



Ontario Association of Architects

May 22, 2018

Via E-mail

Lia Maston  
Firma Architecture  
60 Beverley Street  
Toronto ON M5T 1X9  
lia@firmaarchitecture.com

Dear Ms. Maston,

The Ontario Association of Architects would like to express our support for the initiative to introduce laneway suites in Toronto. Laneway homes are an appropriate and sensitive means to add density to the historical neighbourhoods in Toronto, and an opportunity for new architecture reflecting the city's culture in the present. The OAA acknowledges the excellent work on this matter by the City of Toronto Planning Department, the City Councillors who are supporting this initiative, and Lanescape who have been assisting.

We are writing you to provide our support for the suggestion of an adjustment in the current proposed design guidelines for laneway suites to eliminate the angular plane setback for the following reasons that we believe are in the public interest:

1. An angular plane setback would have the effect of prescribing one primary building form for laneway suites within a limited built volume on an already constrained footprint. Eliminating the angular plane setback would permit architects and designers to develop solutions within a variety of building volumes. The resulting variety of design approaches will help to achieve a more vibrant and diverse urban environment contributing to a livelier city aesthetic without negatively impacting either the laneway or adjacent properties.
2. An angular plane setback reduces the livable area of the laneway suite at the second-floor level and renders an area approximately the size of a bedroom into unlivable space (under the angle). If there were no angular plane setback, for relatively the same cost, a person investing into the construction of a laneway suite could gain an extra bedroom. The OAA supports the creation of new affordable housing and regards an angular plane setback as an impediment to housing a greater number of people more affordably.
3. Achieving greater capacity and variety of affordable housing through a wider range of built form approaches is also consistent with the City of Toronto's Official Plan which advocates for and defends the affordable housing needs of Toronto.

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The OAA thanks you and your colleagues for bringing this issue to our attention and support you in your efforts to improve the planned bylaw.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John K. Stephenson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being particularly prominent.

John K. Stephenson, Architect  
OAA, MRAIC  
President

cc: Mayor John Tory  
Councillor Mary Margaret McMahon  
Councillor Ana Bailao  
Gregg Lintern, Planning Department  
Graig Uens, Planning Department  
George Pantazis, Planning Department  
Joseph Luk, Planning Department  
Setareh Fadaee, Planning Department

