



City of Vancouver *Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines*

Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability Department

453 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4 | tel: 3-1-1, outside Vancouver 604.873.7000 | fax: 604.873.7100
website: vancouver.ca | email: planning@vancouver.ca | app: VanConnect

WEST END RM-5, RM-5A, RM-5B, RM-5C AND RM-5D GUIDELINES

Adopted by City Council on September 26, 1989

Amended February 4, 1992, January 20, 1998, February 4, 2014, June 23, 2015, June 11, 2019, September 15, 2020, January 19, 2021, and July 20, 2022



Contents

	Page
1	Application and Intent 1
2	General Design Considerations 1
2.1	Neighbourhood Character..... 1
2.2	Street Character 2
2.3	Orientation 3
2.4	Views 4
2.5	Topography 4
2.6	Light and Ventilation 5
2.7	Privacy 5
2.8	Safety and Security 6
2.9	Access and Circulation 6
2.10	Heritage 7
3	West End RM Design Guidelines for Infill Housing 7
3.1	Objectives 7
3.2	Development Scenarios 8
3.3	Scale and Building Height 12
3.4	Building Frontages 13
3.5	Building Separation 14
3.6	Building Setbacks 15
3.7	Orientation 17
3.8	Threshold Spaces 17
3.9	Architecture and Form 18
3.10	Open Space 18
3.11	Parking 18
4	Guidelines Pertaining to the Regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law 19
4.1	Building Height 19
4.2	Front Yard 21
4.3	Side Yard..... 22
4.4	Rear Yard 22
4.5	Site Coverage..... 23
4.6	Off-Street Parking and Loading..... 23
5	Architectural Components..... 24
5.1	Roofs..... 24
5.2	Entrances 25
5.3	Balconies 26
5.4	Exterior Walls and Finishing 27
6	Open Space 27
6.1	Private Open Space..... 28
6.2	Indoor Amenities 28
7	Landscaping 29

1 Application and Intent

These guidelines are to be used with the RM-5, RM-5A, RM-5B, RM-5C, and RM-5D Districts Schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law for approval of conditional approval uses or discretionary variances in regulations. These guidelines describe design opportunities. As well as assisting designers of projects, the guidelines will be used by City staff in evaluation of proposals. Most of the guidelines apply to the entire West End residential area, but where noted, some are neighbourhood specific. There are other documents that may be useful in designing buildings in the West End. These include “West End Residential Areas Policy Plan”, “Heritage Incentive Program Policies and Procedures”, and “High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines”, all available from the Planning Department.

Applicants must recognize that while the guidelines note specific design issues and suggest some solutions, responding to each individual guideline will not necessarily result in an acceptable building. The guidelines topics deal with specific components of design in the West End and cannot, within the scope of this document give direction on how to assemble all these components into a cohesive building.

It may not always be possible to achieve all the objectives set out in this document. For each site, there will be conditions that may require giving preference to one design approach over another. The balancing of objectives that will occur is acknowledged, but for every site the emphasis should be on ensuring liveability and compatibility with adjacent development with respect to streetscape, open space, view, sunlight access and privacy.

2 General Design Considerations

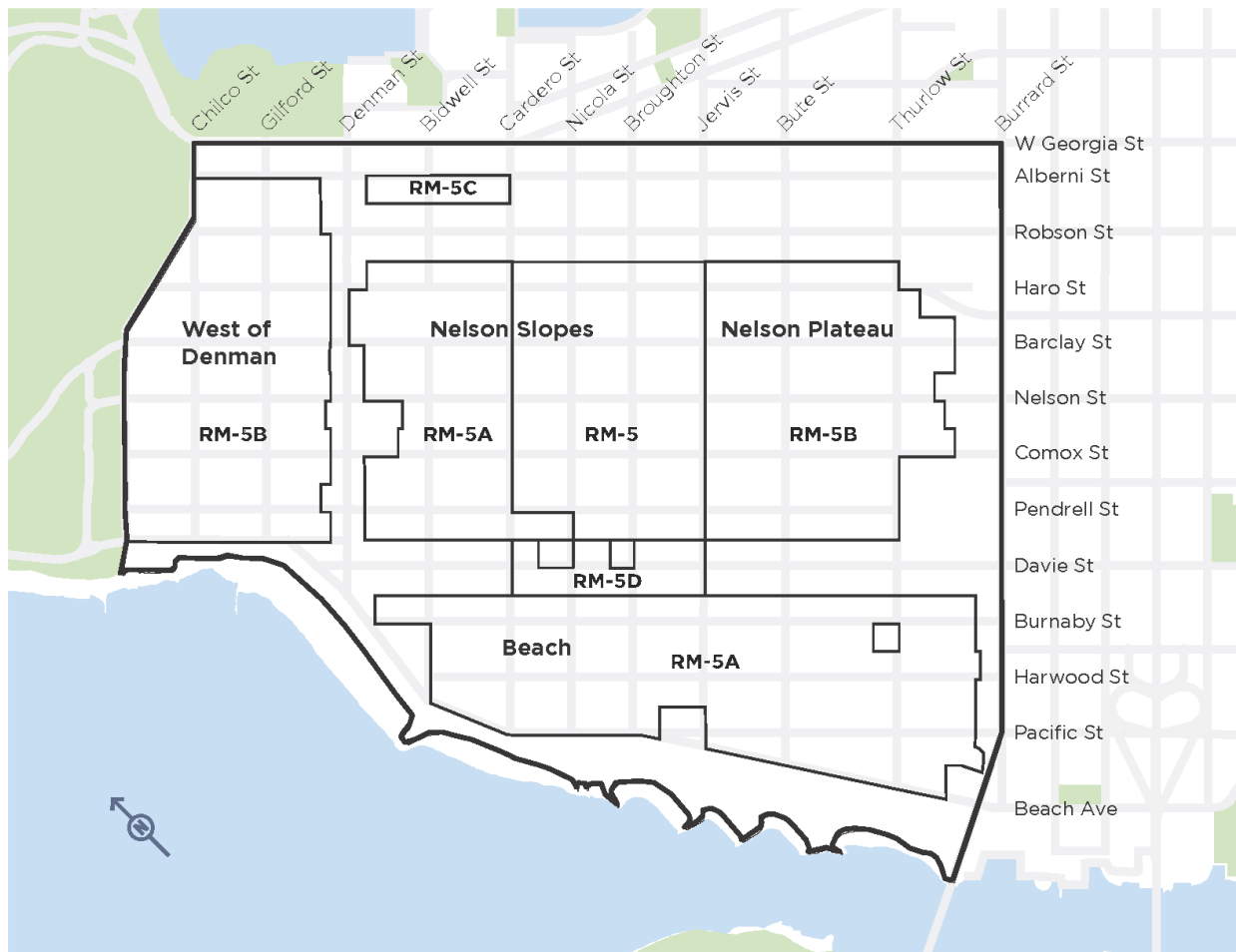
2.1 Neighbourhood Character

The West End is a high density, mature residential community. Its maturity results from the many older buildings, the incremental redevelopment that has occurred, and the established landscaping and street trees. The area’s compactness and proximity to English Bay, Stanley Park and the Downtown gives it a pedestrian orientation. Its pleasant ambience makes walking through the West End an enjoyable experience. Although the overall character of the West End is established, there is room for change. Traditionally, it has been an area in which new architectural forms have been comfortably assimilated, and this should continue.

The changing zoning, zoning boundaries and development patterns over the years have created four neighbourhoods within the West End. The current districts schedule reinforces these neighbourhoods by assigning different density limits. The boundaries are not always distinct though and there is a continuation of building character and form between neighbourhoods.

Applicants should respond to the neighbourhood differences as noted in the district variations by providing building forms compatible with the density and building height constraints. For instance, a tower may not be appropriate for the Nelson Slopes RM-5 neighbourhood where family housing is encouraged. The reverse is also true; a building in the west of Denman neighbourhood built to the maximum building height and density should not have the character and detailing of the smaller scale development in the Nelson Slopes.

Figure 1. West End Residential Neighbourhoods



2.2 Street Character

The character of the streets contributes significantly to the West End's image. The mature street trees and lush landscaping of the front yards are major elements in creating the character. The variety of building types that can be found in a block can coexist successfully because the cohesiveness of the streetscape ties them together. Building configurations which could disrupt this cohesiveness, such as locating the main level partially below grade should be avoided. It is very important that the siting of adjacent buildings is respected to maintain streetscape continuity.

Context has a strong influence on street character. The relationship to existing buildings, parks, commercial areas, neighbourhood edges and main traffic arteries all contribute. In some neighbourhoods, a strong street character is created by the remaining original houses or continuous retaining walls such as those found along Pacific Street and Beach Avenue. These walls are built from a variety of materials, but give a sense of permanence and formality. New development along Pacific and Beach Avenue should continue this characteristic retaining wall treatment.

The West End is a pedestrian area. New development must respond to this pedestrian orientation. Street character should be visually appealing. Bute and Thurlow Streets in particular function as main pedestrian routes to downtown. New development along Thurlow Street should respond to this role and assist in ameliorating the effects of the lack of street trees, heavy one-way vehicular traffic and the greater street width.

