

# Regulations for Garden & Garage Suites

NEIGHBOURHOOD INFILL  
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Rendering by Bldg Studio Inc.

  
**City of  
Saskatoon**  
Planning & Development

Updated December 2021

# Introduction and Table of Contents

This brochure is intended to assist you with planning, designing and constructing your garden or garage suite. It provides regulations you must follow when constructing a garden or garage suite and design guidelines to assist you with the design of your garden or garage suite. Both the regulations and design guidelines help to ensure that your project is compatible with Saskatoon's older residential areas.

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*This document has no legal status and cannot be used as an official interpretation of the various codes and regulations currently in effect. Users are advised to contact the Planning and Development Department for assistance, as the City of Saskatoon accepts no responsibility to persons relying solely on this information.*

*This document reflects the regulations for primary dwellings contained in Bylaw No. 8770, The Zoning Bylaw, is for reference only, and is not to be used for legal purposes. Updates and changes to this document can occur without notice and at the discretion of the City of Saskatoon, Planning and Development Department.*



# Zoning Bylaw Regulations

## DEFINITIONS

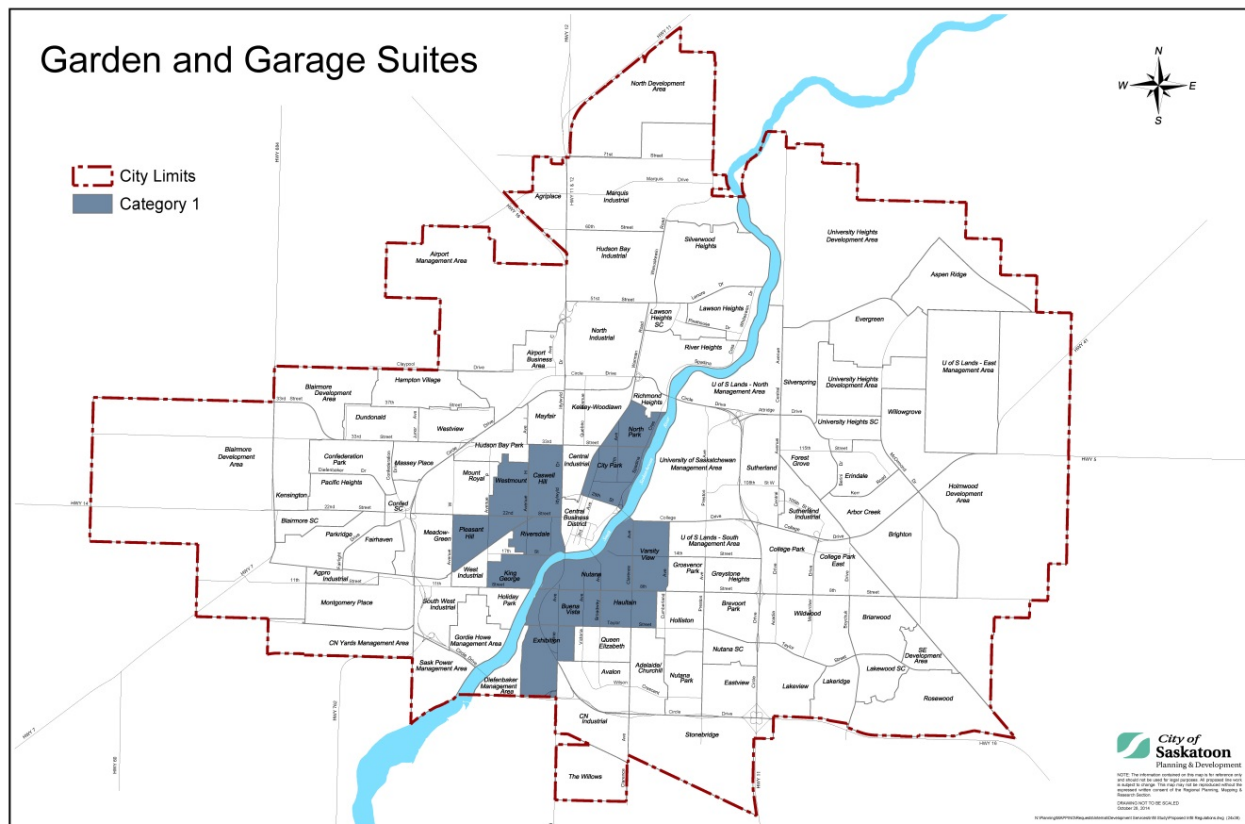
**Garden Suite** means a small, self-contained, ground-oriented dwelling unit that is accessory to a one-unit dwelling. It is located in the rear yard of a one-unit dwelling and has cooking, food preparation, sleeping and sanitary facilities which are separate from those of the one-unit dwelling.

**Garage Suite** means a building containing both a garden suite and an area used as a private garage and is accessory to a one-unit dwelling. It is located in the rear yard of a one-unit dwelling.

Garden and Garage Suites have distinct regulations depending on the neighbourhood in which they are located. For these purposes, residential neighbourhoods are designated either Category 1 or Category 2 as follows:

**Category 1 Neighbourhoods** include King George, Pleasant Hill, Riversdale, Westmount, Caswell Hill, Nutana, Buena Vista, Haultain, Exhibition, Varsity View, City Park and North Park.

