

Reference REF-26-CASETHERES Issued 22 September 2026 Prepared by Daniel Du

Garden Suite Rear-Yard Context: 17 Theresa Ave

17 Theresa Ave, North York (Willowdale) · Minor variance A0469/25NY, filed 2025-11-05, heard 2026-01-08: Approved · Zone RD (f15.0; a550) (x5) · Corner lot, 17.77 m frontage, 715 m², about 40.2 m deep

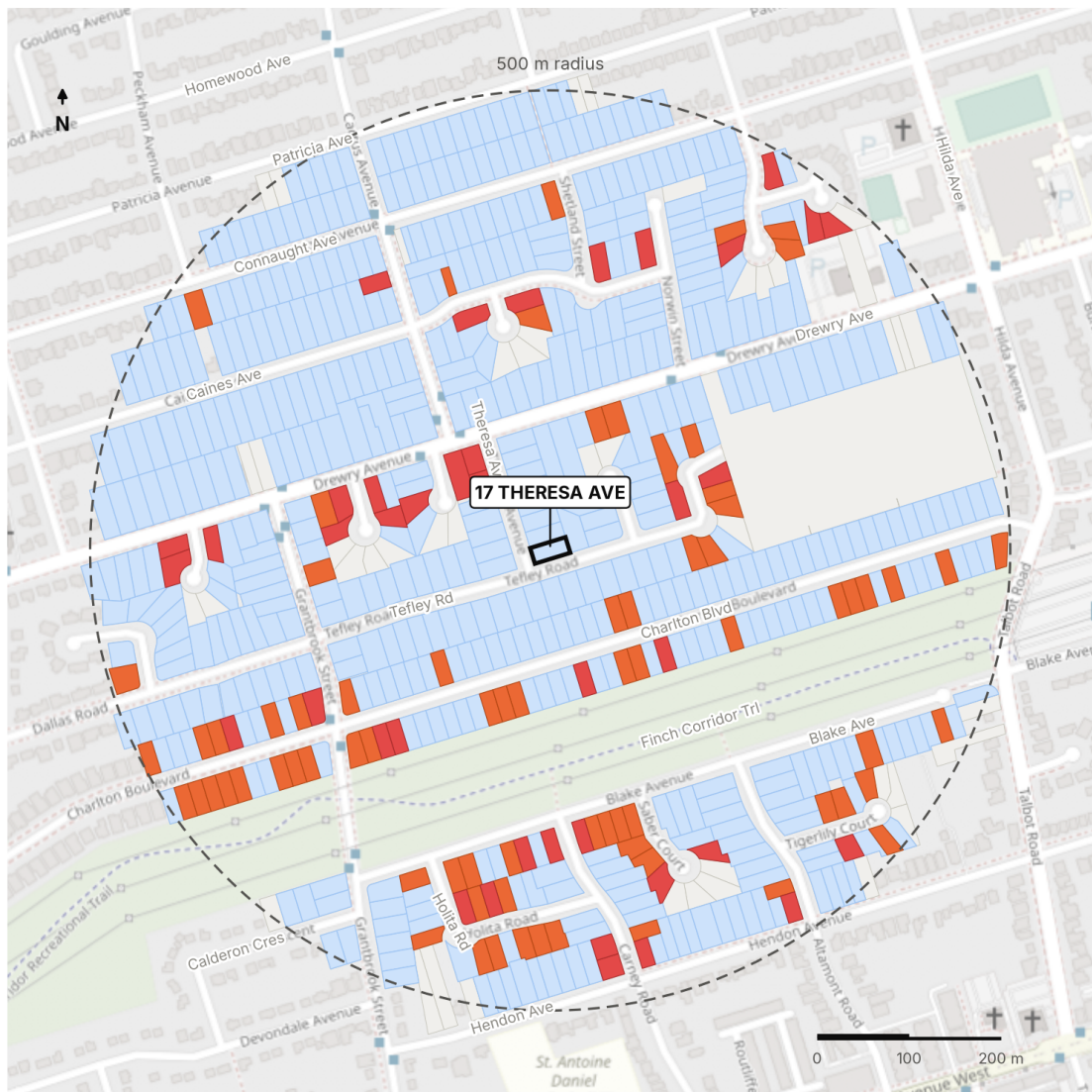
On 8 January 2026 the Committee of Adjustment approved application A0469/25NY at 17 Theresa Ave. The application asked to construct a new two-storey ancillary building, a garden suite, in the rear yard. The record shows no objection. The City closed the file on 29 January 2026. A garden suite is a separate small building behind the house. Frontage and lot area do not decide whether one fits. The open rear yard behind the house is one measurable input. This case study introduces that measurement. We measure the gap between the main house and the rear lot line for every low-rise residential lot within 500 m. The subject sits in zone RD (f15.0; a550) (x5). This is the same zone as the Willowdale demonstration site, so a reader can compare this case with the sample studies directly.

