

September, 2012

## DEVELOPMENT IN LAWRENCE PARK

### Guiding Principles

A key pillar of the Vision and Mandate of the Lawrence Park Ratepayers' Association ("LPRA"), established in 1956, is "to consider and promote all matters regarding the collective welfare of Lawrence Park and its preservation as a residential park area." The Development Committee seeks to uphold that objective by operating under the following Guiding Principles.

The Development Committee strives to:

- preserve the "garden suburb" (or residential park) character of Lawrence Park by preserving as much green space in the public realm as possible
- maintain the feeling of a harmonious streetscape
- encourage neighbours to work together with owners/builders to develop consensus on development issues
- support residents at the Committee of Adjustment (C of A) and the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) when negotiations fail and the collective welfare is threatened
- be guided by the results of our surveys of residents

**A disclaimer.** The information in this document is not meant to be planning or legal advice.

### Specific Considerations

The City by-laws are currently under revision in an attempt to bring conformity between the various pre-amalgamation sets of rules. Lawrence Park straddles both the former City of Toronto and North York and the applicable by-laws within those areas differ. For example, it is possible for a house east of St. Ives Crescent to be twice as large as a house just west of the old border, yet not require a variance to the zoning bylaw.

The notes below lay out the LPRA preferences as clearly as possible in such a complicated, and changing, environment.

The LPRA Development Committee will work with neighbours when requested to help understand variance requests and strategies for dealing with neighbourhood

development.

**Gross Floor Area (GFA) – a key consideration in that part of Lawrence Park within the former City of Toronto.**

Homeowners and builders are required to apply for a variance to the zoning bylaw if the gross floor area (GFA) of the planned house exceeds .35 times the lot area. On the issue of size, the LPRA will rarely oppose requests for variances where the GFA (gross floor area) is .50 times lot area or less.

Where permitted, the LPRA favours:

- increasing GFA by adding third-story living space while maintaining a smaller footprint (thus preserving the green space), and
- increasing GFA by adding on to existing homes (renovations).

The LPRA does not see the necessity of exceeding .50 GFA in the case of new builds.

**Maximum Lot Coverage – a key consideration in former City of North York.**

Homeowners and builders are required to apply for a variance to the zoning bylaw if the maximum lot coverage of the planned house exceeds 35% of the lot area. Thus, on a so-called “standard” Lawrence Park lot – 50’ x 150’ – a new two-story home in the old North York part of Lawrence Park can be 5,250 square feet without need of a variance from the existing zoning bylaw. The LPRA opposes a footprint that exceeds 35% as that decreases green space, infringes on the light and privacy of neighbours, and creates a crowded streetscape.

**Side Yard Setbacks/Length of Dwelling.**

The LPRA opposes a plan that extends beyond the length stipulated in the appropriate by-law as that increases the footprint, decreases green space and infringes on light and privacy of neighbours. For the same reasons, the LPRA opposes a plan that encroaches on the required side yard set-backs.

**Height.**

Buildings that exceed the height restrictions under the by-law cause massing that is inconsistent with the neighbourhood streetscape. The LPRA opposes any development that exceeds the maximum height permitted by by-law.

**Finished First Floor Elevation.**

The LPRA strongly encourages new homes to align their first floor with their neighbours to maintain our harmonious streetscapes. The LPRA strongly opposes a design that elevates the first floor to accommodate a garage at grade with the first floor above the garage.

**Lot frontage.**

The LPRA supports a streetscape where new homes are built in line with the homes on either side as contemplated under the by-law. The LPRA opposes development that does not conform to the by-law in this regard.

**Non-Standard Lots.**

The standard lot in Lawrence Park is 50' x 150' which was intended, in the original plan, to ensure a park-like residential environment. However, part of the charm of the neighbourhood is the number of pie shaped and irregular lots that co-exist. The LPRA believes that we should strive to maintain the diversity of housing stock available in our neighbourhood by applying the 'footprint' and GFA by-laws equally strictly to these lots.

**Garage.**

Negative slope driveways (and the resulting below grade garages) are no longer permitted in Toronto, and the LPRA strongly opposes them as dangerous and offensive to the streetscape.