**Category 2 Neighbourhoods** include all other neighbourhoods in the City of Saskatoon.



## Development Standards

The following tables provide the Zoning Bylaw regulations that must be followed when developing a garden or garage suite.

<b>Garden Suite</b>								
<b>Development Standard</b>	<b>Side Yard (min)</b>	<b>Rear Yard (min)</b>	<b>Rear Yard Coverage (max)</b>	<b>Building Height (max)</b>	<b>Distance From Principle Dwelling (min)</b>	<b>Side Wall Height (max)</b>	<b>Building Length (max)</b>	<b>Number Of Stories (max)</b>
Category 1	0.75 <sup>1</sup> m	2 <sup>2</sup> m	50%	5.8 <sup>3</sup> m	4.0 m	-	9.0 m	2
Category 2	3 m	2 m	50%	3.5 m	4.0 m	3.2 m	9.0 m	1

<b>Garage Suite</b>								
<b>Development Standard</b>	<b>Side Yard (min)</b>	<b>Rear Yard (min)</b>	<b>Rear Yard Coverage (max)</b>	<b>Building Height (max)</b>	<b>Distance From Principle Dwelling (min)</b>	<b>Side Wall Height (max)</b>	<b>Building Length (max)</b>	<b>Number Of Stories (max)</b>
Category 1	0.75 <sup>1</sup> m	2 <sup>2</sup> m	50%	6.0 <sup>3</sup> m	4.0 m	-	9.0 m	2
Category 2	0.75 <sup>1</sup> m	2 m	50%	5.0 m	4.0 m	4.0 m	9.0 m	1

### *Notes to Development Standards*

<sup>1</sup> A minimum side yard setback of 1.0 metres shall be provided on one side of the site.

<sup>2</sup> The minimum rear yard setback may be reduced to 1.2 metres on sites with a rear lane.

<sup>3</sup> The maximum building height can be increased to 6.2 metres to the mean height level between eaves and ridge on buildings with a gable, hip or gambrel roof which are located in Category 1 neighbourhoods.

**Further information on Zoning Bylaw regulations for Garden and Garage Suites is available in the Zoning Bylaw No. 8770.**



## Other Regulations

A garden or garage suite can be developed as an accessory use to a one-unit dwelling. The following regulations apply to the development of a garden or garage suite:

- 1 A one-unit dwelling may have a maximum of one secondary suite – either within the dwelling (i.e. basement suite) or a garden or garage suite.
- 2 No garden or garage suite may be constructed, erected or moved on to any site prior to the time of construction of the principal building to which it is accessory.
- 3 No basements will be allowed in a garden or garage suite.
- 4 The site plan submitted with the application must indicate the location of all City-owned trees and details regarding utility service connections. The site plan must be approved by the City and by all utility agencies which provide service to the site prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.
- 5 Garden and Garage Suites shall have a full bathroom containing toilet, sink and shower or tub, a kitchen and a maximum of two bedrooms.
- 6 The site must be adequately drained. A storm water management plan is required.
- 7 A Building Permit is required prior to construction of a garden or garage suite.
- 8 Two on-site parking spaces are required and must be delineated, screened and surfaced with gravel, asphalt or concrete. The parking space for the garden or garage suite may be in the front yard if the site does not have a rear lane. On corner sites, the parking for the garden or garage suite may be accessed from the flanking street.
- 9 An internal walking path is required for the garden or garage suite to access both the front and rear of the property.
- 10 The main entrance for the garden and garage suite should be accessible and visible from the lane, where a lane exists.
- 11 Windows and doors shall be of a size and in locations which will not result in the loss of privacy for neighbouring properties.



- 12** The following apply to the gross floor area of the garden or garage that can be developed:
- The gross floor area of the primary dwelling includes all areas above grade including an attached garage.
  - The gross floor area of a garden or garage suite includes all areas above grade (including a garage).
  - The gross floor area of a garden suite cannot exceed 77 m<sup>2</sup> (828 ft<sup>2</sup>) or the area of the principal dwelling; whichever is less.
  - The gross floor area of a garage suite cannot exceed the gross floor area of the principal dwelling or 100 m<sup>2</sup> (1,076 ft<sup>2</sup>) whichever is greater, and in no case shall the gross floor area of a garage suite, including both the area of the suite and the garage, exceed 164 m<sup>2</sup> (1,765 ft<sup>2</sup>)
  - The gross floor area intended for use as a private garage in a garage suite shall not exceed 87 m<sup>2</sup> (936 ft<sup>2</sup>)
  - Where a detached accessory building currently exists, the gross floor area of the existing detached accessory building need not be considered in the gross floor area calculation where:
    - The depth of site is greater than 60 metres; and
    - The existing detached accessory building is located entirely within 25 metres of the rear wall of the principal dwelling.
  - When the garden or garage suite has two storeys, the gross floor area of the second storey shall not exceed 80% of the gross floor area of the first storey.
- 13** Balconies can be provided on the second storey facing a lane, or on corner sites, facing a side street in Category 1 neighbourhoods. Balconies shall be screened to maintain privacy for neighbours.
- 14** The garden or garage suite may have rear yard decks and porches.
- 15** Mechanical units such as air conditioners and vents shall be located so that they are not a nuisance to adjacent properties.
- 16** Dormers are permitted in Category 1 neighbourhoods, but shall not exceed 50% of the length of the roof.



