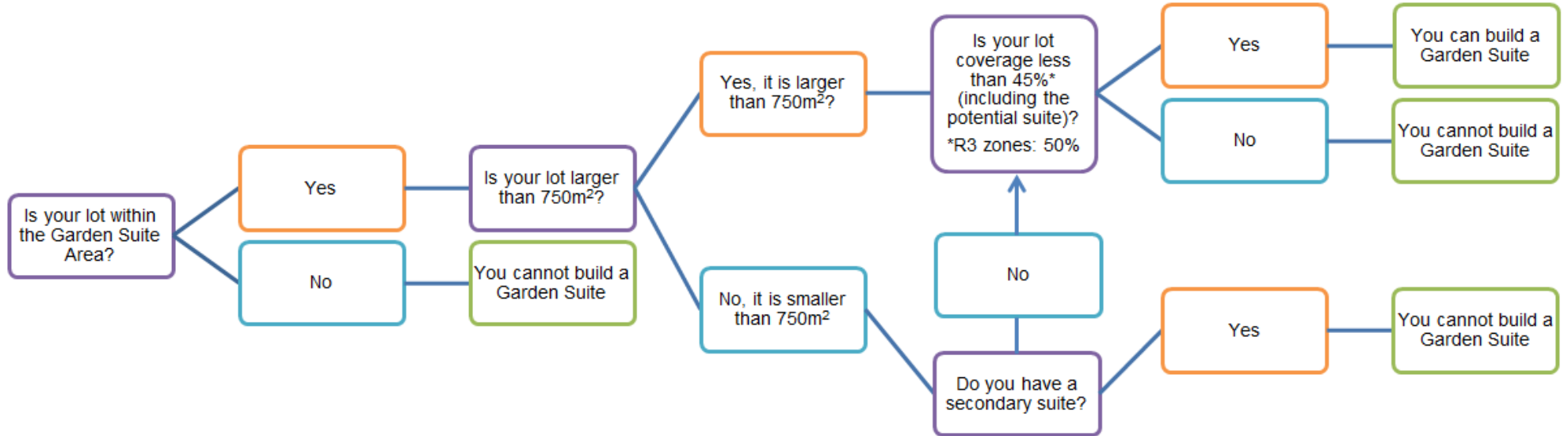


# GARDEN SUITE DEVELOPMENT GUIDE



April, 2015

# IS MY LOT ELIGIBLE FOR A GARDEN SUITE?



*Please note: The decision tree above outlines eligibility for Garden Suites. There are, however, regulations regarding the siting and dimensions of Garden Suites. As such, some lots may be eligible for Garden Suites under the Zoning Bylaw, but the configuration of current buildings on the lot may not support such a dwelling.*

This brochure provides an overview of the steps involved to develop a Garden Suite. This is a general guide only. It is not meant to replace bylaws or other legal documents. Applicants are advised to meet with the Planning Department to discuss their specific development proposal and to consult the relevant bylaws referenced in this document prior to submitting an application.

## **WHAT IS A GARDEN SUITE?**

Commonly referred to as coach houses or laneway homes, Garden Suites are small detached dwelling units that are usually found at the rear of a property. Garden Suites are primarily rental suites and can come in a variety of forms such as combined with enclosed parking or include an outside amenity space. Garden suites are usually accessed through a lane.

## **WHY ARE GARDEN SUITES GOOD FOR GIBSONS?**

Garden Suites use existing infrastructure, providing a sustainable and economical way to increase and diversify the rental housing stock. They provide housing for a variety of people, including those who would like to downsize, relatives of homeowners, aging parents and renters who would like a detached dwelling rather than a condo or basement suite. Rental income also helps to reduce costs for homeowners.

Through the use of Development Permit Guidelines, Garden Suites will be carefully designed to ensure that they will fit with the existing streetscape and atmosphere of the neighbourhood.

## **IS THERE A SPECIFIC AREA THAT GARDEN SUITES ARE ALLOWED?**

Yes. Garden Suites are only allowed in some areas of the Town of Gibsons. This is due to the prevalence of laneways in some areas of the town and the direction of the Official Community Plan. The flow chart shown on the previous page also provides information as to whether your lot is eligible to build a Garden Suite. A map of the designated areas can be found at the back of this guide.

