



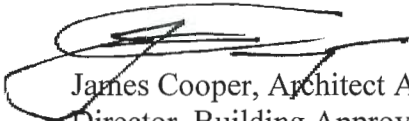
City of Richmond


Report to Committee

To: Planning Committee **Date:** February 13, 2020
From: James Cooper, Architect AIBC **File:** 12-8060-02-01/2020-Vol 01
 Director, Building Approvals
Re: **BC Building Code Changes to Secondary Suite Provisions**

Staff Recommendation

1. That Richmond Zoning Bylaw No. 8500, Amendment Bylaw No. 10139, to better define secondary suites and increase the maximum permitted size of secondary suites in dwellings from 90 m² to 110m², be introduced and given first reading.
2. That Consolidated Fees Bylaw No. 8636, Amendment Bylaw No. 10142, to incorporate cost recovery charges for addressing secondary suites, be introduced and given first, second and third reading.
3. That a 12 month grace period be authorized, from the date of Bylaw No. 10142 adoption, allowing legal secondary suite owners to secure a suite address without charge before the addressing fees take effect.


 James Cooper, Architect AIBC
 Director, Building Approvals
 (604-247-4606)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Development Applications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Wagner G for Joe Erceg</i>
Policy Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Law	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: <i>CS</i>	APPROVED BY CAO 

Staff Report

Origin

On December 12, 2019, amendments to the *BC Building Code* (“BCBC”) addressing the design and construction of secondary suites came into force and effect and includes the following relevant items:

- Eliminating the previous maximum floor area of 90 m² (969 ft²) for a secondary suite within a single family dwelling;
- Revising the definition of secondary suite to permit secondary suites in more building types: single family, duplex, and townhouse dwellings; and
- Providing alternative construction/alteration compliance standards in order to address challenges for constructing new secondary suites within existing buildings.

Leveraging these technical amendments, the City of Richmond is afforded greater flexibility in its zoning regulations to accommodate larger and more varied secondary suites in a range of residential building types. They also offer simplified technical approaches that may be proposed in building permit applications to address required building and safety criteria when developing a secondary suite in an existing dwelling.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #6 Strategic and Well-Planned Growth:

6.5 Ensure diverse housing options are available and accessible across the housing continuum.

Analysis

Richmond Zoning Bylaw No. 8500 is the City of Richmond’s primary regulatory tool for regulating secondary suites.

In 2019, there were approximately 96 building permit applications for single family homes, that contained a secondary suite, submitted to the City.

Secondary Suite Definition, Size and Character

Staff proposes the following measures to facilitate the potential for development of larger secondary suites more appropriate to accommodating families while maintaining the desired residential form, neighborhood character and deference to the principal dwelling:

Definition

- Amend the definition of Secondary Suite to ensure consistent application of the Richmond Zoning Bylaw across all housing types.

Size

- The maximum floor area of a secondary suite will remain 40% of the principal dwelling unit to ensure that the suite remains secondary to the principal dwelling. Larger

properties naturally allow larger principal dwelling units which in turn would provide the opportunity for larger suites. Even on larger properties secondary suites cannot exceed 40% of the principal dwelling size.

- The current restriction on the size of a secondary suite in Richmond Zoning Bylaw No. 8500 is 90 m² (969 ft²), which is consistent with the previous regulations of the *BC Building Code*. The 2019 amendment to the BC Building Code removed the restriction on maximum size, allowing municipalities to select their own maximum. Staff propose that Richmond Zoning Bylaw No. 8500 be amended to increase the maximum size to 110 m² (1,185 ft²), giving latitude to develop suites accommodating more bedrooms and be more suitable for families. The additional 20 m² (215ft²) is the spatial equivalent to a master bedroom and bath.
- Richmond Zoning Bylaw No. 8500, Amendment Bylaw No. 10139 will increase the potential maximum size of secondary suites permitted to the lesser of 110 m² (1,185 ft²) or 40% of the total floor area of the dwelling unit in which it is contained.

Character

- Currently all duplexes require a Council issued Development Permit to control form and character (i.e. architectural form, landscaping and parking). If the secondary suite is permitted to be 50% of the overall primary dwelling unit area, a duplex would effectively be permitted. This could significantly change the neighbourhood form and character by circumventing the requirement to obtain a Development Permit.
- Allowance of a larger suite size of 110 m² (1,185 ft²) is balanced with retention of the current Bylaw provision restricting the secondary suite size to 40% of the principal dwelling unit. This further ensures the secondary suite remains deferential to the principal dwelling unit thereby reinforcing the single family neighborhood character.
- Richmond Zoning Bylaw No. 8500, Amendment Bylaw No. 10139 will further strengthen the requirement for the secondary suite to be incidental to the principal dwelling through entry door placement, resulting in better design for houses containing a secondary suite.