# Building Code

## BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

The construction of all garage and garden suites, regardless of floor area, is required to conform to the current National Building Code (NBC).

Building Permits and Plumbing Permits are required for this type of construction.

Only plumbers registered with the City of Saskatoon can apply for a Plumbing Permit.

**The following are some of the items required to be addressed as part of the Building Permit process.**

**Foundations:** As full depth basements will not be allowed, foundation construction will be limited to shallow foundations with non-habitable crawl spaces (please consult a Design Professional), pile and grade beam construction, or concrete slab on grade. A Design Professional, licensed to practice in the Province of Saskatchewan, will be required to sign and seal all designs which support a living space.

**Fire Safety Between Buildings:** The spatial separation requirements (relationship between wall face area, window area and distances to property lines and other buildings on the same property) of the NBC are required to be met. Depending on the distances to the various property lines and to buildings on the same property, combustible or non-combustible exterior siding and eave projection requirements of the NBC are required to be met.

**Other Life Safety Issues:** All stairs, handrails and guardrails; all smoke and CO alarms; and bedroom emergency exit (egress) requirements are required to conform to the NBC.

**Ventilation System:** To ensure an adequately balanced air flow, a ventilation design, usually completed by the mechanical contractor, is required before the Building Permit will be issued. Upon completion of the ventilation system installation, the licensed mechanical contractor shall provide certification that the system was installed as per the approved design.

**Contact Building Standards at 306.975.3236 or [buildingstandards@saskatoon.ca](mailto:buildingstandards@saskatoon.ca) for more information.**



# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION PROCESS

Permits are required before the start of construction for most projects.

## BUILDING PERMITS

### A Building Permit is required for the following:

- ❖ New building construction;
- ❖ To construct, erect, place, alter, repair, renovate, demolish, relocate or remove a building or structure;
- ❖ Changes to, or construction of, buildings such as garages, decks, swimming pools (including above-ground pools and hot tubs), and mobile homes;
- ❖ Structural changes to existing buildings;
- ❖ Change of occupancy or use of an existing building;
- ❖ Outbuildings larger than 10 square metres;
- ❖ Decks over 200 millimetres (eight inches) above grade and roof enclosures over existing or new decks; and
- ❖ Basement development in existing buildings.

Building Permits can be applied for Online at [Apply Online >](#)

The application process is as follows:

1. A design professional is required to prepare the permit drawings.
  2. Completion of the [Residential Building and Development Permit Application](#) and applicable forms listed on the application form.
  3. One set of drawings must be included. Please see [Drawing Requirements](#) for details.
  4. Apply for the permit online.
- ❖ For Garden and Garage Suites, a detailed drainage plan and utility plan must be submitted with the Building Permit application. The requirements are outlined under Application Requirements and examples are included in this publication.



## Utility Plan:

The Utility Plan will need to show how the suite will be serviced for water, sewer, and other utilities. The plan is required to show if the proposed water and sewer service will be connected to the primary dwelling or directly to the street.

For the Building Permit, the Utility Plan will require certification by a Design Professional licensed to consult in the province of Saskatchewan and will be required to address the following:

- ❖ Provide location of existing water meter and proposed water connection details;
- ❖ Signed and Sealed Drawings, Letter of Commitment for Field Review - Structural, Letter of Assurance for Field Review and compliance must be provided after the Design Professional inspection;
- ❖ Line size and material for both water and sewer service (NPC Articles 2.2.5, 2.6.3.4 & 2.2.5, 2.4.9.4 respectively);
- ❖ Slope of services (Article 2.4.8.1); and
- ❖ Details for frost protection (insulation details if applicable) (Article 2.3.5.4).

For previous Plumbing Permit History, please contact Building Standards at 306-975-2645. For the location of existing water meter contact the Transportation and Utilities Connections Desk at 306-975-2461. City of Saskatoon specifications for service connections can be found on the City's website: [Specifications and Standards](#)



## Drainage Plan:

Residential development in the City of Saskatoon including Garden and Garage Suites are required to submit a drainage plan along with a building permit application. The [Residential Property Lot Grading Guidelines](#) provide details for grading of all developments.

### Lot Grading Requirements for Garden and Garage Suites

- ❖ Compliance to the approved lot grading plan.
- ❖ Minimum 200mm wide drainage path along the rear and side property lines.
- ❖ Minimum 3m wide 5% slope or 150mm drop away from the perimeter of a structure.
- ❖ Minimum 2% slope from the back of the sidewalk and rear property line elevations to the structure.
- ❖ Minimum 100mm clearance below all basement windows and doors.
- ❖ Roof downspouts and sump discharges are extended a minimum of 1 metre away from the structure and not directed at neighbouring properties.

### Retaining Walls

If it is not possible to meet the existing grades and lot drainage types of neighbouring properties, retaining walls are required and must be shown on the Lot Grading Plan including top of retaining wall elevations.

