Missing Middle Design Guidelines

CITY OF VICTORIA

Publishing Information

Title: Missing Middle Design Guidelines
Prepared by: City of Victoria
Sustainable Planning and Community Development Department

Status: Adopted January 26, 2023

Contact details: The City of Victoria
Sustainable Planning and Community Development Department
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6
E: planning@victoria.ca
T: 250.361.0382

Cover photo credit: Stuart Howard Architects Inc.

Diagrams and photos used in this document are for illustrative purposes only.

Duplexes consist of two units, which may be organized side-by-side, front to back, or up-down. Depending on zoning, each unit may have a suite.

Houseplexes consist of multiple residences within a single structure, designed to be compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood and appearing similar in form to a large house.

Townhouses can be expressed in many forms. The ownership format may be stratified, rental, or fee simple. The photos above are examples of townhouses oriented to the street.

Stacked townhouses (above, left) allow for up-down units within a townhouse-style building. Each unit typically has its own access at grade, and ground-level units may provide accessible living. Some townhouse developments, where supported by zoning and city policy, may be organized in more than one row around a common courtyard (example above, right).

Missing Middle Design Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to encourage high quality design of "missing middle" housing forms to enhance neighbourliness, livability, social vitality and create a good fit while supporting a diversity of building forms and designs.

Application

Missing Middle housing forms include townhouses, houseplexes and duplexes with two or more units, and other housing forms where the majority of units have direct access to the outside.

These guidelines apply to corner townhouses, houseplexes and heritage conserving infill as permitted by zoning. They also guide other forms of missing middle housing envisioned in the Official Community Plan (OCP), Neighbourhood Plans and the Missing Middle Housing Policy.

These residential developments can be designed in different ways, in response to Victoria's variety of block patterns, lot sizes, configurations, and topographies.

Structure

The guidelines are structured into two parts:

Part A consists of **General Guidelines** applicable to all types of missing middle housing forms, including those permitted by both zoning, and policy as envisioned in the OCP for Traditional Residential neighbourhoods.

Part B consists of **Typology Specific Guidelines** that are intended to supplement and be used in addition to the general guidelines in part 1.

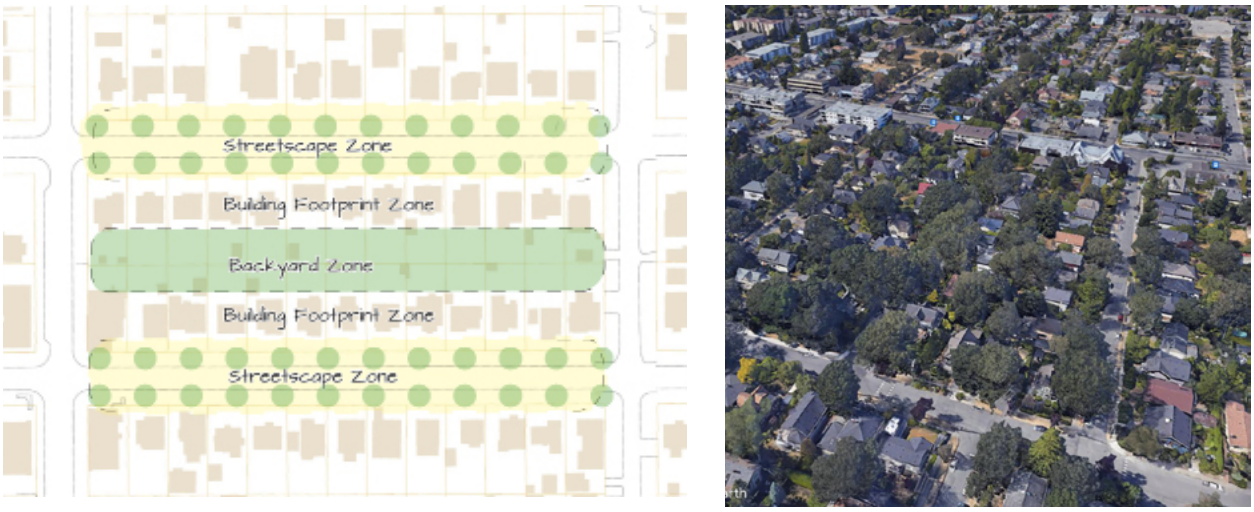
Context and Analysis

Victoria's Traditional Residential areas contain a variety of housing types, including single-detached houses as well as a mix of houseplex and townhouse style developments. Some areas have distinctive styles, having been built during a specific period often before World War 2 (particularly during a building boom in the early part of the 1900s), while others reflect a post-World War 2 character. Many areas display a variety of styles as lots in-filled over the years, and houses range from simple 1-2 storey bungalows and ranchers to larger homes and mansions up to 3 storeys in height.

Victoria has embraced diversity within this context, with policies endorsing secondary suites, garden suites, the conversion of existing houses to multiple residences, and infill housing including townhouses and houseplexes. Many larger character houses have been successfully converted into multiple rental or strata residences. Victoria's Traditional Residential areas are generally characterized by buildings incorporating front entryways, porches, patios, primary windows and other design elements oriented towards the fronting public street.

Victoria's Traditional Residential areas contain a variety of housing type, from 1 storey ranchers, to 2 storey bungalows, to larger, 2-3 storey heritage homes, often mixed within a single block (diagram above, precedent photos below)

Victoria's Traditional Residential areas are also characterized by the presence of front and back yards, with tree-lined streets. An important proportion of Victoria's urban forest and tree canopy is found in Traditional Residential areas, both as street trees and on private property. These areas also display a diversity of topography which may include varied soil types and rock outcrops. Some fall within important ecosystems, such as Gary Oak meadow. Another common element of Victoria's Traditional Residential neighbourhoods is that most (though not all) lots lack laneways, unlike other cities of a similar age in North America.



Victoria's Traditional Residential areas are also characterized by the presence of front and back yards, with tree-lined streets, and a generally defined building footprint zone.

Neighbourhood Evolution and Missing Middle

The diversity of housing forms and design that have evolved over the past century provide an important foundation to inform continued neighbourhood transformation and evolution. Building on this foundation, the introduction of new Missing Middle housing forms are an important opportunity to advance established housing, sustainability and liveability goals.

Diagram showing Missing Middle housing forms integrated with existing housing stock within a block, reflecting a diversity of building heights and forms



Victoria examples of houseplexes (left and centre) and corner townhouse (right)

These design guidelines, together with the associated zoning, are premised on achieving opportunities and benefits, and mitigating impacts, associated with the introduction of Missing Middle housing forms. This includes: locating buildings and parking to maintain the existing pattern of green back yards; orienting buildings positively towards public streets to support social vitality; ensuring use of high quality materials and human scale design features to create visual interest along the street; minimizing overlook of adjacent homes; ensuring liveability though the provision of useable outdoor amenity spaces, and; providing sufficient planting area to support the urban forest.

Diagram showing Missing Middle housing forms integrated with existing housing stock along a street

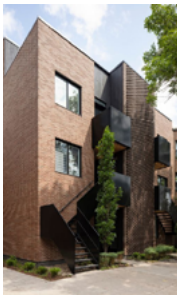


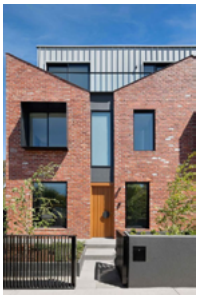










Objectives

Site Planning: To site and orient buildings to maintain the pattern of landscaped front and back yards, that makes a positive contribution to the streetscape and that achieves a more compact and efficient residential building form while maintaining liveability.

Orientation and Interface: To ensure new development is oriented and designed to present a friendly face to the street, enhancing public streets, open spaces, street vitality, pedestrian activity, safety, and 'eyes on the street';

Accessible Design: To encourage a high standard of accessibility in site, building and landscape design to be more inclusive of all users.

Building Form and Design: To achieve energy efficient buildings of high architectural quality with human-scale proportions that are oriented towards and are compatible with the existing and planned future context. Human scale refers to the use of architectural features, details and site design elements that are human proportioned and clearly oriented towards pedestrian activity. Building articulation refers to the many street frontage design elements, both horizontal and vertical, that help create an interesting and welcoming streetscape.

Neighbourliness: To ensure a good fit with existing adjacent buildings to minimize impacts on neighbours, and contribute to an enhanced, varied, and evolving streetscape and neighbourhood context.

Parking, Servicing, and Access: To sensitively integrate parking, circulation and access to minimize impacts on public and private open spaces; to site and screen mechanical equipment and service areas to minimize impacts on neighbours and the public realm.

Materials: To use materials which are high quality, durable and weather gracefully.

Open Space Design: To enhance the quality of open space, support the urban forest, provide privacy where needed, emphasize unit entrances and pedestrian accesses, provide amenity space for residents, reduce storm water runoff, and to ensure that front and rear yards are not dominated by parking.

Part A: General Guidelines

1. Site Planning and Open Space Design

Objectives: *To site and orient buildings to maintain the pattern of landscaped front and back yards, that makes a positive contribution to the streetscape and that achieves a more compact and efficient residential building form while maintaining liveability.*

To enhance the quality of open space, support the urban forest, provide privacy where needed, emphasize unit entrances and pedestrian accesses, provide amenity space for residents, reduce storm water runoff, and to ensure that front and rear yards are not dominated by parking.

1.1. Residential buildings should be oriented towards adjacent public streets and open spaces with entryways clearly visible, and with direct access from the fronting street. Front yards and landscaped rear yards should both be provided in developments.

1.2. For properties that include significant natural features (e.g. significant trees, topography, rocky outcrops), buildings and landscape should be sited and designed to respond to natural topography and protect significant natural features wherever possible. Strategies to achieve this include but are not limited to alternative siting or clustering of buildings to avoid disturbance of natural features, and clustering of parking to reduce pavement on the site.

1.3. For some locations and lot sizes, providing the space needed for the main building and satisfying the zoning's required minimum open site space may limit the achievable surface parking spaces. Where zoning allows for the substitution of Transportation Demand Management measures in place of some required parking spaces, this approach is strongly encouraged. Where a variance to the zoning requirements is requested, the variance should focus on reducing the parking requirement, rather than reducing the required open site space.

1.4. For properties that include buildings of heritage value (Heritage Designated or listed on the City's Heritage Register) alternative siting of new buildings or additions may be considered as part of rezoning to facilitate heritage conservation. Where Heritage Conserving Infill is proposed as permitted under zoning, emphasis should be placed on maximizing landscaping within setbacks and other required open space areas.

Example of a mid-block houseplex sited and designed to maintain the pattern of green front and back yards and oriented positively to the street.

Example of corner townhouses with individual units accessed from and facing the sidewalk (above and below).

1.5. Consolidate open site space to maximize contiguous soil volumes that facilitate successful tree health and useable green space.

1.6. Unless in conjunction with the designation of a heritage building, subdivision is strongly discouraged - especially subdivision that results in panhandle lots. Keeping existing large lots intact helps facilitate more cohesive and efficient site design including the reduction of curb cuts needed to access off-street parking.

1.7. Landscaping and site design

1.7.1. Landscape treatments including use of front patios, accented paving treatments, fence and gate details, and other approaches are encouraged to help call out a residential entry and add interest along the street and sidewalk.

1.7.2. Incorporate plantings integrated with entryways, patios, and pathways to create a green interface between buildings and streets.

1.7.3. Topographic conditions should be treated to minimize impacts on neighbouring development, for example by using terraced retaining walls of natural materials or by stepping a project to match the slope.

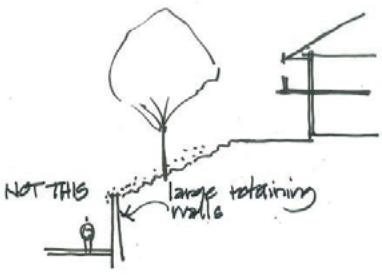
1.7.4. Development should avoid significant reworking of existing natural grade, and large retaining walls next to public spaces.

1.7.5. Where a building's ground floor is elevated above a pedestrian's eye level when on the sidewalk, landscaping should be used to help make the transition between grades. Some techniques for achieving this include incorporating terraces and low retaining walls with floral displays, ground cover or shrubs, and use of stone or brick masonry walls.

1.7.6. Landscape on sites with significant natural features (e.g. significant trees, topography, rocky outcrops) should be located and designed to be sympathetic to the natural landscape.

1.7.7. Landscape areas are encouraged to include a mixture of tree sizes and types

Example showing incorporation of landscape treatments that create a strong connection to and visual interest along the street (above and below)



Avoid large retaining walls and significant reworking of natural grade.

