

GUIDE

A

Garden Suite APPLICATION PROCESS



This guide outlines the eligibility requirements and application process to build a garden suite



INTRODUCTION

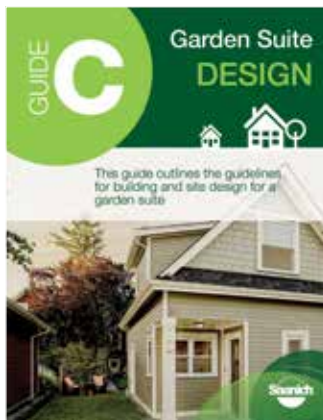
This guide is the first in a series of three about garden suites. It leads you through the eligibility requirements and permitting process to design and build your garden suite.



Eligibility requirements and the application process



Overview of Zoning Bylaw regulations



Guidelines for building and site design

This guide does not replace official documents and the municipality disclaims any liability from its use.

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction.....	1
1.1	What is a garden suite?.....	1
1.2	Why are garden suites important in Saanich?.....	1
1.3	Where are garden suites permitted?.....	2
2.	Pre-Application	3
2.1	Is my lot eligible for a garden suite?.....	3
2.2	Converting an existing accessory building into a garden suite	3
2.3	Pre-Application questions.....	6
3.	Preparing & Submitting an Application.....	8
3.1	Application process.....	8
3.2	Forms and documents.....	13
3.3	Fees	13
4.	Resources	14
4.1	Links.....	14
4.2	Contacts	14
5.	Frequently asked questions	15
5.1	Frequently asked questions	15





1.1 What is a garden suite?

A garden suite is a detached house located in the rear yard of a single family lot. It is accessory to the primary dwelling. Garden suites are sometimes referred to as backyard cottages, laneway houses, carriage houses, coach houses, accessory dwelling units, secondary dwelling units, and detached accessory dwelling units.

1.2 Why are garden suites important in Saanich?

Garden suites provide an important opportunity for sensitive infill housing in Saanich. That is, housing that “fits” within an existing residential neighbourhood without significantly altering its character. They have the potential to:

- Add diversity and choice in housing;
- Increase the supply of rental accommodation and provide an alternative to secondary suites;
- Provide accommodation for family members or caregivers;
- Create accessible living accommodation; and
- Provide rental income to homeowners.

Respecting neighbourhood character and appearance is a priority for garden suites. By considering key aspects of development such as building massing, height, size, placement on the lot, and landscaping, garden suites can become thoughtful and welcome additions to established neighbourhoods.

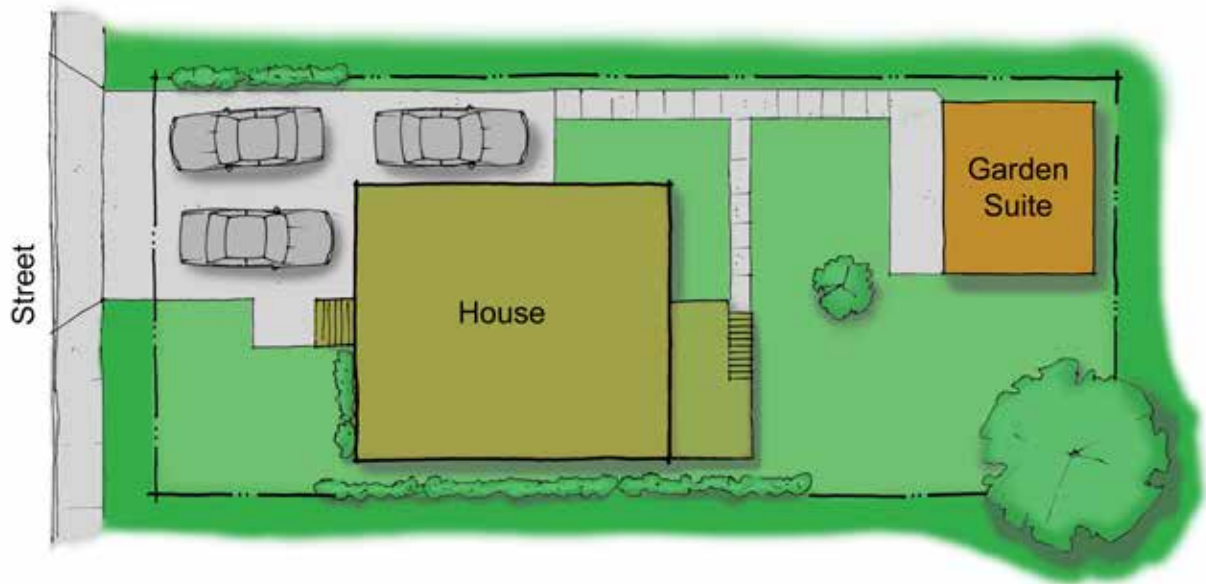


Figure 1: Typical residential lot with a garden suite

Garden suites must comply with zoning regulations and design guidelines, as well as the BC Building Code.

1.3 Where are garden suites permitted?

Garden suites are permitted on RS-zoned properties within the sewer service area and/or the Urban Containment Boundary.

Other eligibility requirements apply. To find out if your property is eligible for a garden suite see Section 2.1.

