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**Abstract:**

City code includes Infill Development chapter used to implement comprehensive plan goals related to infill development. This development is permitted in all zones except single-family, aside from single-family zones that permit cluster subdivisions. It sets site size, setback, parking, and open space requirements for each type of multi-family development.

**Resource:**

## Chapter 20.28

### INFILL HOUSING

Sections:

- 20.28.010 Purpose.**
- 20.28.020 Applicability.**
- 20.28.030 Process.**
- 20.28.040 Definitions.**
- 20.28.050 General standards.**
- 20.28.060 Smaller house.**
- 20.28.070 Small house.**
- 20.28.080 Cottage.**
- 20.28.090 Repealed.**
- 20.28.100 Repealed.**
- 20.28.110 Duplex/triplex.**
- 20.28.120 Shared court.**
- 20.28.130 Garden court.**
- 20.28.140 Townhouse.**

#### **20.28.010 Purpose.**

This chapter establishes special development regulations for a series of housing forms that are different than the traditional detached single-family dwelling unit. These regulations are intended to implement comprehensive plan goals and policies encouraging infill development, more efficient use of the remaining developable land, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, and creating opportunities for more affordable housing. The housing forms listed in this chapter are intended for use in city neighborhoods, urban villages, and in Bellingham's urban growth areas as described in BMC [20.28.020](#). [Ord. 2009-08-047].

#### **20.28.020 Applicability.**

A. The housing types in this chapter are not permitted in residential single zones, except as permitted in cluster subdivision pursuant to BMC Title [23](#), neighborhood commercial zones or property regulated by Chapter [16.80](#) BMC, Lake Whatcom Reservoir Regulatory Provisions, except in those areas that were annexed into the city after 1995 with a "mixed" qualifier that allows multifamily residential, and in Area 8 of the Sunnyland neighborhood. The housing types in this chapter are permitted in all other zones that allow residential, including specifically designated areas of urban villages. In the residential multi-duplex zone, only small house, smaller house, cottage, detached accessory dwelling unit, carriage house and duplex are permitted.

B. If the provisions of this chapter conflict with any other provision in BMC Title [20](#), [21](#) or [23](#), the provisions of this chapter shall apply. [Ord. 2018-12-036 § 27; Ord. 2018-05-009 § 7; Ord. 2014-09-048 § 5; Ord. 2009-08-047].

### **20.28.030 Process.**

A. In accordance with Chapter [21.10](#) BMC, all housing forms will use a Type II process, and all land use applications may be consolidated under the highest type. Design review applies as outlined in Chapter [20.25](#) BMC with additional design standards and guidelines as specified under each housing type.

B. Applicants may request minor modifications to the general parameters and design standards set forth in this chapter. The planning director or hearing examiner may modify the requirements if all of the following criteria are met:

1. The site is constrained due to unusual shape, topography, easements or sensitive areas.
2. The modification is consistent with the purpose of this chapter.
3. The modification will not result in a development that is less compatible with neighborhood land uses.

C. Property ownership may be held in common, through a subdivision or a binding site plan. [Ord. 2009-08-047].

### **20.28.040 Definitions.**

The following definitions apply to this chapter:

“Common shared structure” means a building or structure designed and intended for the common use of the residents of the cottage housing.

“Cottage housing” means a coordinated grouping of four to eight small detached single-family dwellings clustered around common open space and having shared parking.

“Design guidelines” means guidelines for meeting the intention of the ordinance.

“Design standards” means requirements related to the design of the project. Developments are required to meet the design standards in this chapter.

“Duplex” means a building containing only two dwelling units.

“Garden court housing” means four to eight dwelling units clustered around a common open space or courtyard.

“Shared court housing” means four to six dwelling units oriented to a shared courtyard providing access for both vehicles and pedestrians but designed to give priority to pedestrians.

“Small house” means detached single-family dwelling units on lots over 3,000 square feet but not more than 5,000 square feet in size.

“Smaller house” means detached single-family dwelling units on lots 1,800 square feet to 3,000 square feet in size.

“Townhouse” means a dwelling in a row of units in which each unit has its own front and rear access to the outside, no unit is located over another unit, and each unit is separated from any other unit by one or more vertical common walls.

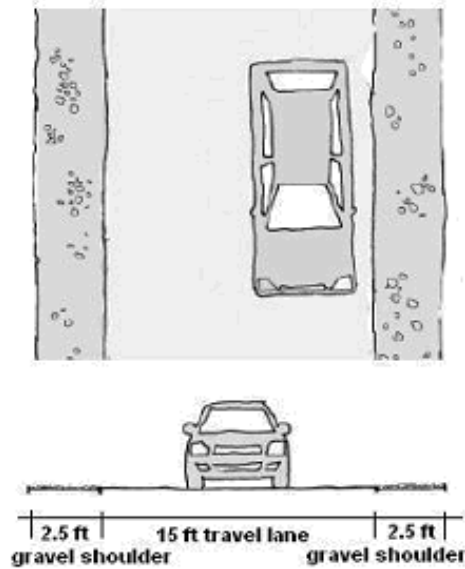
“Triplex” means a building containing only three dwelling units. [Ord. 2018-05-009 § 8; Ord. 2009-08-047].

## **20.28.050 General standards.**

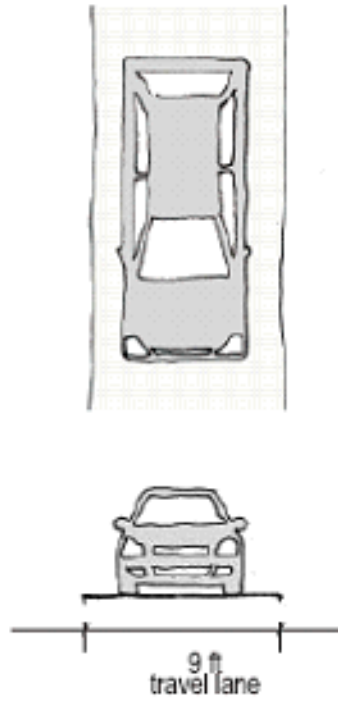
- A. *Density.* Density shall be as specified in the associated area in the zoning table. If there is more than one density listed in the table, the maximum density applies.
- B. *Lot Requirements.* There are no minimum lot dimensions, lot sizes or minimum street frontage requirements unless otherwise specified in this chapter. Up to eight dwelling units may take access from a single private lane in place of public street frontage.
- C. *Subdivision.* Infill housing units approved as part of a cluster subdivision in single-family zoning subareas with a cluster, cluster detached, and cluster attached shall be located on separate, fee simple lots. All cluster subdivisions that include infill housing types shall comply with the lot transition provision pursuant to BMC [23.08.060\(F\)\(1\)](#). Sites with cottage, shared court, garden court, and townhouse types in all other zoning areas permitting infill housing types may be subdivided into lots that do not comply with development standards in BMC Title [23](#) individually, as long as the parent site as a whole complies with this chapter. The plat shall contain notice of any associated land use approvals. Subsequent alterations to buildings are subject to review and approval of plans such that they are consistent with the regulations in this chapter that were previously applied to this site.
- D. *Common Facilities.* Legal documents identifying the rights and responsibilities of property owners and/or the homeowners' association for use and maintenance of common facilities shall be submitted for approval by the planning director and recorded. When part of a subdivision they shall be noted on the plat.
- E. *Encroachments into Required Setbacks.* The following architectural features are permitted to project two feet into the required setback: bay windows, chimneys, porches, balconies, facade treatment and other architectural features approved by the planning director.
- F. *Private Lanes and Alleys.*
1. Each lot must abut a street or lane except lots for individual units in cottage, shared court, and garden court.
  2. Private lanes and alleys must be surfaced with a hard material such as concrete or asphalt. The use of permeable pavement shall be used for hard surface ground cover areas unless infeasible per the infeasibility criteria listed within BMP T5.15 of the Ecology Manual. Projects that include less than 2,000 square feet of new or replaced impervious surface are exempt from this requirement. Gravel or loose material is prohibited.

