



May 22, 2024

This letter will confirm that the property located at 93 Helena Avenue in Toronto qualifies for a laneway house build in the rear portion of the lot, under Toronto's "Changing Lanes" program.

I visited the property on May 22, 2024 and confirmed zoning, siting, emergency access and other appropriate qualifications to certify its eligibility.

The maximum size of a permitted as of right build appears to be approximately 1,312 square feet (over two floors - main and upper), with the ability to include an optional car garage on the main floor, with vehicle entry off the laneway.

A basement is also possible here, adding to the square footage above, but in most cases the floor plate of the basement will be significantly smaller than the ground floor and upper floors, the space cannot usually contain bedrooms or a bathroom or a kitchen, and the cost of basement construction can be significant.

Because of the relatively deep lot here, and a favourable positioning of the existing house on the lot, this property is somewhat rare in that it can support a laneway house up to or near the maximum allowable build here (1,312 square feet) while still allowing for optional car parking *outside* the laneway house, at the laneway. With this configuration, the proponent could choose to build the laneway house with interior parking, or no interior parking (all living space), while still maintaining parking on the property, outside the laneway house.

It should be noted that current fire/emergency access regulations might require the owner of 93 Helena Avenue to enter into a "Limiting Distance Agreement" (LDA) with the neighbour at 95 Helena Avenue or at 91 Helena Avenue in order to build the laneway house. A positive "reciprocity principle" might be in effect here, as the owners of 95 and 91 Helena Avenue also likely need this LDA if they were to build a laneway house on their respective properties.

The relatively new (2018) Changing Lanes program from the City of Toronto allows qualifying property owners to construct a laneway house “as of right” on their property, with simple building permit application and no political approval or committee of adjustment approval required. No variances are required and no appeals or “neighbour vetoes” are permitted (with the possible exception of the LDA, as noted above). The city also waives development cost charges.

Should you have any questions about 93 Helena Avenue in particular, or the Changing Lanes program in general, please feel free to contact me any time, or visit our website.

Martin Steele

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