

Committee of Adjustment Minor Variance Rationale – 20 Helen Ave

The owner is proposing the construction of a new single-family dwelling at 20 Helen Ave. The design reflects a modern architectural style that complements the surrounding streetscape. While the proposal is generally compliant with zoning regulations, three minor variances are requested to achieve both design intent and livability. These variances are modest in nature, maintain compatibility with neighbouring properties, and will have no adverse impact on the character of the area.

Lot Coverage

The permitted lot coverage is 23%, while the requested coverage is 25.1%. The proposed building height remains within the maximum of 9.5 m, and the main house footprint is in compliance at 22.9%. The minor overage is solely due to two design elements:

1. A cantilevered front covered porch, which enhances the architectural presence and provides weather protection.
2. A one-storey cabana in the rear yard, designed as an open, covered structure for seasonal enjoyment, with enclosed space for pool equipment and storage.

Front Yard Setback

The required front yard setback is 13.62 m; the requested setback is 10.92 m. The proposed home is in general alignment with neighbouring dwellings. The modern design incorporates a dynamic façade with push-and-pull massing, creating architectural interest and breaking up building bulk. Portions of the home project into the front yard to achieve this design character, resulting in the 10.92 m variance. The overall siting respects the rhythm of the streetscape.

Accessory Structure – Side Yard Setback

The required side yard setback for an accessory structure is 2.5 m; the requested setback is 1.5 m. The proposed cabana is located adjacent to a neighbouring accessory structure close to the shared property line. This placement provides visual screening between properties and preserves the functional and open backyard area. Given that the majority of the cabana is an open-sided covered space, the massing and visual impact are minimal.

Conclusion

The requested variances are minor, maintain the intent of the zoning by-law, and support a high-quality design that is compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood. The proposal ensures appropriate scale, respects adjacent properties, and enhances the overall streetscape. Approval of these variances will allow the homeowner to realize a thoughtfully designed dwelling and landscaped outdoor space without creating any negative impacts to the community.