

A GUIDE TO GARDEN SUITES

Development Services Division

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This guide is not a bylaw. It is a guide prepared to assist you in understanding the process of creating a garden suite in the City of Pitt Meadows. For details and legal documents, you must consult relevant bylaws and provincial legislation.

Updated March 2015

Introduction

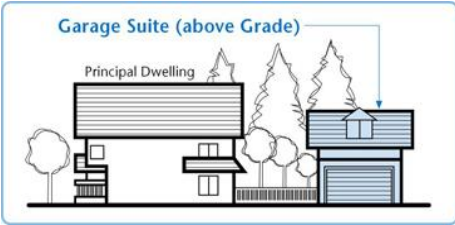
In October 2011, City Council adopted a new zoning bylaw that allows garden suites in certain zones and subject to certain conditions. Council's primary goals in allowing garden suites are to encourage affordability of housing, to encourage code compliance and to ensure that suites are safe for the inhabitants.

This guide is intended to familiarize residents and property owners with the new regulations and to describe the process for creating a new garden suite.

Please review *A Guide to Infill Housing* and *A Guide to Building Permits* for additional information.

What is a Garden Suite?

A garden suite (also known as carriage house, coach house, granny flat, and laneway housing) is a secondary dwelling unit within a detached accessory building in the rear yard. A garden suite may be at grade (one storey) or above a detached garage (two storey). A suite should contain a bathroom, a kitchen with cooking facilities and at least one bedroom.



What are the Requirements for Garden Suites?

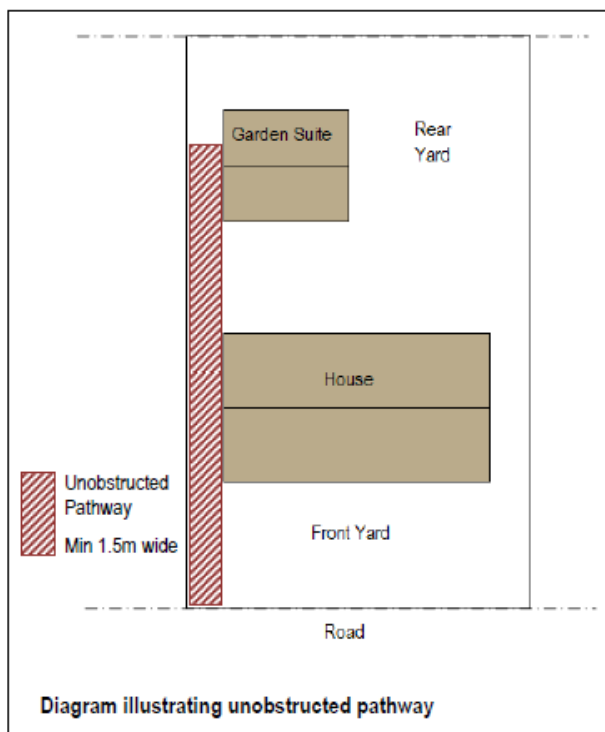
All garden suites shall comply with the following regulations:

- Garden suites are permitted in the following zones:
 - ✓ Agriculture: A-1, A-2 (lot area less than 2 acres)
 - ✓ Rural Residential: RR-1, RR-2, RR-3, RR-4, RR-5
 - ✓ Urban Residential: RS, R-1 (lot area greater than 557 m²)
- Only **one** (1) suite per fee simple lot.
- The suite must be between 33 m² (355 sq ft) and 90 m² (969 sq ft) in size and occupy no more than 10% of the lot area (20% in A-1, A-2 zones).
- One additional off-street parking space is required for the suite tenant.
- Suite must be connected to municipal water, sewer and drainage utilities.
- All home-based businesses, except child care programs, may be carried out within a garden suite.

