

16.5 Multi-unit Residential Development Permit Area No. 4

Purpose

The Multi-unit Residential Development Permit Area is designated under Section 919.1(1)(f) of the Local Government Act to guide the form and character of multi-unit development.

Area

The Multi-unit Development Permit Area is shown as Development Permit Area No. 4 on Schedule E. NOTE: These guidelines do not apply to single-detached or duplex homes.

Justification

The objective of the Multi-unit Residential Development Permit Area designation is to ensure that a high standard of design, landscaping and building form is implemented for any multi-unit residential development. The guidelines are aimed at ensuring that new development is appropriate to its surroundings, and is compatible with surrounding uses or neighbourhood character. The Development Permit guidelines are also intended to ensure that multi-unit residential development is attractive for future residents.

Guidelines

Character: General Design Guidelines

Multi-unit developments should reflect the following design elements which are key components contributing to the form and character of development which “creates” the Gibsons character:

- *Development should promote a small town character by encouraging architecture, landscape design and environmental settings that respect the surrounding context.*
- *Public street edges which are characterized by low (less than 3.5 feet high), neighbourly fences, combined with extensive landscape materials at the private edge.*
- *Residences oriented towards the street with well-defined and welcoming entries at the street edge.*
- *Construction materials should reflect the West Coast Design and Setting.*
- *Each building should appear unique or easily distinguishable from neighbouring buildings.*
- *Simple exterior detailing with earth-tone colours – and primary colours only as accents.*
- *Buildings should be oriented to maximize solar exposure while minimizing shadow impacts on adjacent buildings and common areas.*
- *Common building elements which include:*
 - *pitched roof line*
 - *dormers*
 - *porches*
 - *low building profiles, simple residences, set well back from the roadway and nestled into the landscape*

Changes in the building facades and the massing of buildings add a human scale and visual richness to the development. Long, unbroken building lines and rooflines are to be avoided. New developments should create visual interest by providing variations in building height and massing as follows:

- *The inclusion of elements such as bay windows, dormers, porches and cross gables help mitigate the visual impact of larger buildings.*
- *Steeper roof pitches and stepping down of roof lines to vary the height and rooflines of buildings is recommended.*

- *Offsetting and modulating wall lines along the building elevation to allow smaller building sections to stand out. The overall building footprints on the site shall be modulated to avoid monotony and repetition and to avoid wall-like massing.*

Building Scale and Massing

To compliment adjacent single-detached neighbourhoods and reduce impacts of building massing, the following guidelines shall apply:

- *Larger developments should be separated into smaller groups or clusters of units to promote a sense of belonging and neighbourliness and to maintain a residential scale and image.*
- *Townhomes should be designed in clusters of 25 units or less based on a single entry point.*
- *Apartment-style developments based on a single entry should have 60 units or less.*
- *Very large single buildings more than 70metres in length, or townhomes with more than six joined units are to be avoided.*



Respect for the existing streetscape

Building Wall Design

The general character of the development should reflect aspects of Gibsons' semi-rural coastal setting by using natural and typical local wall materials including wood siding, wood shingles, stucco, stone and brick.

The number of materials used on the building exterior must achieve a balance between achieving visual interest and complexity without overpowering the surroundings.

Roof Design

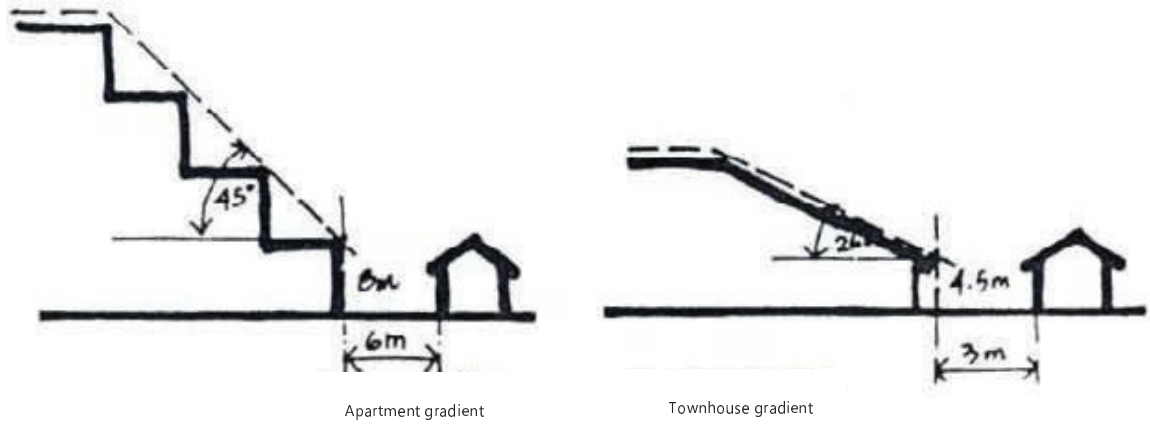
The design of the roof of multiple-unit residential dwellings has a major influence on the overall character of the development. The "roofscape" is a key design feature, which is of critical importance to Gibsons, especially areas of lower Gibsons, because of its potential to be viewed from above (as a result of the varied topography of Gibsons). The following guidelines shall apply:

- *The roof form should have a sloped appearance large areas of flat roof will not be acceptable in low or medium density multiple unit residential developments except in the case of a green (vegetated) roof.*
- *The roof form should be modulated and broken up with dormers, skylights and other architectural features. A continuous unbroken ridge line should be avoided.*
- *Roof lines should include steep pitches typical of west coast building forms.*
- *Secondary hipped or gabled roofs are preferable to flat roofs or mansard roofs, or segments of pitched roofs applied to the building's edge.*
- *Roofing materials may be metal, cedar shakes, concrete tiles or asphalt shingles.*

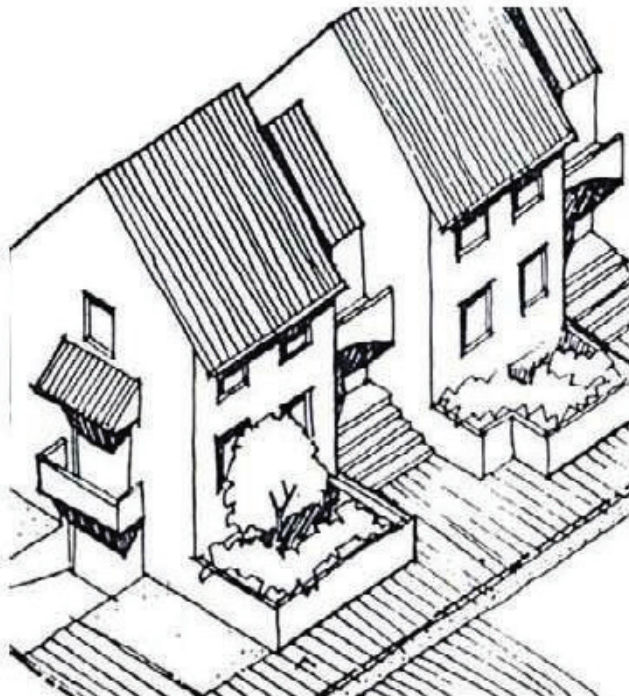
Integration with Surrounding Areas

- *New developments should reflect elements of the existing neighbourhood and the prevailing residential streetscape. This may require recessing of parking areas, creation of gabled entries or porches, and highlighting individual front door entries to be similar to those on neighbouring lots. For larger developments, this may require separating the units into smaller components.*
- *New residential buildings should not in general, be much larger than the surrounding buildings. A graded transition in the building height is desired to ensure adjacent properties are not confronted with a "wall". Additional setbacks may also be required to achieve this transition.*
- *Roof lines should be stepped down from building ends to reduce the apparent mass of the building.*
- *The end units of new developments at road edges should not be more than one to two stories in height to establish a single-detached residential appearance in multi-unit residences.*
- *All lots must have direct access to the larger pedestrian circulation system via park corridors, pathways, and/or sidewalks.*
- *Developments on sloped properties should be terraced with the natural slope of the land, and should avoid the use of high [over 1.2 m (4 feet)] retaining walls.*
- *New developments should be oriented to best utilize natural light, southern exposure, and views of adjacent natural features, and to minimize loss of views and shadows cast on adjacent uses. This may require increased setbacks or terracing of buildings.*

Gradual Change in Height



Front entrances create a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood



Sense of Place; Development Identity

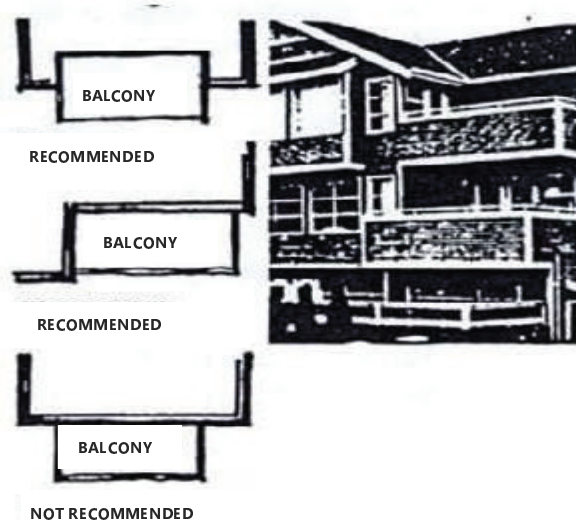
With the increased density of multi-unit housing; creating a sense of “place”, of neighbourhood, and of privacy within the development are importance design features. New multi-unit developments will be reviewed for features which help create these qualities. The following guidelines apply to new developments:

- *The design of developments into smaller areas where residents share smaller parking areas, pathways and other common areas creates a sense of belonging within a larger development.*
- *Multi-unit homes should provide a street orientation through features such as major entry points to provide a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. Street level landscaping creates privacy within the development. Parking areas should be recessed to allow the pedestrian entry to predominate.*
- *Townhome projects on major arterials may have private rear yards facing the street, but should create a streetscape of entrances within the private roadway or courtyard area.*

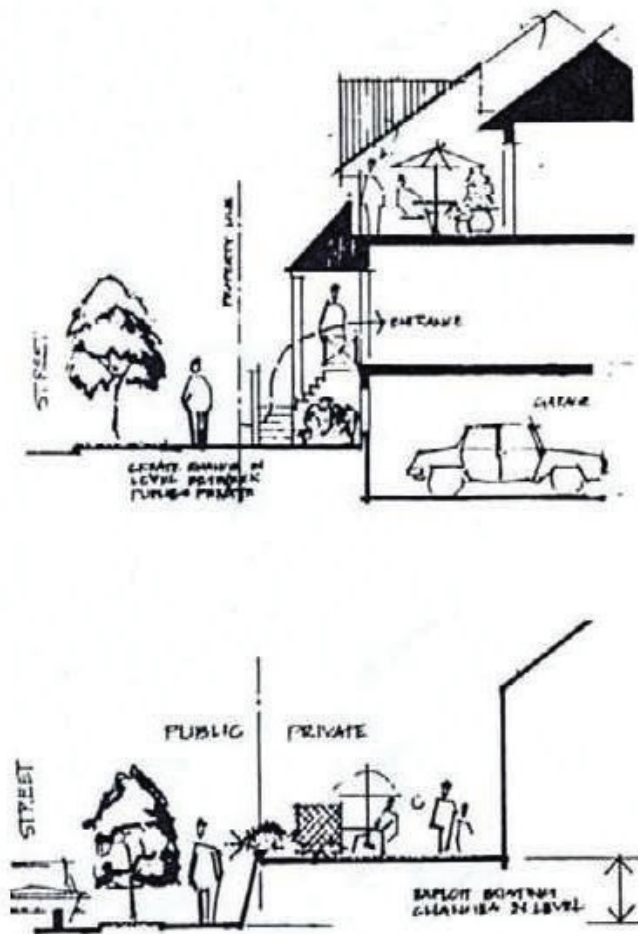
Amenity Space; Private Areas

The location and size of outdoor spaces such as patios and balconies have considerable effect on the sense of privacy. New residential buildings should be designed to provide privacy for each resident; through windows, private outdoor spaces or balconies, or through changes in grade or elevation as follows:

- *An outdoor living space of minimum 5 m depth for townhouses and minimum size of 37 m² (400 square feet) is recommended.*
- *Apartments should have a minimum 3 m depth terrace or balcony, sufficiently large to create a usable outdoor “room”. Balconies should be at least half enclosed in order to give the occupant privacy, security and weather protection.*
- *Dwelling units to be “clustered” in smaller groups to create more resident interaction and neighbourly surveillance.*
- *Changes in grade can provide for private areas between street edges and the development units.*



Balconies to create outdoor rooms



Changes in grade separate the public and private areas

Projects should provide meaningful and appropriate amenity space areas, and may consist of indoor or outdoor recreation areas, landscape features such as benches, gardens or plazas, children’s play areas, social meeting rooms, or specific recreations features such as tennis, swimming or walking trails. These common areas contribute significantly to the quality of life in multi-unit developments, where private yard areas are not available for these activities.

