

Garden and Garage Suite Discussion Paper – February 2009

Background:

Garden suites are small, detached secondary suites located in the rear or side yard on a site with an existing one-unit dwelling (single detached house). Garage Suites are secondary suites that are attached (often above) to a detached garage on a site with an existing one-unit dwelling.

The City of Saskatoon does not currently allow garden or garage suites, however, City Council will be considering a proposal to allow garden and garage suites as a discretionary use in all city neighbourhoods. The City is currently receiving public input on this proposal and it is important that residents make their views known regarding this proposal.

Garden and garage suites could provide needed, affordable housing units that are especially suited to students, seniors, and young adults just entering the work force. Recent studies have confirmed that additional affordable units are needed in Saskatoon for these segments of the population.

Garden and garage suites also have the potential of making homeownership more affordable for families purchasing their first home by providing a mortgage helper.

The neighbourhood issues resulting from garden and garage suites will be similar to those caused by traditional secondary (basement) suites which include parking, privacy, architectural appearance, and the perceived impact on the character of the neighbourhood. To minimize neighbourhood impact, only one suite (secondary, garden, or garage) would be allowed per single family dwelling.

Benefits of Garden and Garage Suites:

- Another affordable housing option for some segments of the population such as seniors and students.
- A unique housing option for seniors and disabled adults that balances independence with family support (when family members live in principle dwelling).
- Additional source of income for the homeowner, making homeownership more affordable.
- Architectural styles can complement existing dwellings.
- More private than secondary suites for homeowners and tenants.
- Increased neighbourhood density making services more viable.

- Wheel Chair Accessible (garden suite).
- Efficient use of site (garage suite).

Considerations of Garden and Garage Suites:

- May affect the character of a neighbourhood or property values.
- Cost of installing services can be high for the homeowner.
- Privacy – suites may look into neighbour's yard or block neighbour's view or sun.
- Suites are permanent. Changes to the site and neighbourhood are not easily reversed.
- Homeowner has reduced yard space (especially with garden suite).
- The City may lack the proper tools for regulating architectural features.
- Traffic and parking concerns (the same as for secondary suites).

Proposed Regulations for Garden and Garage Suites:

(Draft for Discussion Purposes)

1. Garden and garage suites may be allowed as a discretionary use in all zoning districts that allow detached one unit dwellings.
2. Garden and garage suites shall be accessory to a detached one unit dwelling.
3. No more than one garden suite, garage suite or secondary suite shall be permitted as an accessory use to a one unit dwelling on any given site.
4. Only one accessory building will be allowed per site. This means that there can not be a detached garage and a garden suite on the same site.
5. Garden and garage suites must meet all requirements of Section 5.30 of the Zoning Bylaw, except where the development standards vary from those specifically noted in this section. Section 5.30 includes regulations specific to Secondary Suites including:
 - a) Secondary suites shall have no more than 2 bedrooms;
 - b) No more than 3 people shall occupy a secondary suite;
 - c) Secondary suites shall have a maximum size of 65 m² (702 ft²).
6. Garden and garage suites must meet all requirements of Section 5.7 of the Zoning Bylaw, except where the development standards vary from those specifically noted in this section. Section 5.7 of the Zoning Bylaw includes

regulations specific to accessory buildings including:

- a) Minimum setbacks from property lines and principle dwelling;
 - b) Maximum site coverage (generally 40 %) and maximum backyard coverage (30% to 50% depending on site size);
 - c) Accessory building foot print can not be larger than 54 m² (583 ft²) or the foot print of the principle dwelling to a maximum footprint of 87 m² (939 ft²), which ever is greater.
7. Windows which face toward an adjacent property must be located at least 3 metres from a property line which abuts another residential site. Windows above the first storey which face towards an adjacent property must be located at least 6 metres from a property line which abuts another residential site.
 8. Garage suites may be located on the second storey of a building where the main storey is used as a private garage.
 9. Garden and garage suites can be no higher than the principle dwelling.
 10. Basements are not permitted in garden or garage suites.
 11. A minimum of one on-site parking space must be provided for a garden or garage suite and one on-site parking space provided for the principle dwelling. (See sections 5.30 (h) and 6.0 of the Zoning Bylaw for detailed parking requirements)
 12. The garden or garage suite must be hooked up to the water and sewer service of the principle dwelling.
 13. Other services (electrical, natural gas, cable, telephone) can be connected either to the services of the principle dwelling or be separate services.
 14. Service cables including electrical, telephone and television will be buried underground if underground servicing is the normal practice in the neighbourhood where the garden or garage suite is located.
 15. The location of a garden or garage suite and the site grading must allow for proper drainage of the site.
 16. The garden or garage suite must not face the alley and must be connected by a hard surface sidewalk to the front or side street.

17. The City will not approve any condominium plan to provide separate title for a garden or garage suite.

18. Garden and garage suites must meet all relevant building, plumbing and development codes and will be regulated by the City's building permit and inspection process.

For Further Information:

The complete proposal and further information is available online at www.saskatoon.ca click on 'H' and then on 'Housing Initiative' or call 975-7693.

Make Your Views Known:

Please respond with your comments and concerns by June 1, 2009 to:

daryl.sexsmith@saskatoon.ca

Daryl Sexsmith
Housing Analyst, Planning and Development Branch
222 – 3rd Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK
S7K 0J5
975-7693