## **WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO DEVELOP A GARDEN SUITE?**

Firstly you must be in the Garden Suite Designated Area to be able to build a Garden Suite. Once you have confirmed this there is a five-step process to developing a Garden Suite:

### **1) Schedule a Pre-application meeting**

Meet with the Planning Department to discuss your ideas and preliminary plans for your Garden Suite. Pre-application meetings help to define the next steps in the process and ensure that all materials are gathered before the application is submitted.

Although the Town does not have an obligation to notify neighbouring properties about Development Permits, it is suggested to discuss your proposal with your neighbours to gain their support for the project.

### 2) Apply for a Development Permit for Form and Character

Development Permits are required for areas designated with the Official Community Plan. Development Permits enable the Town to reinforce the Official Community Plan's objectives and guidelines, to ensure that these areas within the Town reflect the vision of the Official Community Plan. Development Permit Area Number 8, outlines the design guidelines for a Garden Suite. New Garden Suites will follow the design guidelines to ensure a good fit into existing neighbourhoods.

### 3) Plan Check and Referral

The application will be checked by planning staff to ensure that the application is complete and the proposed building conforms to the zoning bylaw.

Staff will also refer the application to relevant departments and external agencies, including the Town of Gibsons Engineering Department and the Gibsons Fire Department.

### 4) Advisory Planning Commission and Council

An application for a form and character Development Permit is reviewed by the Advisory Planning Commission, who provides recommendations to Council. Council will make the final decision for the issuance of the form and character development permit.

### 5) Building Permit

Once a Development Permit is issued, the applicant can apply for a Building Permit. A Building Guide and Application can be found online, or pick up from the Town Hall.

## WHAT MATERIALS DO I NEED TO SUBMIT?

Applicants will submit a Development Permit application to the Town. The application should contain:

- **A completed application** form signed by registered owner(s) of the property;
- **Payment** of Application Fee;
- **Certificate of Title** - must be dated within 30 days of application;
- **Site Plan**: Maximum size 11" x 17" showing the dimensions of the proposed development in metric scale;
- **Survey Plan**: A set of fully dimensioned metric plans prepared by a B.C. Land Surveyor (with 11" x 17" reduced copy) if applicable. Must include:
  - Gross site area, dimensions;
  - All existing structures on the property and distances from lot lines;
  - Location and purpose of existing easements, rights-of-way or covenants on the property; and,
  - Contour Plan from a topographic survey.

- **Development Permit Design Details:** One set of fully dimensioned plans required, plus one set of reduced drawings (maximum size 11" x 17") required plus one set of high resolution digital copies (in PDF, EPS, TIFF or Jpeg format) including:
  - Scaled building sections and elevations, access and parking details showing scaled building design and siting plans to specify building materials and exterior finish, as well as site coverage, heights, setbacks and other relevant data.
  - Preliminary engineering plans for water, sanitary and storm sewer services;
  - Plans and a cost estimate prepared by a Landscape Architect showing existing vegetation and proposed landscaping to screen the Garden Suite from neighbouring properties and the main house.

### **HOW WILL MY GARDEN SUITE BE SERVICED?**

The Garden Suite will generally be serviced from the existing sewer and water lines to the main parcel. Water is already metered and water bills will reflect any additional water use. The property owner will pay for an extra garbage and sewer utility fee once the Garden Suite has been built.

### **HOW IS THE HEIGHT OF THE GARDEN SUITE CALCULATED?**

The height of a Garden Suite is calculated from the natural grade of the site. Natural grade is determined by measuring the elevation at the corners of the lot and calculating an average. The height is measured to the midpoint of a pitched roof, or to the top of a flat roof.

### **HOW TALL CAN MY GARDEN SUITE BE?**

- 1) For properties outside the view protection area, the maximum height for a Garden Suite is 6m.
- 2) For properties inside the View Protection Area, the maximum height for a Garden Suite is 4m.

### **DOES A GARDEN SUITE REQUIRE OFF-STREET PARKING?**

Yes, a Garden Suite will be required to have one (1) off-street parking space (enclosed or unenclosed).

