



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

KITSILANO RM-4 GUIDELINES

Adopted by City Council on January 19, 1988

Amended April 12, 1988, February 4, 1992, September 15, 2020, and July 20, 2022

1 Application and Intent

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the RM-4 and RM-4N Districts Schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law for developments in those parts of Kitsilano and the area adjacent to Alma Street zoned RM-4. The guidelines should be consulted in seeking approval for conditional approval dwelling uses or for the relaxation of regulations. As well as assisting the applicant, the guidelines will be used by City staff in the evaluation of projects.

The intent of the guidelines is to achieve high quality development and residential liveability, and to ensure compatibility of new development with existing physical character of the neighbourhood.

2 General Design Considerations

Buildings should be located on a site and designed so as to take maximum advantage of views, sun, existing trees and landscaping, and to minimize view blockage, privacy conflicts, overshadowing and noise.

2.1 Neighbourhood and Street Character

New development should be compatible with the predominant physical character of the surrounding residential neighbourhood. The design of a new building should contribute to the positive characteristics of the streetscape and should consider such aspects as site planning, orientation, building massing, roof forms, window type, finishing materials and landscaping. Unarticulated or blank walls are considered detrimental to street character.

2.2 Views

Whenever possible, views of the mountains, water or downtown should be provided.

2.3 Light and Ventilation

Each dwelling unit should have two exterior walls to maximize light access and ventilation through windows.

2.4 Noise

Proper acoustical design of units is essential in new construction near noisy traffic arteries. Double or triple glazing, glassed in patio spaces, and sound absorptive finishes may be essential to ensure good standard of liveability. The advice of an acoustical consultant should be sought.

2.5 Safety

To promote casual neighbourhood surveillance, fences and walls adjacent to the sidewalk should be designed to ensure some view of the building from the sidewalk, without sacrificing unit privacy.

Placing indoor common areas adjacent to outside common spaces or overlooking the street will help to improve the degree of mutual security.

2.6 Access and Circulation

As many units as possible should have individual access from ground level.

Corridor lengths should not exceed 22.9 m in any one direction, with any intersecting corridor limited to a maximum of 15.3 m. On large sites, more entries and vertical circulation will help limit long corridors, as will a variety of widths. Corridors should have natural light and ventilation.

Access to parking should be provided from the lane rather than the street.

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

3.1 Frontage

Development of sites with frontage greater than 45.8 m may be permitted if the development's facade is visually broken into smaller individual components or if the development is not out of scale with the surrounding neighbourhood.

3.2 Yards

Front, side and rear yard setbacks may be reduced where a clear advantage in terms of building siting, neighbourliness, or streetscape quality can be demonstrated. Contextual information including street elevations and context plans of the surrounding neighbourhood will be required to evaluate the success of such a proposal. However, where consistent established setbacks exist, these setbacks should be maintained.

4 Architectural Components

4.1 Entrances

Where a building has a common principal entry, the entry should have strong, well-defined character and a presence on the street.

4.2 Balconies

Balconies should be provided consisting of a usable area that affords some privacy from other units. A minimum depth of 1.8 m is recommended.

4.3 Exterior Walls and Finishing

The exterior finishing and detailing of a building should be of a quality that stands the test of time and weather. Where an identifiable architectural character exists, new development should incorporate sympathetic exterior materials and detailing.

5 Internal Design

A secure storage area should be provided for each unit, preferably ensuite.

Laundry facilities should be provided. Communal laundry rooms should have natural light and ventilation and some room for waiting adjacent to a recreation room to allow for socializing or child supervision in family accommodation.

6 Open Space

A variety of types of open space should be provided. Each dwelling unit should have some private open space.

Open space should be defined by the careful siting and massing of buildings, rather than being left-over areas, in order to maximize their functional and visual benefit.

When site coverage of new development is greater than 50%, alternatives to ground floor open space should be provided, such as large balconies or roof decks. However, consideration must be given to privacy of adjoining sites.

Open space should provide some degree of privacy and rain protection while permitting adequate sunlight.

Private open space should be directly accessible from each unit in the form of a yard, roof deck or large balcony. Ground level private open space should be defined by screening or landscaping.

On sloped sites, open space should be terraced to complement existing topography and landscape.

7 Landscaping

Surface treatment should respond to the variety of uses to which open space will be put. Both hard and soft surfaces should be provided as needed and may include pavers, cobblestone, tile, lawn areas and sand child play areas.

Significant existing trees should be retained in any redevelopment.

To tie the neighbourhood together visually, consistent boulevard trees should be provided in agreement with the City Engineer and compatible street treatment employed (trees, hedges, ground cover, fences and screening).

New landscaping should complement and enhance landscaping on adjacent properties.

Appendix

Submission Requirements

Applicants should refer to the information required for significant development permit applications contained in the Checklist in Brochure #3: How To... Development Permits for Major Applications.