OUTRIGHT DUPLEX
HOW-TO GUIDE

The following information is provided to help you better understand the expectations of the exterior design regulations for duplexes in applicable RS, RT, and RM District Schedules of the Zoning and Development By-law. It is intended only to complement the By-law and does not form part of the By-law. Always refer to the By-law for complete information.

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This guide pertains to “outright” duplexes in the following zones:
• RS-1, RS-1A, RS-1B, RS-2, RS-5, RS-6, and RS-7.
• RT-5, RT-5N, RT-11, RT-11N
• RM-7, RM-7N, RM-7AN, RM-8, RM-8A, RM-8N, RM-8AN

Duplex:
• Is permitted for new construction only
• Can be strata-titled
• Cannot be built in conjunction with a Laneway House

In RS zones, duplexes:
• May include secondary suites or lock-off units on lots with a site area of 334 m² (3,595 ft²) up to 511 m² (5,500 ft²);
• Must include at least one secondary suite on lots with a site area of 511 m² (5,500 ft²) or greater.

Duplexes are intended to provide additional housing options for families in RS zones. It is not required nor expected that duplexes on standard 4,000 ft² lots (33ft by 122ft) will provide secondary suites in all cases, noting that the permitted floor area of 0.70 FSR or 2,800 ft² may be more suitable for two family-sized units without suites. Family-sized units have two or more bedrooms.
A duplex should be located and designed to preserve existing trees, including those on neighbouring properties and City property. Relaxations for setbacks and parking requirements may be allowed in order to retain significant trees. A permit is required to remove a tree. Replacement trees are required as per the Protection of Trees Bylaw.

All utility connections should be located outside of tree protection areas.

An arborist’s report should be prepared as part of the site analysis to evaluate the utility connections and the duplex location. You may arrange a consultation with one of the City’s landscape development specialists at the Development and Building Services Centre.
PARKING

Parking spaces may be contained within an accessory building (garage), which can not exceed 48 m² (516 ft²) with 2 spaces. Additional parking spaces must be surface parking.

Surface parking material must be permeable. Examples of permeable materials include permeable pavers, gravel, grass-crete or a mix of concrete wheel paths and landscape strips. However, for the purpose of calculating the amount of impermeable site coverage, these materials are considered impermeable, except gravel.

The requirement for a fully permeable space may be waived to facilitate accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The minimum required number of parking spaces is:

- 2 spaces for duplex
- 3 spaces for duplex with secondary suite(s)
- Lock-off unit: no additional parking requirement
PARKING

On sites with no lanes, internal parking spaces may be located on the ground floor of the duplex. In such cases, the driveway and garage door as viewed from the street should be minimized; landscape setbacks and upgraded surface treatments should be considered in order to maintain a “residential” look at the front yard.

Driveways should be tapered to provide minimal width at the property line where possible (See Crossing A below).

A 4.3 m (14.0 ft) wide garage could be considered. With this design, the parking space needs to be deeper than 7.3 m (24.0 ft) to facilitate proper manoeuvring. The Planning Department is prepared to exclude from FSR the extra depth necessary for manoeuvring.

Garage doors appear to be set into the building massing, rather than as a base alien to the house on top.

Garage door is narrow with robust details.
PARKING

A 1.0m (3.0ft) landscaped setback is typically required adjacent to the side property line for surface parking spaces and driveways.

Depending on the site width, the landscape setback may be reduced as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot width</th>
<th>Landscaped setback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 12.2m (40.0 ft)</td>
<td>n/a. Vine planting is acceptable instead. Plans should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provide a fence detail showing vine supports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2m (40 ft) – 15.2m (50.0 ft)</td>
<td>0.6m (2.0ft)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 15.2m (50.0 ft)</td>
<td>1.0m (3.0ft)</td>
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</tbody>
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SECONDARY SUITE, LOCK-OFF UNIT

Secondary suite means a smaller dwelling unit within a larger one-family dwelling or two-family dwelling. It must have a separate external entry door and may have shared internal door connecting the units. One parking space is typically required for each secondary suite; however, for duplexes with secondary suites, a minimum of 3 parking spaces is required even when two suites (i.e. 4 dwelling units in total) are provided.

Lock-off units are small, self-contained units with an external door and a shared internal door which can be locked, enabling both the principal dwelling unit and suite to be independent (e.g. used periodically for long-term rental), or unlocked and used as part of the principal dwelling. Unlike secondary suites, lock-off units do not trigger parking space requirements and are not separately addressed.

Each secondary suite must be of minimum 37 m² (400 ft²). There must be no more than one secondary suite for each dwelling unit.

Lock-off units must be at least 26 m² (280 ft²) and a maximum 29.7 m² (320 ft²). There must be no more than one lock-off unit for each dwelling unit. The maximum unit size will help to distinguish lock-off units from secondary suites, which are intended to be larger and provide longer-term rental housing.

In the case where the secondary suite or lock-off unit is located in the basement, the floor level must be no more than 1.5m (5.0ft) below finished grade.
1. Entrances

**Entrance to principal dwelling units**

The duplex main entrance doors are required to be visible from the street. This is intended to ensure recognizable, easily identifiable entrances for residents, visitors, deliveries and emergency services.

For mid-block sites, for side-by-side duplex units, placing two entrances on the front facade at the main level is acceptable.

For corner sites, one main entrance must face the front street and one must face the flanking street to provide activation of both street frontages.