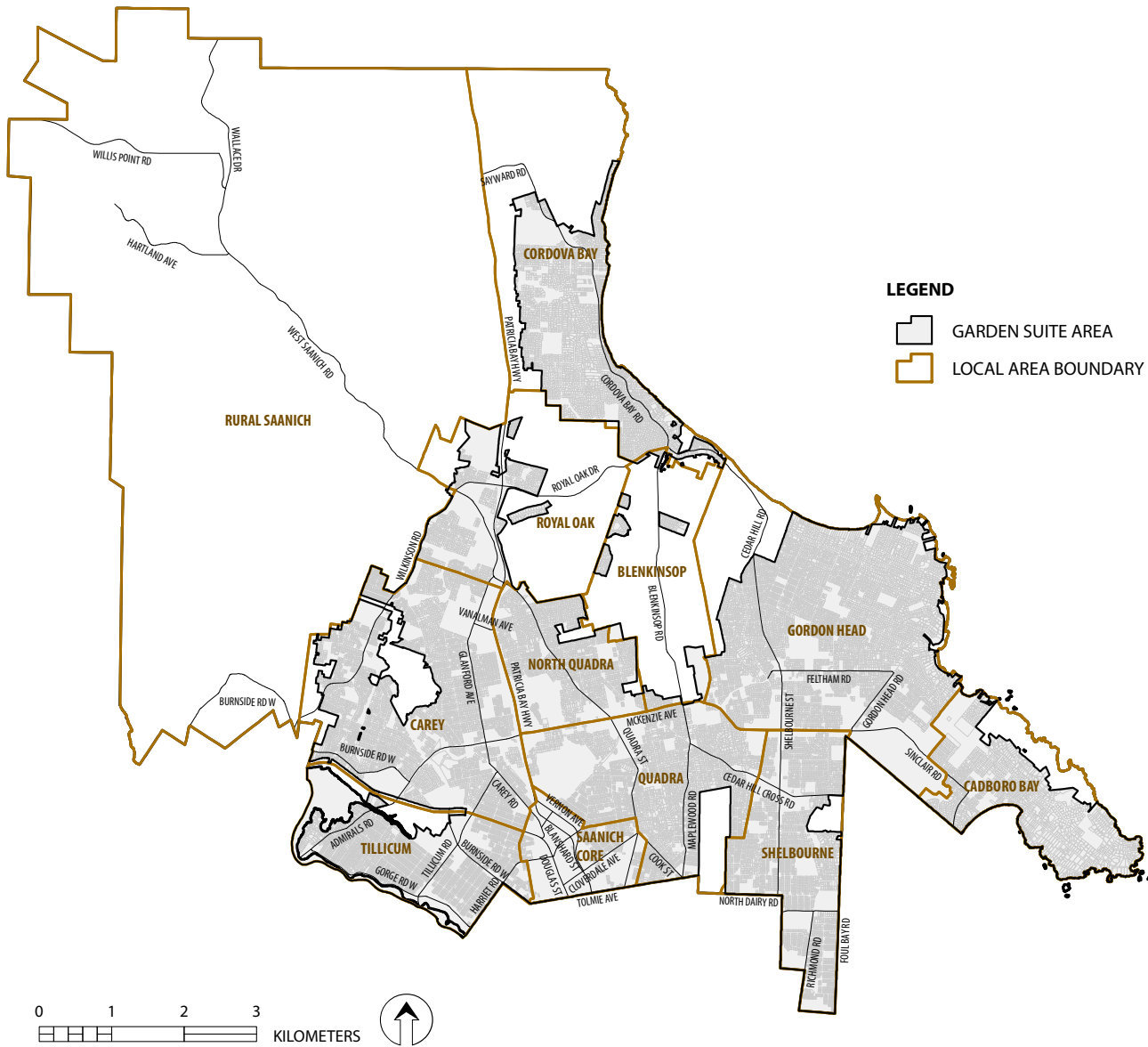


Figure 2: Area where garden suites are permitted
(For information only, please contact Planning Department for confirmation)





2.1 Is my lot eligible for a garden suite?

To be eligible for a garden suite a residential lot must satisfy all of the following requirements:

- The lot must be in an RS zone
- The lot must be in the Sewer Service Area and/or the Urban Containment Boundary
- The lot must be a minimum size of 400 m²
- The lot must be a minimum of 12 m wide
- The principal building on the lot must be a single family dwelling
- There must not be a secondary suite on the lot

In addition to these requirements, there may be other considerations, such as the existing lot coverage or a statutory right-of-way that could affect the eligibility of your property for a garden suite.

You are encouraged to review the pre-application questions and discuss your project with a planner prior to preparing an application.

Eligibility requirements for a new garden suite are outlined in Figure 3.

Researching my property

[SaanichMap](#) is an online mapping tool that lets you access public data.

Find your:

- Location inside Sewer Service Area and/or the Urban Containment Boundary
- Zoning
- Lot size and width
- Heritage status

2.2 Converting an existing accessory building into a garden suite

It may be possible to convert an existing accessory building into a garden suite, but the process will be different, and it may require that you spend more time and money to complete your applications.

