

8.5 Multi Residential

1. Category

The Multi Residential Development permit Area is designated pursuant to Section 919.1(f) of the Local Government Act for the form and character of the multi residential development.

2. Justification

This designation is intended to control the visual impact of multi residential projects to improve overall architectural design, site layout, landscaping and the relationship with adjacent areas and it will also create more liveable residential development that will contribute in a positive way to the urban form and strong sense of community and neighbourhood.

It is to ensure a high standard of liveability for the occupants and community. All proposals will be evaluated within the concept of the Multi-Residential policies within Part 4 of the Official Community Plan.

3. Guidelines

Development permits will be considered in accordance with the following:

A. Form and Character

1. The design of buildings shall reflect the heritage of the City of Courtenay and the use of materials such as stone, brick, ornamental work and wood with varied details and columns is required. All designs will be assessed to compare the submitted design with these guidelines.
2. All multi residential projects shall front or appear to front onto abutting roadways. This may be achieved through appropriate treatment of the building exteriors and through the provision of pedestrian entranceways and walkways directly to the street.
3. Buildings located on corner lots, lots adjacent to a single residential building, and lots next to public open spaces shall be stepped down toward the flanking street, adjacent building, or public open spaces.
4. The design and introduction of a new building type to a residential neighbourhood shall provide harmony and lend continuity to the neighbourhood and should not create excessive disruption of the visual character of the neighbourhood.
5. The design of a new project or an addition to an existing project shall be based on a comprehensive design concept and shall give adequate attention to the general architectural style, detailing, scale, materials, character of fenestration, character and materials of roofs, treatment of entrances, gradation of heights, relationship of indoor and outdoor spaces, design and placement of play areas, access parking arrangement and circulation, and landscape character and design. Plans submitted with Development Permit applications shall illustrate the aforementioned points.
6. No more than four townhouse units shall be linked in a row unless warranted by special design treatment.

7. Where townhouse units have attached garages or carports, the units shall be wide enough to allow the creation of attractive entrances to the individual units between garages. Where lane access is available, parking entrances shall be limited to lane access.
8. Where individual townhouse or multi-family units have vehicular access via public street, combined driveway access points are required.
9. The design and siting of buildings and individual units shall take advantage of views, natural amenities and adjacent open spaces and shall provide the maximum of units with good sun exposure to enhance the liveability of units.
10. Stepped or alternating massing shall be used in the design of buildings in order to break up the volume of the building(s) and to avoid a box like appearance.
11. Sloped roofs shall be encouraged to harmonize with surrounding residential areas.
12. Building shall ensure visual privacy between units and also between private amenity spaces such as balconies or patios.
13. Where a development is to be constructed in several phases, the proposed phasing plan indicating the sequence and timing of construction shall be included as part of the development permit application.

B. Signage

1. The size, location and design of free standing signage shall be architecturally integrated with the overall design of the buildings and landscaping and shall not exceed a height of 2 metres.

C. Siting, Landscaping & Screening

1. A Landscape Architect or registered professional shall prepare a plan which will incorporate plant species, quantities and installation suitable for the project.
2. A detailed landscaping and screening plan, drawn to scale and showing the type, size and location of proposed landscaping, shall be submitted with the development permit application.
3. Recreation and play areas shall be provided within each project and shall be sensitive to the needs of the all age groups likely to reside in the development.
4. Care will be taken in developments intended for family living to ensure that the fundamental needs of family living are not compromised. This includes adequate storage, places for outdoor play, attention to sound and sight separation, and safe convenient parking.
5. A continuous landscaped buffer area of at least 7.5 metres in width shall be provided along the inside of all property lines adjacent to Cumberland Road, 17th Street, 29th Street, Island Highway, Cliffe Avenue, Ryan Road and Lerwick Road. A perimeter landscaped buffer area of at least 4.5 metres in width shall be provided along the inside of all property lines adjacent to all other roads and at approved access points.
6. If a property is adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve boundary, a fence and landscaped buffer area of at least 10 metres in width shall be provided along the inside of the property line.