3. Lanes and alleys must be maintained to city standards, and legal documents regarding common facilities and maintenance must be submitted for approval by the planning director and recorded.
4. Lanes and alleys must be constructed to the following improvement standards:

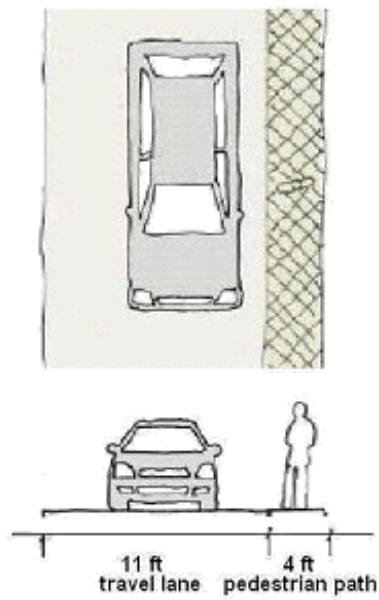
	<b>Travel Lane Width</b>	<b>Pedestrian Path Width</b>	<b>Total Width</b>
Small Lane (one to two dwelling units)	9 feet	N/A	9 feet
Medium Lane (three to five dwelling units)	11 feet	4 feet, one side	15 feet
Large Lane (six plus dwelling units and lanes over 100 feet long)	12 feet	4 feet, both sides	20 feet
Alleys	15 feet	N/A	20 feet



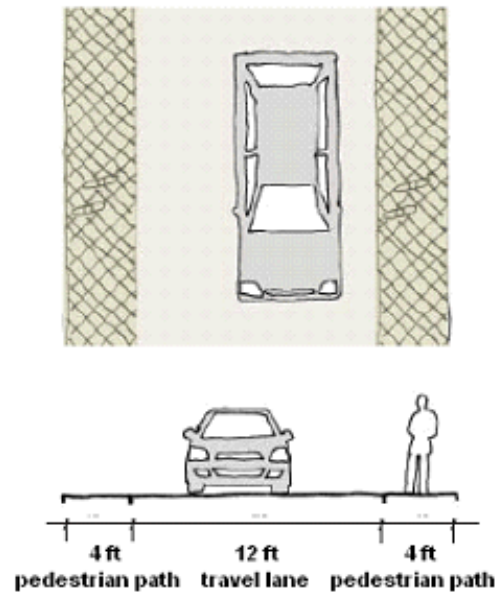
**Figure 20.28.050(A) Typical Alley Plan and Section**



**Figure 20.28.050(B) Small Lane Plan and Section**



**Figure 20.28.050(C) Medium Lane Plan and Section**



**Figure 20.28.050(D) Large Lane Plan and Section**

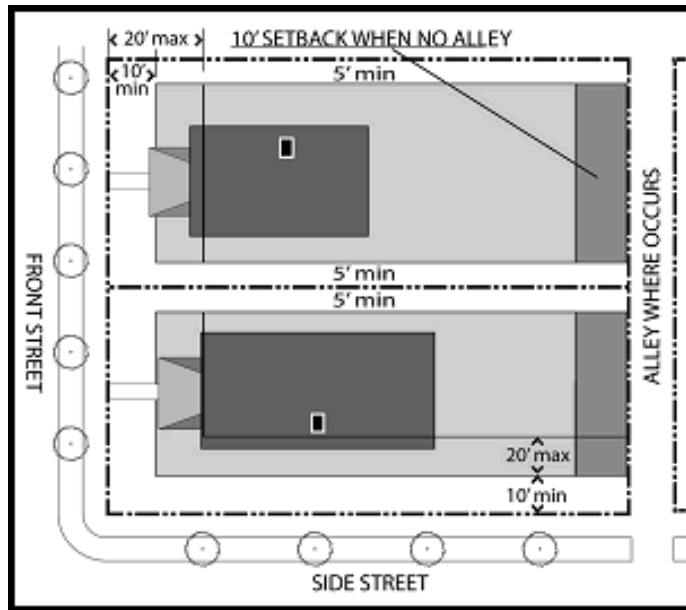
5. Pedestrian paths must be delineated with a change in material, color or pattern.
6. No single lane may serve more than eight dwelling units.
7. Parking is not allowed within the lane width but may be allowed in a pocket abutting a lane.
8. Lanes longer than 150 feet must either connect to an improved public street or provide a turnaround sufficient for emergency access.
9. Private lanes shall be considered streets for frontage, setback and design purposes.
10. Private lanes and alleys are not included in FAR and Open Space calculations. [Ord. 2018-12-036 § 28; Ord. 2017-03-009 § 18; Ord. 2009-08-047].

## **20.28.060 Smaller house.**

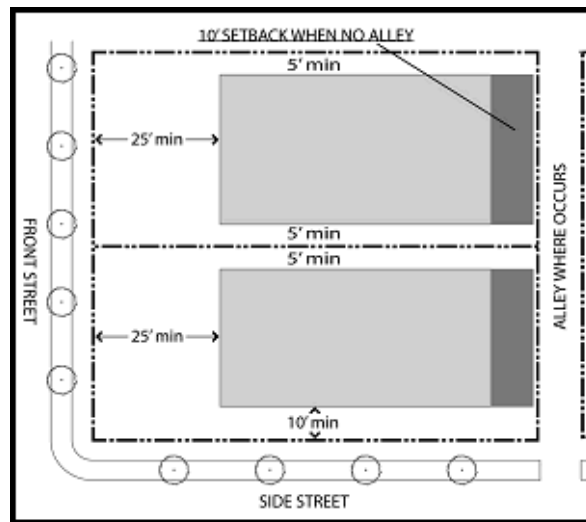
A. *Description.* Smaller house development consists of detached single-family dwelling units on lots of 1,800 square feet and up to 3,000 square feet.

B. *Site Requirements and Setbacks.*

1. Lot size: minimum 1,800 square feet and maximum 3,000 square feet.
2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 20.28.060(A) and (B), except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 20-foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.