Landscaping

Landscaping and open space areas are an essential part of the livability of multi-unit residential developments, and their integration into neighbourhoods. The following guidelines refer to the landscaping surrounding the development, and the common areas within the development:

- *All Development Permit applications must provide a professional landscape plan.*
- *Trees should be planted and maintained by the property owners along street frontages of new multi-unit developments to create a mature tree “boulevard” type of streetscape. (Spacing will vary by species used, however, a rule of thumb for tree spacing is a minimum of 8.0 metres.) This may be supplemented by other lower ornamental plantings.*

- *Native or hardy landscape species are preferred over exotic species; a mix of coniferous and deciduous species is recommended to provide effective landscaping through the seasons. Willows, bamboo and other invasive species are not recommended.*
- *Trees, or a combination of landscape and architectural features shall be used to define the gateway or entrance to a development. Landscaped entrances however, should be low-level for better security at entrances.*
- *Clusters of trees, ponds, or other landscape features should be used within the development to create a meaningful common area. Central areas or courtyards should be usable and inviting to residents as a meeting place, rather than random plantings of grass and shrubs. Seating areas and appropriate lighting should be provided within these common areas. Landscaping should also create a sense of enclosure and privacy for these spaces.*
- *Large areas of uncharacteristic materials such as bark mulch, gravel, river rock and ground cover are to be avoided, and should be combined with a variety of plant materials.*
- *Wherever possible, natural vegetation should be retained or enhanced as a feature of the development. This is particularly important where natural features such as streams or steep slopes are a component of the development.*
- *All public and semi-public areas should be landscaped, including entrance driveways, areas surrounding parking spaces or structures.*
- *Additional landscaping depth, denser vegetation and noise barriers such as earth berms should be used where a development abuts a major roadway.*

Fencing

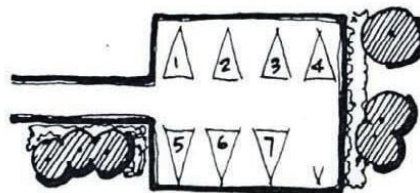
Fencing design for multi-unit residential areas should provide privacy to the individual units or developments without creating solid walls along the street edge. The following guidelines respecting fencing and landscape shall apply:

- *Fences along streets should not provide a continuous wall or high barrier to the street, but should be lower profile and broken at intervals to provide pedestrian linkage and views to the street.*
- *Any fencing located along a street edge should not exceed a length greater than 20 metres without a substantive break or jog.*
- *Fencing should not exceed a height of 1.2 metres within any part of the required front yard setback.*
- *Fencing along the street edge should be supplemented with low profile landscape plantings.*

Parking Areas and Vehicle Access

Parking and driveways entrances should be designed to minimize impact on surrounding uses, the pedestrian character of the street and the internal appearance of the development, according to the following guidelines:

- *Walkways and surface parking areas should be well lit and located in an area which is observable by residents.*
- *Entrances to parking garages should be located in areas visible from habitable room windows and well lit.*
- *Where possible, parking areas should be located in underground structures. Small groups of parking spaces throughout the development, located near to entry doors are preferable to large, central parking areas.*



Small, screened parking

- *Developments should be designed to prevent parking areas, carports or garages from dominating the internal open space areas; parking should be recessed from the main building edges.*
- *Parking areas should be landscaped and screened, but sufficiently visible to provide security to residents and vehicles.*
- *Distinct, visible visitor parking areas should be provided near the entry to the development.*
- *Site design should provide for emergency vehicles, moving vans and service vehicles, and should locate this use to minimize noise impacts on residents and adjacent uses.*

Signage and Lighting

Signage and lighting shall meet the following guidelines:

- *The size, siting and style of signage shall not be obtrusive or present a cluttered image.*
- *Entry signs shall be placed at or below eye level and shall be integrated with landscaping or other feature.*
- *Site lighting of all developments should be designed so that it avoids "light-spill" upon adjoining low density residential lands and of the night sky.*

Central Recycling Area

New developments are encouraged to provide residents with Central Recycling Areas suitable for the disposal of a variety of materials.

Stormwater Management and Drainage

For developments in the Upper Gibsons Neighbourhood Plan area the following guidelines regarding stormwater management apply:

- *Building foundations must be chosen and designed such that they do not require a subsurface connection to the municipal system. They must be designed for on-site drainage, or day-lighting into the fronting municipal surface conveyance system.*
- *No subsurface habitable floor space (MBE) is permitted because it would affect drainage infrastructure requirements and cost.*
- *Roof leaders / downspouts shall drain to ground surface on-site. No direct piping is permitted to the municipal drainage system.*
- *Lot grading shall ensure drainage away from the building and towards the municipal drainage system, or adjacent greenbelts. Where required, side / rear yard swales shall be provided to prevent cross lot drainage.*
- *Where on-site stormwater detention is required, both surface and sub-surface techniques may be used. The provision of stormwater detention does not reduce the requirement for Best Management Practices (BMP). Runoff must first be treated / managed by BMP techniques prior to entering the detention facility, according to applicable standards under the Subdivision Bylaw.*