Transition sensitively between grades.

Example showing incorporation of terraces, planters, and stairways to sensitively transition the grade.

1.7.8. Locate large canopy trees along with associated contiguous planting areas and soil volumes in rear yards, and where possible front yards also.

1.7.9. Consider planting tree species and other landscape plants that will tolerate a degree of drought and will survive the summer water restrictions and dry conditions of southern Vancouver Island.

1.7.10. In considering tree placement in the front yard setback adjacent to street rights-of-way, consider tree sizes and spacing indicated by the City's specifications and policies for street trees.

1.7.11. Integrate landscaping to soften hardscape areas associated with vehicle circulation and parking. Driveway access and surface parking areas should incorporate a minimum 1 m landscape buffer along edges while maintaining site lines and enabling casual surveillance.

1.7.12. Design open site space so that it can not be used to park vehicles

1.7.13. Site design should integrate features to mitigate surface runoff of stormwater, with the goal of managing the first 32mm of rainwater within a 24 hour period. This may include a variety of treatments (e.g. permeable paving for driveways and parking areas, landscape features designed for rainwater management, cisterns or green roofs, and/or other approaches) which are consistent with approved engineering practices and the City's Rainwater Management standards for private property.

1.7.14. Non-glare lighting should be provided at residential unit entrances, along pedestrian paths and common areas to contribute to safety. Lighting strategies that mitigate undue spill-over for adjacent residential units are strongly encouraged.

Example showing integration of landscaping to soften entryways and parking areas

Example of lighting used to accentuate entryways

1.8. Bird Friendly Design

1.8.1. Avoid large areas of glazing and fly-through conditions such as glass bridges and walkways, outdoor railings, free-standing glass architectural elements and building corners where glass walls or windows are perpendicular or other conditions where birds can see through them to sky or habitat on the other side.

1.8.2. Use of mirrored glass and glass with high reflectivity is strongly discouraged and should be avoided.

1.8.3. Consider design treatments that increase the visibility of glass by integrating visual cues for birds to avoid, reduce and dampen glass reflection, and minimize light pollution.

1.8.4. Design corner windows, glass walkways, glass railings, and other similar features to reduce the appearance of clear passage to sky or vegetation, including through incorporation of visible markers

1.8.5. Consider landscape design that provides opportunities for food, shelter, and nesting sites

1.8.6. Maintain existing or create new bird habitat where possible, by, for example:

a. Retaining existing and/or introducing new areas of large tree canopy and landscaping.

b. Incorporation of storm water management infrastructure into landscaping to mimic hydrological systems

c. Incorporating some areas within the landscape that minimizes direct disturbance from humans.

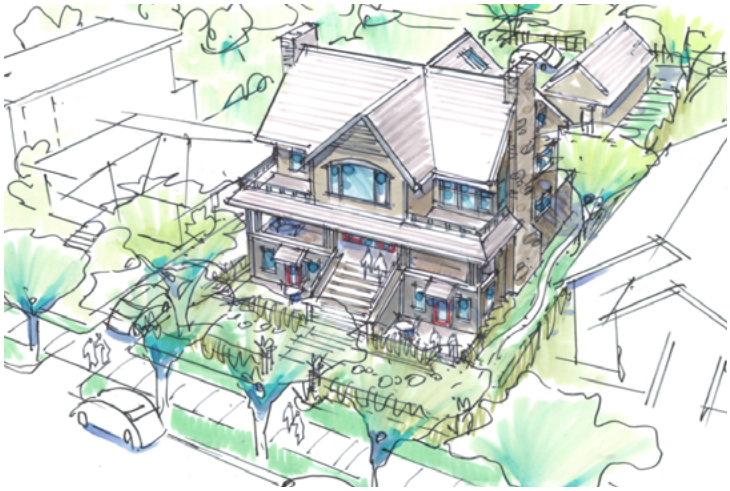
d. Minimizing lawn areas.

1.9. Provide Outdoor Amenity Space for Residential Units

1.9.1. Residential units, including suites, are strongly encouraged to have direct access to usable outdoor amenity space. This may include a combination of private and semiprivate spaces such as a patio, porch, balcony, deck, or similar feature of sufficient size and dimensions to be usable, attractive and comfortable. At a minimum, access to a shared yard or amenity space should be provided.

1.9.2. Consider factors such as privacy and access to sunlight in locating and designing amenity spaces.

1.9.3. Consider integrating opportunities for play in both soft and hardscaped design. This can include designing driveways and parking areas as play courts for children when not in use by vehicles.



Example of a houseplex showing ground floor units with usable outdoor amenity spaces for each unit.

Example of upper-storey balcony designed with consideration for usable dimensions, access to sunlight, and balancing outward views with privacy concerns.

Examples (two photos above) of usable outdoor amenity space for ground level units, with screening for privacy and sufficient dimensions for usability.

2. Accessible Design

Objective: *To encourage a high standard of accessibility in site, building and landscape design to be more inclusive of all users.*

2.1. Access ramps, exterior lifts and related elements should be visually integrated with the overall building design and site plan so as to not appear disjointed from the building façade.

2.2. Smooth routes should be provided. Vertical disruptions along pedestrian routes should be avoided for ease of use by people with wheeled mobility devices, strollers, and bicycles.

2.3. Ensure accessible paths of travel between public sidewalks and accessible dwelling units.

2.4. Exterior accessible paths of travel should:

2.4.1. Have a minimum clear width of 1.5 m, to allow room for mobility devices and service animals going both ways along a path.

2.4.2. Have a minimum head room clearances of 2.1 m, to ensure paths are free of obstacles overhead that white canes cannot detect.

2.4.3. Have firm, stable, and slip-resistant surfaces that canes, crutches, or the wheels of mobility devices will not sink into.

2.4.4. Be free of stairs or other barriers to mobility aids.

2.5. Smooth walking surfaces are preferred. Where interlocking pavers are used, they should be laid on a firm, well-compacted backing, be even, and with joints no greater than 6 mm wide.