- A garden suite may be permitted on lots larger than 2 acres in the A-1 and A-2 zones with the ALC's approval for a non-farm use.
- Garden suites are not permitted in conjunction with a bed & breakfast, a boarding, or a secondary suite use.
- Property owner must reside in either the main house or the suite or retain a property management company based out of Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge or Port Coquitlam to manage tenancies of both units.
- The suite must be located in the rear yard with the following setbacks and height:

Minimum Setback	RR, RS, R-1	A-1, A-2
from the house	2.4 m	2.4-50 m
front lot line	-	7.5 m
interior lot line	1.5 m	3.0 m
exterior lot line	3.0 m*	7.5 m
rear lot line	2.4 m*	7.5 m
watercourse/ditch	-	15 m
Maximum Height	4.0 m*	6.0 m

*Note: the minimum exterior or rear setback is 4.5m and the maximum height is 6.0 m if suite is above a garage with road access in the RR or RS zones.



- An unobstructed pathway 1.5 m wide from the front lot line to the garden suite is required for safety and rescue access. (see diagram below)

What do I Need to Know Before I Submit an Application?

For a garden suite to be legal, it must meet the following criteria:

Zoning Regulations – the proposed suite must meet all the regulations as set out in the zoning bylaw. Please determine the existing zone of the property to ensure a garden suite use is permitted. If your property is governed by a Land Use Contract (a separate bylaw) you will have to amend the bylaw to permit a suite on your property only.

Development Permit Guidelines –properties that are in the Development Permit Area #11 Infill Housing shall adhere to the guidelines as set out in the Official Community Plan (OCP).

Building Code – the proposed suite must comply with Section 9 of the BC Building Code which is for residential uses.

Flood Control Level – determine if your property is within the designated floodplain. Construction of habitable space below the required flood control level is not permitted without the approval of the designated Approving Officer in the form of a restrictive covenant and a written report by a qualified geotechnical engineer stating it is safe to do so.

Registered Legal Documents – determine if there are any restricted covenants registered on title for your property. Some properties may have a no-suite covenant. This document must be discharged to have a legal suite (considering all other criteria are met). For a complete list of documents registered on your property, request a title search at the Land Titles Office.

Application Process

Property owners wishing to construct a garden suite follow the application process below. For those with a garden suite existing before October 4, 2011 start at Step 4.

STEP 1: Preparation

Garden suite applications should be well prepared and researched before they are submitted. Property owners should gather property information and be aware of the policies and regulations that will affect their application. Development Services staff is available to discuss the proposal and to provide advice on submission requirements and procedures.

Development Services staff is available to discuss the requirements for your garden suite, as each situation may differ.

STEP 2: Development Permit Application

Apply for a development permit by submitting the following items:

- Completed **application form**, signed by the registered owner(s);
- Application **fee**;
- Letter of Authorization** signed by the property owner(s) if the applicant is applying on behalf of the owner(s) (*staff will only deal with the applicant*);
- Certificate(s) of Title** within five (5) days of application;
- Applicant Checklist** for Infill Housing;
- Two (2) **set of plans** drawn to scale in 11" x 17", and PDF files of the drawings showing the:
 - location of existing and proposed buildings with setbacks (site plan);
 - location and dimensions of all municipal easements, right-of-ways registered covenants and underground and surface utilities;
 - floor plans and elevations of proposed buildings; and
 - location and layout of parking areas.

Applications will be circulated internally to appropriate staff (i.e., Building, Engineering, Fire) and possibly to the Advisory Design Panel for comment.

The Director of Operations & Development Services has authority under the Development Permit Delegation Bylaw to approve or reject applications for garden suites.

If approved by the Director, a Notice of Permit will be registered with the Land Titles office on the title of the property. The Permit will remain on title and will be binding on all subsequent owners.

The development permit will lapse if construction does not substantially begin within two (2) years of the DP issuance date. After this time period, a new application must be submitted.

Please refer to ***A Guide to Development Permits***, ***A Guide to Infill Housing*** and ***A Guide to Building Permits*** for more info.