**Figure 20.28.060(A) Setbacks - Main Building**



**Figure 20.28.060(B) Setbacks - Garages and Carports**

C. *Bulk and Massing.*

1. Maximum floor area ratio (FAR): 0.4, or 0.5 when an accessory dwelling unit is included pursuant to BMC [20.10.036](#). Attached garages are included in FAR. Detached garages up to 220 square feet, or 440 square feet with an ADU, are exempt from FAR.
2. No single floor shall be greater than 600 square feet.
3. Maximum height is 25 feet under BMC [20.08.020](#), height definition No. 1 and 15 feet under definition No. 2.



**D. *Open Space.***

1. A minimum of 60 percent of the site area shall be in landscaping and permeable materials (may include permeable paving, landscape-based LID BMPs, and green roofs). Exceptions may be made in erosion hazard zones or areas with shallow bedrock as determined by the planning director.

**E. *Parking.***

1. Dwelling units less than 1,000 square feet shall provide one on-site parking stall. Units of 1,000 square feet or larger shall provide two on-site parking stalls. The planning director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant's demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least nine feet by 18 feet, unless adjacent to landscaping, as specified in Figure 20.12.030(A).

2. Tandem parking is allowed (may be exterior or interior).

3. If an alley exists, parking shall be accessed via the alley except when the planning director determines that alley access is impractical or environmentally constrained.

4. If a lane exists, but no alley, parking shall be accessed via the lane.

5. Adjacent properties may share a driveway upon approval of a shared access and maintenance agreement.

6. Detached garages may share a common wall along a property line if a shared maintenance agreement is in place.

7. Parking accessed from the public street shall be limited to one driveway of 20 feet maximum width.

8. Parking setbacks from property line:

Front street:	25 feet
Side street:	10 feet

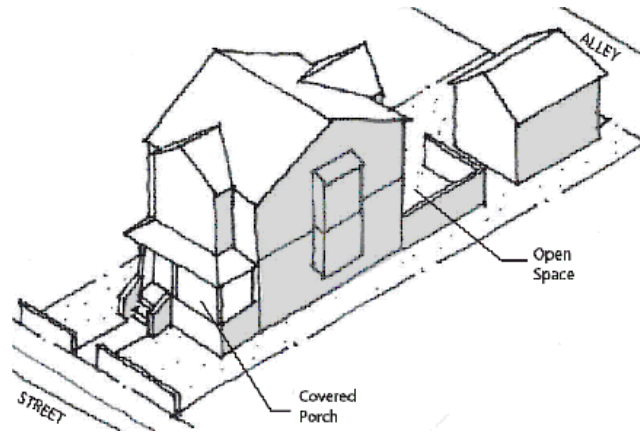
9. All common shared driveway, common wall or any common facility shall be approved by the planning director. Final documents are required to be recorded.

**F. *Design Standards.***

1. Each dwelling shall have a covered front porch with an area of 60 square feet or more, with no dimension less than five feet.

2. Dwelling units that front the public street or lane shall have entrances facing the public street or lane.

3. All fences in the front and side street setbacks are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60 percent opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side street setback.



**Figure 20.28.060(C) Annotated Graphic of Smaller House**

G. *Design Guidelines.* Use context-sensitive site design and building details to help ensure that new infill development will enhance the neighborhood and respect the scale and character of the existing houses on a street.

1. *Building Design.*

- a. Single story massing elements should be emphasized on the front facades, using porches and bays seen from the street.
- b. Gable roofs emphasize vertical proportions, create modulation and are strongly encouraged.
- c. The massing should be varied with elements such as bays, dormers, etc.
- d. A change of materials, colors or textures on different elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and additional variety and character.
- e. Homes should minimize the impact of the garage on the streetscape by minimizing blank garage doors, through the use of windows and/or architectural detail on the garage door.

2. *Site Design.*

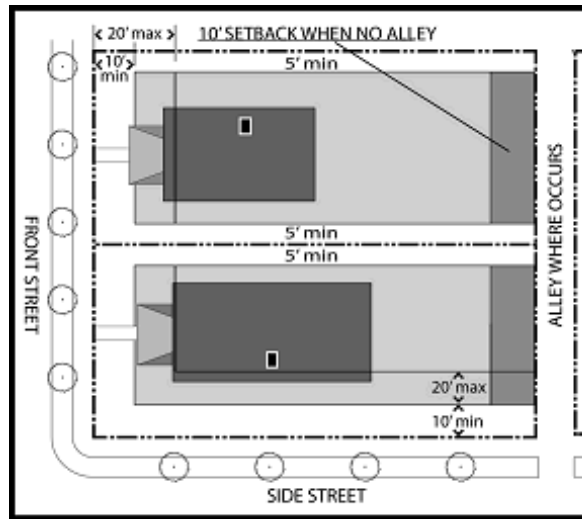
- a. Front yard parking aprons are not allowed.
- b. Back yards should be designed for privacy from neighbors.
- c. Fencing, especially when seen from the street, should be designed to integrate into the architecture of the building and add visual interest in its detail, materials or color. [Ord. 2018-05-009 § 9; Ord. 2017-03-009 § 19; Ord. 2009-08-047].

**20.28.070 Small house.**

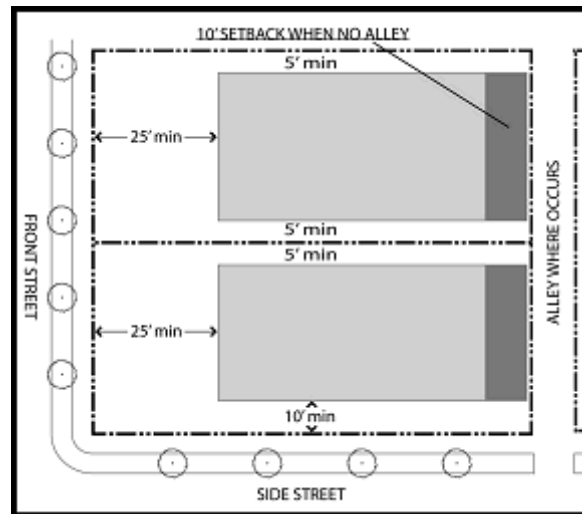
A. *Description.* Small houses consist of detached single-family dwelling units on lots over 3,000 square feet and up to 5,000 square feet.

B. *Site Requirements and Setbacks.*

1. Lot size: minimum 3,001 square feet and maximum 5,000 square feet.
2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 20.28.070(A) and (B), except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 20-foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.



**Figure 20.28.070(A) Setbacks - Main Building**



**Figure 20.28.070(B) Setbacks - Garages and Carports**

C. *Bulk and Massing.*

1. Maximum floor area ratio (FAR): 0.35, or 0.5 with an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) pursuant to BMC [20.10.036](#). Attached garages are included in FAR. Detached garages up to 220 square feet, or 440 square feet with an ADU, are exempt from FAR.
2. No single floor shall be greater than 800 square feet.
3. Maximum height is 25 feet under BMC [20.08.020](#), height definition No. 1 and 15 feet under definition No. 2.