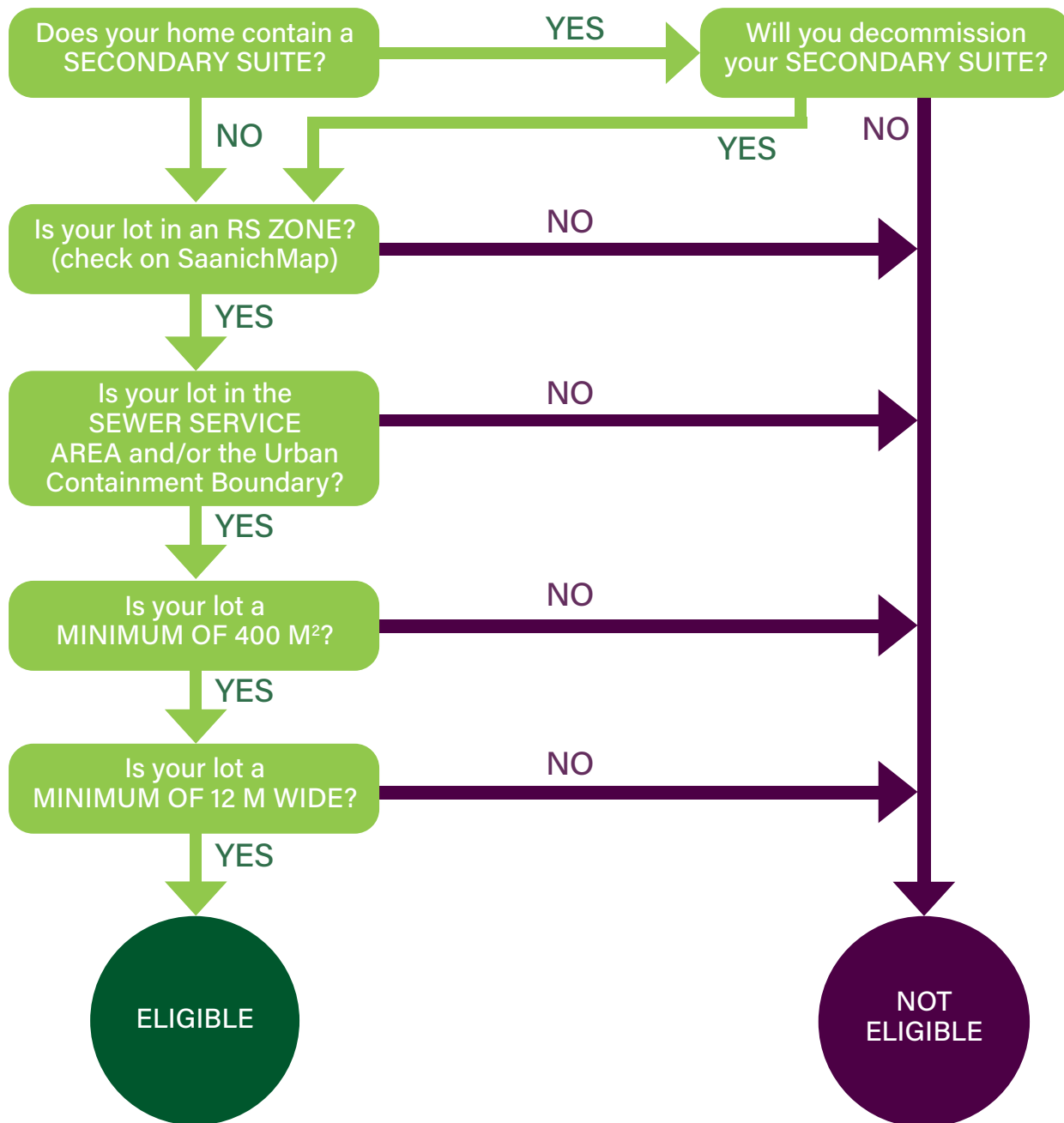
The steps to determine whether conversion of an existing accessory building is the right option for you are summarized below:

1. Determine if your building complies with the zoning regulations. You may need a Development Permit with Variance if your existing accessory building does not meet the requirements.
2. Discuss your plans with Building Inspections and work with a home building professional to determine how your accessory building must be modified to meet the BC Building Code for a residential use.

Eligibility requirements for converting an existing accessory building into a garden suite are outlined in Figure 4.