STEP 3: Building Permit Application

Once you receive your development permit, you may apply for a building permit by submitting the following items:

- Completed building permit **application form** signed by the property owner;
- Application **fee**;
- Signed copy of the **Owner's Acknowledgement of Responsibility** form;
- Certificate of Title** within thirty (30) days of application;
- Two (2) **sets of plans** drawn to scale that illustrate the following:
 - Site Plan
 - Floor Plans
 - Building Elevations
 - Building Cross Sections;
- Letters of Assurance** from the Building Code signed by the registered professional(s) (*if required*);
- Home warranty insurance (HPO)** as outlined in section 13.2 of the Building Bylaw; and
- Additional information** may be required to establish compliance with the Building Code and municipal bylaws.

A Building Inspector will evaluate your plans with respect to the BC Building Code. Essential inspections are required before concealing or burying any building component. Water and sanitary services shall be connected to the existing house connections.

Once the Building Inspector approves the final inspection, the garden suite may receive an Occupancy Permit.



STEP 4: Suite Licence Application

Apply for a suite licence to register your suite. An approved suite licence ensures the property owners live on the property and demonstrates that your suite has been inspected and meets safety standards. Garden suites with a valid licence pay the licensed suite service fee in addition to the utility fees for single family dwellings. Licences are valid until December 31 of each year and must be renewed annually.

Decommissioning a Suite

A garden suite may be decommissioned by removing the cooking facilities. An electrical (or gas) permit from the BC Safety Authority must be obtained to remove the stove, hood fan and wiring (or piping). Please contact the **Licensing Officer** at **604-465-2445** to confirm the removal of cooking facilities.

Common Questions

What determines if a garden suite is legal?

An approved Suite Licence.

Can a mobile home be used as a garden suite?

No, but a modular home with prefabricated pieces that require assembly on site is acceptable.

Where do I get electrical and gas permits?

Please contact BC Authority for electrical and gas permits. The City's Building Inspectors require a copy of these permits to issue an occupancy permit.

Can I have a garden suite in the ALR?

Yes, on lots smaller than 2 acres, provided that all the requirements are met. If your lot is larger than 2 acres, you must receive approval from the ALC for a non-farm use.

If I have an Additional Farm House, can I have a garden suite as well?

Yes, only with approval from the ALC.

Does my garden suite get a separate mailing address?

Yes, a separate and unique address for garden suites is recommended for fire and emergency services.

Do I get a second garbage can?

No, all single family properties, with or without a suite, are allowed **only 1** 120L garbage can. Extra garbage bag tags can be purchased for \$5 at City Hall or Shopper's Drug Mart in the MeadowVale Shopping Centre.

Application Fees *(subject to change)*

Type	Fee
Development Permit	\$400
Building Permit	1% of the construction value
Suite Registration	\$40 <i>(onetime fee)</i>
Suite Licence	\$10 <i>(annual renewal fee)</i>
Covenant Discharge	\$300
Covenant Modification	\$225

Service Fees *(subject to change)*

Suite	2015 Fee
Licensed	\$285.20
Unauthorized	\$1078.25

The cut-off date to qualify for discounted utility fee is the property tax due date. Suites that are licensed after the tax deadline, qualify for the discounted rate for the following year.

If you are not using your suite and wish to remove the unauthorized suite service charge from your property tax notice, you must decommission your suite by the property tax due date.

Financial Assistance

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) offers a Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) for qualifying homeowners. For more information, please contact CMHC at 1-800-668-2642.

More Information?

Development Services

Ph: 604-465-2428 Fax: 604-465-2404

www.pittmeadows.bc.ca

Land Title Office *(New Westminster)*

Ph: 604-630-9630 Fax: 778-312-0333

www.ltsa.ca

Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation

Toll Free: 1-800-668-2642

www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Fraser Health Authority

Maple Ridge office: 604-476-7000

BC Safety Authority

Toll Free 1-866-566-SAFE (7233)

Coquitlam Office 604-927-2041

www.safetyauthority.ca or www.thinkpermit.ca