

October 7, 2025

This letter will confirm that the property located at 171 St. Johns Road 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 October 6, 2025 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 1,446 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.



Single-vehicle laneway house from Toronto's Eva Lanes - www.evalanes.com

On this particular property, due to the very generous lot width (especially for this neighbourhood), there is an opportunity to build the laneway house up to or near the size indicated above, and still leave some room for external parking alongside the laneway house. Then, a proponent might choose to designate more of the laneway house as “living space”, rather than parking garage. And there is an opportunity to build the laneway house right up to the maximum size indicated, while still allowing for exterior pedestrian passage from the back yard to the laneway. Finally, there is also an option here to build the laneway house up to the maximum size indicated above, and leave parking at the laneway, similar to the current configuration.

Protection of one or more mature, protected trees on or adjacent to the property might put some very mild downward pressure on the permitted maximum square footage here, in order to produce a build that protects tree roots and/or canopy.

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. The city also waives development cost charges.

We will further note here, regarding the existing house, that the new EHON (Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods) regulations allow for this property to be legally converted to a 2, 3, 4 or even 5 or 6-plex, provided a proponent can manage the conversion, including meeting egress and minimum building code room size rules. It’s not likely that this house can be converted to a multiplex with unit counts in the higher range noted above, but it certainly can likely be split into two or more living units, as of right, and free from most development charges.

Should you have any questions about 171 St. Johns Road in particular, or the Changing Lanes or EHON programs in general, please feel free to contact me any time, or visit our website.

Martin Steele

Laneway Housing Advisors - www.lanewayhousingadvisors.com
#1801-1 Yonge Street - Toronto, ON M5E 1W7
DIRECT 24/7: 647.847.8128