

Infill Housing - Be a Good Neighbour

The purpose of this brochure is to provide contractors, builders and homeowners with information and ideas on what infill builders should do as “good neighbours”, and what local residents should expect from an infill project.

“This information is provided for convenience only and is not in substitution of applicable City Bylaws or Provincial or Federal Codes or laws. You must satisfy yourself that any existing or proposed construction or other works complies with such Bylaws, Codes or other laws.”

By following some of the practices set out in this brochure a builder can make sure that his or her project creates the most benefits for the neighbourhood with the least possible disruption. Being a considerate builder is good business practice.

See List of Other Brochures related to this topic at the end of this document.

Infill Housing

As cities grow and change so do neighbourhoods. For a variety of reasons old homes are torn down only to be replaced with a new and often larger building. This process of building new homes in already established neighbourhoods is “infill housing”. A single-family dwelling need not be replaced with another single-family dwelling on that lot. It can in fact be replaced by a duplex or involve the putting up of townhouses or simply be a major addition or renovation to an existing home.

The Problem

An infill project traditionally impacts on an established neighbourhood in a variety of ways. Immediate neighbours feel the impact of the new larger building being placed closer to the property lines and the disruption of equipment and workers immediately adjacent to their home. Other neighbours throughout the neighbourhood may be impacted by the changes to the streetscape, the removal of trees, and the noise and dirt of the construction.

Many of the negative impacts of an infill development can be mitigated by the builder if time is taken to keep local residents properly informed of his or her plans, the site is kept clean and safe, and certain other basic steps are taken to ensure that the development will be a safe and acceptable one.

Guidelines for a Successful Infill Project

- *Make sure you have all required approvals and permits:*
- *Talk to the neighbours. Tell them what you are doing:*
- *Protect the neighbourhood including other property such as trees, shrubs and fences:*
- *Clean up after yourself:*
- *Keep noisy work to allowable times:*
- *Do not block driveways (public or private).*

Permits and Approvals

Every development project must receive City approval (building permit, subdivision, rezoning, etc.) before the work can start. If the proposal does not comply with the City's Zoning Bylaw an application must be made to rezone the property, or for minor variance, to the Board of Variance. Never start construction until all the necessary approvals have been received. If you do you may be liable for substantial fines and/or have to remove or redo any or all of the work you have already completed.

Builders and developers should consult with City Building and Planning staff well in advance to determine if the project meets all of the City's requirements.

Rezoning, Subdivision or Consolidation

Many infill projects will require rezoning or Board of Variance approval. If the project meets the general intent of the official community plan but not the Zoning Bylaw (e.g.: higher density or different use than allowed in the bylaw) the builder can apply to the City for a Zoning Bylaw amendment. This includes public information, consultation with affected agencies, and a public meeting.

If the proposed development requires the subdivision of a large lot to create two or more smaller lots, or if the project involves the consolidation of a number of lots to create a larger parcel for the development of a townhouse or strata complex, then the developer should undertake preliminary meetings with the Planning Department at the very earliest stages of the project.

Demolition

Most infill projects require the demolition of one or more existing building. Applicants for demolition permits for single or two-family dwellings must submit a tree plan with their application for a permit. They must also provide proof of ownership or a letter of permission to demolish the building(s) from the property owner. The applicant for demolition permit should be familiar with all on-site conditions. They should contact the Land Title Office for information regarding all easements,

rights-of-way and covenants. They should also arrange for the safe disconnection of all utilities and the removal of hazardous materials prior to demolition, and should be familiar with Part 8 of the B.C. Building Code which is titled “Safety Measures at Construction and Demolition Sites”. Dust, noise and debris should be minimized during demolition and the work should be undertaken at a time which will not have a negative impact on the harmony of the neighbourhood.

Building Permit

A building permit is required for all new construction, exterior renovations or additions, pools, chimneys, house moves, temporary buildings/structures, demolitions, interior finishing, renovations and accessory buildings. Home owners, agents, designers, or contractors may apply for a building permit by submitting two sets of working drawings to the City’s Building Department. A building permit must be obtained prior to issuance of any electrical, plumbing and gas permits that may be required to complete construction.

| For information on the application procedure for a building permit please call 604-294-7130.

Other Applicable Laws

Construction projects must also conform to other provincial regulations and city bylaws. The Workers’ Compensation Act covers a wide variety of issues, from safety helmets and boots to property protection, to proper shoring of trenches. City bylaws regulate a variety of issues including fence height, construction noise, road cleaning, signs, and tree protection. The disposal of demolition material and construction waste is regulated both by city bylaws and provincial acts. Drywall is to be adequately disposed of by recycling or an acceptable disposal site. For more information on the disposal of construction waste please see the Building Department’s Building Information brochure entitled “ Management and Disposal of Construction Wastes”.

