



TRIANGLE TOPICS

Spring 2018 Newsletter Articles

Beach Triangle Residents Association

STAY IN TOUCH

BeachTriangle.com

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hans Looije

It was 20 years ago that I joined the board of the Beach Triangle Residents Association. 33 years ago I was with 30 other Triangle residents protesting Sunday racing in front of the Greenwood Racetrack. Things have changed – the racetrack is gone and there are now few issues that residents will rally around. The most recent issue was bicycle lanes.

The one on-going issue that many residents talk to me about is the great number of empty stores and the gentrification of Queen Street East. Many long-time businesses on Queen have shut their doors.

The developers of the 200 Woodbine condo tell me that Bruno's Fine Foods will be open in August. They also indicated that occupancy for condo buyers was to have been April but the late spring has delayed completion of the building.

Turning to the broader Triangle, now that Bell has completed their fibre installation, it is the turn of Toronto Hydro to upgrade power distribution and replace old hydro poles in the area. The final utility to upgrade will be water and sewage – not yet scheduled.

As you may know, we are losing our local Division 55 police station at Dundas and Coxwell. A new station will be built at Coxwell and Danforth on the site of the TTC yards. The city is now looking for new uses for the old property. I favour converting it into a community centre (we were promised one for the new Woodbine Park, but it never happened).

PUMP-HOUSE PARK

Hans Looije

About 10 years ago, the city started discussions with residents about revitalizing park that surrounds the two Ashbridge's Bay pump houses south-west of Eastern and Coxwell Avenues for sewage treatment. Most of the designs included many tree plantings and getting rid of the baseball diamonds. 10 years later, we still do not have a 'park'.

The first thing to go in was a new rugby field. Next they took out a baseball diamond for a skateboard park. Now they are moving the rugby field because they need the site for a big dig.

The gravity-fed sewer trunk line that comes down Coxwell terminates at the pump houses so the sewage can be pumped up to the plant south of Lake Shore. Once pumped up, sewage is processed before it is pelletized and the liquid waste is pumped a mile out in the lake. Unfortunately, as the city has grown, every major rain storm produces a surge down the system that the plant cannot handle. So the rain water along with the house-hold sewage is allowed to go directly into the lake.

To fix this, the city will increase the capacity by extending the gravity tunnel south of Lake Shore to a new pump house which will divert storm water to a new storm-water treatment facility. All the trees and the berm south of Lake Shore were removed as this was the only space available after the site was severed for the Leslie TTC Barns. The old pump houses are no longer needed and the city is looking for suggestions on future uses.

We lost a lot of trees but I hope we get a cleaner lake in return.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY UPDATE

John Ellis, TBETHS President

The Beach and East Toronto Historical Society (TBETHS) in partnership with the Beaches Library continue to sponsor guest speakers on area topics of historical and heritage interest. In February, Eric Malmsten presented on the history of chess in the Beach. In March, Peter Vronsky presented on Ridgeway 1866, the last battle fought in Canada and Canada's first modern battle. On April 10, Beach Triangle resident, Edythe Gerrard, presented on the Elgin Winter Garden Theatre.



Come to the Beaches Library on May 15, at 7:00 p.m., to hear Bernie Fletcher, on Film and Cinema in East Toronto and the Beach. Free, all welcome!

TBETHS has learned that Toronto Heritage Preservation Services doesn't at this time have sufficient resources to advance the society's nomination of parts of Queen Street East in the Beach as a Heritage Conservation District. TBETHS is developing strategy to try to correct this.

The Society's new and improved website is now ready for viewing (tbeths.com) – let me know what you think of it! A recent addition is a series on the Charles Gates family, and the Newmarket Racetrack and Gates Inn he established just north of Danforth between Coxwell and Woodbine.

The Society also promotes the placement of plaques on historically-significant buildings or sites in the Beach. Last year, TBETHS restored the fallen plaque on the home site of Glenn Gould on Southwood Drive, and is now finalizing a list of sites requiring plaques.

Membership in TBETHS is only \$20 a year (this is the only source of revenue). While attending one of the Society's events, please consider joining.

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Beaches–East York

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LANEWAY SUITES

Hans Looije

Many homes in the Triangle have laneways at the rear with a garage or parking pad. The city is proposing to allow home owners to build an 'in-law' or rental suite on the lot footprint that cannot exceed the dimensions a garage would take up. The suite would be considered part of the main house and could not be severed.

