

A healthy sustainable city must be densely developed, yet avoid concrete canyons and monotonous towers. Vancouver's laneway housing increases density while making traditional neighbourhoods even more attractive and lively.

Laneway Homes: a Creative Solution

THE 21ST CENTURY COACH HOUSE

Laneway housing adds to the supply and variety of housing in single-family areas, while maintaining their character and appeal. Laneway houses are modest in size, like the garages they replace. That lets backyards remain open and sunny green spaces, and lets homeowners build on their own lots, rather than requiring major site redevelopment.

Adding people to a neighbourhood has many benefits. More eyes on the street means better public safety, and more people means more customers, increased business, livelier streets. The approach saves money, too – unlike new subdivisions, city neighbourhoods already have water mains, sewers, power and phone lines.

Laneway housing aims to encourage in modern Vancouver some of the character that makes historic 'old city' neighbourhoods so appealing to visitors around the world: a rich and beautiful mixture of building sizes and street scales, and variety of resident incomes, ages and lifestyles.

BUILDINGS FOR BUDGETS

For existing home owners, laneway housing can be a financially attractive investment that keeps wealth in the community. Laneway houses can be rented, or may be used by family members – a cost-effective way to bring elderly parents, caregivers or adult children closer to home, saving travel time and enriching lives.

For renters, laneway housing is an appealing alternative to the typical apartment, yet more affordable than buying a larger home. Providing more rental opportunities is important, because Vancouver has a low rental vacancy rate, and little new rental housing is being built.



The West House demonstration laneway house is on display at the LiveCity Yaletown site, right next to Vancouver House.



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

HOUSING THAT ENHANCES NEIGHBOURHOODS

Laneway housing is for wide lots that have open access to a lane – which includes nearly all single-family lots in Vancouver. Planning approval will be flexible and streamlined, providing guidelines 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. They may be a little taller than garages, but much lower than existing houses, keeping them unobtrusive. The guidelines treat the the lane as a secondary street, not merely a vehicular route, so the lane becomes a green, safe and welcoming public space.

Trees and green spaces are preserved for outdoor living, urban agriculture, gardening, biodiversity and absorption of Vancouver's famous rainfall.

The guidelines permit a variety of architectural styles and unit designs from studios to two-bedroom units, while explicitly requiring laneway houses to enhance the character of the neighbourhood. Laneway housing will help make Vancouver not only more livable and more sustainable, but also more affordable – a rare achievement.



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