D. *Open Space.*

1. A minimum of 60 percent of the site area shall be in landscaping and permeable materials (may include permeable paving, landscape-based LID BMPs, and green roofs). Exceptions may be made in erosion hazard zones or areas with shallow bedrock as determined by the planning director.

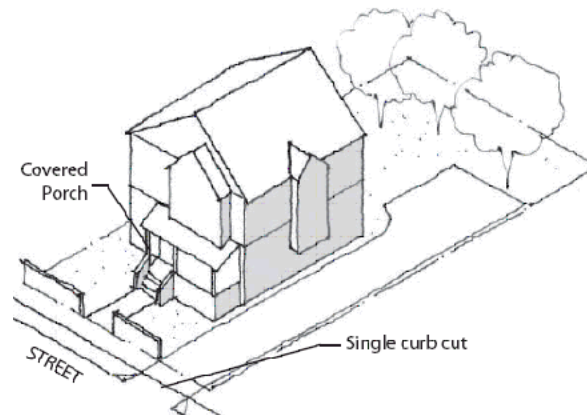
E. *Parking.*

1. Dwelling units less than 1,000 square feet shall provide one on-site parking stall. Units of 1,000 square feet or larger shall provide two on-site parking stalls. The planning director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant's demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least nine feet by 18 feet, unless adjacent to landscaping, as specified in Figure 20.12.030(A).
2. Tandem parking is allowed (may be exterior or interior).
3. If an alley exists, parking shall be accessed via the alley unless the planning director determines that alley access is impractical or environmentally constrained.
4. If a lane exists, but no alley, parking shall be accessed via the lane.
5. Adjacent properties may share a driveway upon approval of a shared access and maintenance agreement.
6. Detached garages may share a common wall along a property line if a shared maintenance agreement is in place.
7. Parking accessed from the public street shall be limited to one driveway of 20 feet maximum width.
8. Parking setbacks from property line:
 

Front:	25 feet
Side street:	10 feet
9. All common shared driveway, common wall or any common facility needs to be approved by the planning director. Final documents are required to be recorded.

F. *Design Standards.*

1. Shall have a covered front porch with an area of 60 square feet or more, with no dimension less than five feet.
2. Dwelling units that front the public street or lane shall have entrances facing the public street or lane.
3. All fences in the front and side street setbacks are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60 percent opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side street setback.



**Figure 20.28.070(C) Annotated Graphic of Small House**

G. *Design Guidelines.* Use context-sensitive site design and building details to help ensure that new infill development will enhance the neighborhood and respect the scale and character of the existing houses on a street.

1. *Building Design.*
  - a. Single story massing elements should be emphasized on the front facades, using porches and bays seen from the street or lane.
  - b. Gable roofs emphasize vertical proportions, create modulation and are strongly encouraged.
  - c. The massing should be varied with elements such as bays, dormers, etc.
  - d. A change of materials, colors or textures on different elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and adds variety and character.
  - e. Homes should minimize the impact of the garage on the streetscape by minimizing blank garage doors, through the use of windows and/or architectural detail on the garage door.
2. *Site Design.*
  - a. Front yard parking aprons are not allowed.
  - b. Back yards should be designed for privacy from neighbors.

- c. Fencing, especially when seen from the street, should be designed to integrate into the architecture of the building and add visual interest in its detail, materials or color. [Ord. 2018-05-009 § 10; Ord. 2017-03-009 § 20; Ord. 2009-08-047].

## 20.28.080 Cottage.

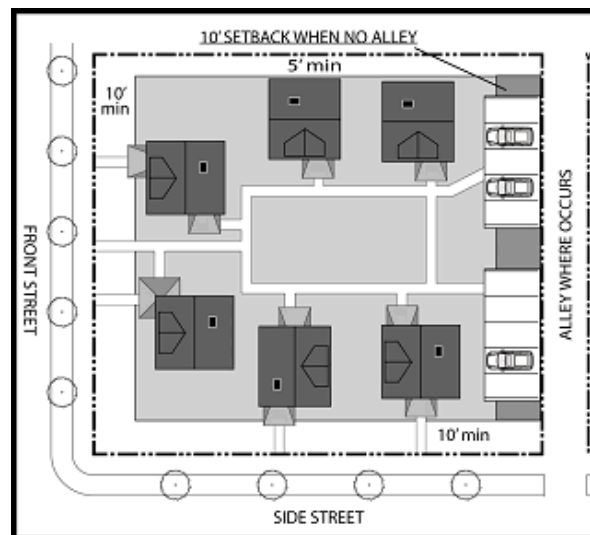
A. *Description.* Cottage housing is a grouping of small compact, detached single-family dwelling units clustered around a common area and developed with a shared plan for access and parking, and a coordinated design for the buildings and site.

B. *Site Requirements and Setbacks.*

1. Cottages may be located on a separate (fee simple) lot or several units may be located on a common parcel.
2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figure 20.28.080(A), except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 20-foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figure.

C. *Bulk and Massing.*

1. The minimum is four dwelling units and the maximum is eight dwelling units in a single development.
2. No structure shall be larger than 1,000 square feet and no single floor area shall be larger than 600 square feet.



**Figure 20.28.080(A) Setbacks for Cottage**

3. Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is 0.4.

4. Common shared structures are allowed, limited to the same bulk and mass restrictions as dwelling units, and are exempt from FAR.
5. The height limit is 25 feet under BMC [20.08.020](#), definition No. 1 or 15 feet under definition No. 2.

D. *Open Space.*

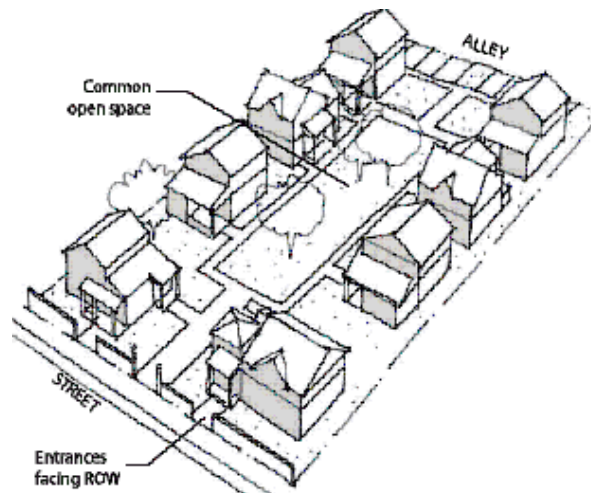
1. Each dwelling unit shall have at least 100 square feet of private usable open space with no dimension less than five feet. Decks may be included.
2. Private usable open space must be directly accessible from the dwelling unit, and be separated from shared spaces or paths and other units.
3. Common usable open space equivalent to 500 square feet per dwelling unit shall be provided. No single dimension shall be less than 20 feet, exclusive of parking or lanes except for emergency access. All units shall have direct access to shared open space.
4. A minimum of 60 percent of the site area shall be in landscaping or permeable materials (may include permeable paving, landscape-based LID BMPs, and green roofs). Exceptions may be made in erosion hazard zones or areas with shallow bedrock as determined by the city.

