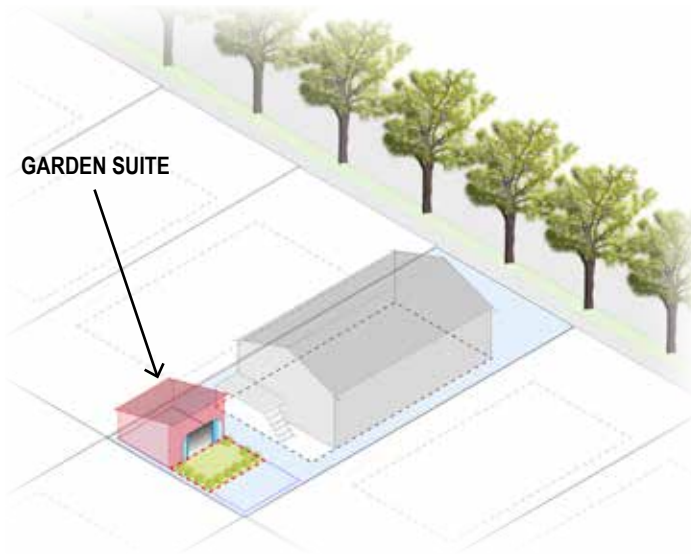


THE GARDEN SUITE POLICY AND GUIDELINES

To be used in consideration of rezoning and development permit applications

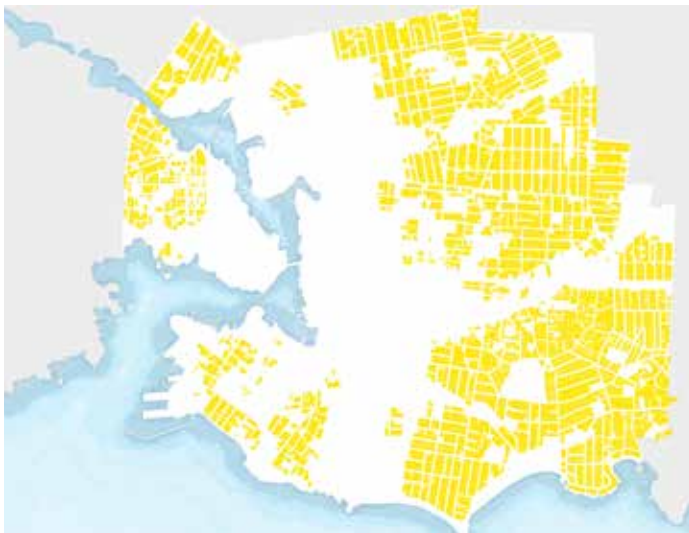
1. What is a Garden Suite?

A Garden Suite is a small, ground-oriented, unit located in the rear yard of a single family detached dwelling.



2. Where can a Garden Suite be located?

Eligible locations for a Garden Suite in Victoria include all properties that contain only a single family detached dwelling and are appropriately zoned. The proposal must meet all requirements of the Garden Suite Policy and should incorporate the design guidelines contained in the Policy. Properties that already have secondary suites are not eligible.



POTENTIAL GARDEN SUITE SITES: The properties shaded in yellow above include sites with the appropriate zoning designation to consider Garden Suites. The graphic is illustrative only.

3. Requirements

The requirements for a Garden Suite to be considered are:

EXISTING LAND USE	Single Family Dwelling
EXISTING ZONING	R1-A Rockland Single Family Dwelling; R1-B, Single Family Dwelling; R1-G Single Family Dwelling (Gonzales); R-2 Two Family Dwelling; R-J Low Density Attached Dwelling; R-K Medium Density Attached Dwelling
LOCATION	Rear yard only
HEIGHT (MAXIMUM)	3.5 m
SETBACKS (MINIMUM)	0.6 m from all lot lines 2.4 m from existing dwelling
CORNER LOT SETBACK ON FLANKING (SIDE) STREET (MINIMUM)	Equal to the existing setback of the primary structure to the flanking street on the adjacent property
REAR YARD SITE COVERAGE (MAXIMUM)	25% maximum
TOTAL SITE COVERAGE (MAXIMUM)	30-40% maximum, based on existing zoning requirement
MAXIMUM TOTAL FLOOR AREA	37 m ² (approximately 400 ft ²)
BUILDING CODE	All BC Building, Plumbing, and Electrical Code regulations apply for residential uses.
STRATA TITLING	Strata titling of properties with Garden Suites is prohibited.
ACCESS	An unobstructed pathway must be constructed and maintained between the public street and the Garden Suite entrance, with a minimum width of 1 m for private and emergency access.
ROOFTOP PATIOS	Interior or exterior structured access to the Garden Suite rooftop is prohibited for all purposes including patios.
PARKING	There are no additional parking requirements for the creation of a Garden Suite but the primary dwelling should have a minimum of 1 parking stall which may not be located in the front yard.
SECONDARY SUITES	Secondary Suites are not permitted on a lot with a Garden Suite.
SERVICING	Servicing to the rear yard must be located underground.

4. Design Guidelines

Character

Quality in design, high quality architectural expression, and unique individual identity of a Garden Suite are encouraged. However, the Garden Suite should relate to the principal building on site in terms of materials, roof form, and general architectural expression. The intent, however, is not to create a “miniature version” of the primary building.

Modular and pre-fabricated housing represents a potential opportunity for homeowners to reduce the construction cost and to reduce construction time and disturbance of neighbours. Therefore, these construction methods are supportable. However, the finished structure must be undifferentiated from on-site and adjacent existing structures in terms of quality of construction and the appearance of permanence in addition to meeting all the BC Building, Plumbing, and Electrical Codes.

Privacy

Windows oriented towards adjacent properties are strongly discouraged to maintain levels of privacy with adjacent neighbours and in some cases, may be prohibited by Building Code regulations. Exceptions for windows oriented towards adjacent properties may be considered if design features are provided that mitigate privacy concerns. For example, windows with opaque glass that permit light into the garden suite but prevent overlook into adjacent yards, or other design solutions may be acceptable.

Rooftop outdoor space is prohibited to protect privacy of neighbours.

Design measures should be taken to mitigate overlook concerns on adjacent properties in the case of garden suites on “plus sites” that have additional floor area or building height.

Minimize Shading

Consideration should be given to minimize shading on adjacent private open space while maximizing contiguous on-site open space. Typically, this means:

- locating the Garden Suite in the southern portion of the rear yard
- locating the highest portion of a pitched or arched roof at the interior of the site, with the roof sloping down towards the nearest lot line
- orienting the ridge so as to minimize shadow on adjacent lots

Siting

Where possible, the Garden Suite should be located to be at least partially visible from the street.

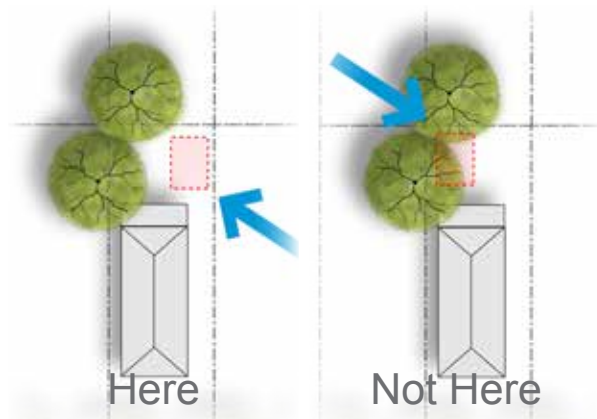
In the case of corner lots, lots with laneway access or double-fronting lots, the Garden Suites should be directly oriented to the adjacent public right-of-way. This means

including front doors that are directly oriented to the street or laneway windows directed towards the street or laneway and landscape that reinforces the location of the entry.