7. Buildings shall be sited to ensure the privacy of residences and adjoining properties, retain view amenities, and minimize the impact of noise or other off-site effects. Noise attenuation fencing will be required adjacent to arterial and collector roads.
8. Buildings shall be sited to retain existing tree stands and terrain as much as possible. Protective barriers, such as snow fencing, shall be installed around all existing plantings which will be retained at the drip line for the duration of construction. No material or temporary soil deposits may be stored within these areas.
9. Buildings shall be sited to ensure the privacy of residences and adjoining properties, retain view amenities, and minimize the impact of noise or other off-site effects, noise attenuation fencing or buffering will be required adjacent to arterial and collector roads.
10. Grading requirements of a development shall be resolved within the property boundary. Cut and fills shall be minimized and blended into the existing terrain. Stepped retaining walls shall be used where possible. Stepped foundation walls and floor levels for buildings shall be used on sloped sites. Slopes shall be determined to promote opportunity for re-planting.
11. Buildings shall locate refuse containers, utility services, etc. to minimize visibility and they shall be screened by landscaping and fencing to a minimum height of 2 metres. In general, chain link fencing shall be used only when screened by landscaping. Similarly, utilities, meters, exhaust elements, satellite dishes, etc., shall be screened by landscaping, fencing or roof elements.
12. To separate internal roads, parking, service or storage areas from adjacent properties, a landscaped buffer area of at least 30 metres in width.
13. Development shall include installation of street trees and sidewalks along all adjacent streets. Boulevards of adjacent streets shall be landscaped, irrigated and maintained by adjacent developments.
14. Undeveloped areas of the site shall be left in its natural state if there is substantial existing native vegetation. Otherwise, the owner will undertake vegetation control within 6 months of building occupancy satisfactory to the City.
15. Any development adjacent to or near stream or wetland areas shall adhere to the requirements of the Streamside Stewardship, 1993 guidelines and the "Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Habitat 1992" prepared by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection along all streams and their tributaries.
16. The City may require an environmental analysis of site conditions in areas subject to natural hazards such as slope slippage, drainage, or high vegetation value, prior to development.
17. It is City policy to limit the peak run off from areas of new development to that which the same catchment areas would have generated under the pre-development land use. A storm water management plan will be required as part of any development and shall be prepared by a Professional Engineer to comply with the City's stormwater management policies and plans and the City's Water Balance Model.
18. Setbacks areas abutting stream areas shall be fenced prior to development occurring to prevent encroachment of equipment or material into the stream system.

19. A biophysical assessment of the site prepared by a professional biologist may be required outlining any environmental values to be protected during and after developments and the methods to achieve this to the satisfaction of the City and federal and provincial agencies.
20. Prior to the subdivision or development of land containing a stream, the natural watercourse and surrounding area shall be considered for dedication to the Crown, the Municipality or other public agencies committed to the protection and preservation of natural watercourses.
21. The City will require the following minimum depth of topsoil or amended organic soils on all landscaped areas of a property:
 - shrubs – 450 mm
 - groundcover & grass – 300 mm
 - trees – 300 mm around and below the root ball
22. All landscape areas shall be serviced by an underground irrigation system.

D. Lighting

1. Lighting should be designated for security and safety. However, there should not be glare on neighbouring properties, adjacent roads or the sky.
2. All new, replacement and upgraded street lighting in existing and proposed developments will be Full-Cut Off/Flat Lens (FCO/FL) luminaries to light roads, parking, loading and pedestrian areas. Exterior building lighting will also be required to have FCO lighting fixtures

E. Parking

1. Large surface parking areas should be broken down into smaller parking lots evenly dispersed throughout the development and integrated with planted landscaped areas. Visitor parking spaces shall be clearly identified within each development. Tree Planting is required in parking areas.
2. Parking areas shall be screened from adjacent properties and from direct views of parking vehicles from the street. The screening should consist of landscaping and fencing.
3. Outdoor parking and loading areas should be located to the sides and rear of buildings. Parking areas shall include landscaped areas, defined by concrete curbs, to provide visual breaks between clusters of approximately ten stalls.
4. Direct and functional pedestrian pathways to connect building entrances to parking areas and sidewalks of the abutting streets shall be provided. Installation of features such as distinct paving, special landscaping with trees and benches, and overhead weather protection on exterior building walls where appropriate is required.

F. Mobile Home Park Residential

In case of Mobile Home Park Residential development, all guidelines above (A to E) shall apply except those that refer specifically to building character. The guidelines below shall apply only to Mobile Home Park Residential areas:

1. The design of the overall project shall be based on a comprehensive concept and shall give adequate attention to the attractive layout of the mobile home spaces, landscape character and design, location and screening of parking areas, design and placement of recreation areas, and design of vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

2. Formalized pedestrian access shall be provided throughout the project to connect internal streets and parking areas with all community facilities provided for residents and to the public walkway system.
3. A street tree planting plan for internal streets shall provide for 6 cm calliper staked streets trees spaced at approximately 15 metre intervals.
4. A comprehensive design shall provide an attractive setting for the recreation area including circulation, access and landscaping.
5. The buffer area shall remain in its natural state, or the existing vegetation shall be enhanced or replaced to provide attractive landscaping to surround the mobile home park.
6. Screen planting in the buffer area between the mobile home park and residential areas shall be sufficient to maintain the privacy of the adjacent properties.

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1. Justification

The intent of the Multi Residential Design Guidelines is to achieve high aesthetic quality while respecting adjacent uses and contributing to a healthy community and a description of expectations for potential developers.

2. Guidelines

Development permits shall be considered in accordance with the following:

A. Mass and Size

Building sizes should convey a sense of human scale.

