

Guidelines

Artist Studio Guidelines

Approved by Council September 10, 1996

Last amended July 20, 2021

Please note that as part of the Artist Studio Regulatory Review, approved by Council October 6, 2011, these guidelines are being reviewed to improve the design and function of artist studios.

1 Application and Intent

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with a district schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law or the official development plans, which permit artist studios - class A, artist studio - class B and the associated residential units. These guidelines should be consulted in seeking approval for these conditional uses.

The intent of these guidelines is to encourage functional, liveable, affordable and safe artist “live/work” studios.

Wherever guideline provisions refer to artist studios:

- (a) they refer to both artist studio - class A and class B, unless otherwise noted; and
- (b) they refer to the residential unit associated with the artist studio.

Discretion may be used, and exemption may be considered in the application of the neighbourhood character or amenity space guidelines in the following situations:

- (a) the development is small in scale (less than 12 studios) with few artist “live/work” studios;
- (b) the use of the site is clearly for a short interim period (i.e., 5 years or less);
- (c) the provision of low cost rental artist studios is proposed;
- (d) renovation of an existing building is proposed; and
- (e) a heritage building will be preserved.

2 General Design Considerations

2.1 Neighbourhood Character

Community development plans have been approved for several areas of the City, including the Mount Pleasant and Strathcona neighbourhoods. The Mount Pleasant Pedestrian Walkway, which follows the historic Brewery Creek, is an example of an area wide initiative recommended in a community development plan. New artist studio developments, including renovations, should make significant contributions to the objectives outlined in approved community development plans. They should enhance the overall character of the neighbourhood.

New developments, including renovations, should contribute to objectives contained in the City’s green policies. New developments should provide street trees adjacent to the site, if Engineering and Park Board assess them as feasible. Landscape buffers required by by-laws or other guidelines should be provided. Alternative measures such as screening can be proposed in renovations where it may not be physically possible to provide landscape setbacks.

2.2 Street Character

Artist studios on the ground floor of developments are generally not encouraged on pedestrian oriented streets in commercial, historic and comprehensive development districts. Where it can be shown that retail continuity will not be interrupted or reduced, artist studios should incorporate or retain design elements that reinforce their scale as shopping streets. Pedestrian interest should be maintained by retaining storefronts and windows. Windows should not be blocked and should allow for viewing work underway in the studio. Window displays should be used to present works of art.

Artist studios on the ground floor of developments located on pedestrian oriented streets in commercial, historic and comprehensive development districts should retain existing entrances, where possible. Buildings containing artist studios that exceed a 15.3 m frontage should contain more than one entrance. Ancillary galleries and other uses on the ground floor should have their own entrance.

The residential unit associated with the artist studio should be visually screened so that it cannot be viewed from the street. It should generally not be located adjacent to the ground floor front wall of the building.

2.3 Light and Ventilation

Adequate light is needed for the production of art. The residential unit, when located to the rear of the studio, can borrow light through the production area. Consideration should be given to other guidelines (e.g., specific guidelines for District Schedules).

3 Uses

3.1 Land Use Compatibility in the IC-3 District

The compatibility of artist studios with existing or proposed uses will be a concern when adjacent uses generate noise (vibrations) or odours that could impact on residential livability in the studios. In the IC-3 district, the applicant may be asked to demonstrate through a report from a qualified professional (e.g., acoustical or environmental engineer) that there are no impacts on residential livability or that the impacts can be mitigated through appropriate design.

3.2 Time Limited Development Permits

In the I, M, IC-1 and IC-2 districts a development permit that will be limited in time may be required for the use and occupancy of an artist studio in cases where the scale of the proposed development (12 studios or more) or increased parking may impact on the viability of surrounding industrial activities. In all cases, landowners and businesses will be consulted. The advice of a panel of artists will also be sought prior to approving the studios.

3.3 Time Limited Development Permits

There are two use options in the Zoning and Development By-law that permit Artist Studio use in live work premises – Live Work Use and “Residential Unit associated with an Artist Studio”. An applicant’s choice of option should be made with an awareness of the differences as discussed below.

- (f) Under Live Work Use, occupants including artists are permitted to have employees and walk in trade in their units. As noted in the Live Work Use Guidelines, Live Work units need to comply with Vancouver Building By-law requirements for both residential and non residential occupancies.
- (g) Under “Residential Unit associated with an Artist Studio”, occupants are limited to the production of art only, and employees and walk in trade are not permitted. The Vancouver Building By-law allows these units to be designed as a residential occupancy, provided they comply with certain sprinklering and structural floor load requirements (i.e., generally the building code requirements are less onerous under this option). Where “residential units associated with an Artist Studio” permit an occupancy of more than two persons and are located within a multi-unit development, consideration should also be given to ensuring a high

standard of livability, including on-site amenity space, bicycle parking and where applicable, compliance with the requirements of the High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines.

There are separate zoning regulations and guidelines for Live-Work use and residential units associated with an Artist Studio. For Live Work Use, refer to the Live Work Use Guidelines.

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

4.1 Off-street Parking and Loading

Loading bays should be adjacent to a direct route to an elevator.

Reduced parking and loading requirements may be considered in the case of a renovation of an existing building which cannot accommodate all the required parking or loading spaces and for low cost rental studios secured through a legal or housing agreement.

5 Internal Design and Facilities

5.1 Internal Design

Wide doors to studio units and over size elevators that can carry heavy loads are encouraged to facilitate moving larger works of art. Access and corridors between the loading bay and the elevator should be designed to permit the moving of large works of art.

5.2 Facilities

An amenity room should be provided in developments with 12 or more artist studios. The amenity room can be used for (among other functions): meeting space, an exercise facility or a display area for art work.

The separate common workshop should be provided in developments with 12 or more artist studios. It should provide a mechanical ventilation unit with associated ducting sufficient for the safe use of noxious or toxic materials and a 220 volt service for machinery. The common workshop is a facility separated from individual artist studios and associated residential units.

In cases where artist studio - class B (studios involving industrial processes or toxic materials or generating noise impacts) is proposed, plumbing should be located to permit the easy installation of a slop sink in each studio.