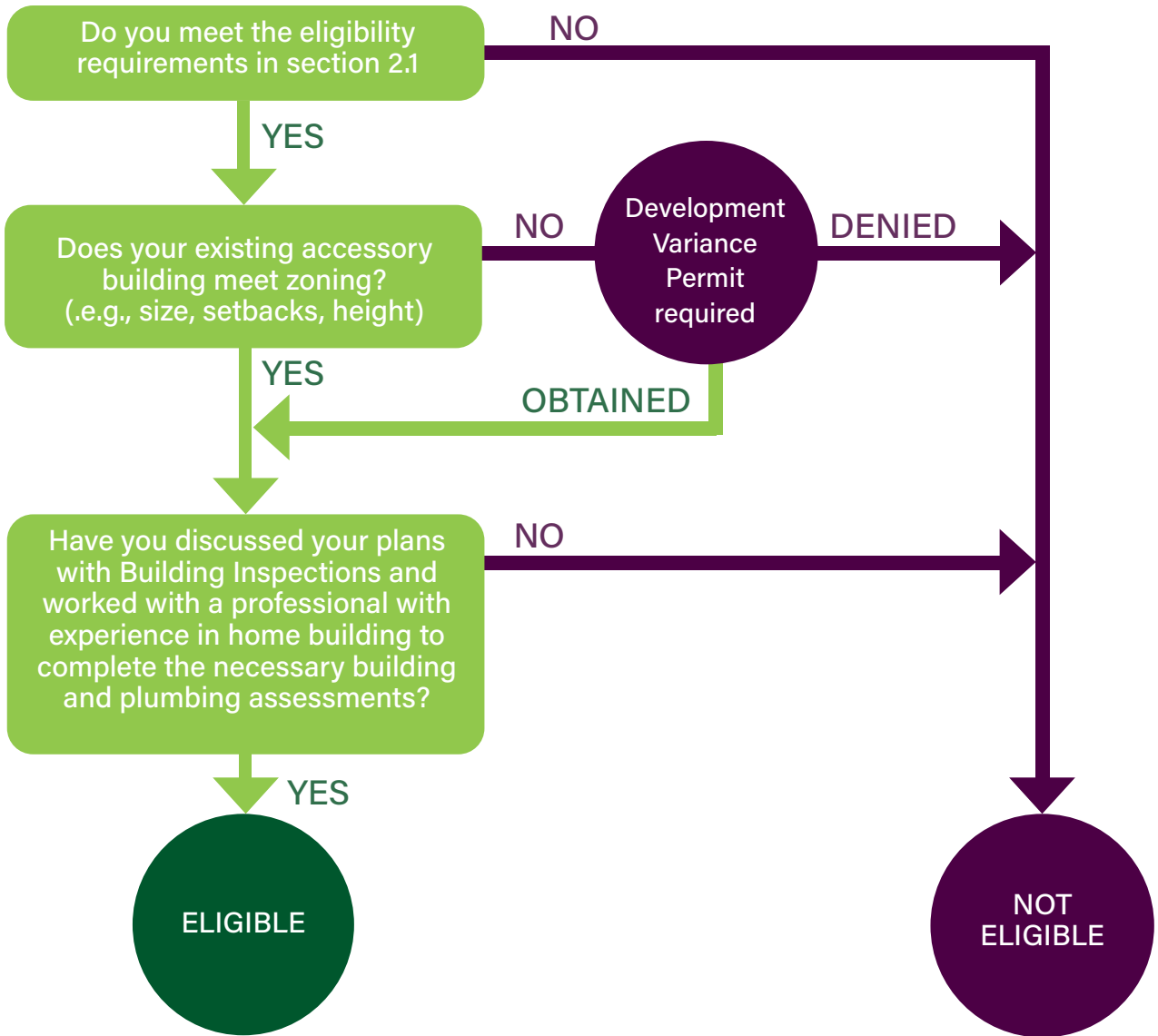


Figure 3: Eligibility requirements for a new garden suite

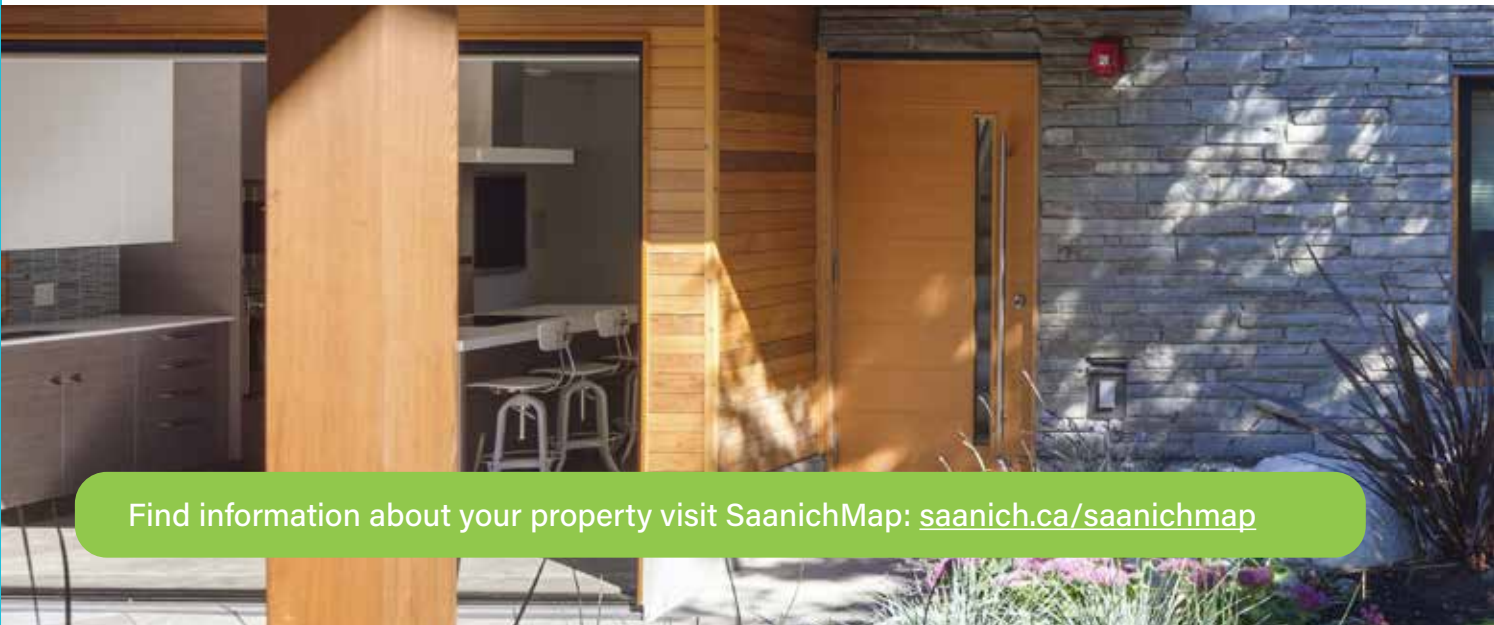


2. Pre-Application

Figure 4: Eligibility requirements for converting an existing accessory building into a garden suite



2. Pre-Application



Find information about your property visit SaanichMap: saanich.ca/saanichmap

2.3 Pre-Application questions

Before submitting an application for a garden suite, we recommend that you spend some time investigating the following pre-application questions. The information gathered will help you identify potential issues and prepare your submission.



1 Zoning and Building Code (Need help? Visit the Planning Department)

1. Does your lot meet the basic eligibility requirements for a garden suite?
- Is your lot a minimum of 400 m²? Yes/No
 - Is your lot a minimum of 12 m wide? Yes/No
 - Is your lot zoned Single Family Dwelling (e.g., RS-6)? Yes/No
 - Is your lot inside the Sewer Service Area and/or the Urban Containment Boundary? Yes/No

2. What lot size category does your property fall within?
- Small (400-559 m²)
 - Medium (560-999 m²)
 - Large (1000 m² plus)

3. Will you need to vary any of the zoning regulations for your garden suite?

4. Where will you put a 1.0 m wide pedestrian pathway to access the garden suite?

5. Where will you locate one additional parking space for the garden suite (3 spaces in total)?

6. Do you have an existing accessory building on your property?
- Where is it located?
 - What is the area in square metres?
 - Approximately when was it constructed?
 - How will your accessory building contribute to your total lot coverage?

7. Do you have a secondary suite in your house?
- If yes, how will you decommission it?

8. Are you aware of any encumbrances (e.g. a covenant) on your property that could impact your ability to build a garden suite?



2 Other Considerations

1. What steps will you take to minimize the impact of your proposed garden suite on immediately adjacent neighbours?

2. Is your property on the Heritage Register?





3 Servicing (Need help? Visit the [Engineering Department](#))

1. Do you have a storm sewer connection?

2. Where are your services located? (Check [saanich.ca/saanichmap](#))

3. What is the size of your water service? (Check [saanich.ca/saanichmap](#))

4. What route will your services take from the municipal connection to the garden suite?

5. Are you proposing a garden suite on a corner lot, and if so, do you require a second driveway?