E. *Parking.*

1. The project shall include at least one on-site parking stall per unit. The planning director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant's demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least nine feet by 18 feet, unless adjacent to landscaping, as specified in Figure 20.12.030(A).
2. Parking may not be located between structures or front directly upon a street.
3. If an alley exists, parking shall be accessed via the alley except when the planning director determines that alley access is impractical or environmentally constrained.
4. Parking shall be consolidated in areas not less than four spaces.
5. Parking accessed from the public street shall be limited to one driveway of 20-foot maximum width.
6. Parking shall be screened from the public street by landscape feature or fence.

F. *Design Standards.*

1. A front porch with a minimum of 60 square feet and no dimension less than five feet is required for each dwelling unit (in addition to private open space requirements).
2. Dwelling units that front a public street or lane shall have a porch that faces the street or lane. Units that face the shared open space shall have a porch that faces the open space. In some cases, units will require two front porches to satisfy this criteria.



**Figure 20.28.080(B) Annotated Illustration of Cottage**

3. All fences in the front and side street setbacks, or between the common areas and the dwelling units, are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60 percent opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side street yard.

G. *Design Guidelines.* Cottage housing developments should architecturally blend into existing neighborhoods through careful attention to the design of the units, open spaces, parking and landscaping. Well proportioned cottage houses, with porches, small gardens, varied roof lines and dormers can fit comfortably into surrounding neighborhoods of older, detached homes.

1. *Building.*

- a. Buildings should employ variety in orientation, design, and layout between cottages while maintaining a similar character to help distinguish units and support a neighborhood feel.
- b. Cottages should reflect common neighborhood design features such as porches, dormers, gables, and architectural detailing.
- c. Changes in materials, colors or textures and colors to add visual interest and character to the development are encouraged.

2. *Site Design.*

- a. Provide small private open spaces in conjunction with a large shared open space.
- b. Provide generous use of landscape structures such as trellises, gate houses, decks, patios, and raised beds to provide plenty of usable outdoor space with a variety of environments. Use planting materials and elements such as fencing to unify the overall site design.
- c. Shared driveways are preferred.
- d. Walkways should connect all dwelling units to the shared open space and consolidated parking and should utilize pervious materials. [Ord. 2017-03-009 § 21; Ord. 2009-08-047].



## 20.28.090 Carriage house.

Repealed by [Ord. 2018-05-009](#).

## 20.28.100 Detached ADU.

Repealed by [Ord. 2018-05-009](#).

## 20.28.110 Duplex/triplex.

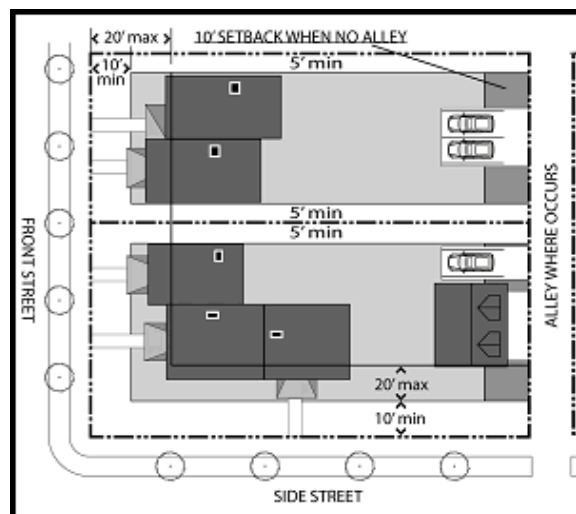
A. *Description.* A duplex/triplex is a single structure comprised of two or three dwelling units on a single lot, either side by side or on different floors.

B. *Site Requirements and Setbacks.*

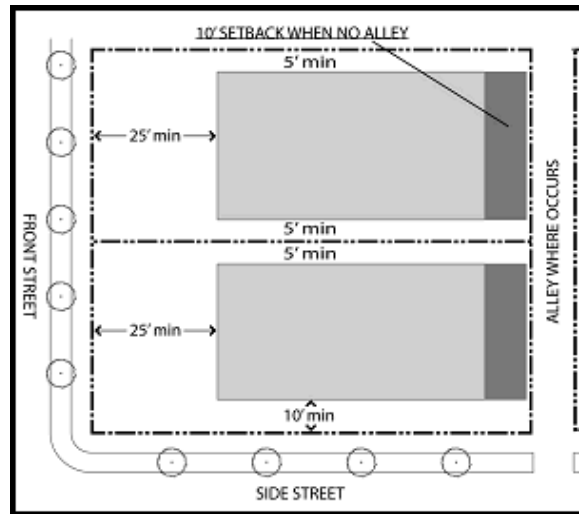
1. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 20.28.110(A) and (B), except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 20-foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.

C. *Bulk and Massing.*

1. Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is 0.5.
2. Maximum dwelling unit size is 1,000 square feet.
3. The height limit is 25 feet under BMC [20.08.020](#), definition No. 1 or 15 feet under definition No. 2.



**Figure 20.28.110(A) Setbacks - Main Building**



**Figure 20.28.110(B) Setbacks – Garages and Carports**

D. *Open Space.*

1. Each dwelling unit shall have 75 square feet of private open space with no dimension less than five feet. It may be accommodated with a deck or porch.
2. No less than 40 percent of the site area shall be landscaping or permeable material (may include permeable paving, landscape-based LID BMPs, and green roofs). Exceptions may be made in erosion hazard zones or areas with shallow bedrock as determined by the city.

E. *Parking.*

1. Each dwelling unit shall provide at least one on-site parking stall. The planning director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant’s demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least nine feet by 18 feet, unless adjacent to landscaping, as specified in Figure 20.12.030(A).

2. Parking setbacks from property line:

Front:	25 feet
Side street:	10 feet

3. If an alley exists, parking shall be accessed via the alley except when the planning director determines that alley access is impractical or environmentally constrained.
4. Parking accessed from the public street or lane shall be limited to one driveway per street or lane with a maximum width of 20 feet.

F. *Design Standards.*

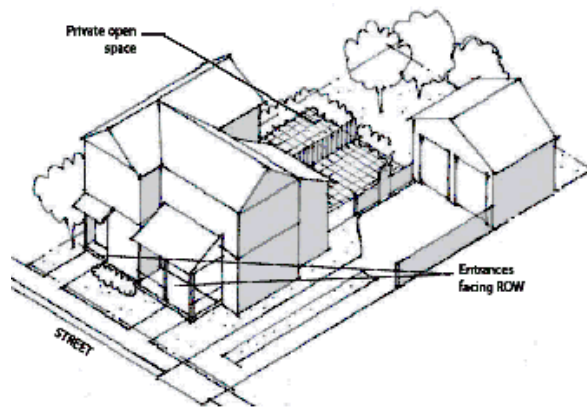
1. At least one entrance must be visible from the public street.

2. Dwelling units that front the public street shall have entrances facing the public street.
3. All fences in the front and side street setbacks are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60 percent opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side street setback.

G. *Design Guidelines.* A duplex/triplex should be designed as either a larger, single-family composition or as distinct separate units.