2.2.1 Building Character

A wide range of building types has been built in the West End since it was first subdivided in 1882.

A common design theme for development from most periods has been to emphasize a simple building massing as exemplified by the early mansions, masonry apartments and more recent towers. The resulting building character is a strong factor in establishing the West End's image.

The higher density of the West End in conjunction with a variety of building types and site configurations results in buildings being visible from many view points. Recognizing this, all prominent walls, and not just those facing the street, should be finished and detailed in an equal manner.

In some areas of the West End, groupings of similar building styles and buildings with similar massing can be found. These groupings create a consistency image that should be respected by new development by drawing from the predominant massing, siting and detailing. The row of houses facing Nelson Park and the procession of towers along Beach Avenue are examples. In a block with a predominant heritage character, new development should respect this character. This can be done even with the most contemporary buildings by reflecting the characteristic patterns and scale relationships of the older buildings.

While architectural components common to an area should be incorporated into a new building, the detailing should be compatible with its scale.

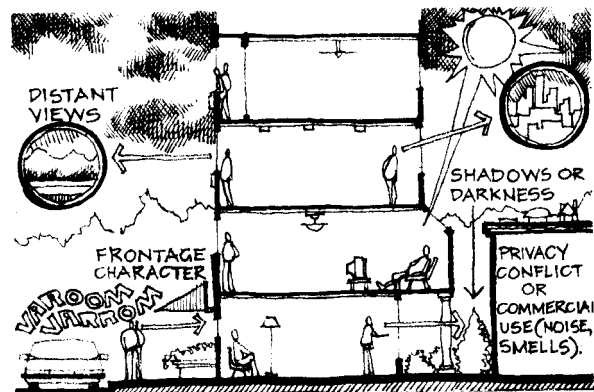
2.3 Orientation

The siting and massing of a building to respond to the myriad location opportunities and constraints is important in ensuring liveability, neighbourliness and compatibility. New development must be able to orient to a variety of circumstances, such as adjoining commercial uses, busy streets, corner sites, existing buildings and near and far views. Where housing is next to commercial uses, it is important that the adjoining units face away from the commercial building unless views over it are available. If this is not possible, a more attractive secondary orientation, near view, internal courtyard or setback should be provided. Development on corner or double fronting sites should address both streets to ensure that both facades have a frontage character that contributes to the streetscapes.

Figure 2. Orientation Conditions



Example of a poor orientation response to an adjacent commercial site.



Orientation considerations.

2.4 Views

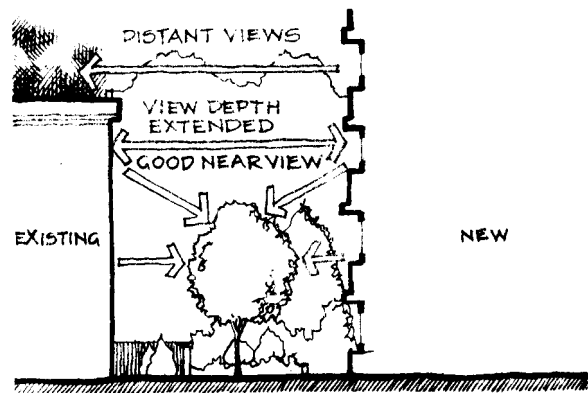
Views of Stanley Park, English Bay, Coal Harbour, the North Shore Mountains and Downtown are important amenities for the West End. The West End itself is a major view. Its prominent skyline is visible from many other points in the city.

View impact can be a contentious issue in the West End since new development taking advantage of view opportunities often results in the views of others being blocked. New development should minimize its impact on existing views and provide attractive near views for existing development when distant views cannot be preserved. New open space can be visually linked with adjacent open space to expand the depth of the views. The impact of new development, particularly towers, on existing views and the creation of public and private views must be carefully considered. When possible, new development should open up views from surrounding sites. This can be achieved by pulling the building away from potential public view corridors. On mid-block sites, buildings can be sited to create view slots through the site. Where a development is proposed to exceed 60 feet, a view impact analysis of both public and private views will be required.

Figure 3. Response to Views



Tower sited on internal lot to open up a view slot.



View considerations.



Building footprints minimized to open up views from the street and adjacent sites.



Example of a tower pulled back from the street to create a view corridor.

2.5 Topography

The topography of the West End results in many sloping sites. Development on these sites should be stepped to minimize high blank walls along the street edge. Retaining walls should be terraced to allow for landscaping and to reduce the scale along the street edge. Entrances to buildings located on the high side of the site should be at the same level as the sidewalk or be connected by a gradual transition of grade to prevent a “pit”-like nature from developing. Parking garages which protrude above grade should also be terraced to reduce the scale of the walls along the lane edge.

Figure 4. Response to Topography



A poor response to topography resulting in an inhospitable image along the lane.



Retaining wall stepped to respond to topography.

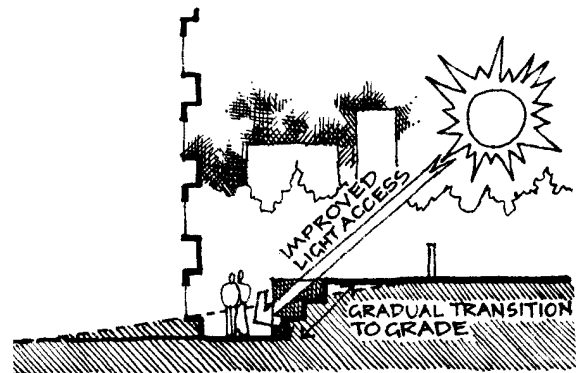
2.6 Light and Ventilation

Natural light and ventilation are essential to residential liveability. Light access to units can be a problem when they are sited partially below grade resulting in dark, and in some cases, damp living conditions. All units should be located at or above grade. If a unit is lower than the adjoining street or lane grade because of a sloping site, it should have a sufficient flat patio area. The surrounding sloped area should be terraced to increase the view depth and permit more light to reach the unit. Buildings should be massed to minimize shadowing of the street and adjacent open spaces. The distance between new and existing development should permit adequate light to reach new units, and should maintain daylight access to adjacent units. Where a development is proposed to exceed 10.7 m in building height a shadow impact analysis will be required.

Figure 5. Units Below Grade



Example of a below grade unit with minimal access to daylight.



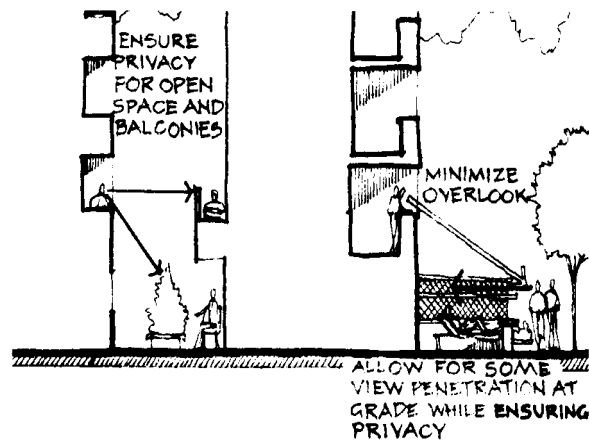
Retaining walls stepped to improve light access.

2.7 Privacy

In a high density area such as the West End, privacy is highly valued. New development should not decrease present levels of privacy enjoyed by adjacent residents and should ensure adequate privacy for new units is provided. Windows and balconies should be oriented away from the windows of adjacent apartments, or screened to minimize overlook.

Adequate screening for grade level units near a lane, street, or access route should also be provided.

Figure 6. New Development Responding to Privacy Problems



Privacy Considerations

2.8 Safety and Security

Safety is a key component of liveability. New development must provide a secure environment. Areas that require attention are parking garages, lobbies, screens, landscaping, grade level units and children's play areas. The interiors of lobbies should be visible from the street. Semi-private open space on the site should be secure from trespass or use by anyone not a resident of the project.

To create a safer night-time environment, appropriate residential lighting should be provided to ensure good visibility of access routes and open spaces.

Better casual surveillance can be created by locating children's play areas where they are visible from dwelling units and away from the street edge, and allowing for some view into private open spaces (for other ideas on accommodating families with children see High-Density Housing For Families with Children Guidelines).

2.9 Access and Circulation

Traditionally, access to buildings in the West End has been from a single, prominent entrance. The original houses provide access from a single stairway leading from the street. Most apartments provide access from a central lobby. Some recent development has provided direct at grade access to individual units. On mid-block sites the lobby can lose prominence when it is accessible only from the side yard. Some new development may try to maximize its floor space by using exposed exterior corridors. This can create an incompatible building character if the corridors are prominent from the street or dominate other units or private open space.

The number of access points to a building from the street should be limited to avoid breaking the front yard into small discontinuous pieces of open space. Access paths to individual units should be spaced at least 6.1 m apart. Exterior access to groups of individual units can be provided from landings or courtyards that each connect to the street at a single point and maintain the visual continuity of the landscaping along the street edge.