6. Are there any easements or statutory rights-of-way on your property? (Check your property title)

7. Do you have a stormwater tank on your property and, if so, where is it located?



4 Trees (Need help? Visit the [Parks Division](#))

1. How many trees do you have on your property? (estimate)

2. Where are they located? (draw them on a site plan)

3. Are there any **protected trees**? ([Tree Protection Bylaw No. 9272 - Highlights for Property Owners](#))

4. Which trees would be impacted by the garden suite?

- Approximately how tall are they?
- Approximately how wide are they?
- What species are they?
- Are they protected trees?



5 Environmental (Need help? Visit the [Planning Department](#))

1. Is your lot in the Streamside Development Permit Area? (check [saanich.ca/saanichmap](#))

2. Are you proposing to build a garden suite in a floodplain? (check [saanich.ca/saanichmap](#))

3. Are there any natural features such as rock outcroppings or a creek/stream on your property?

3.1 Application process

Before you can start building your garden suite, you will need an approved Development Permit and Building Permit. Depending on your site, you may also require a Tree Permit.

The steps necessary to gain approval for your garden suite are outlined in this section. The information you will need to navigate the process is described below.



DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION



APPLICATION REVIEW



DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPROVAL



TREE PERMIT



BUILDING PERMIT



INSPECTIONS & OCCUPANCY PERMIT



3. Preparing & Submitting an Application

1 DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION

Submit a complete Development Permit application and fee

- When you are ready, submit a complete [Garden Suites Development Permit application package](#) and pay the required fees at the Planning Counter in Municipal Hall. To be complete, the package must include all required documents and plans outlined in the application form.

Information about trees must be submitted with your Development Permit application. You will be notified if a Tree Permit is required. Please note, you do not need to apply for a separate Tree Permit online.

It is likely that an Arborist's report, prepared by an ISA certified arborist will be required for your Tree Permit. Knowing this, you may choose to submit an arborist report with your application for a Development Permit.