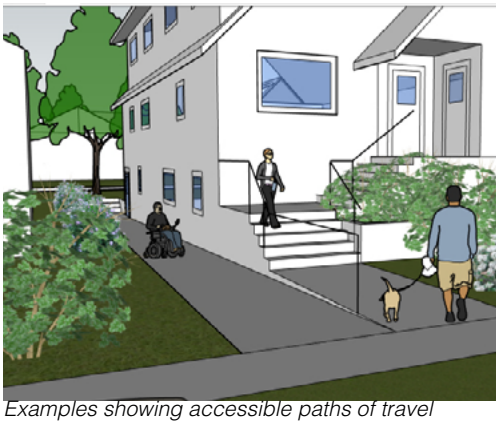
2.6. Gratings or grills should generally be located to one side of accessible paths of travel.

2.7. Benches, bike racks, bins and other furnishings should be located to one side of accessible entryways and pathways, and maintain a minimum pathway clear zone of 1.5 m.

2.8. Accessible entrances should provide basic protection from the weather and include doors and vestibules that are useable autonomously by persons with varying abilities.

2.9. Entryways should be well-lit and clearly visible.

2.10. Landscaping and outdoor common spaces (e.g. areas for seating, gardening, etc.) should be accessible for people with varying levels of ability and mobility.



Examples showing accessible paths of travel to accessible entryways (above and below)

3. Parking, Access; and Servicing

Objectives: *To sensitively integrate parking, circulation and access to minimize impacts on public and private open spaces.*

To site and screen mechanical equipment and service areas to minimize impacts on neighbours and the public realm.

3.1. Vehicular access, circulation, garage doors and parking should not be the dominant aspect of developments and should be designed to minimize impacts on fronting streets and adjacent public and private open spaces. Design strategies should be employed to minimize the impact of accommodating vehicles on site, including the following:

3.1.1. Integrate parking in a manner that provides substantial landscaped areas in rear yards;

3.1.2. Locate and consolidate off-street parking areas to minimize extent of driveways and eliminate need for driveway access to individual units.

3.1.3. Consider grouping driveway access points to minimize the number of driveway cuts and maximize space for landscaping and on-street parking;

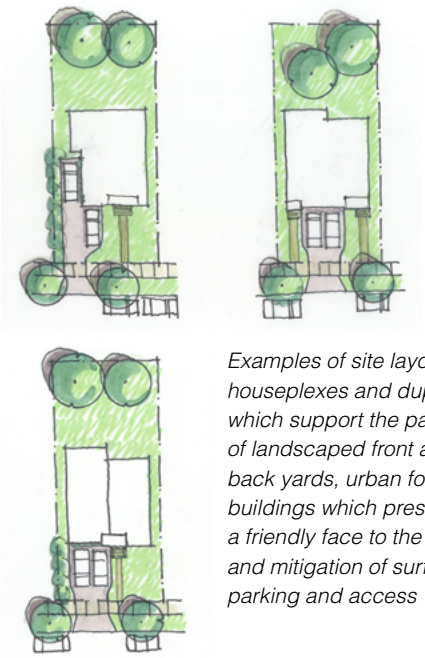
3.1.4. Location of driveway access should strive to preserve existing canopy trees or provide opportunities for new canopy trees within the boulevard by providing enough planting space.

3.1.5. Front yard parking and access may be appropriate in some cases, for example for houseplexes, in order to avoid excessive pavement in rear yard areas. In these cases, attention to design is required to emphasize front entryways, pedestrian access, patios, porches, front yard landscape, and tree planting space, and ensure a pedestrian-friendly building façade.

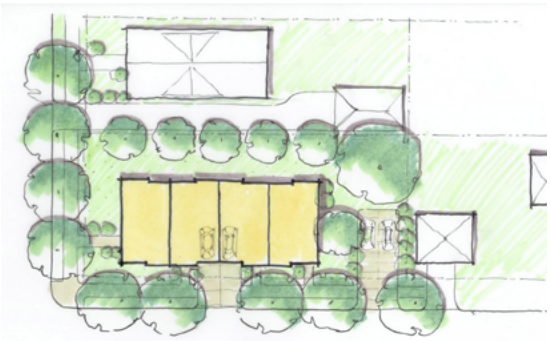
3.1.6. Minimize the impact of garage doors and vehicular entries by recessing them from the facade to emphasize residential unit entries and shield them from public view where possible.

3.1.7. Incorporate landscaping within driveway areas to soften impacts of front yard parking and hardscape environment and emphasize unit entryways where they are located and accessed from a driveway;

3.1.8. An accessible parking stall should be located adjacent to an accessible pathway to enable the pathway to also accommodate the required 1.5 m transfer space associated with an accessible parking stall and, as a result, reduce the amount of hard surface space;



Examples of site layouts for houseplexes and duplexes which support the pattern of landscaped front and back yards, urban forest, buildings which presents a friendly face to the street and mitigation of surface parking and access



Example showing accommodation of parking to minimize impacts on the public realm (above and below)

Example showing accommodation of a corner townhouse with rear-yard parking while still accommodating yard space for individual units along with required open site space and tree planting space

Examples showing use of landscape and materials to minimize impacts of front yard parking

3.1.9. Where an accessible parking stall is provided adjacent to a pedestrian path, clearly delineate the accessible path of travel from the parking space, for example through the use of different paving materials, patterns or colour, or using a banding element between the pathway and parking stall;

3.1.10. Use high quality and, where appropriate, permeable paving materials for driveways;

3.1.11. Design driveways and parking areas to also function as multi-functional hard surface open areas, including play spaces for children;

3.1.12. Use attractive, high quality materials and consider incorporating glazing in garage doors where provided;

3.1.13. When a car share vehicle parking space is planned on the site, design the parking space to be clearly visible from the street, easily accessed by pedestrians, well lit in a way that does not spill light onto the street or adjacent properties, and ensures the vehicle can be driven forward from the entrance to the site into a parking space without turning the vehicle more than 90 degrees.

3.1.14. See Section 4, Open Space Design for additional design guidelines related to landscaping and screening.

3.2. Long term bicycle parking spaces should be consolidated within an enclosed area to which residents have shared access (not individually accessed bicycle storage lockers). To minimize impact to green, usable backyards, this bicycle parking area is encouraged to be connected or designed into the footprint of a main residential building.

3.3. Design open site space so that it can not be used to park vehicles.

3.4. Mechanical equipment, vents and service areas (e.g. for the collection of garbage or recycling) should be integrated with architectural treatment of the building, and screened with high quality, durable finishes compatible with building design.

3.5. Mechanical equipment, such as the outdoor components of heat pumps and air conditioners, vents and service areas should be located to minimize impacts on adjacent residential buildings by avoiding proximity to windows, doors and usable outdoor spaces.