1. *Building Design.*

- a. The design should break the home's facades into several distinct elements.
- b. Gable roofs emphasize vertical proportions, create modulation and are strongly encouraged.



**Figure 20.28.110(C) Annotated Illustration of Duplex/Triplex**

- c. The massing should be varied with elements such as bays, dormers, etc.
  - d. A change of materials, colors or textures on building elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and additional variety and craftsmanship.
  - e. Buildings should minimize the impact of garages on the streetscape by utilizing garage doors with windows or other architectural features.
2. *Site Design.*
- a. Front yard parking aprons are not allowed.
  - b. Back yards should be designed for privacy from neighbors. [Ord. 2017-03-009 § 22; Ord. 2009-08-047].

**20.28.120 Shared court.**

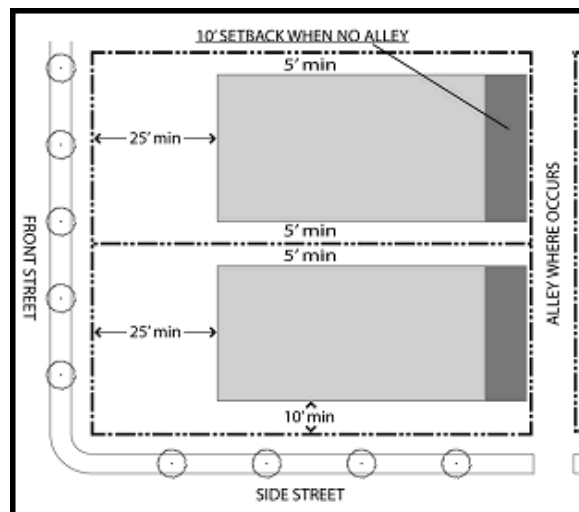
A. *Description.* A shared court is a multifamily development that shares a courtyard that also allows vehicular access to parking. The structure is arranged in a “U” shape around a central court. Design details, paving and landscape should create the impression of a small, intimate courtyard when viewed from the street.

B. *Site Requirements and Setbacks.*

1. Shared court units may be located on a separate (fee simple) lot or several units may be located on a common parcel.
2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 20.28.120(A) and (B), except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 20-foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.



**Figure 20.28.120(A) Setbacks - Main Building(s)**



**Figure 20.28.120(B) Setbacks - Garages and Carports**

C. *Bulk and Massing.*

1. There shall be a maximum of six dwelling units and a minimum of four dwelling units clustered around a shared court.
2. Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is 0.5. Projects meeting green factor requirements in section (D)(4) of this section may request additional FAR up to 0.7 with approval by the planning director.
3. The maximum dwelling unit size is 2,000 square feet.
4. No single floor area shall be larger than 1,000 square feet per dwelling unit.
5. The height limit is 25 feet under BMC [20.08.020](#), definition No. 1 or 15 feet under definition No. 2.

D. *Open Space.*

1. Each dwelling unit shall have at least 150 square feet of private open space with no dimension less than five feet. Some or all of the requirement may be accommodated in a deck.
2. All private open space must be directly accessible from the dwelling unit and shall be separated from shared pathways, driveways, and other units.
3. No less than 40 percent of the site area shall be landscaping or permeable material (may include permeable paving, landscape-based LID BMPs, and green roofs). Exceptions may be made in erosion hazard zones or areas with shallow bedrock as determined by the city.
4. Use of the green factor is strongly encouraged. When used as a FAR bonus option in subsection [\(C\)\(2\)](#) of this section, a green factor landscaping score of 0.6 is required.

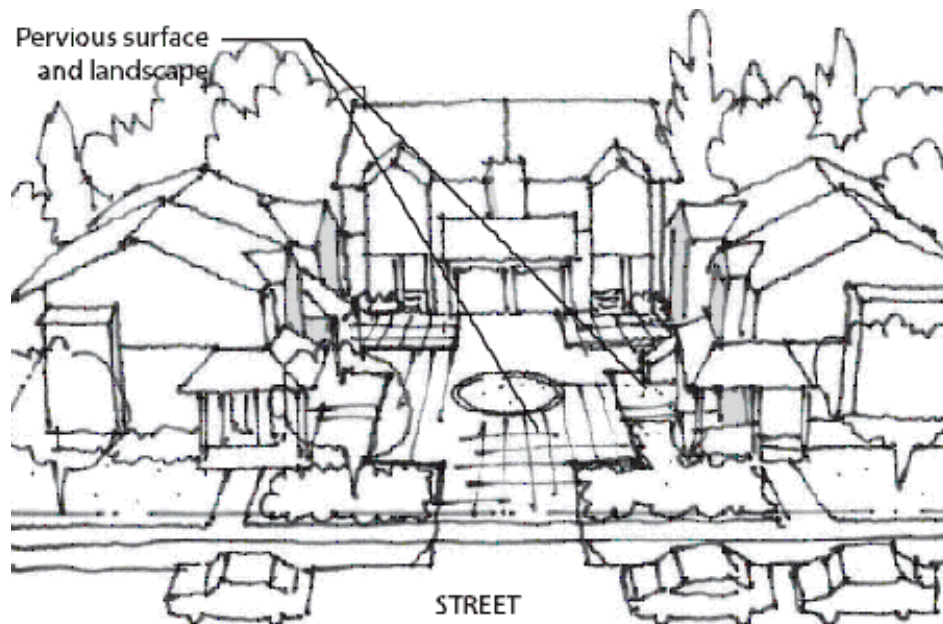
E. *Parking.*

1. Dwelling units less than 1,000 square feet shall provide at least one on-site parking stall. Units of 1,000 square feet or larger shall provide two on-site parking stalls. The planning director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant's demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least nine feet by 18 feet, unless adjacent to landscaping, as specified in Figure 20.12.030(A).
2. Parking shall not be located between structures and a public street.
3. Parking accessed from a public street or lane shall be limited to driveway with a maximum width of 20 feet.

F. *Design Standards.*

1. Each dwelling unit must have a separate, ground-related entrance. Units that front the public street shall have entrances facing the public street; all other units shall have entrances facing the shared open space.
2. No roof pitch shall be less than 2:12 (may be shed type) except for green roofs.

3. Each dwelling unit shall have a covered front porch no less than 50 square feet with no dimension less than five feet, this is in addition to the private open space requirement.
4. Garbage/recycling areas shall be consolidated and screened from public view.
5. All fences in the front and side street setbacks, or between the common areas and the dwelling units, are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60 percent opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side street setback.



**Figure 20.28.120(C) Annotated Illustration of Shared Court**

6. The following design standards shall be met to define the shared courtyard space, enhance the function as a shared, attractive, and usable open space, and unify site elements through the use of paving and landscape materials:
  - a. Provide clear direction to primary building entries and enhance circulation paths with trees, lighting, and plant materials.
  - b. At least 35 percent of the total shared court area shall be landscaped.
  - c. Poured surfaces (e.g., asphalt or concrete) may be used for vehicle treaded areas up to 10 feet in width but are not acceptable for area paving. The remaining unplanted areas shall be paved with unit pavers (e.g., brick, concrete, or tile) set or covered with gravel. Permeable pavements are acceptable paving options for all unplanted, shared court area.
  - d. The incorporation of courtyard amenities is required. Courtyard areas shall include at least two of the following elements:
    - i. Benches, bench-type edges for planters.