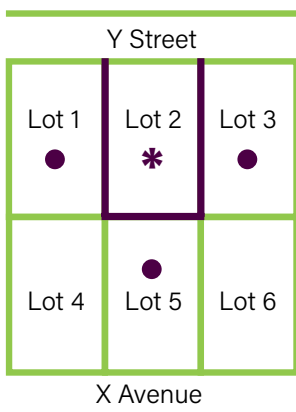
HIRING A PROFESSIONAL TEAM

To facilitate a successful application we recommend you hire a professional team to assist you with your application. Your team may include:

- Engineer and/or Surveyor
- Certified Arborist
- Designer/Architect

Development Permit Requirements (see Application Form for a complete list of requirements)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Title search (current within 30 days, including copies of any encumbrances registered on title (e.g. restrictive covenants, rights-of-way, easements))
<input type="checkbox"/>	Owner Authorization form (if necessary)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contaminated Sites form
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site and servicing plan prepared and certified by a BCLS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Floor plans
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project data
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elevations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cross-sections
<input type="checkbox"/>	Landscape plan with information about trees
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project design summary

Who are your immediate adjacent neighbours?



You are encouraged to discuss your plans with your immediate adjacent neighbours to gather early input on the design of your garden suite.

Neighbour notification: Prior to making your application you are required to distribute a [Neighbour Notification Letter](#) to your immediate adjacent neighbours that includes the following information:

- your name and contact information;
- the address of your project;
- a brief description of your project;
- a concept plan;
- next steps in the process; and
- contact information for the Planning Department

At the time of application, you must provide a list of addresses notified and a summary of any feedback received on the building and site design.

- ✳ Proposed garden suite
- Immediate, adjacent neighbours

2



APPLICATION REVIEW

Staff will review your application and provide you with a letter summarizing necessary revisions

1. The Planner will review your application for compliance with the Zoning Bylaw and Garden Suite Design Guidelines.
2. The application will be circulated to other departments for review and comment including, Engineering, Parks, Environment and Building Inspections.
3. The Advisory Design Panel may be asked to provide comments on the building and site design. Their review would occur at the same time as staff's.
4. Once the review is complete, you will receive a letter summarizing the comments about your proposed garden suite. You may be required to revise and resubmit your plans for further review.

Depending on the conditions on your property, a Tree Permit may be required. You will be notified of this requirement in the Summary Letter.

ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL (ADP)

What is the ADP?

A municipal committee that provides advice on the design merits of a garden suite development permit application.

Who is on the ADP?

Eight members are appointed by Council. They include:

- Two architects;
- Two landscape architects;
- One building industry representative;
- One representative of the disabled community; and
- Two community representatives.

What is the ADP's role in garden suite applications?

The ADP would review garden suite applications and provide advice to staff to help inform decisions on compliance with design guidelines.





3. Preparing & Submitting an Application

3 DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPROVAL

If your project complies with zoning and design requirements, you will receive a Development Permit

1. Once the technical and design review is complete, and it is determined that the project meets all zoning and design requirements you will be required to register a covenant on your property title. The covenant, under section 219 of the Land Title Act, will prevent subdivision of the garden suite from the lot.

The Manager of Community Planning will approve your Development Permit once the covenant is registered on title.

2. The Garden Suite Development Permit will be registered on your property title.

4 TREE PERMIT

If trees will be impacted by your garden suite, then a Tree Permit may be required

1. For your Tree Permit you will need to provide an arborist report prepared by an ISA certified arborist that includes the following:
 - A tree inventory, including tree tag numbers
 - The location and species of replacement trees
 - A Tree Protection Plan for retaining trees on your property on on adjacent property (e.g. boulevard)
2. For information on Tree Permit requirements contact Parks (see Section 4.2).



5



BUILDING PERMIT

A Building Permit will be required prior to construction of a garden suite

1. Once you have an approved Development Permit you will need to apply for a Building Permit and pay the associated fees. The Building Permit application requirements are outlined below. To find out more about the specific requirements contact Building Inspections (see Section 4.2).

Building Permit Requirements

(see [Application Form](#) for a complete list of requirements)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Title search (current within 30 days, including copies of all encumbrances registered on title (e.g. restrictive covenants, rights-of-way, easements))
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site and servicing plan prepared and certified by a BCLS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Floor plans
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elevations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cross-sections
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project data sheet
<input type="checkbox"/>	HPO (Homeowner Protection Office)
<input type="checkbox"/>	BCESC Pre-Construction Energy Compliance Report
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agents Letter (Required if the owner(s) have not signed the application)

6



INSPECTIONS & OCCUPANCY PERMIT

With an approved Building Permit and Tree Permit (if required) construction can begin. Inspections will be scheduled at different stages of construction and tree removal. Final inspection for occupancy will occur once construction is complete

1. When all building and tree requirements have been met, a Building Permit and Tree Permit will be issued. You are now ready to begin construction of your garden suite.
2. Inspection requirements will be outlined in the permits. You are responsible for contacting Building Inspections and Parks for all relevant inspections.
3. When your garden suite is finished, you will need a final occupancy inspection. You must have this before you can live in your garden suite.

ADDRESSING

Once a Building Permit is approved for a garden suite you must apply to Engineering to change your property address. For example if you live at 123 Reindeer Avenue, your garden suite may be addressed Unit B 123 Reindeer Avenue.