3.6. Location and installation of gas and electrical meters and their utility cabinets, as well as other mechanical or service apparatus should be carefully integrated into building and site design. Gas and electrical metres and utility cabinets on building frontages should be screened.

4. Orientation and Interface - A Friendly Face to the Street

Objectives: *To ensure new development is oriented and designed to present a friendly face to the street, enhancing public streets, open spaces, street vitality, pedestrian activity, safety, and 'eyes on the street'.*

Residential buildings should be sited and oriented to overlook public streets, parks, walkways and on-site open spaces.

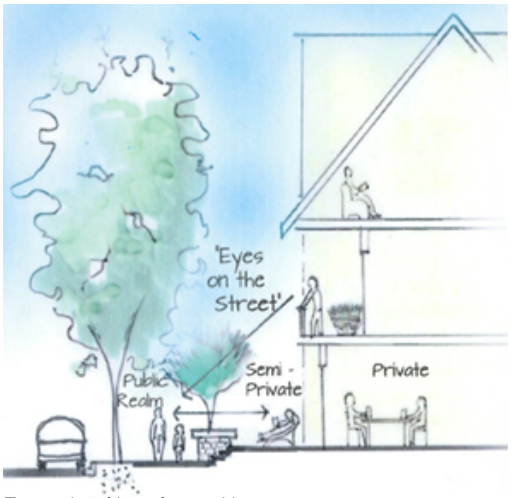
4.1. Buildings should maintain a street-fronting orientation, parallel to the street. In the case of a Heritage Conserving Infill building located in the rear yard, site lines from the fronting sidewalk to the front entryway are desired

4.2. Residential units facing streets should have entries oriented towards, and be clearly accessible and visible from, the fronting street.

4.3. Where some units do not front onto a public street, a clear, legible and welcoming pedestrian pathway from the public street should be established.

4.4. For developments that have interior-facing units, or side yard facing entryways, ensure unit entries are legible and emphasized through design features. This is important for welcoming visitors, for emergency responders and for consistency with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. Strategies to achieve this include:

4.4.1. Visible addressing to help visitors navigate to the entry. Where an entry is shared, include addressing at the shared entry.



Example of interface with street.

A 3 level houseplex with a welcoming and human scaled entryway

A 3 storey houseplex integrated positively within a neighbourhood streetscape

4.4.2. Defining features such as a roof overhang, patio or porch or other features to help identify the entry.

4.4.3. Provide low-glare outdoor lighting beside or above entry doors as well as walkways, to enhance security and to help identify the entrance.

4.4.4. Consider accessibility for entries to at grade or basement units.

4.4.5. If the entrance is immediately adjacent to a parking area, delineate the entrance with planters or other landscape features to provide visual relief and a clear separation from the parking area.

4.5. In cases where tuck under (under-building) parking is located at grade, provide a minimum 5 m depth of interior residential use for portions of the building facing the street or public open space.

4.6. Consider design strategies to delineate private front yard spaces, porches or patios from the public realm and create a semi-private transition zone, while maintaining visibility of unit entrances. Design strategies may include:

Where unit entries do not directly face the street, design features including pathways, gates, signage, lighting, and visibility make it clear where unit entries are located.

4.6.1. Incorporating a semi elevated front entryway, patio or porch; and

4.6.2. Where a semi-elevated front entryway, patio or porch is provided, ensure accessible access is still provided to buildings requiring an adaptable unit through the use of a ramp or person lift. Configuring the at-grade entrance of an adaptable unit at the rear of the building can facilitate the gradual ramping/grade-change needed to provide accessibility of the unit from the street.

4.6.3. Where a grade level entryway is incorporated, delineate the semi-private entryway area through other means such as landscaping features, patios, low fencing, or planters.

A positive orientation to the street should be emphasized through building and landscape design

4.7. For buildings with exterior staircases on the front elevation, ensure the design of the staircase is high quality, makes a positive contribution to the streetscape, integrates with the architectural expression of the building, and is human scale. Strategies to achieve this include:

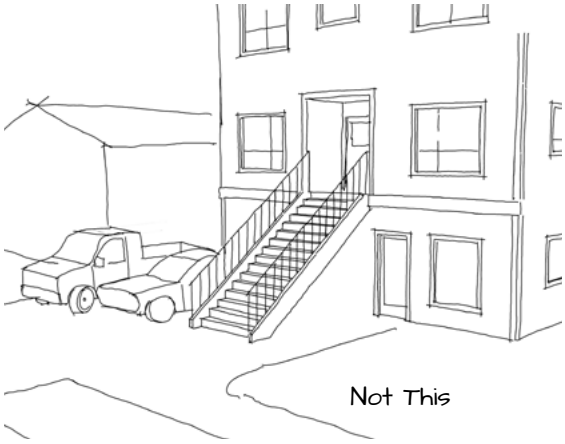
- 4.7.1. Using the site topography to help reduce the height of the staircase;
- 4.7.2. Designing the staircase to be less than one storey in height to support comfortable access and abilities;
- 4.7.3. Consider a split-stair design with landing(s) to mitigate the perceived height of the staircase and provide areas of respite;
- 4.7.4. Incorporating landscaping, trellis or plantings;
- 4.7.5. Connecting the staircase base with other site circulation.

4.8. The design and placement of buildings and landscape should establish a sensitive transition to adjacent parks, trails, open spaces, and natural areas, through, for example, incorporation of a landscaped edge; respecting the root zones of adjacent trees; and minimizing impacts on ecologically sensitive areas and natural features.

4.9. For new development adjacent to parks and larger public outdoor open spaces, design should clearly delineate private from public spaces, to avoid "privatizing" of public space.

Stairways should be designed and scaled to support convenient and comfortable access while achieving an attractive and human scaled interface with the sidewalk (above and below)

Minimize the visual impacts of large stairways located facing the street by incorporating split stairway designs, landings, planters and landscaping, and through use of high quality materials



Large stair cases that do not achieve a positive relationship to the street should be avoided. Front yards devoid of landscaping are not permitted

5. Building Form, Features and Context

5.1. Building Form and Design

Objectives: *To achieve energy efficient buildings of high architectural quality with human-scale proportions that are oriented towards and are compatible with the existing and planned future context. Human scale refers to the use of architectural features, details and site design elements that are human proportioned and clearly oriented towards pedestrian activity. Building articulation refers to the many street frontage design elements, both horizontal and vertical, that help create an interesting and welcoming streetscape.*

5.1.1. Building design elements, details, and materials should create a well-proportioned and cohesive building design and exhibit an overall architectural concept.