On corner lots, the Garden Suite is sited as close to the side street as possible to create a consistent streetscape pattern.

Respect Mature Landscape Elements

Siting should respect mature trees both on site and on adjacent properties. This means locating the Garden Suite so as to minimize impact on a tree’s root system. A certified arborist report may be required as part of the application when a tree on the subject site or a neighbouring lot may be affected.



Hierarchy of Siting Considerations

In the event that a Garden Suite cannot be sited without adverse impacts to either mature landscape or shading on adjacent properties, the following hierarchy of policies apply:

1. protect mature landscape on adjacent properties
2. protect mature landscape on subject property
3. minimize shading on adjacent properties.

Care should also be taken to minimize the visual impact on adjacent properties. However, this does not mean that the Garden Suite will not be completely unseen from adjacent lots.



Windows

Windows should be maximized along those façades oriented to the interior of the site. On corner lots, lots with laneway access or double-fronting lots, windows should be oriented to the street or laneway.

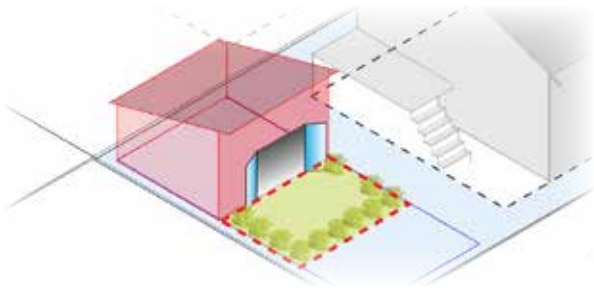
Rooftops

Rooftop outdoor space is prohibited to mitigate privacy concerns of neighbourhoods. Rooftop energy initiatives such as solar panels or solar hot water heating may be considered.

Green roofs are encouraged as benefits include reducing stormwater runoff, improving water quality, reducing urban heat island effect, conserving energy, creating wildlife habitat, and prolonging the life of the roof membrane. An added benefit is that the green roof may soften the appearance of the Garden Suite from neighbouring lots.

Usable Outdoor Space

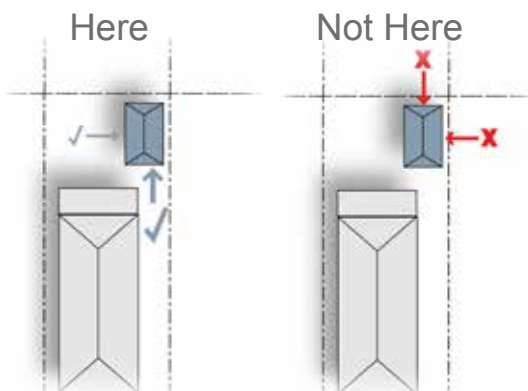
Design and orientation of the Garden Suite should ensure a direct connection with usable outdoor space. A minimum of 15 m² of semi-private outdoor space should be clearly associated with the Garden Suite. This may be achieved through plantings or changes in surface materials. Hard-surfaced areas are supportable but should include permeable pavers, be decorative in nature, and must not be usable as a parking space



Entries and Addressing

Unit entries should be oriented to the street. When this is not practical, a secondary preference would be to locate the entry to the interior portion of the site.

A Garden Suite must be assigned a unique, individual address. This will occur at the building permit stage. An address sign for the Garden Suite must be located at a clearly visible location along the street frontage.



Landscape

Native plant species and drought-tolerant plants are encouraged in side yard areas, particularly within narrow setbacks between the Garden Suite and adjacent lots where access for maintenance and upkeep is limited.

Heritage

The City will request that all properties identified on the Heritage Register will receive Heritage Designation when a Garden Suite is introduced to a property. Where a property may have heritage value but has not been identified or included on the Heritage Register, the City would encourage applicants to consider heritage designation as they pursue approval of a Garden Suite.