3.2 Forms and documents

Form/Document	Link reference
Development Permit Application for Garden Suites	Part 1 , Part 2 , Part 3 https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/App~Forms/app-gs-part1.pdf https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/App~Forms/app-gs-part2.pdf https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/App~Forms/app-gs-part3.pdf
Building Permit	https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/local-government/inspections-by-law-services/residential-permits.html
Tree Permit	https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/natural-environment/trees/trees-development.html
Owners Authorization Form	https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/App~Forms/appl6_ownerauth.pdf
Contaminated Sites Form	https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/App~Forms/appl5_contamsite.pdf
Neighbour Notification Letter	https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/Garden~Suites/gs-neighbour-notification.pdf
Application to Change Property Address	https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/Engineering/2020.12.01%20Change%20of%20Address.pdf

3.3 Fees

The fee for a Garden Suite Development Permit is \$500. The covenant fee is \$361.91.

Building Permit fees are outlined [here](#).

Development Permit and Building Permit fees must be paid when you submit your complete applications.

The fee for a Tree Permit is \$100 plus \$30 for each affected tree.

UTILITIES

Electricity: [BC Hydro](#) can provide information to help you prepare for and request a connection for your new garden suite.

Visit [BC Hydro](#) for a [new building and renovation connection](#) or contact a BC Hydro customer service representative at 1-800-224-9376.

Gas: [Fortis BC](#) can provide information if you need to install or move a natural gas line, or upgrade a natural gas service.

Visit [Fortis BC](#) to find out more about [natural gas services](#) or contact a Fortis BC customer service representative at 1-888-224-2710.

BC Housing (formerly Homeowner Protection Office): Home Warranty Insurance is required to construct a new garden suite in BC. To learn more about the requirements for [Home Warranty Insurance](#) visit the [BC Housing website](#) or contact a representative in Licensing and Consumer Services at 1-800-407-7757.

Addressing: Once a Building Permit is approved for a garden suite you must apply to Engineering to change your property address. For example if you live at 123 Reindeer Avenue, your garden suite may be addressed Unit B 123 Reindeer Avenue.

FOR CONTACT INFORMATION SEE PAGE 14.

4.1 Links

Document	Link reference
Official Community Plan	https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/community-planning/official-community-plan-ocp.html
Garden Suite Development Permit Area Design Guidelines	https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Community/Documents/Planning/garden-suite-report-to-council-20191021-attachment-b.pdf
Zoning Bylaw	https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/local-government/zoning/zoning-bylaw-8200.html
Tree Protection Bylaw	https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/Bylaws~and~Policies/9548%20-%20TREE%20PROTECTION%20BYLAW,%202014,%20AMENDMENT%20BYLAW,%202019,%20NO.%209548.pdf
Development Fee Schedule	https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/App~Forms/appl7_feeschedule.pdf
Building Permit Fees	https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/Inspections/BuildingPermitFees.pdf

4.2 Contacts

Organization/Department	Address	Phone Number	Website/Email
SAANICH			
Planning	770 Vernon Ave. Victoria BC V8X 2W7	T 1 250-475-5471	planning@saanich.ca
Inspection Services		T 1 250-475-5457	inspections@saanich.ca
Engineering		T 1 250-475-5570	engineering@saanich.ca
Sustainability		T 1 250-475-5471	sustainability@saanich.ca
Parks	1040 McKenzie Ave Victoria, BC V8P 2L4	T 1 250-475-5522	parks@saanich.ca
OTHER			
BC Energy Step Code			https://energystepcode.ca/building.safety@gov.bc.ca
BC Hydro	P O Box 8910 Vancouver, BC V6B 4X3	T 1 800-224-9376	https://www.bchydro.com
BC Housing	See text on page 13.		
BC Land Title and Survey	Suite 200 1321 Blanshard Street Victoria BC V8W 0B6	T 1 877-577-5872	https://ltsa.ca/
Fortis BC - Gas	16705 Fraser Highway Surrey, BC V4N 0E8	T 1 888-224-2710	https://www.fortisbc.com/



