

## Background

On 2008-AUG-11 Nanaimo City Council adopted "ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT BYLAW 2008 NO. 4000.438", which permits secondary suites within an accessory building provided that:

1. No secondary suite exists within the principal dwelling unit;  
**AND**
2. A minimum of 30m<sup>2</sup> of private outdoor space is provided;  
**AND**
3. The lot is:
  - A. A corner lot; **OR**
  - B. Accessed by a laneway; **OR**
  - C. Is greater than a 1,000m<sup>2</sup> in lot area.

The total size of all accessory buildings on the lot shall not exceed 70m<sup>2</sup>.



Photo courtesy of rosschapin.com

## Design Checklist

While no formal design approval process is required for a secondary suite within an accessory building, in order to ensure detached suites are constructed in a manner that provides for a safe and comfortable living environment for tenants while respecting the privacy of neighbouring residents, Staff recommend the following be considered during the construction of a detached suite:

1. The exterior materials and colours of the suite should compliment the overall character of the existing dwelling and neighbourhood.
2. Emergency personnel must be able to easily find and access the suite.
3. Three parking spaces are provided (one for the suite and two for the principal dwelling).
4. The detached suite must be oriented and sited in a manner that protects the privacy of neighbours.
5. The suite should be screened from the neighbouring yards in the manner most suited to the character of the neighbourhood.
6. Private outdoor space should be provided for suite tenants.

### City of Nanaimo

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## SECONDARY SUITES IN ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

## GUIDE TO ZONING REGULATIONS



[www.nanaimo.ca](http://www.nanaimo.ca)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1 Can I build a detached secondary suite on my property?

A secondary suite is permitted in all single family residential zones as well as all multiple family, rural agriculture, commercial and public institution zones where a single family home is the only use on the property; however, secondary suites are only permitted within an accessory building where no other suite exists within the associated principal building and the property on which the suite is to be built meets one of the following three criteria:

1. the property is considered a corner lot; **OR**
2. a lot whose side or rear lot line abuts a lane; **OR**
3. the total size of the lot is greater than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

## 2 How many parking spaces do I need to provide?

One additional off-street parking space is required where a secondary suite is built, whether it is within an accessory building or within the home. An additional two parking spaces are required for the principal dwelling unit.



## 3 How large can my detached suite be?

The total Gross Floor Area of all accessory buildings on a lot cannot exceed 70m<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, if you wish to construct a secondary suite within an accessory building the total floor area of your suite cannot exceed 70m<sup>2</sup>, minus the floor area of all other accessory buildings on the lot.

Within most residential zones the maximum permitted height for an accessory building varies based on roof pitch, as follows:

Roof Pitch	Maximum Height
< 6:12	4.5 metres
≥ 6:12	5 metres
≤ 8:12	5.5 metres

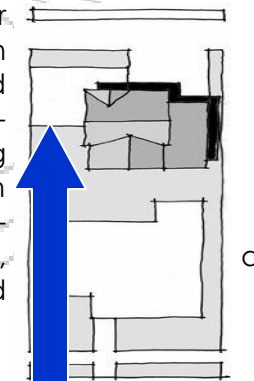
The height of an accessory building can however vary, based on zoning, therefore, to ensure the above height regulations apply to your lot you are required to check your zoning and the height requirements within that zone.

## 4 Can I sell my detached suite?

No, secondary suites cannot be stratified or subdivided from the principal dwelling unit to which the suite is accessory. Secondary suites are intended as rental units or as an independent housing option for family members.

## 5 What is meant by private outdoor space?

The Zoning Bylaw requires that 30m<sup>2</sup> of private outdoor space be provided for tenants of a secondary suite within an accessory building. This outdoor space provides suite tenants with an amenity not commonly found in other rental accommodation. The open space shall be permitted in the required yard setback area but shall not include space used for parking purposes. Open space must be marked on the site plan submitted during the building permit process and can include an open or covered deck, patio pavers, porch or fenced yard space.



## 6 Is a development permit required?

If the proposed detached suite conforms to all Zoning Bylaw regulations no development permit is necessary; however, a building permit is required. If you wish to exceed the height or size regulations, as outlined in question 3, you may apply to do so through a development variance permit (DVP). Staff support of your DVP application will largely depend on how well you meet the design checklist in this brochure.