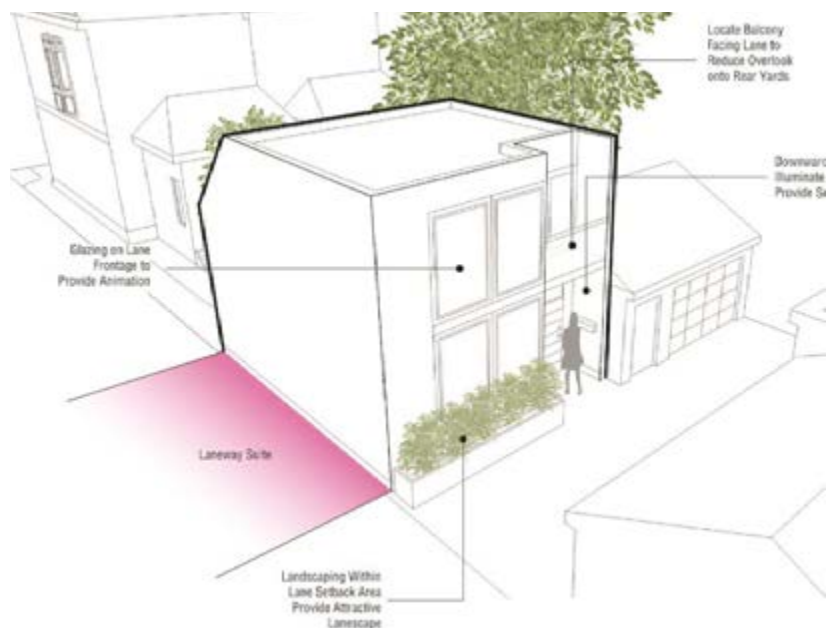
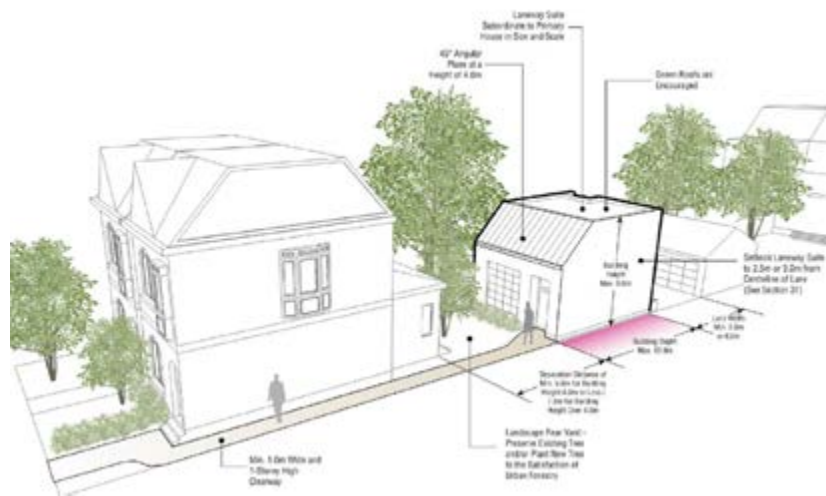
However, not all lots would meet all of the minimum requirements. There must be five meters between the main house and the suite. There must be at least one meter of clear access at the side of the main house to access the suite from the street. For fire access, the front of the main house cannot be more than forty-five meters from a fire hydrant.

All services to the suite will be provided from the main house, including garbage – water and sewage connection to the main house must be buried. The electrical connection does not need to be buried but would need to be 200 amps with electric heat, possibly more if you are keeping a garage with a plug-in for your electric car.

All in, a two-storey laneway suite could cost close to \$200,000 to complete. To make a return as a rental, you would need to charge at least \$1,200 a month. Heating costs would be high as it is a stand-alone structure. A basement suite of a similar size would be much cheaper to build and heat but would not offer the noise separation.

Many detached homes on 25-foot lots in the Triangle could accommodate very nice suites on the laneway. The size of the suite would be more limited for semi-detached homes on 17-foot lots. All the homes backing onto the Jeff Sloan parkette would be ideal locations for laneway suites. However, some home owners would not want to lose their view of the park. Some homeowners on Bailey Lane may be able to build suites on their lots, but many of the garages on the lane have been severed and so do not qualify.

The rules and by-laws for lane-way suites are still being written. Many areas in Toronto already have laneway suites and the new rules will be 'grandfathered' in.



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HOME HISTORY: THREE CEDARS #2

52 Rainsford Road

John Ellis

On November 1st, 1973, my wife, Beverley and our children, Douglas and Amber, moved into 52 Rainsford Road from a two-bedroom apartment in Forest Hill Village. We enjoy “the ceremony of rooms” and determined to make no major renovations – we have left all walls as built.

However, I somewhat envy many of our new neighbours in the Triangle who purchase their heritage homes fully renovated. We had married when quite young, soon had our children, and both had careers that were meaningful but not particularly lucrative. As a result, we renovated as inexpensively as possible and did Do-It-Yourself (DIY) projects as much as possible.

Following is the second of several articles regarding our home, chronicling the foibles, adventures, and history of Three Cedars over the 44 years we have lived here. The first article was about the purchase of the home.

The Plumbing Adventure

I was up first on a Saturday morning. In the kitchen there was a Pyrex coffee pot with a bit of yesterday’s brew still in it so I put it on a stove burner and turned on the heat. Thinking of something I needed from the basement, I went downstairs and noticed an incomplete project on the work bench. Delighting in this quiet time, I did a bit of work on my project and then noticed how quickly time had flown so I headed back upstairs.

I was near the top of the basement stairs when I smelled... what... a burning odour? I raced through the basement door to see smoke pouring out of the coffee pot and brown-black goo at the bottom of the pot. I grabbed a potholder and plucked the pot off the stove. But what do I do now? I musn’t put water in it – that would cool it down too fast, probably breaking it – so I put it down on the kitchen counter. (In those days, we were making do with homebuilt cupboards installed by a previous owner. These crude cupboards had linoleum surface on the counter top held down with glue and aluminum edges.)

With trepidation, I watched the pot and waited for it to cool down. Then I heard a “Crack” and quickly concluded that the metal band around the glass pot was cooling at a different rate than the glass, so I threw a tea towel over it to keep the glass from shattering across the room.

Now here’s where a paranormal event occurred. I saw to my wondering eyes that the coffee pot was rising! Yes, under its tea towel it was definitely rising toward the upper cupboards. I told myself, “No, you’re imagining this. Coffee pots don’t rise in the air – it is scientifically impossible.”

Then I heard a louder “CRACK” and the tinkling of glass as the devil destroyed my floating coffee pot. When I dared lift the tea towel, I found the expected pile of glass shards and the intact metal ring. But as I cleared the mess away, I discovered to my relief that the pot wasn’t possessed by the devil after all.

It hadn’t actually “floated” under the tea towel – the intense heat from the pot had bubbled the linoleum counter top, lifting the pot upward. Now I had a new and much worse problem. The coffee pot would be easy to replace but would I be easily replaced when Bev learned that I had ruined the counter top?

How could a \$1,000 plumbing repair can become a \$10,000 home renovation?

In 1976, I noticed a leak at a pipe joint in the basement, where copper pipe had been joined to original pipe that had been painted. My brother Dick (who could fix anything) was visiting and diagnosed the problem immediately – the copper pipe was connected to iron pipe, resulting in electrolysis and corrosion. All of the iron pipe in the house would have to be replaced with copper.

Having to take out the old plumbing and kitchen sink led to buying a new stainless steel double sink and faucets. Well, and then there was the old painted plywood DIY kitchen counters and cupboards. We went to Hanover Kitchens and bought high-grade Georgian Oak top and bottom cupboards for the east wall of the kitchen, with laminate counters (some years later, we added the same Hanover cupboards to the south and north walls). The new cupboards of course meant that the old linoleum floor had to be replaced. Oh, and the wallpaper was replaced with a heritage pattern.

Having to replace the plumbing in the bathroom resulted in removing the vanity, which was too big anyway. A new, narrower vanity needed to be built and a narrower sink bought. The floor had to be opened for access to the drain, meaning the linoleum had to be torn out and replaced. Some wall tile needed to be replaced. I spent days searching for a matching colour, deciding on one that was close. Sometime after the job was complete, I happened to be in a tile supplier and found exactly the matching colour. Too late: The almost-matching-tile remains in place to this day! Finally, we replaced the garish wallpaper with new heritage paper we liked.

Finally, we had to replace the carpet because the plumber had a habit of not taking off his work boots and the carpet become so stained that we decided to replace it, in the downstairs and upstairs hallways, and on the stairs.

Now, that’s \$10,000 worth of renovations!

Next: The Driveway Adventure



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UNTIMELY DEATH OF SUZANNE BEARD

Edythe Gerrard

On March 24th a service was held at Corpus Christi Church. Approximately 800 people came to celebrate Suzanne Beard's life. The church only seats 650 so people filled all the corners. It was an amazing tribute to a generous, happy person who greeted us always with a smile.

Suzanne was active in the church, served as chair of the Beach Village BIA, was a guide leader and Beach Citizen of the year in 2013. She also made space in her home for refugees through a program offered by Beach United Church. She showed us that generous spirit in so many ways.

As we left the reception we were asked to take a small potted flower. A table full of Tulips, Daffodils and Hyacinth shone with colour and sunshine and hope – just like Suzanne.

She will be missed.

THANKS TO OUR SNOW ANGEL!

Bev and John Ellis sincerely thank our mystery 'Snow Angel', who faithfully shovelled our sidewalks after every snowfall from late December through January and beyond. How did you know that we were terribly ill with a pneumonic flu and, being 'night owls' we would never catch you doing it? You are a great example of Triangle neighbourhood spirit.



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SHOULD WE STAY OR SHOULD WE GO?

Laura Inward

When we first bought our three-storey semi in the Triangle in 2002, we thought it would be our 5-year home. We also thought that it was perfect and, aside from a few minor changes like getting rid of the rotting garden planter on the back deck, we didn't need to make any changes or improvements. Well, that was 16 years ago now and our 5-year home has grown into what is shaping up to be our 20-year home!

And despite our "perfect" home, I am hard pressed to find a wall, a floor or an exterior that hasn't been modified. In fact, we find ourselves again contemplating the age-old question... do we renovate or do we move? And, if we are to renovate, what renovations should we do to maximize the value of our home as we may wish to sell in the future? Yes, we are asking ourselves the same questions my clients ask me every day: Should we stay or should we go?

Well the answer is really "Can the space you currently have accommodate your life comfortably?". Is it too big? Too small? Do you have the parking set up that meets your needs? Are you challenged sharing in a party wall? Loud kids, music, dogs? Do you have the outdoor space and privacy you desire? Space, parking, and shared walls generally can't be changed, and they tend to lead to a decision to "go".

Do you love your location? Tired of your kitchen? Need an ensuite? Want a bit more space but generally love your home? Consider breathing life back into your home with a renovation.

What if you are unsure? What if you are thinking of moving, want to do some updates but you are not sure what you should do? People often ask me "What updates should I make to my home if we are thinking of selling?" Well, my first question is, how long are you planning on staying? If you are a planning on staying seven or more years, do what will make you happy. If you love cement tile - choose cement tile. If you want to get rid of the tub and have a walk-in shower - enjoy!

Why? Because renovations that are more than seven years old will be ready for a refresh when you are ready to sell, so you might as well enjoy your home exactly the way you want it. If you are planning on moving in the next two years, then talking with a designer or realtor to understand what buyers are looking for and where you can get the most return on your investment is important.

Why? Because those renos will really be for the next owner and not for you. You want to make sure that the areas you invest in will result in a higher sale price or you are better off saving the funds and investing in your own new home. If your time horizon is four-to-six years it's a balancing act between the two. Do the renos that fix your problem areas and then be selective about any others.



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It's pretty standard to hear that kitchens and baths bring about the greatest return. However, that doesn't always mean that you need to make these improvements to net the most for you home. Sometimes, paint, staging and great accessories are all you need to get the highest return on investment.

And speaking of investment, how much are Triangle homes worth today? As of the end of April 2018, seven Triangle homes have sold this year - two detached and 5 semi-detached. The average price of a detached home sold this year in the city of Toronto is just under \$1.5 million and the two-storey semi is \$1.06 million. Across the GTA for the month of March, the average price of a detached home is \$1.293 million and a semi \$1.032 million. Of course, every home is different so for a true evaluation of your home speak with a realtor.

If you are thinking about staying and renovating, be sure to get several quotes, ask for references and be sure talk to those former clients. There are some really fabulous contractors in our city. Choosing someone who performs for you will make loving your home for years to come that much easier. If you can stay in your home during the renovation you can avoid the cost of a short-term rental. However, sometimes taking on that added expense makes the renovation that much easier and quicker. If you are thinking of going, talk to your mortgage broker and realtor. You will need to factor in land transfer tax, real estate fees and legal costs.

And Us? We are still unsure whether we are staying or going, but we are doing a basement renovation (the result of a sewer backup - but that is another story!).





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Beach Triangle Residents Association Annual General Meeting

All welcome! Please join us!

**Wednesday, June 1st, 2018, 7-8 p.m.
Corpus Christi Church Hall (Basement)**

Agenda:

- Reports of the Board of Directors, Treasurer, Committee Chairs
- Election of directors for the 2016-2017 year

Seeking Election? Please contact:

- Hans Looije, Nominating Committee Chair
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OR

- Edythe Gerrard, Nominating Committee Secretary
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*Volunteers