Key findings

1. The subject keeps **23.5 m** of open yard between the house and the rear lot line. Its lot is about 40.2 m deep and the house occupies 9.4 m of that depth. The rear yard is deeper than the rear yard of most lots in the radius.
2. **93.8%** of the 643 measured lots (603 lots) keep at least 7.5 m of open rear yard. 528 lots keep 10 m or more. 75 lots sit in the marginal band and 40 lots (6.2%) fall below the screen.
3. The median rear yard in the radius is **16.0 m** (P25 11.0 m, P75 22.4 m). The median lot depth is 40.1 m.
4. The local record for this building type is thin. The post-2015 record holds 39 Committee files within 500 m, and the Committee approved 28 of the 34 decided files (82.4%). Only 2 descriptions mention a garden suite, laneway suite or ancillary building. One is the subject, approved. The other paired a garden suite with a new dwelling, and the Committee refused it. A wider search that adds accessory structures finds 3 files, 2 approved.
5. 557 of the 661 low-rise lots in the radius share the subject's zone label. The lot-by-lot table lets a reader compare any of them with the subject.
6. The Committee approved without objection. The subject has 23.5 m of measured rear yard. The illustrative 7.5 m screen is met by 603 of 643 measured lots.

Exhibit 1

Each lot shaded by the measured open yard between the house and the rear lot line.



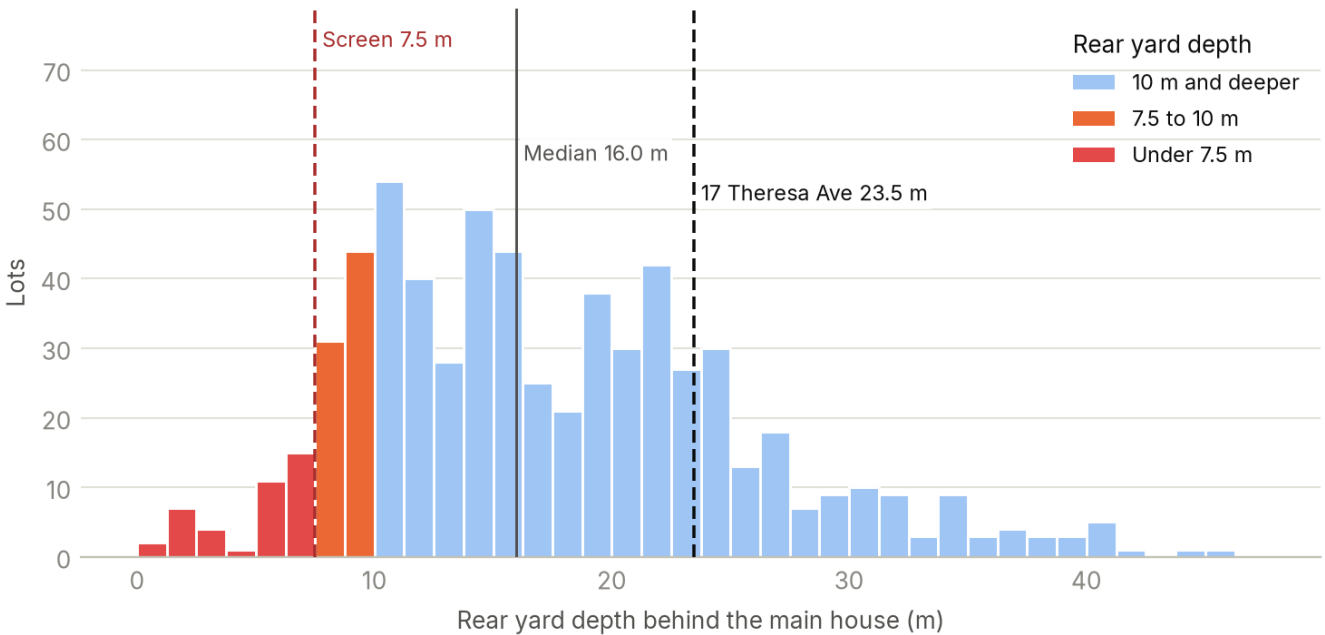
Measured gap between the house and the rear lot line