- ❖ Retaining walls may be constructed of wood, steel, concrete, masonry, stone or plastic.
- ❖ Retaining walls must have drainage swales to prevent drainage over the wall onto existing properties and graded to drain to the front or rear property line.
- ❖ Retaining walls must be 50mm higher than the adjacent grade.
- ❖ Retaining walls must be designed by a structural engineer if they are higher than 0.6m



## PLUMBING PERMITS

Plumbing installations are governed by the Saskatchewan Plumbing Regulations, as adopted and enforced by the Building Standards Plumbing Inspectors. **A plumbing permit is required whenever a plumbing system is being constructed, changed, renewed, or repaired.**

The Plumbing Permit Application Process is as follows.

1. Complete the [Plumbing Permit Application](#) form.
2. Submit application form and corresponding documents via email to [plumbing.permits@saskatoon.ca](mailto:plumbing.permits@saskatoon.ca)
3. A Building Standards representative will contact you to collect payment via credit card and a permit will be issued.
4. Inspections take place at the rough-in and final stages. Several rough-in inspections may be required depending on the complexity of the specific project. A final inspection is required before the new system can be put into service.

## DEMOLITION PERMITS

You must complete a Request for Demolition for the demolition of any residential building including residential garages. The drawings and permit application requirements vary for different projects. Information can be found here [Demolition Permit Information](#)

## GAS AND ELECTRICAL PERMITS

Contractors and individuals who provide gas or electrical installation services must apply for a license with the Government of Saskatchewan.

SaskPower 306.787.6937 | [www.saskpower.com](http://www.saskpower.com)

## Urban Forestry Information

A tree protection plan may be required as part of either a demolition permit for existing structures or Building Permit for the Garden or Garage Suite. Further information is available at [www.saskatoon.ca/trees](http://www.saskatoon.ca/trees)



# Design Guidelines

## REAR YARDS DECKS AND PORCHES

- ❖ Rear yard decks and porches, attached to a garden or garage suite, will be permitted provided minimum rear yard setbacks, separation distances, and necessary site access and parking areas are provided.

## INTERNAL PATHWAYS

- ❖ Garden and Garage Suites should be connected to adjacent streets and laneways, through the site, via an internal pathway.
- ❖ All publicly accessible areas, including sidewalks and internal pathways, should be barrier-free and constructed of materials chosen for their functionality as well as their maintenance efficiency.
- ❖ The preferred surface treatment is brushed concrete.
- ❖ Internal pathways should have a minimum width of 1.2 metres to facilitate barrier-free access and should integrate seamlessly with the adjacent sidewalk, on-site surface parking areas, main and secondary dwelling entrances, garage entrances, porches, decks, and other access points between primary and accessory dwellings.
- ❖ Access structures such as ramps should be considered as integrated components of infill development.
- ❖ Trees, landscaping and site furnishings should not obstruct the path of travel.

## LIGHTING

- ❖ Internal pathways should incorporate pedestrian-scaled lighting at key locations including main and secondary dwelling entrances.
- ❖ Pedestrian-scaled lighting may be free-standing or wall-mounted depending on the desired application.
- ❖ Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be down lit to avoid unnecessary light pollution.
- ❖ Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be provided adjacent to rear lanes to enhance the perception of safety.



## LANDSCAPING

- ❖ Existing significant trees, tree stands, and vegetation should be protected and incorporated into infill development to the extent possible.
- ❖ New trees should be planted to contribute to the existing tree canopy of the neighbourhood.
- ❖ Where appropriate, retaining walls should be incorporated into the overall landscaping plan for the site. They should be low in profile and should be designed in a manner which is compatible with the streetscape.
- ❖ The design of private outdoor amenity spaces and site landscaping features should incorporate sustainable site design principles.

## ORIENTATION, LAYOUT AND PRIVACY

- ❖ Garden and Garage Suites should be positioned and oriented to maximize overview of adjacent rear lanes or rear yards, and minimize overview of adjacent properties.
- ❖ Garden and Garage Suites should be directly accessible from the sidewalk or roadway located at the front of the property and also from the rear lane, where rear lanes exist.

## ENTRANCES

- ❖ Main entrances should be directly accessible and visible from rear lanes however other locations are acceptable given site layout.
- ❖ Main entrances should generally be ground-oriented, with sufficient cover and integration into the overall building design.
- ❖ Main entrances should be designed to provide weather protection, and can include features such as recessed entries, front porches and verandas.
- ❖ All entrances should be located at-grade or close to grade, so as to protect the privacy of neighbouring properties and to avoid site overlook.
- ❖ Secondary entrances should not be dominant, but should be easily accessible and convenient to access via adjacent parking areas.
- ❖ The design and location of building entrances should adhere to the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.



## FAÇADES

- ❖ Buildings should use a variety of materials and architectural details, both vertical and horizontal, to break up the façade. Such articulation should include three-dimensional depth and composition, which can be achieved by varying the massing of the façade through the use of bays, recesses, reveals, substantial trim and secondary building elements including porches, verandas, balconies and bay windows.
- ❖ Buildings should not have blank façades. Flanking façades should have a design and material standard equal to the primary façade.
- ❖ The design of Garden and Garage Suites should be complementary in character and quality of detail to the principal dwelling.
- ❖ Walls facing rear yards and rear lanes may be glazed provided spatial separation requirements of the NBC are met.