All family units should be located at grade or have direct access to grade by means of stairs. Circulation routes serving the children's outdoor play area should be free of barriers (gates, elevators) and designed so as to be easy to negotiate for a child alone.

Figure 7. Configurations



A main access route that is dark, inhospitable and uninviting.



Access to individual units appropriately spaced along the street.



Example of a clear and direct access route from the street to the lobby.

2.10 Heritage

Many heritage buildings are located in the West End, contributing to its character and architectural diversity. These buildings are listed in the Vancouver Heritage Register which is available from the City. When developing a site with heritage building, options that will allow its retention should be explored. Other character buildings, although not listed in the Register, should also be considered for retention.

3 West End RM Design Guidelines for Infill Housing

3.1 Objectives

The wider laneways that are typical of the West End present a unique opportunity to develop ground-oriented family housing that will increase the diversity and availability of rental homes in the community while still maintaining integral right of way and utility functions.

In line with the West End Community Plan, infill development will be encouraged on suitable sites to deliver residential buildings on the lanes. The process of infilling existing under-utilized frontages to the lane with additional buildings requires sensitive and creative design, with a focus not only on creating neighbourly relationships with adjacent development but also on the manner in which lanes are treated and their resultant public realm character. It is important that lanes are treated properly based on their intended role within the neighbourhood's public realm as smaller and more intimate in scale pedestrian routes with less traffic, while at the same time ensuring that they still support the necessary service functions.

These guidelines are intended to be used in conjunction with the West End Community Plan to ensure the delivery of liveable and diverse infill typologies and to guide their role in the transformation of the West End's laneways into vibrant community spaces.



3.2 Development Scenarios

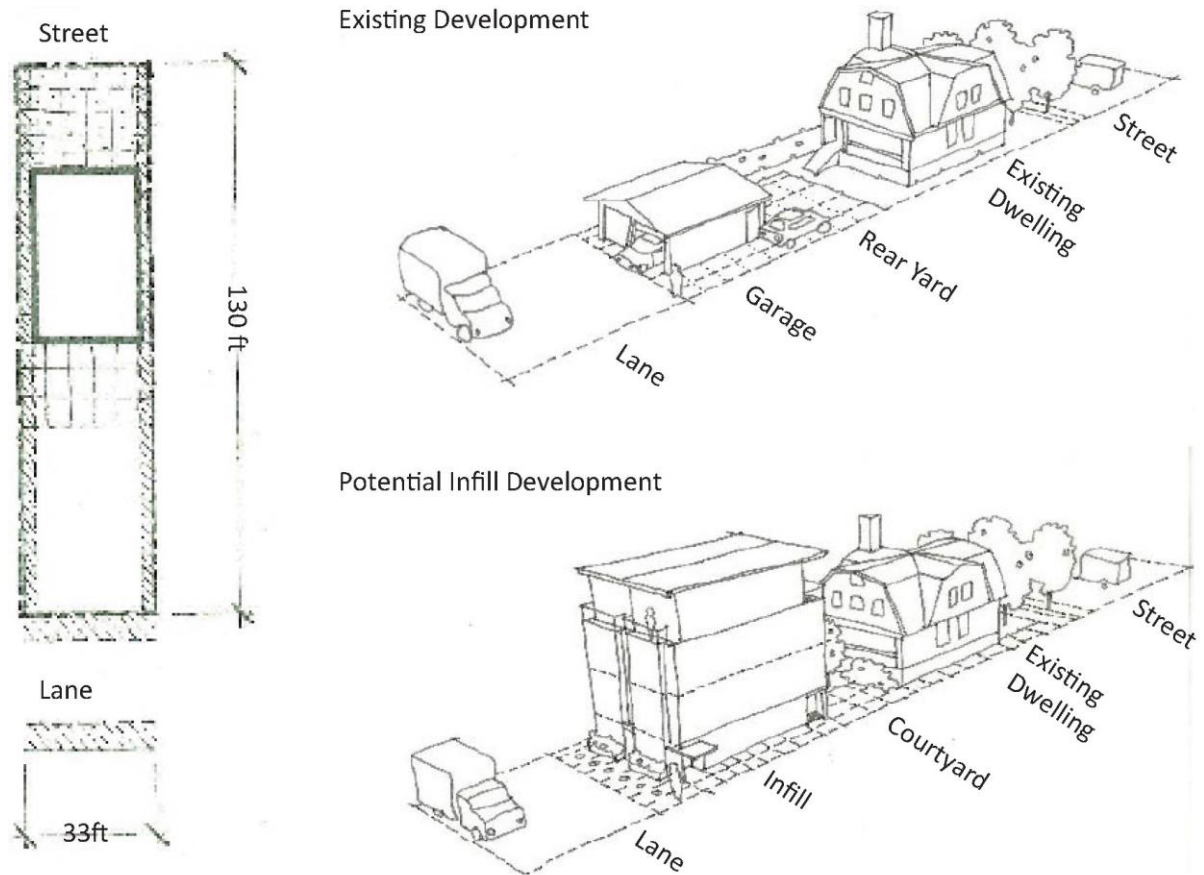
Where feasible and where lot dimensions allow, infill development fronting the laneway will be encouraged. Infill development will generally be smaller scale ground-oriented residential buildings in a form compatible with existing development on the site and reinforcing the intimate scale and character of the lane. The primary influence on the appropriate scale and form of infill development possible will be the physical dimensions of the lot and the nature of existing development. Four typical lot conditions exist within the West End. These typical conditions are identified here with appropriate infill development responses.

3.2.1 Lot Typology 01: 33 ft to 65 ft Lots

Many of the 33 ft wide lots in the West End are configured as single detached houses, with private rear yard provision and accessory building fronting the lane. Often, the rear portion of these lots is underutilized. These areas are envisaged as potential sites for modest infill development.

Infill development of a townhouse or stacked townhouse type in 3.5 to 4 storey form will be encouraged where appropriate to provide additional sites for rental housing and to activate the lane frontage. New development should demonstrate a good contextual fit with adjacent development. A minimum separation distance of 20 ft in the form of a shared courtyard will be maintained between the existing development on the lot and any infill development. Minimum side yards of 3 ft will be required.