## HOW LARGE CAN MY GARDEN SUITE BE?

A Garden Suite's potential size depends on the size of the lot, the size of the principal house and the amount of lot coverage that already exists on the property:

- A Garden Suite cannot exceed 0.14 times the lot area to a maximum of 90m<sup>2</sup>.
- The Garden Suite cannot exceed the size of the principal house.
- The zoning of the property needs to be taken into consideration when looking at the lot coverage of the property. Lot coverage is defined by the impermeable surface area, for instance, buildings, asphalt driveways and carports. Residential Zones 1 and 2 must not exceed 45% coverage, while Residential Zone 3 must not exceed 50% coverage.
- The Zoning Bylaw also states that a second storey cannot exceed 75% of the footprint of the Garden Suite.

## GARDEN SUITE DESIGN GUIDELINES (EXCERPT FROM DPA NO.8)

The Official Community Plan's Development Permit Guidelines consist of a number of design guidelines to ensure that development is consistent with the Town's vision. The guidelines for Garden Suites ensure that the Garden Suite will be smaller than the main house and that the design of the Garden Suite is complementary to that on the main house and the existing neighbourhood.

Applicants are also encouraged to read through the Town's "Good Neighbour Program" brochure to minimise your Garden Suite's impact on neighbours.

### *General Form and Character*

- Development should fit with the small town character of Gibsons by demonstrating architecture, landscape design and site design that respects the surrounding context.
- Local and natural building materials such as timber and stone are preferred. The use of vinyl siding is discouraged.
- The use of natural colours is encouraged, and the use of a variety of complementary colours as accents is also encouraged to promote visual interest.
- Vary materials and/or colours to distinguish individual dwelling units on the property to reflect an environmentally friendly ("green") image through the design and exterior features of the development. This image may be achieved in such ways as:
  - buildings and driveways should be sited to retain existing trees, vegetation, and other important natural features where possible
  - incorporation of visible "green" landscaping features such as rain gardens and infiltration trenches

- incorporation of visible “green” building features and materials such as skylights, rain barrels, local wood and stone, green walls and roofs, rain gardens, solar panels, recycled exterior materials, exterior elements for window shading
- incorporation of permeable pavement or wheel strips for parking spaces to reduce the visual and environmental impact of driveways
- Design lighting to minimize light spill, glare and sky glow by using non-glare full cutoff fixtures.

### *Building Massing and Street Rhythm*

- To achieve harmonious integration with surroundings, Garden Suites should be sensitive to scale, mass and form of adjacent buildings.
- Garden Suites should be smaller than and complement the scale, mass, built form and character of the principle dwelling unit as well as the neighbourhood.
- Roof ridges should be orientated roughly in the same direction as the slope allowing for overlook and views from uphill properties should be taken into consideration.

### *Relationship to the Street or Lane*

- Garden Suites positioned at the rear of the property should have a clear and obvious approach from the street or lane.
- Provide a clearly identifiable door to the street or lane and public open space.

### *Relationship Between Buildings*

- Garden Suites should be screened from the principle building to create privacy between the two buildings.
- Windows and balconies should be placed to reduce overlook.

### *Solar Orientation*

- Building orientation and massing should ensure that a majority of primary living space receives direct sunlight and therefore is positioned to face towards the South, East or West.
- Garden Suites should be positioned and scaled to minimize the impact of shadows on adjacent developed properties.

### *Parking and Access*

- All buildings should be sited to provide for safe fire access to all dwellings on site from the front yard of the lot.
- Parking should not dominate the proposed Garden Suite.
- If the parking space for the Garden Suite is not enclosed in the building, permeable pavement or wheel strips should be used, to minimize additional impermeable surfaces.

### *Screening and Landscaping*

- Retain the existing landscaping to the extent possible, especially where it can function as a buffer between adjacent properties.
- A usable private open space should be provided for the Garden Suite, either at grade or on a balcony. If on a balcony, this open space should be no less than 5ft deep and no less than 50 ft<sup>2</sup>. If at grade, the open space should be no less than 100 ft<sup>2</sup>.
- Vehicle access should be screened from the view of neighbouring properties.
- A landscaping plan is required showing how the site is landscaped and screened with the goal of ensuring privacy for the Garden Suite and adjacent properties.

### *Other*

- The location of extra garbage and recycling should be taken into consideration, and should be sited away from the primary entrance of both the principle building and the Garden Suite, and should be screened from public views.

For more information regarding Garden Suites, see section 810 of the Town of Gibsons Zoning Bylaw, or contact the Planning Department at 604-886-2274.





# Garden Suite Areas for Residential Zones 1, 2 and 3 Schedule F

File No.: 20140502  
Date: Aug 2014