- ii. Fountain or other water feature.
- iii. Ornamental shrubbery and landscape trees.

G. *Design Guidelines.*

1. *Site Design.*

- a. Provide for the functional and visual integration of buildings, vehicular access and parking, and the “outdoor room” function of the shared court.
- b. Define and contain the shared court space through a combination of building, landscape, and other site furnishings.
- c. Provide a walkway from each dwelling unit to the shared court and street.

2. *Building Design.*

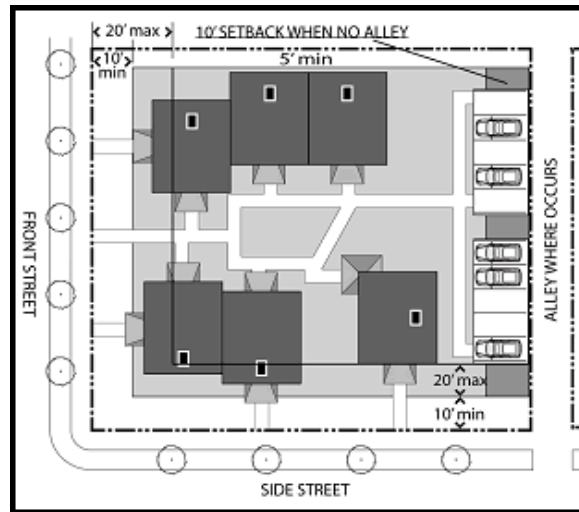
- a. The design should break the facades into several distinct elements.
- b. Gable roofs emphasize vertical proportions, create modulation and are strongly encouraged.
- c. The massing should be varied with elements such as bays, dormers, etc.
- d. Changing materials, colors or textures on building elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and add variety and craftsmanship.
- e. Buildings should minimize the impact of garages on the streetscape by utilizing garage doors with windows or other architectural features. [Ord. 2017-03-009 § 23; Ord. 2009-08-047].

## **20.28.130 Garden court.**

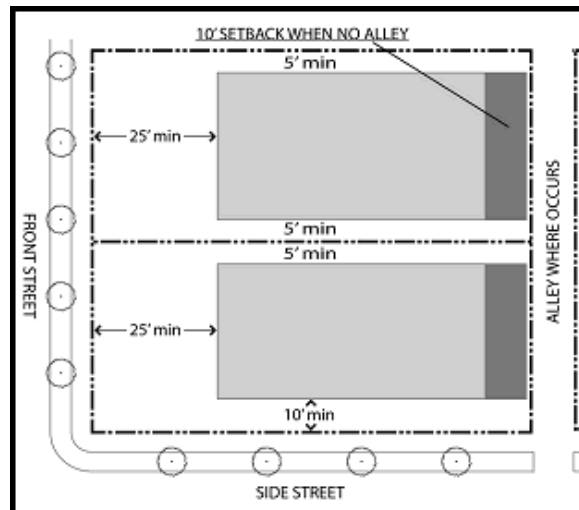
A. *Description.* A garden court is a multifamily development that shares a landscaped courtyard. The structure is arranged in a “U” shape around the garden court with parking typically consolidated and located to the side or rear of the development.

B. *Site Requirements and Setbacks.*

- 1. Garden court units may be located on a separate (fee simple) lot or several units may be located on a common parcel.
- 2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 20.28.130(A) and (B), except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 20-foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.



**Figure 20.28.130(A) Setbacks - Main Building(s)**



**Figure 20.28.130(B) Setbacks - Garages and Carports**

**C. Bulk and Massing.**

1. There shall be a maximum of eight dwelling units and a minimum of four dwelling units clustered around a shared open space.
2. Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is 0.6. Projects meeting green factor requirements in subsection [\(D\)\(4\)](#) of this section may request additional FAR up to 0.75 with approval by the planning director.
3. No dwelling units may be larger than 2,000 square feet.
4. The single floor area is limited to 1,000 square feet per dwelling unit.
5. The height limit is 25 feet under BMC [20.08.020](#), definition No. 1 or 15 feet under definition No. 2.

**D. Open Space.**



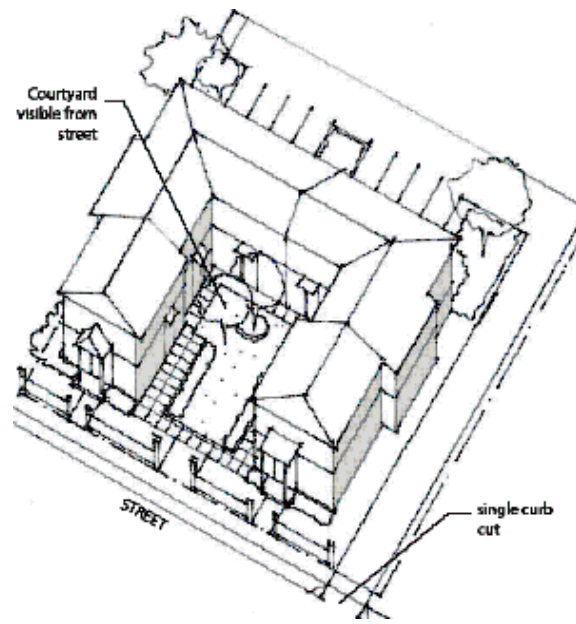
1. Shared open space shall be provided in the amount of 200 square feet for each dwelling unit. It shall be consolidated, with a minimum average dimension of 20 feet.
2. Each dwelling unit shall have at least 100 square feet of private open space with no dimension less than five feet. Up to 50 square feet of deck space may be included.
3. Private open space must be separated from public rights-of-way, shared paths, shared open space, and lanes.
4. Use of the green factor is strongly encouraged. When used as a FAR bonus option in subsection [\(C\)\(2\)](#) of this section, a green factor landscaping score of 0.6 is required.

E. *Parking.*

1. Dwelling units less than 1,000 square feet shall provide at least one on-site parking stall. Units of 1,000 square feet or larger shall provide two on-site parking stalls. The planning director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant's demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least nine feet by 18 feet, unless adjacent to landscaping, as specified in Figure 20.12.030(A).
2. Parking generally shall be located to the rear or side only, but 20 percent of parking may be located between structures, but may not be located between structures and a public street.
3. Parking may be consolidated.
4. Parking accessed from a street or lane shall be limited to one driveway with a maximum width of 20 feet.

F. *Design Standards.*

1. Each dwelling unit must have a separate, ground-related entrance. Units that front the public street shall have entrances facing the public street; all other units shall have entrances facing the shared open space.
2. Each dwelling unit shall have a covered front porch no less than 50 square feet with no dimension less than five feet; this is in addition to the private open space requirement.
3. Garbage/recycling areas shall be consolidated and screened from public view.
4. No roof pitch shall be less than 2:12 (may be shed type) except for green roofs.
5. All fences in the front and side street setbacks, or between the common areas and the dwelling units, are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60 percent opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side street setback.



