

**It would be useful if Urban Planning could develop a spreadsheet identifying 15 to 25 common home projects identifying whether they require a permit and PAC approval. (We might be able to do this ourselves with Urban Planning cooperation.)**

**Here is a list of situations where bylaws appear too restrictive.** The first 5 cases were presented in **Post 1** on the [Montreal West Community Forum Facebook](#) page.

1. A post on the MW Residents FB page (sept 12, 2023) described how a resident was **restoring his basement after the catastrophic flood** of July 14, 2023. A “mountain of old drainpipes and contractor debris bags on [his] driveway” attracted the attention of a Town employee who told him he needed a permit.
2. A resident on the MW Residents FB page (Apr 13, 2021) questioned why he’ll need a permit to **restore his front steps and awing** to exactly the same look when he felt it should be considered a repair so he could avoid the permit process and costs.
3. A reply posted to case 2 described how a resident who had a **hole in his roof** leaking water during the spring rainy season couldn’t wait to get a permit. He had it fixed, and got a fine.
4. At the September 18, 2017 council meeting a resident reported that he’d been fined for making **chimney repairs** without a permit. Bylaw REPEALED.
5. In 2019 my neighbour was fined \$450 for replacing her **roof shingles** with exactly the same colour. She brought it to a council meeting where it was acknowledged that the “pendulum had swung too far in one direction” and that the bylaw would be changed. Yet she couldn’t recoup her \$450. Bylaw REPEALED.
6. A resident posted on the MW Community Forum FB page that “**replacing her eavestrough** with same gutter, same everything required a permit. The Town also suggested (strongly worded) the contractor would need to apply for a parking permit. Less than a half-day’s work”.
7. A resident posted on MW Residents FB page (May 17, 2024): “Turns out we need a permit to have our **gutters replaced**. Photos and brochure required. And of course there will be a cost not to mention the delay. What could we possibly do that would not be appropriate? Knitted gutters? Playdough gutters?”
8. **Held responsible for previous owner’s lack of permit.** A new homeowner posted on the MW Residents Facebook page (Sept 14, 2020): “In filing for a permit for a new patio door, the Town noticed from the submitted photograph that our rear deck “looks very new”, and that no building permit was issued for it. We bought the house with it already in place, and it’s on the seller’s Certificate of Location well before we purchased. Now, I am being asked to contact the previous owners for the required documents in order to file for the permit for something that we didn’t commission. I’m perplexed, and honestly find this maddening. What can we do?”

The resident reached out to **Councillor Feeney who resolved the issue** “and added that the city will review their processes with prior owners in the future.” (Unclear what this means?)

9. **Semi-detached handrail woes.** A resident looking for a custom-made handrail reached out on the MW Residents FB page (June 13, 2024) “Does anyone know where we can find similar style railings? Seemingly from the 1920s. Must be similar style, the ones we proposed were rejected by the Town.” “They (Town) said that the ones I chose from Home Depot, wouldn’t match my neighbour.”

10. **Garage door blues: Two useful suggestions.** March 25, 2024 council meeting (video 35:46 -- link just below). A Banstead resident in possession of a colonial-style (with squares) garage door to be installed at his mother's home on Bedbrook was required by PAC to change it to a panel-type for aesthetic reasons. (64.3% of 28 nearby homes on Fairfield Crescent have colonial doors, only 14.3% have panel doors.) He found the permit process to be exhausting, frustrating and adversarial, and PAC's decision subjective.

He asked the following: **1.** "Is the city open to **conducting a survey** that will specifically address our citizens' degree of satisfaction with the permits process, the PAC's performance, and the overall permit application experience. **2. Can we have a permit process that fosters collaboration** and doesn't give us the impression of weaponizing of the process against citizens?"

(Has anybody ever seen commercially available garage doors that are ugly.)

March council meeting video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmAQ5boX3yE>

11. From the minutes of the April 25, 2016 Council meeting: A resident extract "said that he had to **repair a balcony and a door**, as their current state is **dangerous** for an elderly woman living at the ground floor of his property. He was told by the Town that this work required a permit going through the SPAIP process. He contended that it is worth less than \$5,000 and has to be done urgently for safety reasons. He noted that **this project did not imply to change the appearance** of that part of the building, but on the contrary to restore it to its original state. Mayor Masella said that the process can be shortened, since the PAC meets twice every month and the Council can hold a special sitting to deal with projects before the regular meeting. Councillor Tasker-Brown said she talked to the Building Inspector about this file. It may be that the value of the work is under \$5,000 but its nature would still make it subject to the SPAIP. To make sure this project will be actually dealt with, the Mayor advised the resident to verify that all the necessary documents are provided with his application.
12. **Clarification & simplification of permits.** June 25, 2024 council meeting (video 34:49 – link just below) A resident asked "for clarification of what things actually require permits, and if there could be some simplification of permit requirements. For example, for someone who wishes to replace a door or window or roof and wishes to change the colour, are there some standard colours that are acceptable so that they wouldn't have to pay for a permit? There are people opting not to do work because they cannot absorb the additional expense and the delay. **It becomes onerous for those of us who are seniors on a fixed income.** Most people are reasonable and want to do something to improve the appearance and maintain the quality of their house. Could the Town consider simplifying the permit process and not require permits for so many little things?"
- June Council meeting video:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZmCXFu\\_m44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZmCXFu_m44)
13. **Guillotined by windows.** In reply to a post on the MW Residents FB page (Jan 9, 2023) about why "slider-type" windows are no longer allowed, a resident noted: "I recently changed windows, they wanted the 'guillotine' look so that it is consistent with the age of the neighbourhood. My original request was refused (**replace what was there with exactly the same thing**) and when I pushed back, that's when they explained it absolutely has to have the guillotine look."
14. **DIY benefits.** An April 17, 2021 post on the MW Residents FB page asked: "Does anyone know if we need a permit for new **landscaping**?" A Strathearn N resident replied: "Only if you are taking down shrubs of a certain size. The details are on the Town's website. **We did our entire front yard last year and did not require a permit.**" Another resident added: "**if you use a pro landscaper they need a permit from MoWest.**" This seems true of interior renovations; if you do it yourself a price can't be allocated to it so a permit can't be issued, though I've no knowledge of such situations.

15. **Beware: Heat pumps on the side of a house must be located > 50% of the length and camouflaged.** At the June 25, 2024 council meeting (video 27:57 – link below) a resident getting a new certificate of location was warned by her surveyor that her heat pump needed to be screened. She has plants there that would be killed and which would eventually camouflage the heat pump. Many homes are in the same predicament. She observed: “Looking at the side of my house I see the [Hydro] meter [which does not need camouflage], is that not [also] an eyesore?” A councillor replied that “**other places have the units completely exposed and they need to go.** We deal with one house at a time”.

I need to obtain details for the following:

16. Lisa’s deck and fence replacement

17. Marie’s friend and the \$12,000 (?) door