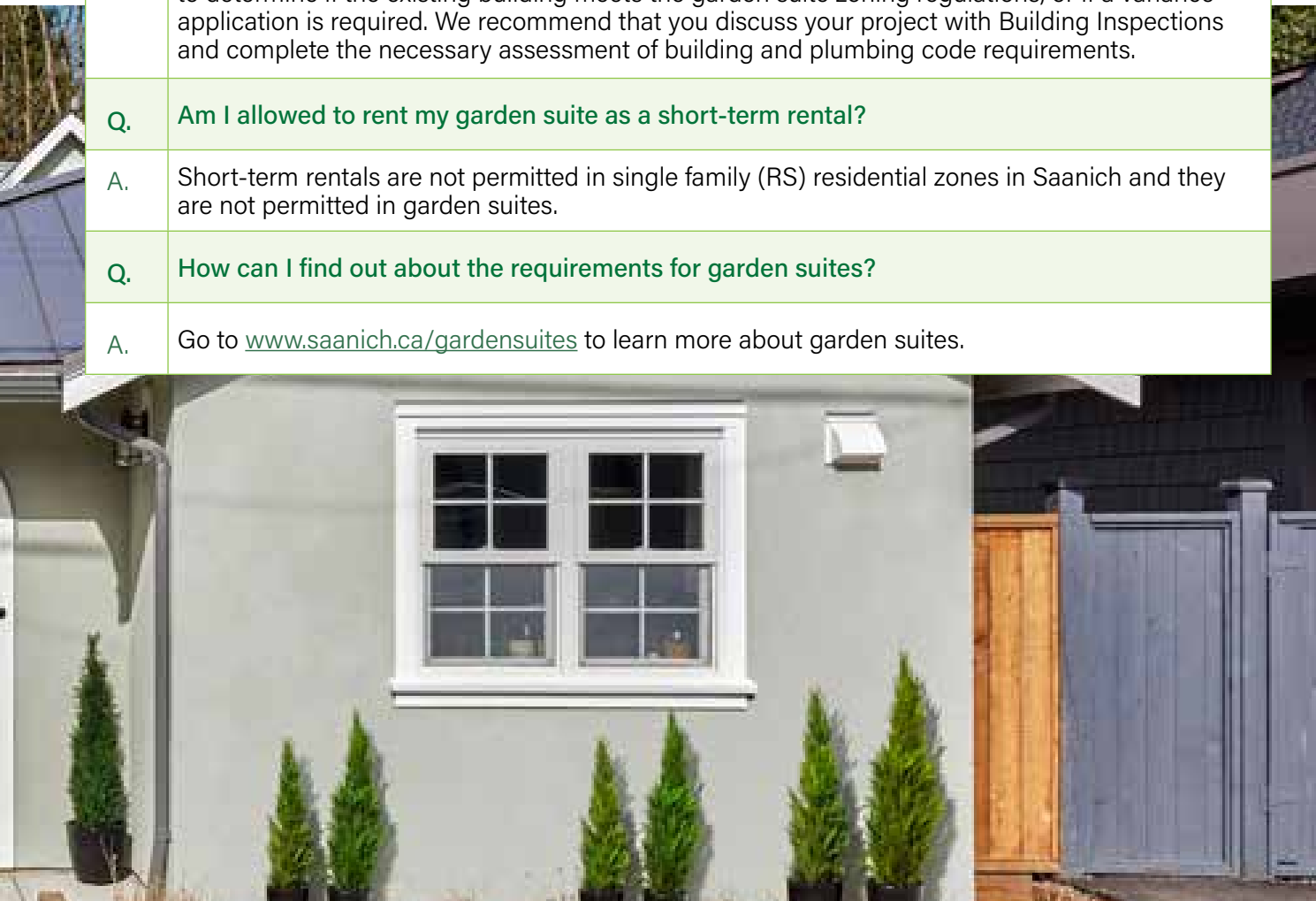
5.1 Frequently asked questions

Q.	Are Garden Suites allowed in Saanich?
A.	Yes. Garden Suites are permitted on most RS-zoned properties in Saanich. See section 2.1 for details on eligibility.
Q.	Are tiny homes permitted?
A.	Smaller-sized homes are permitted as garden suites, as long as they meet zoning and design requirements and the BC Building Code.
Q.	What permits do I need to build a garden suite?
A.	You will need a Development Permit, which must be issued before you can apply for a Building Permit. You may also need a Tree Permit, if there are trees on your property.
Q.	Why is a Development Permit required?
A.	A Development Permit allows staff to review an application against a set of building and site design guidelines. Through public engagement we heard from residents who were concerned about potential impacts to their properties. The design guidelines allow staff to review building and site design to promote livability and ensure garden suites are positive additions to residential neighbourhoods.
Q.	Can I have a garden suite and a secondary suite?
A.	No. An owner has the option of either a secondary suite or a garden suite, but not both.
Q.	Can I rent out the garden suite and principal building?
A.	No. The owner must live either in the garden suite or principal dwelling.



5. Frequently asked questions ?

Q.	Can I subdivide a garden suite from my lot?
A.	No. A key objective of the garden suite program is to provide permanent rental housing. Subdivision of a garden suite from a lot with a single family dwelling is not permitted.
Q.	Will neighbours have the opportunity to provide input on a garden suite proposal?
A.	An owner is required to notify their immediate adjacent neighbours about their project. Through notification neighbours have the opportunity to provide comments on the building and site design. A summary of these comments can be provided to the Planning Department at the time of application.
Q.	My site is unique and will need variances in order to build my garden suite. What should I do?
A.	It is recommended that you engage a design professional to explore the possibilities for your site and prepare a concept plan, as well as preliminary building elevations (if necessary). Once you have your plans, contact the Planning Department to discuss your project and map out next steps.
Q.	Can I renovate an existing accessory building to be a garden suite?
A.	Yes, but the process may be different than the process to build a new garden suite. You will need to determine if the existing building meets the garden suite zoning regulations, or if a variance application is required. We recommend that you discuss your project with Building Inspections and complete the necessary assessment of building and plumbing code requirements.
Q.	Am I allowed to rent my garden suite as a short-term rental?
A.	Short-term rentals are not permitted in single family (RS) residential zones in Saanich and they are not permitted in garden suites.
Q.	How can I find out about the requirements for garden suites?
A.	Go to www.saanich.ca/gardensuites to learn more about garden suites.





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