



City of Vancouver *Planning - By-law Administration Bulletins*

Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability Department

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RA-1 Illegal Occupancy

Effective December 1, 2002

Amended November 14, 2022

Illegal occupancy is an issue in the RA-1 District. Addressing the potential for illegal occupancy during the permit application process will support the approved zoning and lessen the need for future by-law enforcement.

The proposed design should be appropriate to the intended use and evaluated accordingly. The following is a summary of possible ways that potential illegal occupancies can be identified and discouraged during the design review process.

1. Building Height and Storeys

Limiting building heights and storeys that is appropriate for the intended use, e.g., an ancillary building, such as a tractor shed, or garage, whose height exceeds what is necessary for its intended function.

2. Roof Shape

Roof shapes that enclose large volumes of space such as a mansard, can accommodate future interior alterations. Mock dormers, venting elements skylights etc., can be converted to windows.

3. Use Identification

All rooms on floor plans should be identified with a use title that clearly defines the intended use and is unambiguous in meaning.

4. Stairs

Stairs or frame openings that could be used for vertical circulation, either shown on the permit drawings or discovered during a routine inspection.

5. Windows

Limiting the number and placement of windows and skylights for conditional approvals that is appropriate for its intended use.

6. Heating, Plumbing and Electrical

Heating, plumbing and electrical systems that exceed the requirements of the intended use. A garage for example need not be heated or insulated. (Note: these may not be on the permit drawings and may be discovered during routine construction inspections.)

Note: Notwithstanding the above, in cases where potential future occupancy requires further confirmation, it is advisable to note on the approval drawing set: “*this area to be used (or approved for) [identify use] only.*”

Reference Documents

Zoning and Development By-law, RA-1 District Schedule

2.2 Use-Specific Regulations

3.1.1 Floor Space Ratio

Southlands RA-1 Guidelines

3.1 Caretaker’s Quarters

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Stables - RA-1 District