## DOORS AND WINDOWS

- ❖ The following recommendations should be used as a general guide recognizing that the specific conditions of a given property may call for an alternative solution. The requirements for passive solar gain may also dictate solutions which call for greater amounts of glazing and should be permitted while maintaining the privacy of flanking lots.
- ❖ All glazing must meet the requirements of the NBC as per Table 9.10.15.4.
- ❖ Windows and doors in Garden and Garage Suites should be of a size and in locations which will not result in the loss of privacy for residents of adjacent sites, especially in Category 1 neighbourhoods with minimal side yard setbacks.
- ❖ Since Category 2 suites are restricted to a single storey and require 3 metre side yard setbacks, the extent of glazing may be greater than in Category 1 neighbourhoods provided that sufficient screening (fencing or landscaping) is present on side property lines to screen the suite from neighbouring rear yards.
- ❖ While overlook is an issue for properties on either side of a 2 storey garden or garage suite the rear lane should be considered a public frontage and the garden or garage suite may have a high degree of glazing facing the laneway and shared yard between the primary dwelling and the garden or garage suite.
- ❖ In Category 1 Areas, the percentage of glazing on side walls should be limited to 20% of the total side wall surface areas. Generally, the majority of this 20% glazing allocation should be provided on the lower level provided sufficient screening with a fence or landscaping is present on the side property lines. Any side wall glazing on the second storey should be limited and carefully positioned so as not to overlook neighbouring properties.



- ❖ In Category 1 Areas, front and rear walls should generally provide a proportion of glazing that is no more than that which is allowed under the NBC.
- ❖ The location of doors and windows within the side yard should not conflict with that of existing adjacent dwellings.
- ❖ Garden and garage suites facing a flanking street or lane should provide a generous amount of window openings to encourage strong visual connections between the suite and the public lane or side street.
- ❖ Windows should be arranged to enhance views, and provide natural ventilation and light, without sacrificing privacy to adjacent dwellings.

## ROOFS

- ❖ Roof materials and colours should complement the building materials and the overall building design.

## DORMERS

- ❖ Dormers and secondary roof components should be positioned and proportioned to remain secondary to the primary roof form.
- ❖ Dormers on upper storeys should remain relatively small in order to maintain appropriate building and roof proportions.

## BALCONIES

- ❖ In Category 1 Areas, balconies and terraces may be provided on the second floor of a garden or garage suite facing the rear lane and should be screened to avoid privacy loss for adjacent properties.

## MATERIALS

- ❖ Finish materials should extend to all sides of the building, including building projections.
- ❖ Building materials should be chosen for their functionality and aesthetic quality as well as their energy and maintenance efficiency.



## UTILITIES AND WASTE STORAGE

- ❖ Water meters and gas meters should be placed in discrete locations and/or screened from public view.
- ❖ The location of mechanical units such as air conditioners and venting should be located in order to not create a nuisance to adjacent properties.
- ❖ All garbage and recycling bins should be stored on-site in designated locations, screened from public view.
- ❖ Garbage and recycling storage areas should be integrated into the design of Garden and Garage Suites where feasible.

## SUSTAINABLE BUILDING DESIGN

- ❖ Waste Water
  - Waste management, water use reduction and wastewater technologies should be explored where possible.
  - Rain barrels or cisterns can be designed into new Garden and Garage Suites to accommodate grey water irrigation.
- ❖ Passive Solar Design
  - Factors including temperature, precipitation, wind conditions, cloud cover, air quality and solar loss and gain should be considered when designing suites and private outdoor amenity spaces.
  - Trees and vegetation, operable windows, treated glass, roof coverings and other building elements should be selected to take advantage of natural means of regulating interior temperature, lighting and other environmental variables.
  - Indirect natural light should be maximized.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- ❖ Life cycle cost analysis should be used to evaluate mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems as well as to evaluate design options for occupiable spaces.
- ❖ Buildings and windows should be oriented and designed such that natural means of heating, cooling, ventilating and lighting interior spaces are maximized.
- ❖ Outdoor lighting systems should incorporate LED technology to reduce energy and maintenance demand.
- ❖ Garden and garage suite developments are encouraged to explore the potential use of geothermal and solar technologies to reduce grid energy dependency.
- ❖ Inventories of all plumbing fixtures and equipment, as well as all heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, should be summarized in building packages as well as a strategy for minimizing water demand.
- ❖ Adaptive re-use is encouraged to reduce dependence on new materials. The energy efficiency of existing buildings should be carefully considered when assessing their potential for re-use.

## MATERIAL EFFICIENCY

- ❖ Although locally sourced materials are preferred, foreign products made with quickly replenishing raw materials, such as bamboo, are also desired and encouraged.
- ❖ Unplanted rooftop areas should be finished with cool or light coloured materials that remain cool by reflecting the sun's rays or have a high insulation value.

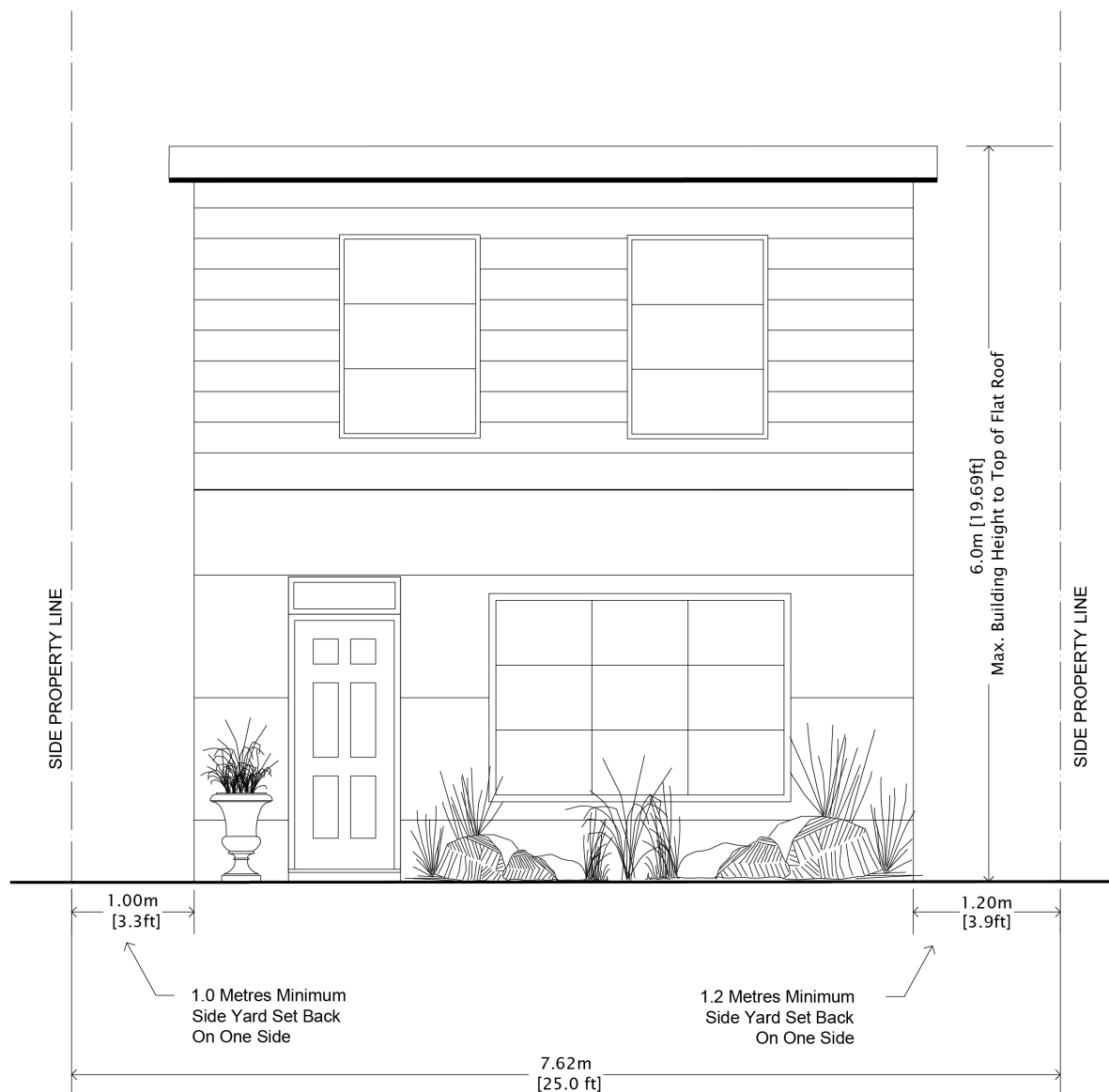


# Sample Drawings

## BUILDING ELEVATIONS – EXAMPLES

### Garage Suite – Category 1

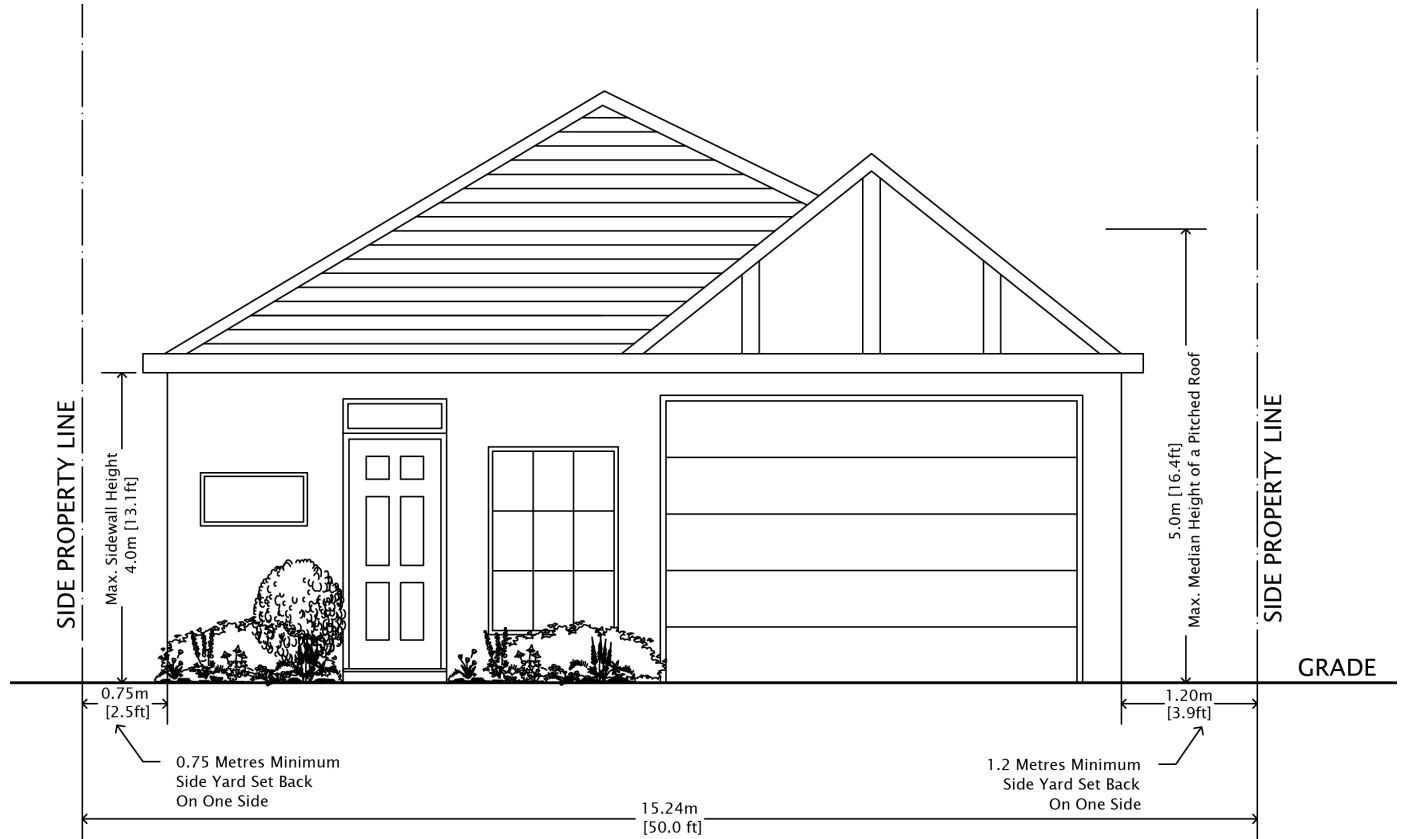