Contractors and building crews should be aware of local parking regulations and should not block lanes or streets for extended periods of time.

| Any pertinent city bylaws can be obtained from the Clerk’s Office at Burnaby City Hall, 4949 Canada Way, Burnaby, BC V5G 1M2 or from the City website at www.city.burnaby.ca

Talk to the Neighbours

Before making application for a building permit, minor variance, rezoning or subdivision, builders should inform nearby residents what is being planned by writing a letter or visiting them personally. When neighbours have full information they are usually much more supportive and understanding of the project.

It is often useful for the builder to give the neighbours a sheet with his or her full name, address and phone number. In this way neighbours can contact the builder immediately if they have concerns, or if there is an emergency.

Prior to the project beginning, a sign should be erected at the site, giving the builder’s full name and phone number. Signs may be purchased from the Greater Vancouver Home Builders’ Association.

Protect the Property and the Neighbourhood

Vacant homes waiting for demolition should not be allowed to become an eyesore or a potential fire hazard. They should be properly secured to prevent the entry of children and animals and dangerous materials such as broken glass, garbage and abandoned equipment should be removed from the site as soon as the house becomes vacant. Ideally a house should be vacant only a very short period before it is ultimately demolished or moved from the site.

Existing neighbourhood services should not be damaged or disrupted. Before any excavation or digging call BC ONE CALL at 1-800-474-6886, cellular *6886 or 604-257-1940 to locate any underground services.

Protect neighbouring properties' trees and plants. Special care must be given to keep construction and operations and trucks away from neighbour's landscaping. Trees and shrubs to be protected should be circled with protective fencing. If areas are at risk, builders should work out an acceptable agreement with the homeowner before starting work. Trees on the city boulevard must be protected and cannot be cut down or damaged without city approval.

Excavations should be fenced to eliminate access by children, and where possible access to the ongoing construction site should be restricted.

Portable lavatories should be located well away from neighbouring homes. This is particularly important in the summer months when people will be out in their yards and gardens.

Do not encroach on the neighbour's property with garbage bins and do not burn construction waste on the site. All outdoor burning is prohibited in the City of Burnaby.

Make sure your workers are protected. Insist on proper protective equipment such as hard hats and work boots.

Keep parking access and laneways clear for use by neighbours and emergency vehicles.

Site Maintenance

Prompt clean-up of scraps and construction garbage keeps the site from becoming a safety hazard and an eyesore. Remove mud and dirt tracked onto city streets and sidewalks. If mud does become a serious problem vehicles should be hosed down before leaving the site. As necessary, roads should be immediately swept down.

Care must be taken to keep debris on the site. Mud, silt and contaminants must not enter the storm drainage system.

Failure to comply with these guidelines could result in bylaw action and fines.

Hours of Construction

The Burnaby Noise Bylaw allows construction to take place between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Monday through Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Saturdays. On Sundays and statutory holidays an owner or occupier may personally or through a contractor carry on renovations, alterations, additions or repairs to a structure in a single or two-family residential district between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. This exemption does not apply to commercial projects or the construction of new houses or buildings. No other construction is permitted on Sundays or statutory holidays. For additional information about noise control in the City of Burnaby please call the Engineering Department at 604-294-7460.

Other Considerations

Occasionally a builder or developer will discover that a principle building, from an adjoining lot, is encroaching on the property that they wish to develop. Such encroachments will not prohibit the owner or developer from building a new building but, for the purpose of applying the spatial separation requirements of the BC Building Code, the encroaching building will be considered to be a second building on the property. Those spatial separation requirements will be applied to both the existing and proposed construction.

The City does not generally concern itself with aerial encroachments such as gutters, eaves, roof overhangs, bay windows, architectural features, and they should be resolved at the discretion of the adjoining property owners. For more information on encroachments see the Building Department's brochure entitled "Encroachments".

Lateral support for adjoining property is also often an issue in infill developments. Builders who excavate a site such that it reduces the grade in relation to adjoining properties should be prepared to construct a retaining wall or other landscape feature that will provide adequate lateral support for the neighbour's property. While City bylaws do not address this issue, builders who excavate a site and cause the neighbour's property to fall away, or be damaged may be liable to the neighbours to recover the costs of repairing or supporting their property.

Further Information

For further information on building permits please contact the Building Department at 604-294-7130.

For zoning and planning information please contact the City's Planning Department at 604-294-7400.

For information on encroachments onto easements or public property contact the City's Engineering Department at 604-294-7460.

The general number for Burnaby City Hall is 604-294-7944.

Other Brochures related to this topic

The City of Burnaby Building Department has brochures on a variety of related topics available at their counter. The following are just some of the brochures that might be of interest to an infill developer or builder.

- *Board of Variance appeals*
- *Building Near Streams and Ravines*
- *Building permit application requirements for new single and two-family dwellings*
- *Encroachments*
- *Foundation and surface drainage installation guide*
- *Legal survey requirements single and two-family dwellings*
- *Management and disposal of construction wastes*
- *Permits and inspections for house construction*
- *Residential parking areas and driveways*
- *Rock pits*
- *Roof/Floor Truss Layout*
- *Selecting contractors for new home renovations and repairs*
- *Tree bylaw 1996*
- *Accessory buildings*
- *Front yard requirements*
- *Permitted floor area*

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