

## **Attachment 11: Expanding Permitted Uses in Garden and Laneway Suites**

In response to Item [PH14.13 - Expanding Permitted Uses in Laneway and Garden Suites](#), Staff reviewed Minor Variance applications seeking to permit the following uses in ancillary buildings: group homes, residential care homes, laneway suites with two units (double laneway suites), and garden suites with two units (double garden suites). A review of the Minor Variance applications for these uses could inform demand, identify patterns in development standards sought to be through approval at the Committee of Adjustment, and outline geographic distribution of these uses.

### **Laneway Suites and Garden Suites**

Of the four uses, the most common requests for variances were for two-unit laneway suites in an ancillary building and two-unit garden suites in an ancillary building. There were 11 applications for two-unit laneway suites and 4 for two-unit garden suites. Of these, the Committee of Adjustment approved 5 of 11 proposals for two-unit laneway suites and 2 of 4 proposals for two-unit garden suites. The approval rates were 45 percent and 50 percent respectively.

An analysis and comparison of approved and refused applications demonstrates that applications for two dwelling units in ancillary buildings are largely evaluated based on lot characteristics. Lots that are larger than typical lots within the surrounding neighbourhood (e.g., “double-wide”, “triple-wide”) and lots with unique shapes (e.g., flag-lots) are usually deemed as appropriate sites for two dwelling units in an ancillary building. Lots that are standard or typical for their neighborhood are typically deemed not appropriate sites for two dwelling units in an ancillary building.

Geographically of the 11 applications for two-unit laneway suites, seven were proposed in the Etobicoke-York District and four in the Toronto-East York District. Of the seven applications in Etobicoke-York, six were in the Rockcliffe-Smythe neighbourhood, specifically north of St. Clair Avenue West between Jane Street and Runnymede Road. One application from this neighbourhood was approved and the one other application in Etobicoke-York, Mount Dennis neighbourhood was also approved. Of the four applications in the Toronto-East York District, they were distributed throughout the District with applications found in the three Wards surrounding the downtown. Three of the four applications were approved. Geographically, of the four applications for two-unit garden suites all are located in Toronto-East York and are distributed within the District.

The overall demand for two dwelling units in an ancillary building is very low and geographically concentrated. The approval rate is even lower, with little discernable pattern that would support an as-of-right permission. Provided this variety, the Committee of Adjustment remains the appropriate venue for the review and approval for these types of applications.

## **Group Homes and Residential Care Homes**

No Minor Variance applications for the extension of a group home use into an ancillary building have been received.

Three Minor Variance applications for the extension of a residential care home into an ancillary have been received. Of the three applications, two were for extensions into “garden suite style” ancillary buildings and one was for an extension into a “laneway suite style” ancillary building. All three were in the western portion of the Toronto-East York District, each in separate Wards west of the downtown. All three are in the Residential (R) Zone within the City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013, where residential care home uses are prohibited. All had existing, legal non-conforming residential care home uses in the principal building prior to their Minor Variance application to extend the use into an ancillary building. All applications contain atypical lot characteristics (corner lot, flag-lot, “triple-wide”). All three were approved.

The overall demand for group home and residential care home uses in ancillary buildings is very low and geographically concentrated in Toronto and East York. Despite all applications being approved, the low volume, unique lot characteristics, and the non-conforming nature of the use as a principal use, confirm that there is no pattern to support an as-of-right permission. Provided this variety, the Committee of Adjustment remains the appropriate venue for the review and the appropriate approval authority for these types of applications.

## **Limitations**

This review identifies Minor Variance applications where public notice has been posted, which included a requested variance for the extension of a group home use, the extension of a residential care home use, two-unit laneway suites, or two-unit garden suites in an ancillary building; and a decision by the Committee of Adjustment that was made prior to December 31, 2024. The review does not include proposals where an initial proposal included variances for those uses but was revised and removed prior to public notice being posted.