Figure 8. 33 ft Lot Typology Development Scenarios

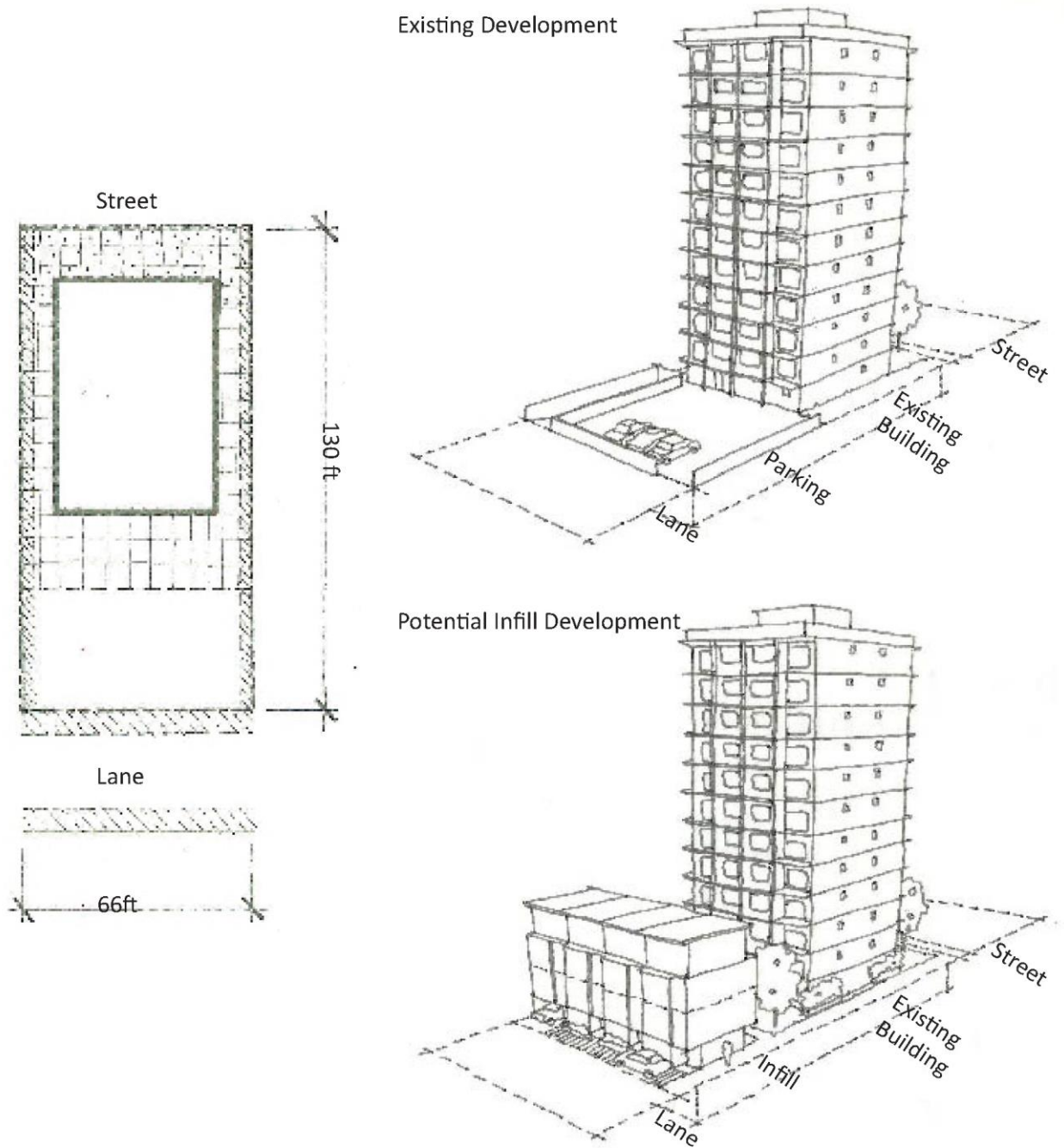


3.2.2 Lot Typology 02: 66 ft to 98 ft Lots

Typically, 66 ft lots in the West End feature one of two types of existing development. The first type is a mid-rise concrete apartment building of approximately 8 to 12 storeys. The second is a low-rise wood-frame walk-up apartment of approximately 3 to 4 storeys. Often, the rear portion of midrise lots is an underutilized parkade which does not contribute to the potential liveliness of an activated urban lane. These underutilized parking structures can become potential sites for additional housing that will also help activate West End laneways.

Where existing development is of the typical 8 to 12 storey concrete apartment type, infill development of a townhouse or stacked townhouse type in 3.5 to 4 storey forms will be encouraged where appropriate on these under-utilized rear yard sites to provide additional sites for housing and to activate the lane frontage. New development should demonstrate a good contextual fit with adjacent development. A separation distance of 20 ft in the form of a shared courtyard will be maintained between the existing development on the lot and any infill development. Minimum side yards of 3 ft will be required.

Figure 9. 66 ft Lot Typology Development Scenarios

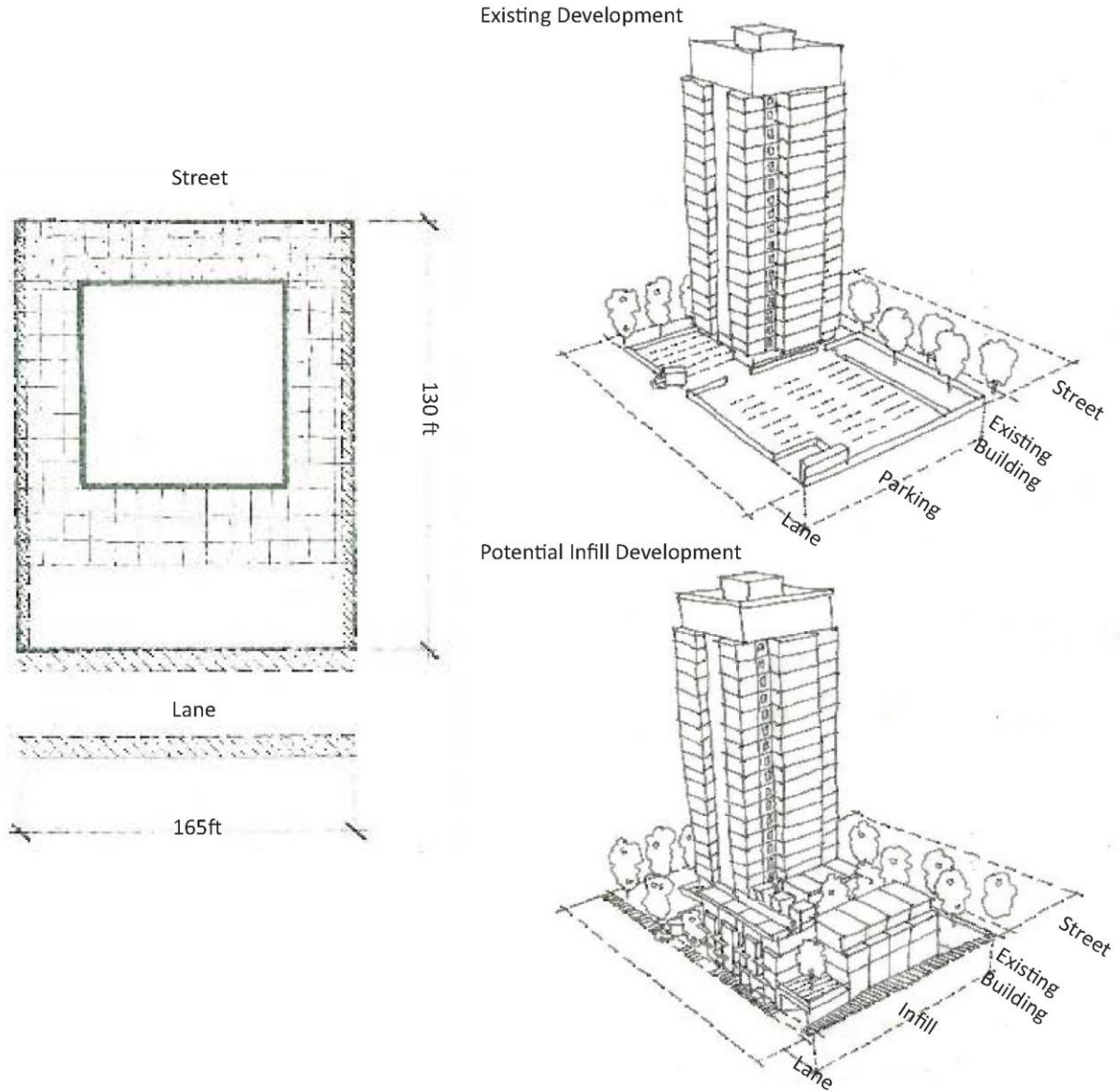


3.2.3 Lot Typology 03: 99 ft to 199 ft Lots

Development lots in this range typically feature an existing concrete apartment building from 10 to 20 storeys, with surface and underground parking facing the lane. These areas can be potential sites for additional housing that will also help activate West End laneways. It is anticipated that lots of this dimension will support a greater variety of infill development types. Generally, as the lot width increases a higher density of infill development will be supported. For sites with 165 ft or more laneway frontage, building heights beyond the 3 to 4-storey townhouse form, up to 6-storeys, will be considered. On larger sites and where the development lot is located on a corner, a limited penetration of the infill form into side yard areas, subject to the urban design performance of the proposed form of development as well as addressing and access concerns, will be considered.

In all instances, new development should demonstrate a good contextual fit with adjacent development. A separation distance of 20 ft in the form of a shared courtyard will be maintained between the existing development on the lot and any infill development. Minimum side yards of 3 ft will be required.

