

AGENCY COMMENTS

Upper Thames Region Conservation Authority (UTRCA) noted that there may be size limitations for accessory structures within hazard lands that will be subject to further review through the Section 28 permitting process.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Notice of complete application and notice of public meeting regarding the application for zone change were circulated in the Tillsonburg Post and Oxford Review on May 21, 2026, in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*. As of the date of this report, no comments or concerns have been received from the public.

Planning Analysis

Report [CP 2026-114](#) was presented to Council on April 14, 2026, which contained a fulsome overview and analysis of the accessory building provisions and the proposed changes requested by Council. The analysis within the previous report reviewed historical application trends and approvals of minor variance and zone change applications.

Maximum Lot Coverage Provisions

Within Table 5.1.1.3 of the Township Zoning By-law, the lot coverage provisions for accessory structures are measured by either the gross floor area or a percentage of the total lot coverage, whichever is lesser. It is the intent to use both the gross floor area and percentage coverage to ensure that the provisions maintain the intent of the accessory building provisions.

It is the intent that accessory structures remain secondary and subordinate to the main use of the property. If only a percentage coverage were to be considered for accessory provisions, an existing larger property could benefit from a much larger accessory building which would be inconsistent with the intent of the provisions. For example, an existing 2 acre property zoned 'RR'

or 'RE', at 10% coverage, could have an accessory building 809.3 m² (8,7112 ft²) in area. Staff are of the opinion that both the percentage coverage and floor area provisions need to be maintained to avoid instances where larger existing parcels could benefit from a larger structure which would be allowed based on a percentage coverage that would not maintain the intent of the Official Plan or Zoning By-law.

It is also recommended that the provision be amended to a ground floor area definition in order to enable loft areas or second stories where the height provisions can be met. The ground floor area definition was introduced through a recent amendment and passed via By-law 04-2026-Z. The definition for ground floor area is as follows:

"GROUND FLOOR AREA, means the aggregate of the maximum horizontal extent of all areas of a *building* measured between the exterior faces of the exterior walls, including retractable walls and roofed projections (e.g. covered *porches*, *decks*, balconies and *carports*). For greater clarity, *ground floor area* shall encompass the total footprint of a *building* that exists above or below grade (e.g. walk-out *basements*) and shall exclude uncovered *decks* and balconies, canopies, and overhanging eaves, which are two metres or more in *height* above *finished grade*.

The current definition of 'gross floor area' includes all storeys of a building, which results in multi-storey buildings having a higher calculated gross floor area. The intent of the lot coverage requirement is to regulate the amount of building area covering the lot to maintain adequate stormwater management, drainage, and open/green space and is not intended to limit the height of buildings. The proposed amendment uses 'ground floor area' to calculate lot coverage, which has the effect of controlling the footprint of a building or structure but in some instances could have the effect of increasing the size of an accessory building relative to what currently exists in the Zoning By-law

Staff note that the provisions contained in Table 5.1.1.3 of the Township Zoning By-law do not apply to buildings being used for agricultural purposes where agricultural equipment or activities are being conducted or stored.

Within the A1 and A2 zones, the recommended lot coverage is in line with neighbouring municipalities but may still require a variance application where a larger structure is proposed. This will allow staff and relevant agencies to assess whether the proposed accessory structure is appropriate on an agriculturally zoned parcel and will not impact surrounding agricultural operations as a result. As noted, buildings proposed for agricultural uses do not need to comply with the provisions contained in Table 5.1.1.3.

Maximum Height Provisions

Similarly to the maximum lot coverage provisions for accessory structures, the maximum height provisions are intended to ensure that accessory structures remain secondary and subordinate to the main use of the property. It is intended that an accessory building does not exceed the height of the dwelling on a property or be of a height that would cause adverse impacts on adjacent properties (i.e. privacy, shadowing etc.).

The height provisions for structures are measured to the mean point (mid-point) between the eaves and the ridge of a gable, hip or gambrel roof. The means of measuring the maximum height should be taken into consideration when assessing the proposed provisions.

Of the applications that have been received the average approved maximum height by the Committee or Council are outlined in Table 1 as well as the difference between the permitted height and the average approved height.

Table 1: Average Approved Maximum Height, 2020-2026			
Zone Category	Permitted	Average Approved Height	Difference
A1	4.5 m (14.8 ft)	6.25 m (20.5 ft)	1.75 m (5.7 ft)
A2	4.5 m (14.8 ft)	N/A	N/A
R1	4.5 m (14.8 ft)	5.83 m (19.1 ft)	1.33 m (4.36 ft)
R2	4.5 m (14.8 ft)	6.0 m (19.6 ft)	1.5 m (4.9 ft)
RE	5.5 m (18.0 ft)	6.38 m (20.9 ft)	0.88 m (2.8 ft)
RR	5.5 m (18.0 ft)	6.93 m (22.7 ft)	1.43 m (4.7 ft)

Table 2 below provides a comparison of the Township of Norwich maximum height provisions for accessory structures compared to other municipalities in Oxford County as well as an average of neighbouring municipalities permitted maximum height.

Table 2: Comparison of Neighbouring Municipalities						
	BB	EZT	SWOX	ZOR	AVERAGE	NOR
RE & RR	5.5 m (18 ft)	5.5 m (18 ft)	6.1 m (20 ft)	5.0 m (16.4 ft)	5.53 m (18.1 ft)	5.5 m (18 ft)
R1/R2/R3	4.5 m (14.8 ft)	4.0 m (13.1 ft)	5.0 m (16.4 ft)	4.0 m (13.1 ft)	4.38 m (14.3 ft)	4.5 m (14.8 ft)
A1/A2/All other	5.5 m (18 ft)	5.5 m (18 ft)	6.6 m (21.6 ft)	4.0 m (13.1 ft)	5.40 m (17.7 ft)	4.5 m (14.8 ft)

Recommended Maximum Height Provisions

Based on a review of the long-term average approved maximum height for accessory structures, and in comparison, to neighbouring municipalities. Staff are recommending that Council proceed with the following maximum height provisions as part of this amendment to the Township's Zoning By-law:

Zone Category	Current	Recommended	Increase from Current
RR/RE	5.5 m (18 ft)	6.0 m (19.6 ft)	0.5 m (1.6 ft)
R1/R2/R3	4.5 m (14.8 ft)	5.5 m (18 ft)	1.0 m (3.2 ft)
A1/A2/All Other Zones	4.5 m (14.8 ft)	5.5 m (18 ft)	1.0 m (3.2 ft)

Where a building is proposed to be of a greater height than what is permitted, this allows staff and the Committee or Council to review the proposal and decide whether the height is appropriate based on the site context and surrounding land uses.

CONCLUSION

It is the opinion of Planning staff, that the proposed amendments to the maximum ground floor area and maximum permitted height of an accessory structure as explained in the report above are consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and maintains the intent and purpose of the Official Plan respecting accessory uses within the Township. The proposed amendments ensure accessory buildings remain secondary and subordinate to the principal dwelling or use on the subject lands while reflecting historical building trends and Council approvals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council of the Township of Norwich approve the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment (File No. ZN 3-26-04) submitted by the Township of Norwich to introduce amendments to the Township's Zoning By-law No. 07-2003-Z to increase the maximum permitted lot coverage and maximum height for accessory structures throughout the Township as described in Report CP 2026-190.

SIGNATURES

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