The term “human scale” generally refers to the use of human-proportioned architectural features and site design elements that are clearly oriented to human activity. A building has a good human scale if its details, elements and materials allow people to feel comfortable using and approaching it.

1. In order to minimize the perceived size of the building, step down its height toward the neighbouring structures. Height of buildings on the perimeter of the property, adjacent to residential development on St. Andrews Way shall be limited to two (2) storeys.
2. In order to break up the perceived mass of structure, the building shall be divided into modules. A combination of two and three storey buildings, containing single and two storey units, is encouraged.

Incorporate features that convey a human scale.

1. Provide a porch, or similar element, that will define a primary entrance for each residence that is oriented to the public realm.
2. Incorporate a central courtyard that organizes architectural elements while providing a common open area for residents.

The site shall be developed with several buildings, rather than a single structure in order to reduce the perceived size of the project.

1. The site between the buildings shall contribute to the overall open space of the site.

B. Building Roof and Form

Building design elements, details and massing shall create a well proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept.

1. The buildings shall be divided into modules. A combination of two and three storey buildings is required.
2. Design interest shall be created by avoiding the development of massive, uniform structures that lack articulation.

Roof top decks may be incorporated into the design to allow for access to the outside when outdoor balconies are not provided.

1. Roof top decks shall be located away from adjacent residential.

C. Pedestrian Systems

Site development shall encourage pedestrian activity and interaction.

1. Provide variety in setback, height, colour, texture of materials and building size and form to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Provide amenities that encourage pedestrian activity within and through the development.

1. Sidewalks, paths and bike lanes which are separated from traffic are encouraged.
2. Coordinate with public bicycles and pedestrian pathways.

D. Respect for Adjacent Sites

Building placement shall respect adjacent properties.

1. Locate buildings on the site to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.
2. Maximize side and rear yard setbacks abutting neighbouring residential uses.

Buildings shall be designed for maximum privacy of neighbours.

1. Limit the number of windows overlooking the neighbours.
2. Design and organize windows to provide privacy for both residents and neighbours.
3. Place balconies towards the interior of the development or the street, away from abutting residential properties.

E. Open Space

Provide the maximum possible open space.

1. Provide a minimum of 50% open space on the site.

Create “places” with distinct identities within the project.

1. Provide open space that is planned and designed as an amenity. This may occur as a courtyard or plaza.
2. Include open spaces with special amenities that encourage use, such as benches and sitting areas.

3. Where diversity in building setbacks is a part of the context, a varied setback may also help to create open space.
4. Locate open space in sunny areas whenever possible.
5. Ensure open spaces offer accessibility, security and encourage social interaction among residents.

The spaces between the buildings shall contribute to the overall positive open space of the area.

1. Buildings shall be positioned on the site in a manner that minimizes the apparent mass and size and maximizes open space.

F. Landscaping

In addition to the landscaping guidelines outlined in section 8.5©, ensure effective screening from roadways and maximize privacy between abutting residential properties.

1. Locate buildings in a way to preserve the maximum number of trees.
2. Minimize the removal of significant trees.
3. Replace trees that are removed with new trees.
4. Emphasize naturalizing or native landscape materials.

Maximize the use of landscaping treatments to create a distinctive development.

1. Enhance entry ways and pedestrian circulation pathways with landscaping treatments.
2. Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features shall be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.
3. Landscape open areas to create distinctions between the various outdoor spaces.
4. Permeable landscape treatments shall be incorporated into the design when appropriate.
5. Must meet BC Water Balance Model with soil depths of 300 mm for lawns and 450 mm for all planting beds.

G. Site Development

Ensure post-development flows are equivalent to pre-development flows.

Incorporate permeable surfaces in site development when appropriate

Employ innovative technologies in site development when appropriate.

H. Automobile Circulation and Parking

Clearly identify automobile circulation patterns, both internal and external, and ensure such circulation does not interfere with pedestrian pathways.

Clearly identify and distinguish separate entrances to the property for both automobiles and pedestrians.

1. Use landscaping and lighting accents to identify entrances.

Minimize the visual impact of parking.

1. Limit the amount of, and effectively screen, any surface parking; underground or under-building parking is preferred.

I. Architectural Character

All facades shall be given equal design consideration.

1. Development shall provide a refined façade to address both the adjacent streets and the neighbouring properties.

Design shall express or distinguish each individual residential unit within the building.

1. Employ window patterns, building articulation and other treatments to break up the building mass and provide interest.
2. Provide porches or covered entries.

Building exteriors shall be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

1. Materials suitable in the Comox Valley context may include clear or painted wood siding, shingles, brick and or stone.

J. Innovative Design

Provide housing diversity.

Encourage sense of community and social interaction within the development through design and provision of amenities.

Employ innovative technologies, when appropriate, for stormwater management, water conservation and site development.