5.1.2. Incorporate a range of architectural features and design details into building facades that are rich and varied in detail to create visual interest when approached by pedestrians. Examples of architectural features include:

a. Roof forms, vertical and horizontal articulation

b. Bay windows and balconies

c. Fenestration pattern (proportions and placement of windows and entry ways)

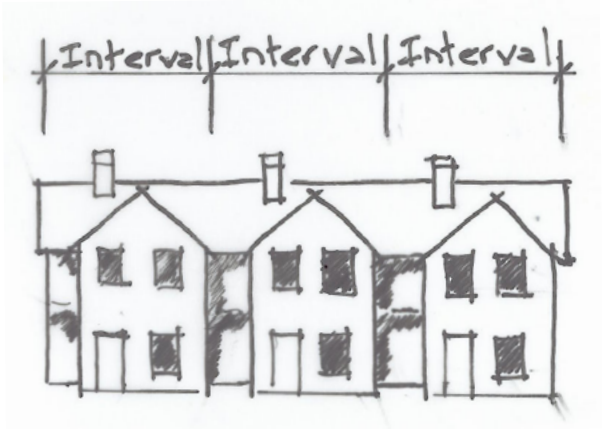
5.1.3. For townhouse type development: modulation in facades and roof forms are encouraged to break up building mass, differentiate individual units within attached residential developments, and to provide architectural interest and variation along the street.

a. Individual units should include distinct design elements while being compatible with neighbouring units as part of an overall architectural concept.

b. Longer rows of townhouses (exceeding approximately 4 units) should generally be broken up.

5.1.4. Entrances should be located and designed to create building identity, to distinguish between individual units, and generally create visual interest for pedestrians. Well-considered use of architectural detail and, where appropriate, landscape treatment, should

Development which exhibits a cohesive architectural expression, with variation in units, clear front entries, and architectural interest for pedestrians.



Consider articulating facades into a series of intervals to emphasize individual units and entryways, help break up the mass of larger buildings, and create visual interest along the street

Example of a townhouse stepped to respond to topography.

be used to emphasize primary entrances, and to provide “punctuation” in the overall streetscape treatment.

5.1.5. Consider building designs and roof forms that minimize impacts on sunlight access to public and private outdoor spaces.

5.1.6. Consider integrating floor area into peaked roof forms to help mitigate scale and massing and to maximize sunlight access to open spaces.

5.1.7. Balconies should be designed as integral to the building. Overly enclosed balconies should be avoided, as these limit views and sunlight access. Balconies should be located and oriented towards front and rear yards, and not side yards

5.1.8. Building sidewalls should be designed to be attractive and interesting when viewed from the streets, sidewalks, and public open spaces through the use of a combination of materials, colours, textures, articulation, fenestration, and/or plant material.

5.1.9. Creative use of landscaping or other screening should be incorporated to reduce the perceived scale of development without compromising surveillance of public areas.

Historic traditional townhouses (above) demonstrate human scale architecture, relationship to the street, and a cohesive architectural expression. These same principles should guide the design of more modern developments which may be expressed in varied architectural styles (examples below).

5.2. Neighbourliness

Objectives: *To encourage designs that are responsive to context and that minimize privacy and shadowing impacts on adjacent properties.*

5.2.1. New buildings should be designed to minimize overlook into adjacent private yards. Strategies to achieve this include the following:

a. Increased building setback.

b. Stagger windows to not align with adjacent, facing windows.

c. Pay particular attention to the design of windows facing shared side lot lines to mitigate privacy impacts by employing the design strategies noted in this section.

d. Locate upper level windows, decks, and balconies to minimize overlook.

e. Consider using skylights, translucent windows or clerestory windows to ensure access to natural light within units while minimizing overlook of adjacent side yards.

f. Landscape screening.

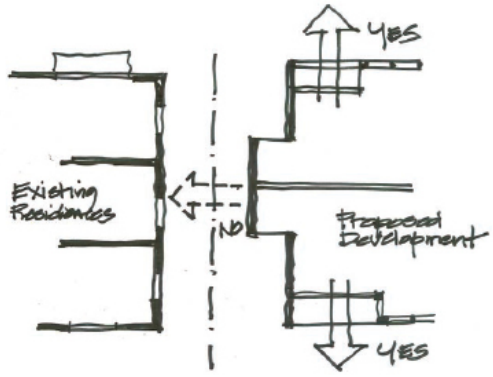
5.2.2. Site, orient and design buildings to minimize shadowing impacts on adjacent properties and public spaces.

5.2.3. On sites with a heritage building, design infill buildings to be subordinate to and maintain the visual prominence of the heritage building.

5.2.4. More intensive forms of housing development, such as mid-block townhouses and transitional missing middle housing, should consider transitioning in scale to adjacent residential buildings, where appropriate. Strategies to achieve this include the following:

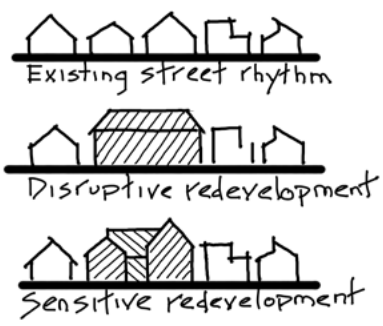
a. Use building height and roof pitches to help transition in scale.

b. Modulate building façades to match or transition to the front yard set back of adjacent existing residential buildings.

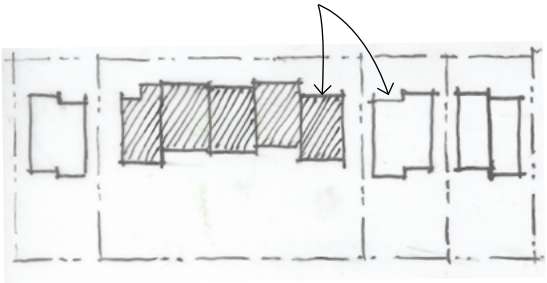


Orientation and placement of windows, balconies and porches to respect privacy of adjacent development

Compatible forms with contrasting architectural styles add diversity, character and visual interest along a street.



End units should be set back to match or transition to existing neighbouring houses



5.3. Materials

Objective: *To use materials which are high quality, durable and weather gracefully.*

5.3.1. Consider variation in colours and materials between buildings along the street, while achieving a pleasing composition of cladding materials and colours within the building itself.

5.3.2. In general, new buildings should incorporate substantial, durable and natural materials into their facade to avoid a 'thin veneer' look and encourage graceful weathering of materials over time. Materials such as masonry, stone, natural wood, etc. are encouraged.

A diversity of materials and colours integrated with design features creates visual interest and identity along the street (above and below).

Part B: Typology Specific Guidelines

The following section provides additional guidance for specific residential typologies permitted under zoning or as envisioned in the OCP (and therefore requiring a re-zoning), to be used in conjunction with the General Guidelines in sections 1 - 5.

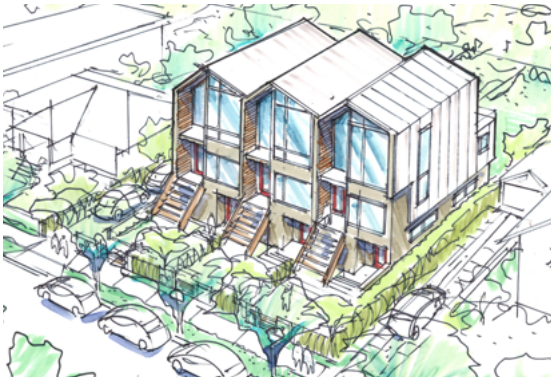
6. Corner Townhouses

6.1. Site, orient and design corner town houses with principal façades and individual unit entries facing and accessed from both fronting streets

7. Mid block and double row townhouses

Overview: *Some locations, as specified in applicable land use policies, may allow consideration for mid-block townhouses, or for developments sited in more than one building complex (i.e., more than one row). For these developments, the following should be achieved:*

7.1. Townhouse forms of development should be sited and oriented with the longer face of the building parallel to the street. This is to maximize entries facing the street as well as access from the street, and to minimize visual impacts of driveways and parking on the public realm. “Galley-style” developments, where building complexes are sited perpendicular to streets with residential unit entries oriented internally or to adjacent property side-yards, are discouraged unless explicitly supported by a neighbourhood plan or other City policy.



7.2. Where development sited in more then one row (i.e., double row townhouses) is proposed as part of a re-zoning process, the following should be achieved:

7.2.1. Site planning should ensure that dwelling units face the street;

7.2.2. Units located in the interior of lots should be designed with adequate separation from other buildings and have access to open space;

a. a minimum 8 m building separation should be provided between two principal facades

b. a minimum 5 m building separation should be provided between a principal (front or rear) façade and an adjacent side façade.

7.2.3. Vehicle access, parking and circulation should be integrated sensitively so it is not the dominant aspect of the development and integrates play features and other design elements that support flexible uses for driveways and parking areas. See Section 2. for further guidance.

7.2.4. Dwelling units located in the interior of a site should have rear yard and side yard setbacks sufficient to support landscaping and sensitive transitions to adjacent existing development and open spaces.

7.2.5. Sufficient building separation should be provided between buildings to maximize daylight and minimize shadowing and overlook. Consider increased setbacks on the north side of sites to reduce shadowing impacts on adjacent properties.

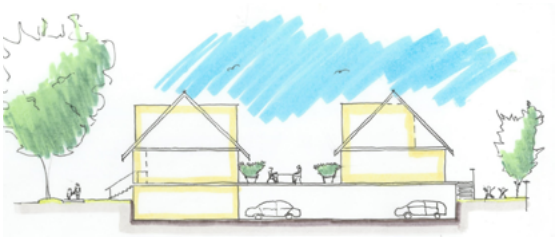
7.2.6. Buildings which do not front onto the public street should be sited to provide sufficient separation from shared property lines and adjacent development in order to reduce overlook and shading, protect privacy for residents and neighbours, and provide space for landscaping.

7.2.7. Consider lower height and massing of buildings located to the rear of a site, compared to the front, where this would mitigate impacts on neighbouring properties.

7.2.8. Where parking access courts are included in a development, these areas should be integrated into the overall development to create a welcoming space. Integrate landscape into these areas and provide features such as legible entries, windows or balconies to provide casual surveillance. Wherever possible, integrate one or more trees within or directly adjacent to a parking court or rear yard parking area, and consider landscaping areas associated with individual entries accessed from a parking court.

7.2.9. Consider varying garage and parking orientations to avoid drive aisles dominated entirely by garage doors. A mix of entries, patios, windows and landscape create a more livable and inviting space.

Double row townhouses should be oriented parallel to the street, and provide sufficient building separation and setbacks to ensure liveability for units within the development and on adjacent sites



Where parking is required, consider under-building parking to minimize impacts on open spaces

Example showing incorporation of landscaping to soften an interior drive isle and emphasize entries

8. Houseplexes

8.1. Houseplexes should be designed to make clear that the building comprises different units through, for example, incorporation of legible front entries with street address.

8.2. When more then one houseplex is located on a single lot, they shall not be sited in tandem (one in front of the other) but rather, shall be located side-by-side and oriented to front onto the facing street.

8.3. Maximize front yard landscaping incorporating shrubs and at least one small to medium canopy tree to soften front entry stair cases along with parking areas and access.

9. Heritage Conserving Infill

9.1. The design of new development located on the same lot as a designated heritage building should be complimentary to, yet subordinate to, contrasting with and clearly distinguishable from, the heritage building. Consider designing the infill building or addition to acknowledge design elements of the heritage building, including roof forms, building and window proportions, materials, entryway treatments, detailing and landscaping.

9.2. New buildings or additions to existing buildings should not detract from or obscure character defining elements of a heritage building.

9.3. Additions to heritage buildings should be sensitively integrated with the existing fabric to minimize the impact on character-defining elements.

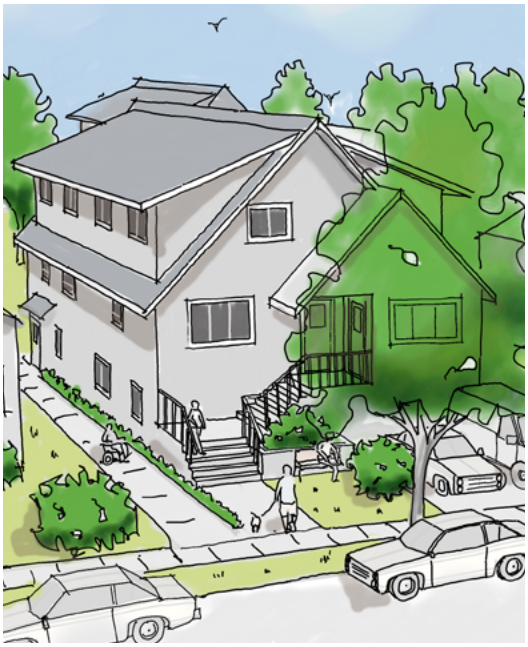
9.4. Additions should be set back from the front façade of the heritage building.

9.5. Infill buildings located in rear yards should incorporate roof forms that minimize shadowing impacts and maximize sunlight access to gardening and outdoor spaces both on site and to adjacent properties. To help achieve this, consider peaked roofs incorporating floor area.

9.6. Windows into habitable rooms should not face a side or rear yard unless it is approximately 5 m setback from the side or rear yard property line.

9.7. Windows should be located to minimize overlook into adjacent properties. Consider using skylights, translucent windows or clerestory windows to ensure access to natural light within units while minimizing overlook of adjacent side yards.

9.8. Consider incorporating green open spaces and outdoor amenity spaces into rear and side yard setback areas.



Houseplex concept sketch showing integration of front entry stairs, parking, landscaping and accessible paths of travel to rear unit

Example of an infill building behind a heritage home incorporating both complimentary and contrasting design elements (above and below).

10. Additional Livability Guidelines for Suites

Some forms of housing may have suites (e.g. lock-off suites). In addition to the guidelines elsewhere, the following guidelines apply:

10.1. All units should be provided with windows of sufficient size and orientation to provide for sunlight and outward views.

10.2. Where a suite is located in a basement, smaller windows or light wells with obstructed views should not be the primary window orientation.

10.3. Avoid locating at-grade windows directly adjacent to parking spaces. Windows in these locations should generally contain landscape separation from the parking space.

10.4. Where topography and basement suite location do not allow for outward looking windows and entry, consider the creation of a sunken patio, generally located at the rear or side of a building (also see Section 4.2 of these guidelines regarding outdoor amenity space).

10.5. Exterior pathways and entries leading to basement-level or at-grade suites should be designed to be accessible wherever possible.

10.6. Taking advantage of grade changes on a site can help locate suites in a way which provides for access to sunlight, amenity space, and accessible entry.

10.7. Provide adequate storage space including bicycle storage for suites.

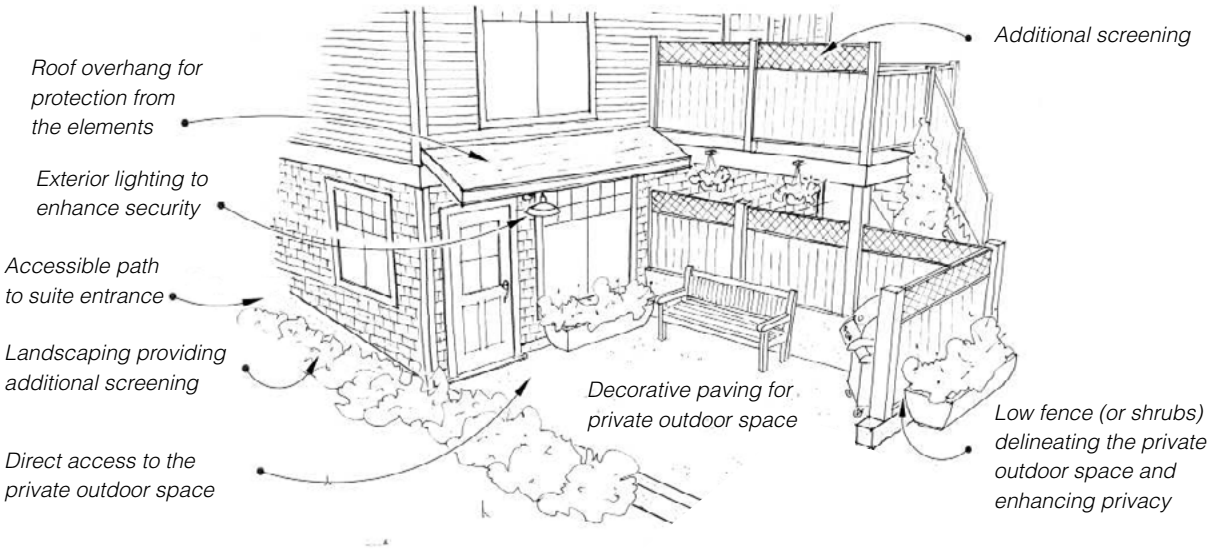


Illustration of strategies for effective design of usable outdoor amenity space for a suite.

11. Additional Guidance for properties adjacent to laneways

Some properties that are candidates for missing middle housing may be located adjacent to a laneway. While laneways are typically seen as service areas which access parking, they also provide a unique character to blocks where they are found. While few in number, many of Victoria's laneways are bordered by landscaping and serve as areas where pedestrians and slow car traffic mix. Laneways can provide opportunities for more flexible site planning, a welcoming frontage, casual surveillance and landscaping along the laneway.

11.1. Development of properties adjacent to a laneway should:

- 11.1.1. create a welcoming frontage through the inclusion of legible entries, gates or pathways, and fenestration oriented to the laneway
- 11.1.2. provide for casual surveillance of the laneway through the location of windows or balconies
- 11.1.3. include a modest setback from the laneway's edge to accommodate landscape or pedestrian areas between the edge of the lane (or parking) and the building
- 11.1.4. be sited to preserve mature trees and provide tree planting spaces which enhance the appearance of the laneway
- 11.1.5. provide low-glare, downward facing lighting at entries and to enhance a sense of safety
- 11.1.6. minimize stormwater runoff onto the laneway

11.2. Where laneways are provided, consider locating rear yard parking and access off of the lane to support more front yard landscaping while limiting the amount of space dedicated to parking in the rear yard.

11.3. Massing and location of windows, porches and decks should limit overlook and shadowing of adjacent back yards.

11.4. Green spaces should be provided to the centre of the lot as compatible with existing patterns.

11.5. Consider pedestrian safety in siting of gates and entries along the laneway by providing visibility for pedestrians and drivers.