Civic Addressing for Secondary Suites

The City does not currently assign an address to a secondary suite. Staff proposes the following changes to the civic addressing process for secondary suites in order to facilitate improved timeliness for emergency response, postal delivery, and ability to track and collect data on secondary suites developed in the City. The addressing procedure noted below is procedural in nature and will be managed by Staff.

- Legal secondary suites will be assigned an “additional address” in our property addressing system. The primary dwelling would retain the civic address while the secondary suite will have the primary address followed by an “A”. For example,
 - 1234 Granville Avenue will be the principal dwelling address
 - 1234A Granville Avenue will be the secondary suite address
- As per the City’s addressing protocol, all City assigned addresses must be displayed and be properly numbered and clearly visible day and night.

- Assignment of secondary suite addresses will be at building permit stage and assessed a \$50.00 fee (for cost recovery). To facilitate this change, proposed Amendment Bylaw No. 10142 to the Consolidated Fee Bylaw No. 8636 would add the \$50.00 charge to the list of fees collected for additional addresses requested for secondary suites or coach houses.
- A grace period of 12 months would be provided for owners of a legal and properly permitted secondary suite and coach house that existed at the time of this bylaw having come into force and effect to request an additional address for the secondary suite with no charge to encourage compliance.

Staff have consulted with Richmond Fire and Rescue, Canada Post, Richmond RCMP Detachment and BC Assessment on the proposed addressing scheme to ensure that their respective systems and processes would not be adversely impacted, and they have no objections to the proposal.

Communication

- Staff suggests that no consultation of this bylaw amendment is required because only the maximum cap has been increased and the addressing options are consistent with other municipalities.
- Information regarding proposed modifications to the City's secondary suite regulations and addressing procedures will be shared through Departmental Bulletins.
- The City will notify existing legal secondary suite owners through direct mailing of the ability to have an address assigned free of charge during the grace period. This information will also be included on the website and Staff will work with Corporate Communications to issue press releases identifying the grace period.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

The technical amendments to the *BC Building Code* which came into effect on December 12, 2019 pertaining to the development of secondary suites in residential dwellings may be leveraged by amending Richmond Zoning Bylaw regulations to provide increased size and variety of suites to better address current housing needs in the community.

Staff recommends an approach that balances the ability and need to develop larger suites with adherence to formal regulations that preserve the form and character of existing neighborhoods. These proposed changes also present an opportunity to improve the addressing system for secondary suites.



Serena Trachta
Manager, Plan Review
(604-204-8515)

ST:st

PLN - 150



**Richmond Zoning Bylaw No. 8500,
Amendment Bylaw No. 10139
(Secondary Suites)
City-Wide**

The Council of the City of Richmond, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

- 1) Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended at Section 3.4 [Use and Term Definitions] by deleting the definition of **Secondary Suite** in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

“Secondary Suite means an un-stratified, accessory, self-contained **dwelling** located within a **principal dwelling unit**, and exclusively used for occupancy by one **household** in accordance with Section 5.4 of this bylaw.”

- 2) Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended at Section 5.4 [Secondary Suites] by:

- a) Deleting Subsection 5.4.1(c) in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

“The secondary suite must be incidental and integrated with the **principal dwelling unit** so as not to externally appear as a separate unit, with the design and placement of the entry doors maintaining that hierarchy to the satisfaction of the Director of Building Approvals. The front door of the **secondary suite** shall not face the primary street upon which the **principal dwelling** is located.”

- b) Deleting Subsection 5.4.1(e) in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

“The secondary suite must have a minimum floor area of at least 33.0 m² in a **single detached housing** unit.”

- c) Deleting Subsection 5.4.1(h) in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

“The secondary suite must not exceed the lesser of 40% of the total floor area of the **dwelling unit** in which it is contained or 110 m².”

3) This Bylaw may be cited as **“Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 10139”**.

FIRST READING

PUBLIC HEARING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

CITY OF RICHMOND
APPROVED by
<i>SS</i>
APPROVED by Director or Solicitor

MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER



**Consolidated Fees Bylaw No. 8636,
Amendment Bylaw No. 10142**

The Council of the City of Richmond enacts as follows:

- The **Consolidated Fee Bylaw No. 8636**, as amended, is further amended by adding the following to the Civic Address Changes section of SCHEDULE – DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FEES to the Consolidated Fees Bylaw 8636:

Section	Description	Base Fee	Incremental Fee
Section 1.13.1	Additional Address requested for secondary suite or coach house	\$50.00	Not Applicable

- This Bylaw may be cited as “**Consolidated Fees Bylaw No. 8636, Amendment Bylaw No. 10142**”.

FIRST READING

PUBLIC HEARING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

CITY OF RICHMOND
APPROVED by
<i>JA</i>
APPROVED by Director or Solicitor
<i>J.C.</i>

MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER