

"It's a unique area of law," she says.

But there are many such cases in the United States, she says.

O'Connor points to a [news report](#) about a home developer south of the border that used the law to go after people who had similar homes. According to the article, the firm would tell its employees to drive around to copyright troll, looking for houses they could sue over and promised the workers a cut of any proceeds.

There are copyrights and moral rights attached to a design, O'Connor notes. For example, an architect can own the copyright of the blueprint for a building so if someone tried to copy it exactly, the architect can sue, she says.

If a builder changed a design during the construction process, they may infringe the moral rights of the architect as the design's creator, she says.

O'Connor says the Toronto case raises questions about the law around copyright and homes.

There has been so little litigation around housing copyright in Canada that the law remains somewhat unclear, she says.

"The law is clear around house plans," she says. "But there is little precedent in Canada involving infringement of architectural works.

"The Canadian standard form of agreement for architectural services, between an architect and a client, does not contain any provisions with respect to the copyright of the building itself."

O'Connor says Canadian architects are likely paying attention to the Toronto dispute because it calls attention to the issue of copyright and housing.