Blue	Rear yard 10 m and deeper (comfortably above the 7.5 m screen)	Red	Rear yard under 7.5 m (below the screen)
Orange	Rear yard 7.5 to 10 m (marginal)	Grey	No measurable house footprint / non-residential

Source: City of Toronto Open Data, Committee of Adjustment Applications (decision record for A0469/25NY), accessed September 2026; City of Toronto Open Data, Building Outlines with LiDAR heights, Municipal Parcels, Street Centrelines, Zoning By-law 569-2013 layers; Daniel Du analysis

Exhibit 2

The rear yard distribution with the screen, the median and the subject marked.



Source: City of Toronto Open Data, Committee of Adjustment Applications (decision record for A0469/25NY), accessed September 2026; City of Toronto Open Data, Building Outlines with LiDAR heights, Municipal Parcels, Street Centrelines, Zoning By-law 569-2013 layers; Daniel Du analysis

Method

We measure every low-rise residential lot within 500 m from parcel geometry in EPSG:2952. Lot depth is lot area divided by frontage, the planning convention. Frontage is the extent of the street-facing edge, measured along the street.

For each lot with a hosted building footprint we take the largest footprint as the main house, as the height studies do. We build a lot-aligned frame from the street-facing edge, the same construction the setback and building envelope studies use. The rear yard depth is the gap, measured along the depth axis of that frame, between the back of the main footprint and the lot line furthest from the street.

The subject is a corner lot. It fronts two streets. We take Theresa Ave, the addressed street, as the front, so the rear lot line is the line opposite Theresa Ave. We apply the same rule to the other 162 corner lots in the cohort and we keep them in the statistics. The median rear yard is 15.4 m for mid-block lots and 18.2 m for corner lots.

We exclude 9 lots where the largest footprint is a garage or where the footprint sits mostly outside the parcel. Those cases give a gap that does not belong to a house. 9 residential lots have no hosted footprint and appear neutral on the map.

The 7.5 m screen is an illustrative working threshold for a two-storey garden suite plus separation from the main house. It is not a by-law test. The garden suite regulations set their own setbacks, height limits and separation distances, and only a full zoning review applies them to a lot. The 10 m band marks lots that clear the screen with room to spare.

Committee precedent comes from Committee of Adjustment records within 500 m, filed from 2015 onward. We search the description field for 'garden suite', 'laneway suite' and 'ancillary', case-insensitive. The wider count adds 'accessory building', 'accessory structure' and 'accessory dwelling'. The open record is thin for this building type, so the counts are small and we report them as they are.

Source material

Dataset	Custodian	Vintage / access
Municipal Parcels; Street Centrelines	City of Toronto	Accessed September 2026
Zoning By-law 569-2013 layers and overlays	City of Toronto	Accessed September 2026
Topographic Building Outlines (LiDAR heights)	City of Toronto	Accessed September 2026
Committee of Adjustment applications; TLAB appeals	City of Toronto	Accessed September 2026
Application Information Centre feed	City of Toronto	Accessed September 2026 (feed refreshes daily)
Building Permits	City of Toronto	Accessed September 2026
Census 2021 (dissemination areas)	Statistics Canada	2021 Census release
Rental Market Survey	CMHC	Surveys to October 2025
OLT decisions	CanLII	Indexed September 2026

Sources

City of Toronto Open Data: Committee of Adjustment Applications (decision record for A0469/25NY), accessed September 2026.

City of Toronto Open Data: Building Outlines with LiDAR heights, Municipal Parcels, Street Centrelines, Zoning By-law 569-2013 layers.

About this sample

This is a retrospective demonstration study. The Committee of Adjustment decided the application in 2026, and it is a public record. Daniel Du was not retained on the matter. We prepared this analysis after the decision, as a work sample. It shows what the evidence would have looked like if we had prepared it before the hearing. It states no planning opinion. We compute every figure in this report from the cited public datasets. The accompanying CSV contains the full lot-level table, so you can check any number. Our measurements and tolerances follow the Technical Standards, v1.0 (September 2026). This document is available with every engagement and in the study library.