2 storey permitted



## BUILDING ELEVATIONS – EXAMPLES

### Garage Suite – Category 2

1 storey permitted



## BUILDING ELEVATIONS – EXAMPLES

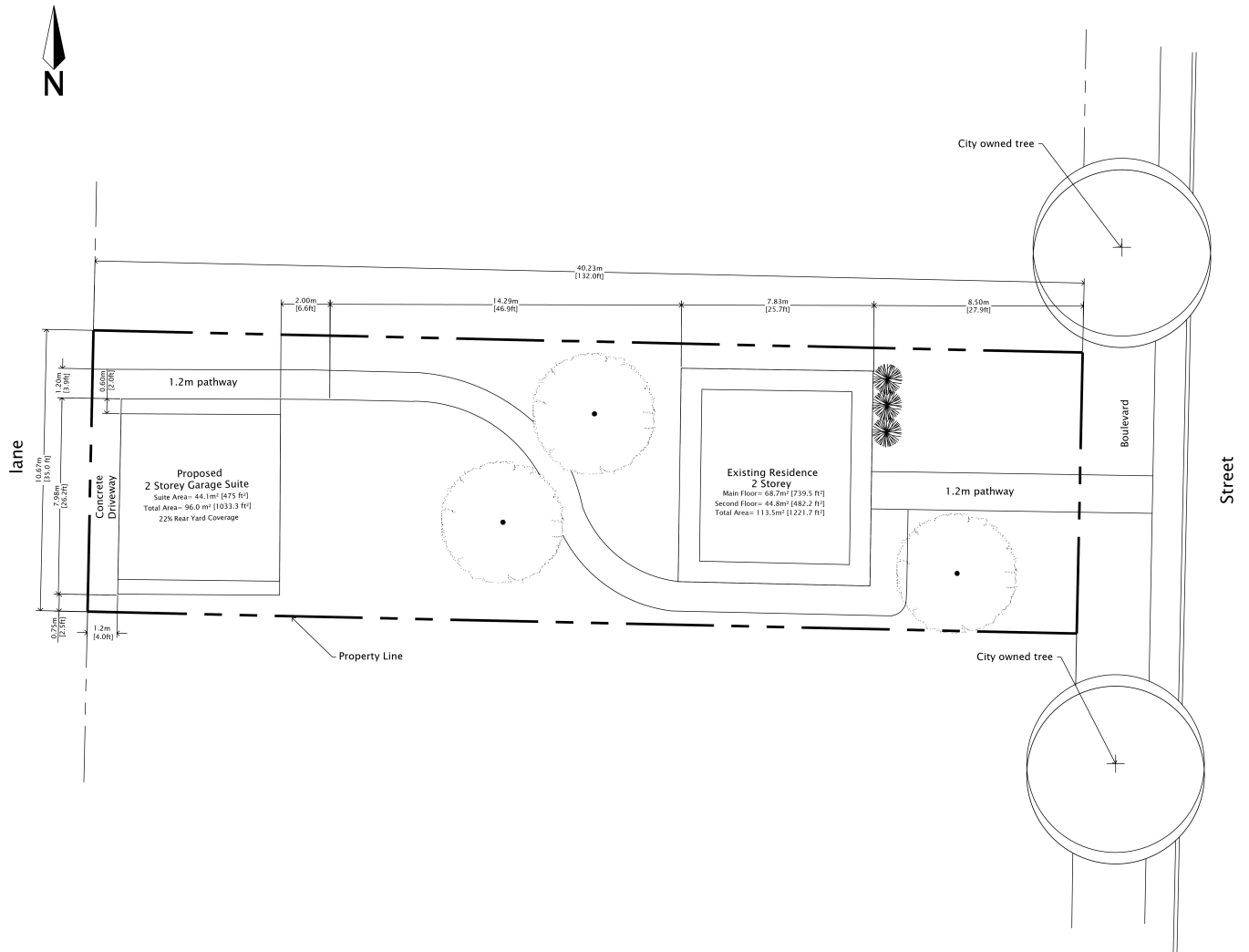