Figure 10. 99-199 ft Lot Typology Development Scenarios



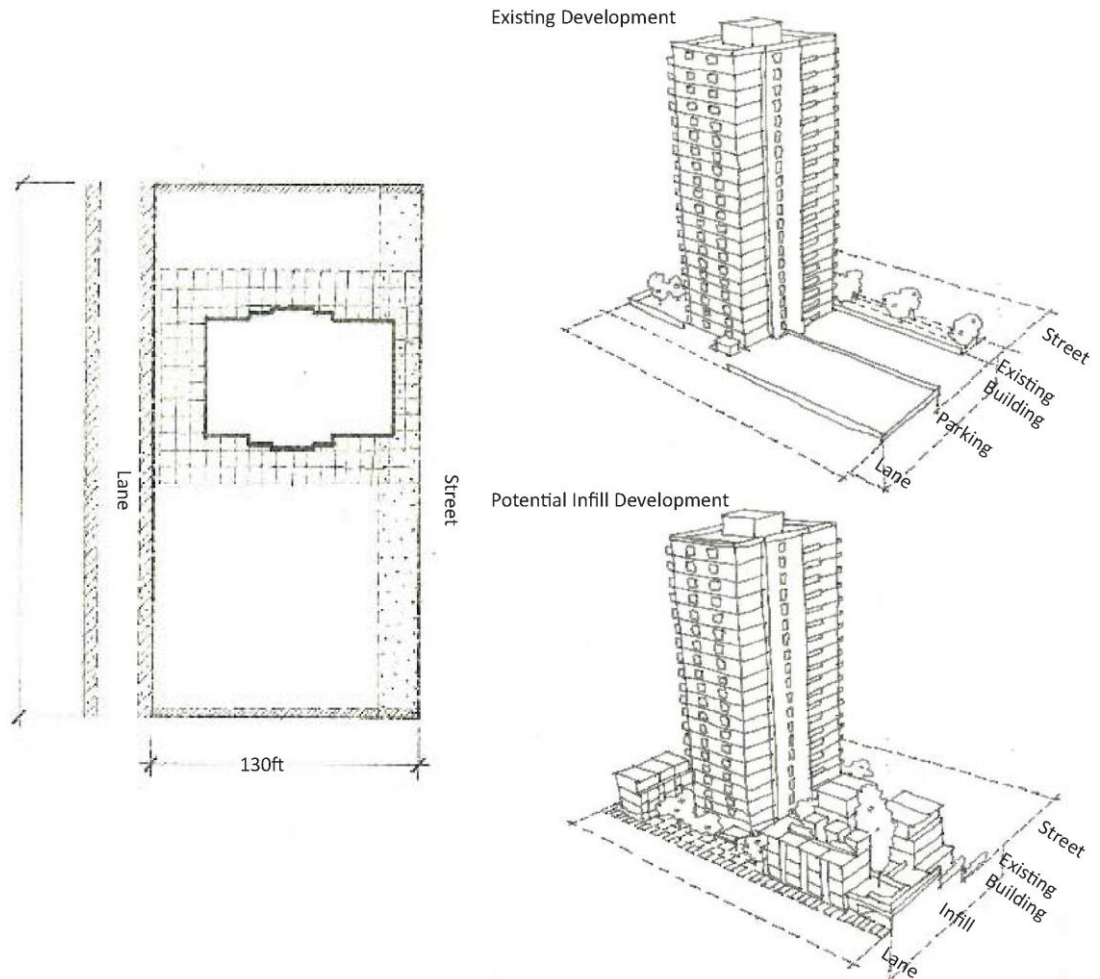
3.2.4 Lot Typology 04: 200 ft + Lots

Typically, lots of 200 ft width or greater typically feature existing 20+ storey concrete buildings, with surface and underground parking facing the lane. These areas can be potential sites for additional housing that will also help activate West End laneways. These larger sites will support a greater variety and scale of infill development. Generally, as the lot width increases a higher density of infill development will be accommodated with the potential for more taller forms.

On these larger sites, and on some corner sites, the greater area available for infill development potentially allows for the development of lower scaled townhouses along suitable side yard areas with an aspect to the shared courtyard between the existing development and the larger infill development fronting the lane, subject to the urban design performance of the proposed form of development as well as addressing and access concerns. Proposals of this kind will be expected to provide front-yard setbacks, typically in the order of 25 ft, as described in section 3.6 of these guidelines below.

In all instances, new development should demonstrate a good contextual fit with adjacent development. A separation distance of 20 ft in the form of a shared courtyard will be maintained between the existing development on the lot and any infill development. Minimum side yards of 3 ft will be required.

Figure 11. 200 ft + Lot Typology Development Scenarios



3.2.5 Irregular Lots in the West End

A limited number of irregular development lots that do not conform to any of the above typical scenarios exist in the West End. In these instances, infill development will be considered on a site by site basis and will be expected to demonstrate a good contextual fit with adjacent development and an ability to provide the expected separation distance of 20 ft in the form of a shared courtyard between the existing development on the lot and proposed infill development as well as minimum side yards and other accessing requirements. These factors will be used as the performance criteria to establish an appropriate building height and form for new development.

3.3 Scale and Building Height

The West End Community Plan envisages laneways as smaller and more intimately scaled pedestrian routes. To this end, infill development is expected to be within the range of 3.5 to 4-storeys, with limited building heights above this up to 6-storeys depending on lot size and contextual fit with both existing development on the host lot and potential infill development on adjacent lots.

To reinforce the more intimate scale and character of the laneways, where taller infill development is appropriate, it should step-back at upper levels to present a consistent street wall height to new dwelling frontages along the lane. Building heights will be considered as per the table below. Applicants are directed also to the West End Laneway Typology map included in these guidelines (see Figure 12).

Site Frontage	Commercial Adjacent Lane	Commercial Flanking Lane	Residential Lane
10.0 – 19.8 m (33 – 65 ft)	18.3 m (60 ft)	12.2m (40 ft)	12.2m (40 ft)
20.1 – 29.9 m (66 – 98 ft)	18.3 m (60 ft)	12.2m (40 ft)	12.2m (40 ft)
30.2 – 60.4 m (99 – 198 ft)	18.3 m (60 ft)	18.3 m (60 ft)	12.2m (40 ft)
60.7+ m (199+ ft)	18.3 m (60 ft)	18.3 m (60 ft)	18.3 m (60 ft)

Figure 12. West End Laneway Typology Map

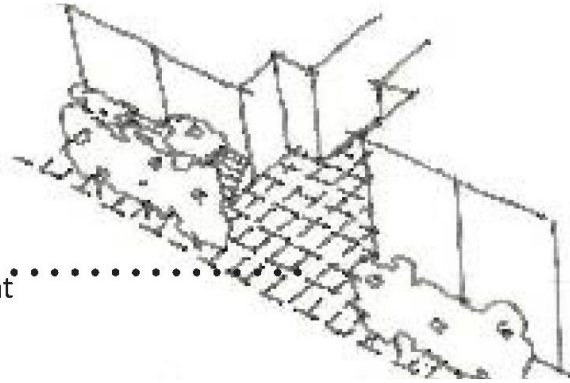


3.4 Building Frontages

Frontage of new infill development will ultimately be a factor of the lot width and typical development scenario that applies to the subject site. However, specific site contexts and neighbourhood conditions may mean that even on some larger sites a smaller grain of frontage is appropriate.

Figure 13. Finer Grain Building Frontage

Semi-Public Space created at break in infill frontage connected to new development strip at the lane.



Generally, an upper threshold of 80 ft maximum frontage will be considered for larger sites, before a significant break is desired. Where a break in frontage occurs, the public realm should be developed to link this threshold space with the shared courtyard between infill and existing development on the lot. Entrances and aspect, especially with respect to potential infill development penetrating to the side yard on larger sites, should inform the location of this break in laneway frontage.

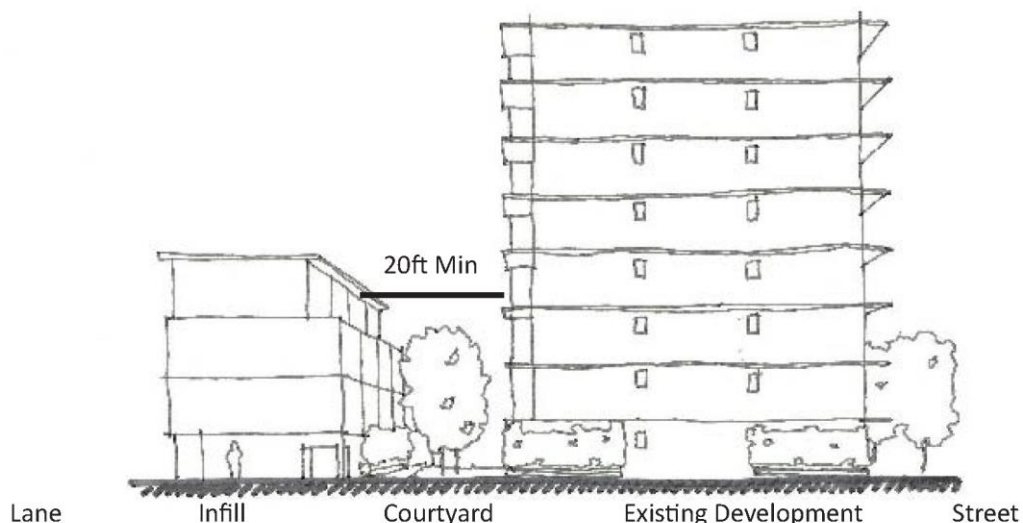
Consideration should be given to the interface of this semi-public threshold space with the marginal development strips to the laneway beyond the property line.

3.5 Building Separation

In general, a minimum separation distance of 20 ft in the form of a shared courtyard will be maintained between the existing development on the lot and any infill development. Building By-law and Fire Prevention Staff will review proposals through the application process, as such applicants are advised to review specific development characteristics with their registered professionals at pre-application stage to determine whether the particulars of existing development on the lot will require an increase in the separation between buildings.

Where larger lot widths or irregular development scenarios suggest that building heights up to 6-storeys are appropriate, this courtyard depth should be increased to 25 ft subject to ensure adequate penetration of natural light to the both courtyard and dwelling spaces, and to minimize shadowing.

Figure 14. Building Separation



In those instances where site conditions suggest that limited development along the internal side yard is appropriate, separation between infill blocks will be determined by the same considerations of light infiltration, shadowing and overlooking.

3.6 Building Setbacks

3.6.1 Setbacks to the Lane

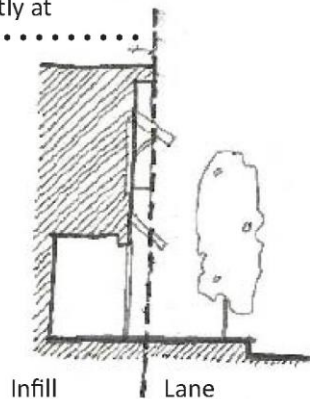
Infill development is envisaged as ground orientated family housing that will open directly onto the laneways to create a vibrant people oriented public realm. The West End Community Plan envisages repurposing 6.5 ft of the existing lane surface as a marginal development strip that will act as a threshold space between the service corridor and new infill development. Strategies for the use of this space (including limited surface parking, greening measures, and utility functions) are outlined in the Public Realm Plan and should be used to inform the relationship between infill development and the laneway with regard to appropriate setbacks and relationship to finished grade to provide continuity of the public realm.

