

Laneway Homes: a Creative Solution

Vancouver has grown into a city where the housing market can be tight. Finding rental housing or a home you can afford is often a challenge.

One of the ways the City of Vancouver is meeting this challenge is through a creative and green housing alternative – laneway homes. These types of small houses are built by homeowners behind a main house.

Adding extra, low-impact housing to neighbourhoods not only provides more living space, but also fits with the City's goals to be the world's greenest City by 2020.

A HOME BEHIND A HOME

Laneway homes are built by homeowners behind their main house in the space where a garage is usually located. They can be built at the same time as a new house or added to a property while keeping the existing home. It's an opportunity for homeowners to build on lots they already own and the construction of a laneway home doesn't require major site redevelopment.

Since these homes are modest in size, they help maintain a neighbourhood's character and appeal. The modest size also lets backyards remain open, green spaces.

Although, laneway homes can't be sold, they do provide ideal accommodations for family members, caregivers or renters. They help increase the supply and variety of housing in areas that have mainly single-family houses.



Laneway houses are modest in size, like the garages they replace. Backyards remain open and sunny green spaces.



For renters, laneway housing is an alternative to a typical apartment, yet more affordable than buying a home.

REQUIREMENTS

A laneway home is generally a 500 – 750 square feet building on a single-family-home-sized lot. The homes are allowed in most of the city's single-family zoned areas.

Laneway housing goes through an approval application similar to one- and two- family homes, yet includes a streamlined design review to ensure neighbourhood compatibility. Guidelines provide direction on roof form and height, setbacks, shading, privacy and overlook, landscaping, durability, and parking spaces.

Laneway houses must maintain a neighbourly relationship with adjacent properties.

All laneway houses must have separated sewer systems, like all new housing, and a fire suppression system.



PRACTICAL AND GREEN

Laneway housing can be a way to keep families together by providing a nearby home for aging relatives, adult children, multi-generation families, or caregivers. Homeowners may also want to live in their own laneway home as they downsize from the main house.

As rental housing, a laneway home can provide some extra income or be a mortgage helper for the property owner. For renters, laneway housing is an alternative to a typical apartment, yet more affordable than buying a home.

Laneway homes also help build sustainable communities. They're compact living spaces that have a smaller environmental footprint. They are being built to meet the highest standards in North America set by the City's Green Homes Program. And they provide more opportunities to live in centrally located neighbourhoods where there are more jobs, services and transit alternatives.

For more information:

vancouver.ca/commsvcs/lanewayhousing/whatsnew.htm



A laneway house is a small house, for family use or rental, built facing the lane at the back of houses.