For front-to-back duplex units, the legibility of the rear unit entrance may be improved as follows:

- The rear entry may be fully open to the street. In a case where that is not practical, the rear dwelling unit should have an approximately 1.8m (6.0 ft) side yard setback to reveal at least half of the rear unit’s entry.

- Where the side walls of the front and rear dwelling units align and an entry “notch” is proposed for the rear dwelling unit, a canopy may be provided, with a separate entry arbour at the front property line. Canopies may project into a side yard to the same amount as an eave projection (refer to the regulation for eave projection into required yards).

- In order to maintain the visibility of the rear dwelling unit, projections such as chimneys or bay windows should not block the view to the rear dwelling unit from the street.

The requirement that each entrance faces the street may be waived where it unduly compromises the overall design including the functional layout of the units. For example, for front-to-back duplexes on lots of 10m (33.0 ft) or less in width, a rear-facing entrance to the rear unit may be considered. In such cases, the location of the rear unit should be clearly identified with a well-designed entrance walkway that may incorporate a landscape border, upgraded surface treatments, and an entry trellis or gate.
EXTERNAL DESIGN REGULATIONS

1. Entrances

Entrance to secondary suites and lock-off units

Entrance to suites and lock-off units should be secondary in prominence to the primary duplex unit entries.

Entrances to suites and lock-off units are typically from the rear, and may be through sunken patios. Patio entrances to suites may be located in the front yard and should be minimized in size and screened with landscaping and avoid the use of guardrails where possible.

For example, sunken patios more than 0.6m (2.0 ft) below grade should include terraced landscape planters at the border. Planter terraces should be no more than 0.60 m (2.0 ft.) in height to avoid a requirement for a guardrail. Careful attention to design of the doorway, windows, and steps down to the entry is necessary to ensure that it does not detract from the dominance of the main entrances, yet provides a functional entry and outdoor amenity space for the secondary suite.
2. Covered Entry

Main entrance to each unit of the duplex should be covered for weather protection.

A covered entry is not required to have posts or a traditional porch appearance.

A covered entry must be provided with a minimum width and depth of 1.8 m (6.0 ft). A shared entry is acceptable, but it should have a usable seating area for both units (i.e. 2x 6ftx6ft).

The entry should be one floor in height. Two-storey entry or porticoes are not acceptable.
3. Roof Form

All roofs except for dormer roofs must be hip, gable or a combination of both forms, and must have a minimum slope of 7:12 to maximum 12:12, and must not exceed 10.7 m (35.0 ft) in height. Spring height should be no more than 7.9 m (26.0 ft) above the base surface.

Where a half storey is proposed, it should be clearly seen from the street as being contained within the roof form.

The Director of Planning may consider flat roofs or shallow roofs for Near Zero Emissions Buildings, such as a certified Passive House or Net Zero Energy design, or an equivalent standard, as well as for high quality and innovative design. You may consult with a development planner for design review before submission.

Mansard roofs, or pitched roofs with a flat top are not acceptable.

Not Acceptable Roof Examples

- Flat roof with 2.5 storeys
- Sloped roof 7:12 eaves more than 7.3m (24ft) above base surface
- Shallow roof (less than 7:12) building height more than 7.9m (26.0ft)
- Shallow roof with decorative eaves
- Eaves higher than 0.6m above half storey level
- Mansard roof
- Eaves higher than 0.6m above half storey level
4. Dormers
Dormer roofs must be gable, hip or shed in form and have a minimum slope of 4:12;
The maximum total width of dormer roofs provided on a half storey above the second storey must not exceed 50% of the width of the elevation of the storey below.
All dormer walls (except where it provides headroom over a stair) should be set in a minimum of 0.6m (2.0 ft) from the wall below.
The eave height of dormer roofs should be as low as practical to reduce the perceived scale of the partial upper storey.
Dormers facing the side yard should be set at least 3.0m (10.0 ft) away from the wall face of the front elevation to maintain the prominence of the main roof as viewed from the street.

5. Outdoor space and inset balconies
Private outdoor space should be provided for each unit, and should be oriented to take advantage of sun and views wherever possible while ensure visual privacy from the street.
Where on-grade open space is limited, above-grade covered balconies or sleeping porch should be provided. These elements should be contained within the principal roof form, or incorporated as an integral part of the building design. The inset balconies will be excluded from FSR if it is no more than 1.8m (6.0 ft) in depth.
EXTERNAL DESIGN REGULATIONS

6. Windows

Exterior windows in a secondary suite or lock-off unit must have:

a. a minimum total glazing area of 10% of the total floor area of the room, in each of the kitchen, living room and dining room; and

b. a minimum total glazing area of 5% of the total floor area of the room, in all other rooms, except bathrooms and laundry rooms.

7. Materials

For design considerations, the finishing materials of duplex should be durable, sustainable and create less waste. Materials that perform well over a long period of time also increase the affordability of the dwelling.

Materials should be used in a way that is true to their nature. For example, stone facing should be used as a foundation element, and as the base of columns, but should not be used as a facing on upper levels with no clear means of support below unless also used as a facing material on the lower level.

The same materials should be used in consistent proportions on all facades and not just on the street face. Materials should carry around corners and terminate at logical points to avoid appearing as a thin veneer or ‘false front’.
QUESTIONS

For permitting information and site-specific inquiries, please contact the Development and Building Services Centre at csg.enquiry.centre@vancouver.ca, or call 311 or 604.871.7611.