**Figure 20.28.130(C) Annotated Illustration of Garden Court**

**G. Design Guidelines.**

**1. Site Design.**

- a. The courtyard should address the street, and be easily accessible from the street, with a spacious, clearly defined entry.
- b. At least a portion of the courtyard should be visible from the street. The courtyard is best located at street level, or a foot or two above or below the street.
- c. Create opportunities for exposure to, and shade from sun as well as weather protection.
- d. Define the garden court space through a combination of building, landscape, and other site furnishings.
- e. Provide a walkway from each dwelling unit to the garden court and street.

**2. Building Design.**

- a. The design should break the facades into several distinct elements.
- b. Gable roofs emphasize vertical proportions, create modulation and are strongly encouraged.
- c. The massing should be varied with elements such as bays, dormers, etc.
- d. Changing materials, colors or textures on building elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and add variety and craftsmanship. [Ord. 2017-03-009 § 24; Ord. 2009-08-047].

### 20.28.140 Townhouse.

A. *Description.* A townhouse is one of a row of homes sharing common walls, each with its own front and rear access to the outside.

B. *Site Requirements and Setbacks.*

1. Townhouses may be located on a separate (fee simple) lot or several units may be located on a common parcel.
2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 20.28.140(A) and (B), except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 20-foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.

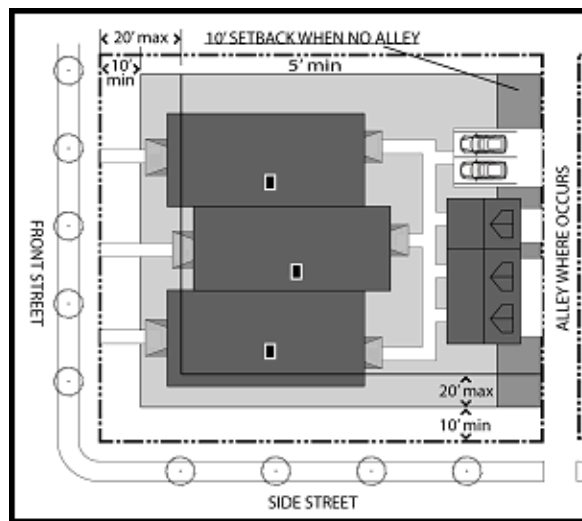


Figure 20.28.140(A) Setbacks - Main Building(s)

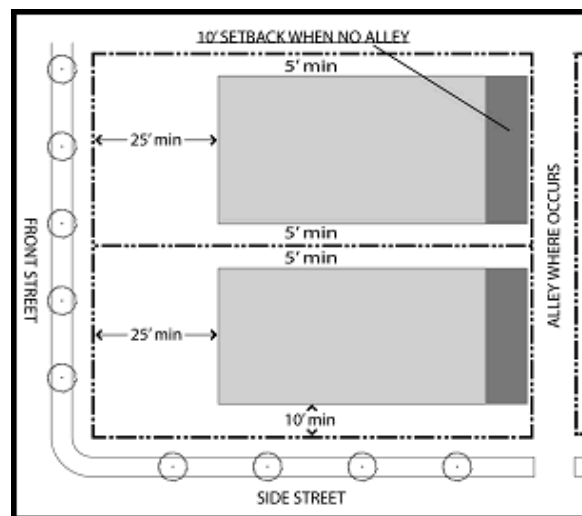


Figure 20.28.140(B) Setbacks - Garages and Carports

C. *Bulk and Massing.*

1. Maximum attached dwelling units is eight.
2. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.75.
3. The height limit is 35 feet under BMC [20.08.020](#), definition No. 1 or 20 feet under definition No. 2.

D. *Open Space.*

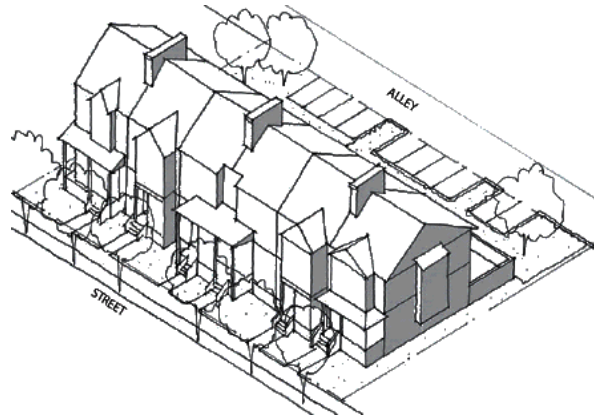
1. Each dwelling unit shall have 200 square feet of private open space with no dimension less than five feet. Up to 100 square feet of deck or structure may be included.
2. Private open space must be screened from public right-of-way, paths, and lanes.
3. Private open space must be directly accessible from the dwelling unit.
4. A green factor landscaping score of 0.6 is required (see BMC [20.12.030](#)).

E. *Parking.*

1. Dwelling units less than 1,000 square feet shall provide at least one on-site parking stall. Units of 1,000 square feet or larger shall provide two on-site parking stalls. The planning director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant's demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least nine feet by 18 feet, unless adjacent to landscaping, as specified in Figure 20.12.030(A).
2. Parking may be consolidated.
3. Parking accessed from a street or lane shall be limited to one driveway with a maximum width of 20 feet. Individual driveways may access a private lane.

F. *Design Standards.*

1. Each townhouse unit shall front a street or lane, and have an entrance that faces a street or lane.
2. Entrances for each unit shall be separate.
3. Each unit shall have direct access to both the public street or lane and parking.
4. Each unit must have a covered, main entry-related porch or stoop area of at least 50 square feet with no dimension less than five feet.
5. Buildings must be modulated along the public street at least every 30 feet. Building modulations must step the building wall back or forward at least four feet.
6. All fences in the front and side street setbacks, or between the common areas and the units, are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60 percent opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side street setback.
7. Garbage/recycling areas shall be consolidated and screened from public view.



**Figure 20.28.140(C) Annotated Illustration of Townhouse**

G. *Design Guidelines.*

1. *Building Design.*

a. Reduce the potential impact of new townhouse development on established and historic neighborhoods by incorporating elements and forms from nearby buildings of character. This may include reference to architectural details, building massing, proportionality, and use of high-integrity materials such as wood, brick, and stone. References to period architecture can be made in a contemporary manner.

b. *Use lines and rhythms to create a human scale streetscape.* These may include vertical and horizontal patterns as expressed by bays, belt lines, doors and windows.

2. *Site Design.*

a. Front yard parking aprons are not allowed.

b. Provide generous use of planting materials and landscape structures such as trellises, raised beds and fencing to unify the overall site design. [Ord. 2017-03-009 § 25; Ord. 2009-08-047].

**The Bellingham Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 2021-07-029, passed July 12, 2021.**

Disclaimer: The City Clerk Representative has the official version of the Bellingham Municipal Code. Users should contact the City Clerk Representative for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

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