In general, infill development should consider a minimum 2 ft setback from the rear property line to the lane to allow for edge elements such as landscaping.

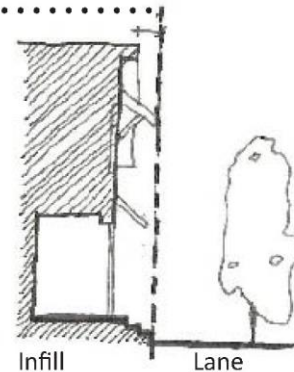
Where ground oriented family units are proposed with entry at grade, and no vehicular parking is envisaged on the marginal development strip, consideration will be given to removing the required setback from the public right of way to allow for more engaging interfaces between new homes and the marginal development strips.

Figure 15. Typical Setbacks

2ft setback from rear property line to lane where infill unit enters directly at grade.



4ft setback from rear property line to lane where infill unit entry is elevated from grade.



Where parking is envisaged within the marginal development strip, or where unit entry is elevated from grade, a minimum 4 ft setback from the rear property line to the lane should be provided to ensure that private access arrangements do not encroach on the public right-of-way.

3.6.2 Upper Level Setbacks to the Lane

Massing of infill development on its laneway frontage should respond to the more intimate scale and character of the thoroughfare through the introduction of upper level step-backs. Where taller infill development is appropriate, it a more substantial setback of the upper levels will be required to ensure continuity of the street wall height of new dwelling frontages enclosing the lane.

3.6.3 Upper Level Setbacks to the Shared Courtyard

In general, upper level setbacks will be encouraged for all infill development on its internal frontage overlooking the shared courtyard, but will not be required for typical 3.5 to 4-storey infill development subject to urban design performance relative to privacy, overlooking and solar access to the shared courtyard.

Where taller infill development is appropriate, the upper levels will be setback such that the infill building does not have significant adverse effects upon the amenity of existing development, and to an extent that minimizes overshadowing of the shared courtyard and ensures sunlight penetration to existing and newly created open amenity space occurs daily for significant periods of time throughout the year.

Given the family-oriented nature envisaged for new infill dwelling units, upper level setbacks should be in the order of 6 to 8 ft minimum to allow the provision of a useable deck as private open space amenity.

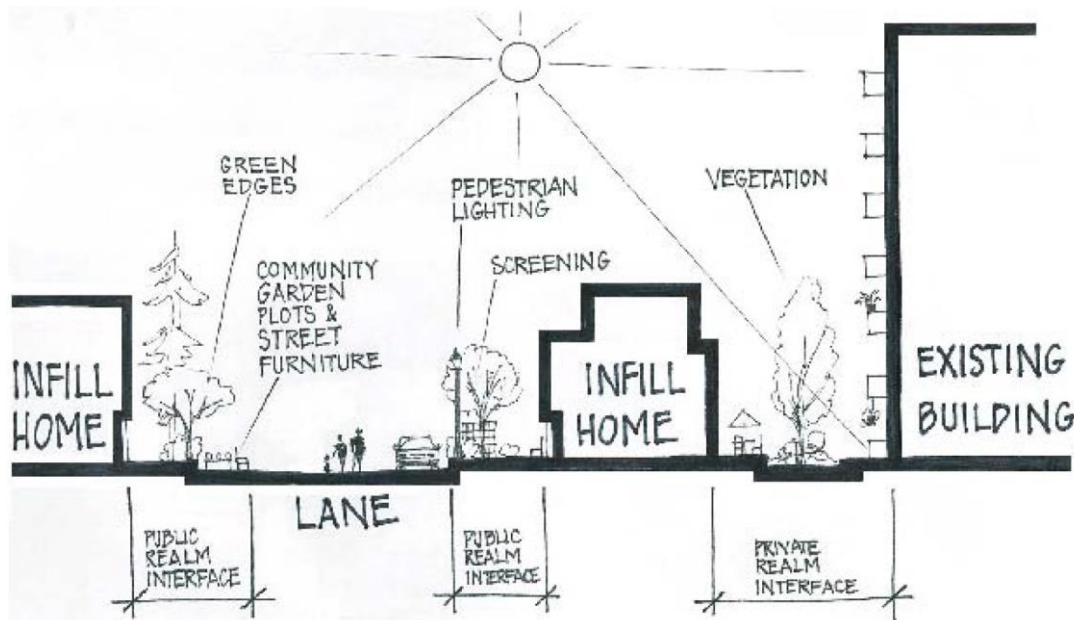
3.6.4 Side Yard Setbacks

Infill development will be situated a minimum of 3 ft from side property lines in all development scenarios. It should be noted that firefighting access and building code issues, relating to addressing from the lane and the existing form of development on the lot, will require increased side yards of 4 ft or 6 ft in certain instances. Building By-law and Fire Prevention Staff will review proposals through the application process, as such applicants are advised to review specific development characteristics with their registered professionals at pre-application stage to determine whether the particulars of existing development on the lot will require an increase in the required side yard provision.

3.6.5 Front Yard Setbacks

The landscaped side and front yards of existing development contribute to the character of the West End by providing a green streetscape- a semi-private space extending the public realm of the street by acting as a public face for the visual enjoyment of both the residents and neighbours. Infill development is limited to the lane to preserve this existing character. Where limited infill development in the side yard is deemed appropriate, a key concern will be the retention of this visual amenity by ensuring that new development does not encroach so far as to detract from the existing street character. Such development should consider the nature and character of the existing development and the fronting streetscape, as well as typical setbacks of adjacent development, in determining the appropriate scale of development. Typically, new development will be expected to retain existing building line setbacks to the front yard, or a minimum of 25ft, whichever is greater.

Figure 16. Indicative Section Showing Setbacks



3.7 Orientation

The building of new shared spaces that maximize street life and activity on the lanes is one of the guiding principles behind the proposed forms of infill development. As such, an important aspect of the infill development will be the provision of ground-oriented family dwellings with entrances directly to the lane. Access to units at the upper level of stacked townhouse forms should be provided by means of external or internal stairs with direct aspect to the lane, or an internal courtyard. Exaggerated first floor relationships to the lane should be avoided and vertical transitions to dwelling units minimized. Where these cannot be avoided, provision of an increased setback to the marginal development strip as outlined above will be required.

In those instances where the laneway frontage results in more than one infill development block, entrances and windows should directly face the secondary public spaces created. Similarly, where a limited amount of infill development is appropriate in the side yard of existing development lots, entrances should be oriented toward the internal courtyard with good visibility from the secondary public space at the laneway. To ensure legibility, discrete lighting of paths and entries should be provided.

To maximize active street life; front entry porches, external porch stairs and living room windows are strongly encouraged. Apartment forms with single entry and common interior corridors as the primary access to units will not be permitted as these do not provide the activation and animation necessary.

3.8 Threshold Spaces

The interface of new infill development with the marginal development strips along the laneway will be a key design consideration for any new development. These reclaimed areas of public realm will serve a number of functions from landscaping to surface parking provision to accommodation of service functions. In general, screening, fencing and green-edging will be used to create privacy for new laneway homes, as well as providing a pleasant laneway walking experience for the public. Infill development should be designed with lighting that enhances the pedestrian experience of the lane at night.

Features such as street furniture and community garden plots will be located as to not impact the privacy of new infill development. Where setbacks on the infill side are required, articulation of the building façade should provide opportunity to maximize landscaping of the private realm while maintaining privacy and sunlight infiltration.

The public realm and landscaping design of new infill development will be expected to visually integrate the provision of such landscaping or utilitarian features required adjacent to the development. Applicants are advised to consult the West End Public Realm Plan for details to inform development proposals.

Figure 17. Active Laneways



3.9 Architecture and Form

In line with the eclectic nature of existing development in the West End, there is no stylistic preference set for new infill proposals. Infill development should clearly express its residential function and, regardless of style, the use of high quality and authentic details and materials is expected and a high level of design excellence is expected to participate in the enrichment of the laneways.

Infill development should respond to existing on-site character, the surrounding neighbourhood context and the emerging character of the host laneway. Sensitivity to adjacent development should be demonstrated in roof form, window size and placement. The existing taller building stock in the West End means that the roofscape of new lower scaled infill development will be highly visible so the attractiveness of the roofs as viewed from above in terms of detailing and materiality will be a key concern.

Where development is envisaged on a smaller development lot typology with an existing character home, it is expected that there should be a consistent architectural language between the primary building and the infill at least in terms of form and massing, but the opportunity to create uniquely engaging buildings on lanes and design creativity will be encouraged.

3.10 Open Space

The provision of open space should be a part of an overall site development strategy and landscape plan and take into consideration existing landscape features. All new infill development will result in the provision of a shared semi-private courtyard between the new and existing buildings. The design of this new courtyard should be informed by existing landscape and open space features, sun access, privacy and usability.

As new infill development will be family-oriented, each unit will be required to have access to a private open space that is suitable for children. Private open space should be provided at grade where possible and should take advantage of sunlight and views.

3.11 Parking

Parking for infill developments will be incorporated within the primary building's parking where possible.

Figure 18. New Development Responds to Heritage



A contemporary building incorporating elements from the adjacent heritage building.



A new building emulating the style and massing of its heritage neighbour.

4 Guidelines Pertaining to the Regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law

4.1 Building Height

Building height is a major issue in the West End, especially when it affects views. The variety of building heights in the West End contribute to its character. To many, the image of the West End is embodied in its few remaining houses and heritage apartment buildings. To others, the procession of towers lining English Bay creates the definitive West End image. For new buildings to fit in comfortably, a balance between higher and lower structures must be maintained.

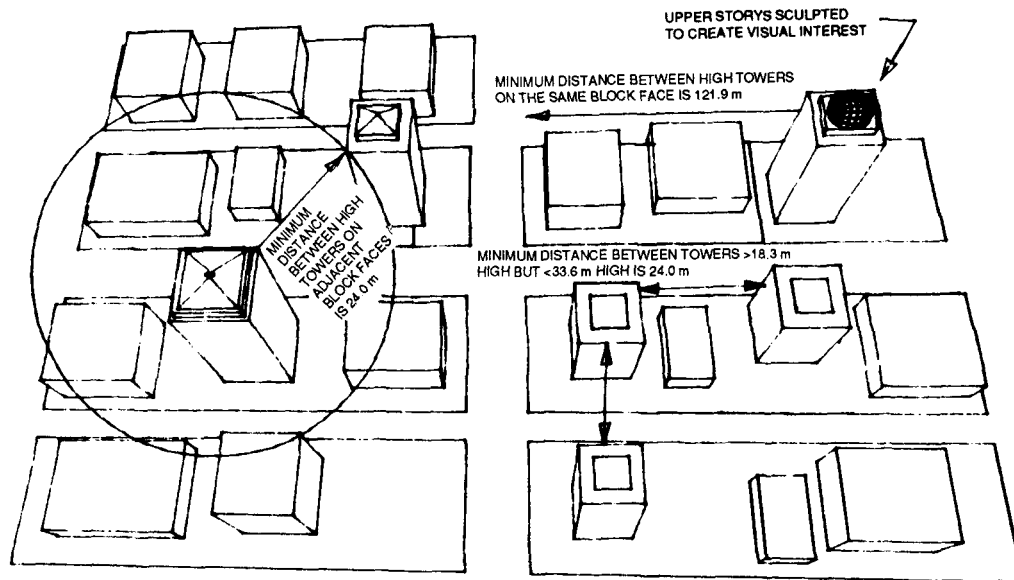
As the West End is an established community, sites for towers are limited. An increase in building height may be considered when the liveability of adjacent development is respected, and when other public objectives such as opening up street end view corridors or retaining heritage buildings are met.

High towers should be located to help create a skyline with an evident pattern. The towers should be sited where they will maintain or create view corridors between existing buildings, and not fill in a gap, creating a continuous wall of towers blocking views and resulting in a wall like appearance. To maintain the diversity of building heights, towers should be separated horizontally as follows:

- (a) In the RM-5, RM-5A, RM-5B and RM-5C areas, where a building exceeds 33.6 m in building height, the building should be separated from all other buildings above 33.6 m within the same block face by a minimum distance of 121.9 m and from all other buildings above 33.6 m in building height in adjacent block faces by a minimum distance of 24.0 m; or
- (b) In the RM-5, RM-5A, RM-5B and RM-5C areas, where a building exceeds 18.3 m in building height but does not exceed 33.6 m in building height, it should be separated from all other buildings exceeding 18.3 m in building height but not exceeding 33.6 m in building height by a minimum distance of 24.0 m.
- (c) Within the RM-5D areas, where a building exceeds 18.3 m in building height it should be separated from all other buildings exceeding 18.3 m in building height by a minimum distance of 24.0 m.
- (d) Within the RM-5D areas, building heights greater than 18.3 m in building height are only be permitted where the minimum site frontage is at least 39.6 m.

The above building separations may be decreased by the Director of Planning provided they consider the intent of these Guidelines, and the relationship with the adjacent buildings in terms of views, privacy, light, open space or heritage.

Figure 19. Tower Separation



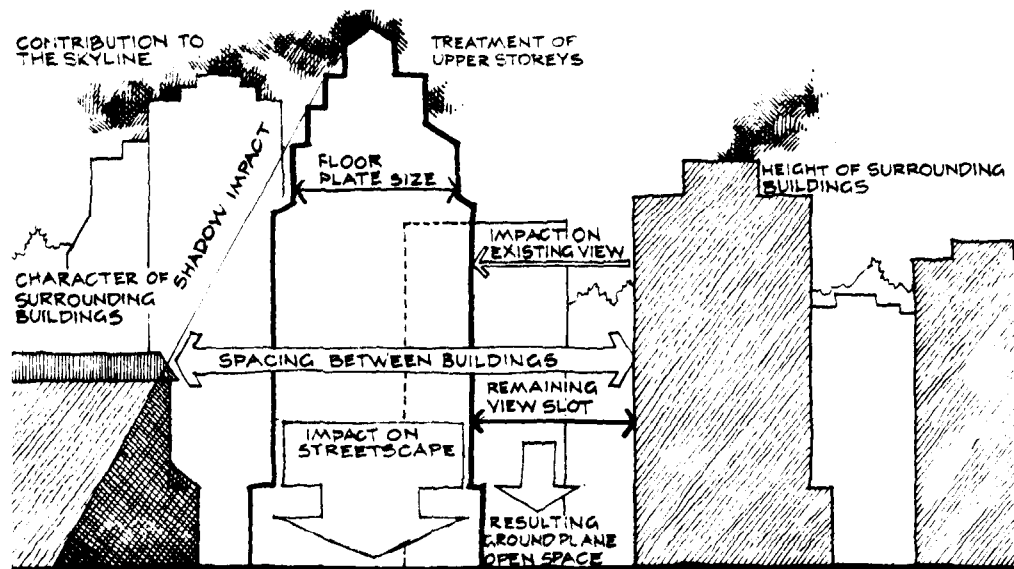
The scale of a higher building along the street edge should not be overpowering.

Potential impacts of increased building height include view loss, increased over-shadowing of the street and adjoining properties, overly massive walls dominating the street, and decreased daylight access to adjacent sites.

Existing views should not be unduly blocked. If an increase in the building height limit is sought, its impacts should be verified by a view impact analysis. To minimize view blockage a small floor plate should be used, creating a slender profile.

Any portion of a building above the outright building height limit of 18.3 m should be sculpted to provide variety, identity, and scale as part of the skyline.

Figure 20. New Development Responding to Height Issues



4.2 Front Yard

The front yard is the most public aspect of a site. Its treatment strongly influences streetscape character and how the building is seen from the street. There is a variety of front yard treatments in the West End. Providing a consistent setback and treatment creates a sense of unity along a street by tying different building styles together and by allowing some continuity of open space and landscaping. New development should make a transition to the setback of adjacent development where there is not a consistent setback pattern.

The continuity and character of the front yard can be compromised by the desire to provide more private open space and maximize site coverage. High, solid building walls or fences near the sidewalk create an incompatible image and limit the visual extension of the public space of the street into the site. Because of its public importance, the provision of a consistent front yard setback is a high priority.

Any projection into the front yard by porches, privacy walls, entrance lobbies or portes-cochere should create visual interest, enhance the streetscape and be compatible with the siting of adjacent buildings. Lobby extensions should have a high degree of transparency.

Characteristic front yard treatments such as masonry walls along Pacific Avenue should be incorporated. The height of walls along the front property line or on flanking streets for corner sites should not exceed 1.2 m. If additional height is required, the wall should step back. Any portion of a flanking wall that extends beyond an adjacent building is very visible. It should be detailed and finished in an equal manner to the facade. Avoid blank side walls visible from the street.

Figure 21. Front Yard Treatments



A representative masonry retaining wall.



High, solid fences along the street edge cut the building off from the street and appear out of place.



A blank, flanking wall extending beyond the adjacent building is very prominent and requires special attention.



A high blank, wall along the street edge creates an inhospitable image.

4.3 Side Yard

Side yards in the West End help establish street rhythm, ensure that side facing units receive daylight, permit views between buildings and create open space. Depending on site context, side yards may be varied to achieve these objectives. A side yard should be decreased only when a corresponding increase in yard areas elsewhere on the site achieves another planning objective such as the creation or expansion of view corridors, improving daylight and privacy, and will not adversely affect adjacent units. A zero lot line may be acceptable in circumstances where there are obvious public benefits.

For many low-rise units, the side yard is the main orientation and it should be treated as more than just a space between buildings. Side yards should assist in maintaining the predominant rhythm of the street and open up view corridors where possible.

Figure 22. Side Yard Treatments



New Development stepping back from the side yard to ensure that the adjacent building maintains some view and light access.



A poorly designed side yard resulting in a leftover and unattractive space.

4.4 Rear Yard

Rear yards play a special role in the West End. The constraints of high density development often result in many units facing the lane. The treatment and size of the rear yard affects the liveability of these units and the units of adjacent buildings. A new development should acknowledge the importance of the rear yard by providing an attractive rear view to compensate for the lane orientation. The wide variations in site planning has meant that many different rear yard conditions exist. New buildings should be sited to ensure that the liveability of adjacent rear yards is not compromised and that a visual continuity of open space can occur.

Figure 23. Rear Yard Configurations



A high, solid wall along the rear yard is acceptable where livability may be affected by commercial uses.



A minimal rear yard is compensated for by variations in the setback, the treatment of the lane wall as a major elevation and the substantial landscaping.

4.5 Site Coverage

Site coverage varies throughout the West End. The relationship between site coverage, site size and building height is key in creating a sense of scale and built character. The low site coverage of towers and the high site coverage of low-rise apartments both contribute. Neither should be considered as an inherently superior approach to development. Each can be appropriate depending on context and the overall block character. Site coverage should be reduced when an opportunity exists to open up quality public and private views. It is important though that the site coverage maintain the prevailing street wall definition and character for the block by providing enclosure elements such as walls and landscaping treatments. Views from the street into any open spaces resulting from reduced site coverage should be provided. These spaces should be treated as a public amenity, creating visual interest from the street.

Figure 24. Site Coverage Options



A lower building element maintains streetwall definition.



Reduced site coverage resulting in substantial open space that can be visually shared by adjacent building.

4.6 Off-Street Parking and Loading

The majority of the West End is serviced by lanes from which in most cases there is access to parking. Because of topography, some sites have parking access from the street. In these situations, access should be unobtrusive and present an attractive appearance by using high

quality materials such as paving stones or brick and landscaping the entrance to integrate the ramp into the streetscape. Any parking garage doors should be predominantly solid to partially screen garage interiors, although some visual penetration should be provided for security. To help minimize the visual impact of parking ramps as viewed from above, trellises or other screening devices should be used.

Portes-cochere can disrupt pedestrian movement and front yard continuity, and should be limited to large corner sites where they connect to the street only once, the other access point being the lane or side street. The porte-cochere driveway should be attractively finished with materials such as paving stones, and be directly linked with the parking access.

Surface parking (acceptable on sites with a frontage of 10.1 m or less that are unable to provide underground parking) should present an attractive appearance. Special paving materials, appropriate landscaping and trellises should be provided. Access to surface parking should be from the lane only.

Figure 25.



An unattractive parking entrance.



A well designed, attractive parking entrance.

5 Architectural Components

5.1 Roofs

The number of higher buildings in the West End makes the roofs of lower development very visible. New development should create an attractive roofscape when viewed from above or as part of the skyline. Roofs should be finished with materials and detailing that are attractive and visually interesting. This is especially important for flat roofs. It is also important that roof parapets have a sense of depth and solidity.

Mechanical rooms and elevator towers should be screened with materials and finishes compatible with those used on the facade. Vents and other mechanical equipment should be grouped together to create a unified roof image. In the case of towers, these elements should be incorporated into an overall roof treatment that responds to their visibility on the skyline. Consideration should be given to incorporating habitable areas as part of the roof design to assist in screening mechanical uses and creating visual interest.

Figure 26. Representative West End Roof Treatments



Figure 26. (Continued) Representative West End Roof Treatments



5.2 Entrances

Most West End buildings have clearly defined prominent entrances which animate the street and create identity. New development should provide entrances that create visual interest and identity. Tower development deserves a single prominent lobby entrance. This entrance should have a scale appropriate to the building. A large tower should have a large dramatic entrance. All entrances need to have some form of weather protection.

Figure 27. Entrance Treatments



An entrance with limited character and appeal.



A gateway defining the entrance.



Awnings creating entrance identity and character.



A representative “grand” west end apartment entrance.

5.3 Balconies

Balconies provide needed private open space for West End residents. A minimum depth of 1.8 m is recommended. To create a cohesive image, balconies should be integrated with the building and not appear “tacked on.”

Figure 28. Balcony Types



The projecting curved balconies create identity for a building with simple massing.



This projecting balcony appears tacked on.



Balconies as a major architectural component of the design.

5.4 Exterior Walls and Finishing

Exterior finishes of many types are found in the West End. The variety of finishes does not detract from a West End character because of the visual strength of other elements that tie the streetscape together. However, some of the predominately stucco buildings present a stark, flat image that is susceptible to weathering and staining and results in a dilapidated look. New development should be finished with quality materials that stand up well to Vancouver's climate and sound architectural detailing is also desirable. Finishing materials such as brick, stone and wood siding to express a sense of solidity and permanence are most appropriate. The use of stucco on large uninterrupted surfaces should be limited to avoid a flat, monotonous image. Walls finished predominantly in stucco should be articulated to create visual interest. A more substantial and durable finish for the base of stucco buildings such as stone, concrete block or brick is suggested.

Figure 29. Exterior Finishes



Brick clad base of this predominantly stucco building creates a sense of solidity and permanence.



Poorly detailed surfaces weather quickly in Vancouver's climate.

6 Open Space

The West End's high density requires open space to maintain liveability. While residents have access to English Bay and Stanley Park, the streets also provide open space, particularly where mini-parks have been established. Traditionally the street edges of development are open grassed areas that are visual extensions of the public realm helping to create an attractive, generous streetscape. New development should maintain and offer this sense of open space along the street edge and visually extend the depth of views from the street.

Open space between adjacent buildings can improve privacy and daylight access.

Major open spaces can be located at street corners where the massing of existing adjacent buildings does not suggest defining the corner with building mass (Figure 26).

It is important to provide large contiguous open spaces rather than a series of smaller isolated spaces. These spaces can also visually connect to adjacent open space areas. A sense of pride in the community can be achieved with well placed seating in the landscaped area.

Figure 30. Open Space Treatments



A well designed open space area that is visually linked with the open space of adjacent development creating a sense of openness.



Open spaces should include seating.

6.1 Private Open Space

The provision of quality, usable private open space is key to maintaining liveability in a high density setting such as the West End. It is usually provided by balconies, and in some cases, patios. Communal open spaces such as roof decks, pool areas and courtyards are also found.

All units should have some private open space directly accessible in the form of a balcony, roof deck or patio. Communal open space can be provided in the form of courtyards, pool decks or roof decks. Privacy fencing should be set back from the property line since it is desirable to maintain open space continuity between sites. Private open space areas should be screened where the liveability of adjacent units will be affected.

Pools and playgrounds should be located in internal or screened locations away from the street. Playground areas should be large enough to accommodate items such as swings and slides as well as provide open space. Materials used should be varying in texture and safe for children. Sunlight penetration, particularly during the winter, is critical to the utility of the open space.

Open space on roof decks and terrace locations can provide children's play areas as well. The design must ensure safety and visual access from several adjacent units. These spaces can serve family units which are not at grade, or can augment play spaces at grade by providing play space for a different age group of children in the building.

6.2 Indoor Amenities

In designing indoor amenity spaces in a building containing family units consideration shall be given to including an amenity area which is sited, designed and of a size that would permit its use ultimately as a childcare facility, as deemed desirable by the Managing Director of Social Policy and Projects.

Figure 31. Private Open Space Treatments



A gradual transition from the public to private space is well done in this design.



Uses such as swimming pools with their attendant mesh fencing are inappropriate along the street edge.

7 Landscaping

Landscaping is one of the most important elements creating the West End character. It is the combination of the lush, mature landscaping with the high density buildings which is an integral part of the West End image.

Near Stanley Park, the landscaping along the streets appears almost as an extension of the park. Landscaping such as street trees, mini-parks and major public park spaces is very important. New development should reinforce and integrate with the pattern and character of the existing public realm. The opportunities for landscaping above grade should be explored. Roof decks and balcony planters can enhance a building's appearance. Many units have a lane as their main orientation. The density of the West End requires that the lanes be treated in a special manner in recognition of their visibility. Attractive landscaping along the lanes should be provided to respond to their role as a secondary orientation and access areas. Planting can also be used to help screen private open space from the lane. New development should ensure that established West End landscaping patterns are maintained and enhanced.

Residential lighting should be incorporated into the landscaping to create an attractive image after dark and to improve security.

Mature trees and prominent landscape elements should be retained when possible.

To create a lively streetscape, special landscaping elements such as ponds, gateways, arches, arbours, fountains and sculpture should be incorporated in order to create visual interest along the street edge.

Fences and screens should be integrated with the overall design with the use of materials and detailing compatible with the building.

Figure 32. Landscaping Treatment



The West End is characterized by its mature street trees.



Existing mature landscaping incorporated into new development.



Lush landscaping mitigates the impact of fencing.



Sculpture is an appropriate landscaping element for the West End.