In cases where an existing accessory building is heritage designated, a Heritage Alteration Permit is required and the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* apply.

In cases where a new Garden Suite is located on a property where the primary structure is protected by heritage designation or is identified on the heritage register, then a Heritage Alteration Permit is not required for construction of the Garden Suite but the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* should be considered.

Parking and Driveways

No additional parking is required for the Garden Suites but the primary dwelling should have a minimum of 1 parking stall which may not be located in the front yard. Any proposed changes to the parking layout and driveway should include permeable paving materials.

In situations where an existing parking space is displaced by the creation of the Garden Suite, the new parking location should occur within the existing driveway in order to prevent an increase in paved surface but should be located beyond the front face of the primary building as per general parking requirements.

Garbage and Recycling

The proposed site plan should consider the location of extra garbage and recycling bins and screen these from view. These should not be located near the primary entrance of either residence.

5. Exceptions

The requirements for Garden Suites are intended to be consistently applied to all eligible sites. However, given the variety of lot sizes and configurations in the City, natural site conditions unique to each lot, and the possibility that older, existing accessory buildings may not comply with current accessory building requirements, staff may consider recommending approval of a Garden Suite in the following situations.

Exception #1: Existing Garage Conversions

In situations where an existing garage or accessory building is located on site, a Garden Suite may be located within a structure that exceeds the standard requirements provided that:

- the structure was built with all appropriate permits and has not been altered
- the structure is fully upgraded to meet all Building Code requirements for residential use

In the event that a new structure is required to replace the existing legal non-conforming accessory building, the new structure must not exceed the footprint, height, or roof form as defined by the existing structure. Careful documentation of this should be prepared and submitted to the City prior to demolition in order to ensure an opportunity to verify the scale of the existing structure.

Exception #2: "Plus Sites"

Properties that meet the following criteria are considered "Plus Sites":

- a corner lot
- a lot with two street frontages
- a lot with rear yard laneway access
- lots greater than 557 m² (6,000 ft²) in total area.

On "plus sites", there may be an opportunity to increase the floor area of a Garden Suite up to a maximum of 56 m² (600 ft²). The additional floor area may be considered supportable if it can be demonstrated that it would not have a negative impact on privacy, shading, or overlook of or onto neighbouring properties.

Additional floor area may be achieved either by:

- increasing the floorplate - though not to a level exceeding site coverage requirements - to accommodate all floor space on a single level.
- exceeding the height requirement in order to incorporate a loft space with a floor area no greater than 50% of the building footprint, provided that interior floor to ceiling height of the loft space is kept minimal (approximately seven feet) and careful attention is given to prevent excess shading on neighbouring lots.



POTENTIAL GARDEN SUITE "PLUS" SITES: The properties shaded in dark yellow in the graphic above indicate potential Garden Suite "Plus" Sites where an additional floor area may be considered. These properties have the appropriate zoning designation for Garden Suites and are either located on a block corner, between two streets, or between a street and a laneway. The graphic is illustrative only.

Exception #3: Protected Trees

In situations where the siting of a Garden Suite is severely limited by the presence of protected trees as described in the Tree Preservation Bylaw, a height variance may be considered to accommodate a sleeping loft provided that:

- the maximum floor space of the Garden Suite does not exceed typical requirements
- the floor area of the sleeping loft does not exceed 50% of the ground floor area
- design measures are taken to mitigate shading or overlook concerns on adjacent properties.

6. Note to Applicants

- Confirm with City staff what type of development application or permit is required.
- It is advisable to discuss the proposal with your immediate neighbours.
- Applicants are encouraged to review a preliminary proposal with the City's Engineering and Public Works Department to better understand potential servicing costs and with the City's Planning and Development Department to better understand the rezoning requirements and process. The applicant should also consider aspects related to providing utilities to the Garden Suite including phone, cable, and internet.