



POLICY REPORT URBAN STRUCTURE

Report Date: January 9, 2018
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TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Amendment to the Guidelines for Additions, Infill and Multiple Conversion Dwelling in Association with the Retention of a Character House in an RS Zone

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve an amendment to the Guidelines for Additions, Infill and Multiple Conversion Dwelling in Association with the Retention of a Character House in an RS Zone to clarify the maximum number of units that can be provided on a site.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report recommends an amendment to the Guidelines for Additions, Infill and Multiple Conversion Dwelling in Association with the Retention of a Character House in an RS Zone by introducing a cap on the total number of units on a site where a character house is retained. The proposed cap will allow a density (number of units) for standard RS lots that is consistent with the City's character retention RT zones, which permit multiple conversion dwelling and infill. For the few very large RS sites, it will encourage property owners to consider other opportunities, through Housing Vancouver implementation, to accommodate more intensive low-rise housing choices on these sites (e.g. townhouses, stacked townhouses).

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- Heritage Action Plan (December 2013)
- Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law to introduce incentives for the retention of character homes and to add new housing choices into all RS district schedules (approved October 2017)

- Guidelines for Additions, Infill and Multiple Conversion Dwelling in Association with the Retention of a Character House in an RS Zone (approved October 2017)
- Housing Vancouver Strategy (November 2017)

REPORT

Background/Context

In October 2017 Council approved amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law to support the retention of character homes and to expand housing choice on standard RS lots, in keeping with the direction in the Housing Vancouver Strategy to evolve low density neighbourhoods through creative ground-oriented infill and low-rise options. The amendments introduced incentives for the retention of character homes, including new conditional approval uses for infill and multiple conversion dwellings (MCD) in conjunction with retention of a character house and additional floor area. At that time, the Guidelines for Additions, Infill and Multiple Conversion Dwelling in Association with the Retention of a Character House in an RS Zone (the Guidelines) were also approved to inform the implementation of the incentives. They include the specific criteria for the retention of a character house, and provide technical specifications for additions, multiple conversion dwellings, infill buildings, site design and tree retention, parking, and overall dwelling unit density.

Strategic Analysis

Similar to the density allowed in the RT zones (which encourage character retention by allowing infill and multiple conversion dwellings) the Guidelines limit the overall dwelling unit density to 74 units per hectare. This allows the provision of three units on a typical 10.05 m (33 ft.) wide lot, and four units on a typical 15.2 m (50 ft.) wide lot. On the few very large RS lots in the city, the dwelling unit density would result in significantly more infill and MCD units than intended through the character home retention program. These sites can accommodate a greater variety of low-rise housing forms (e.g. townhouses and stacked townhouses) and should be encouraged to consider options beyond the character home program to intensify housing variety. Opportunities to expand housing choices on these large sites will be addressed through the implementation of the Housing Vancouver Strategy.

Introducing a cap of 6 units on a site would allow new ground-oriented housing options on standard RS lots where a character home is retained, in alignment with both the character home retention program and the Housing Vancouver Strategy and would encourage the consideration of more intensive housing options on larger RS sites. It is proposed that section 9 of the Guidelines be amended by adding the wording in italics:

"9 Dwelling Unit Density

For Multiple Conversion Dwelling and Infill, the dwelling unit density should not exceed 74 units per hectare, except where the calculation of dwelling units per hectare results in a fractional number, the nearest whole number shall be taken and one-half shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number.

The total number of dwelling units on a site varies with lot width but should not exceed 6 units. For sites with a width of 10.05 m, the total number of units should not exceed 3 units. For sites with a width of 15.2 m, the total number of units should

not exceed 4 units. Generally, a minimum lot width of 20.1 m or more can achieve the maximum of 6 dwelling units."

CONCLUSION

The proposed amendment to the Guidelines for Additions, Infill and Multiple Conversion Dwelling in Association with the Retention of a Character House in an RS Zone to limit the number of units on a site will allow new ground-oriented housing options on standard RS lots, similar to the City's RT zones and will encourage the consideration of more intensive low density housing options on larger RS sites.

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