### Garden Suite – Category 2

1 storey permitted



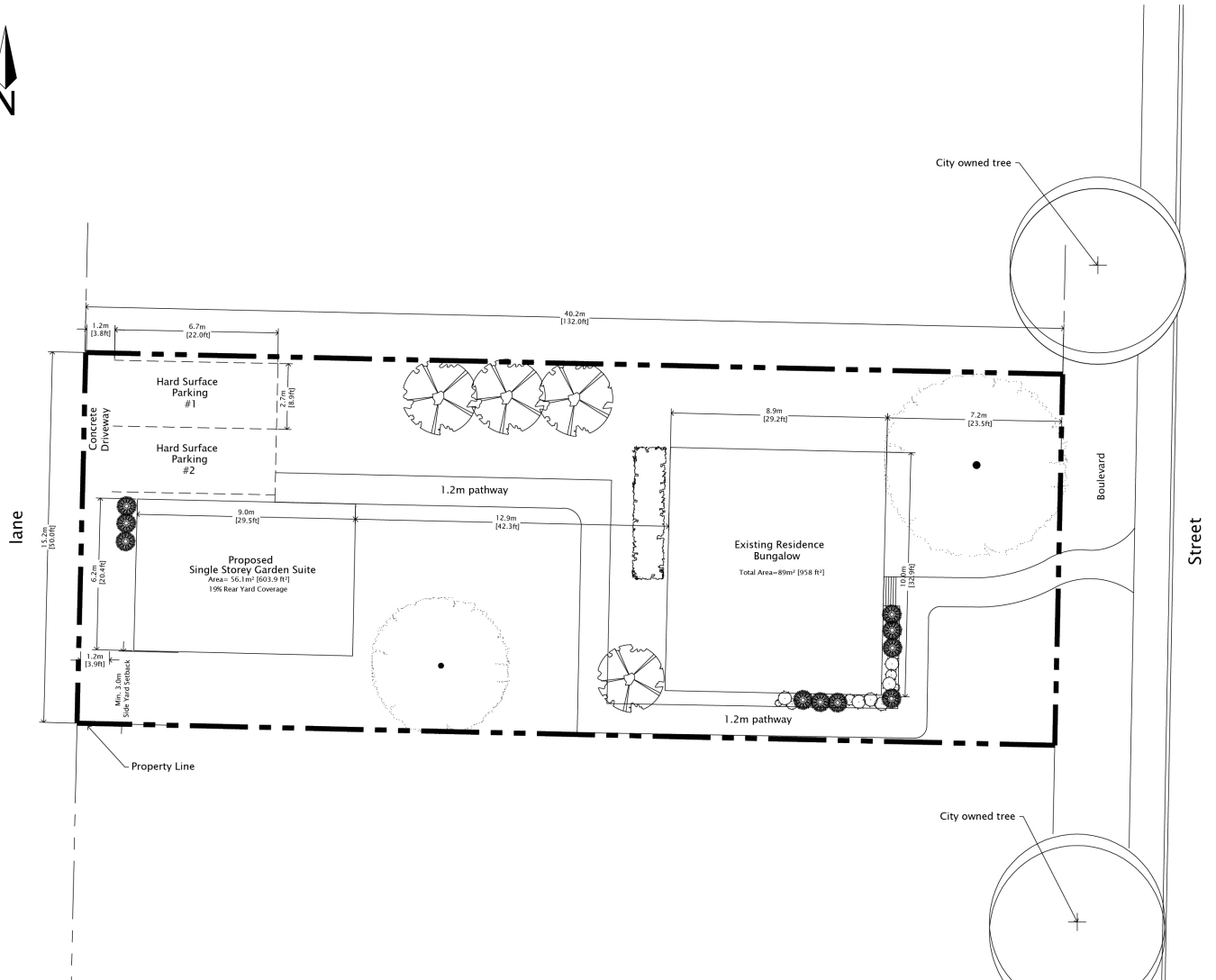
## SITE PLAN – EXAMPLES

### Garage Suite – Site Plan Category 1



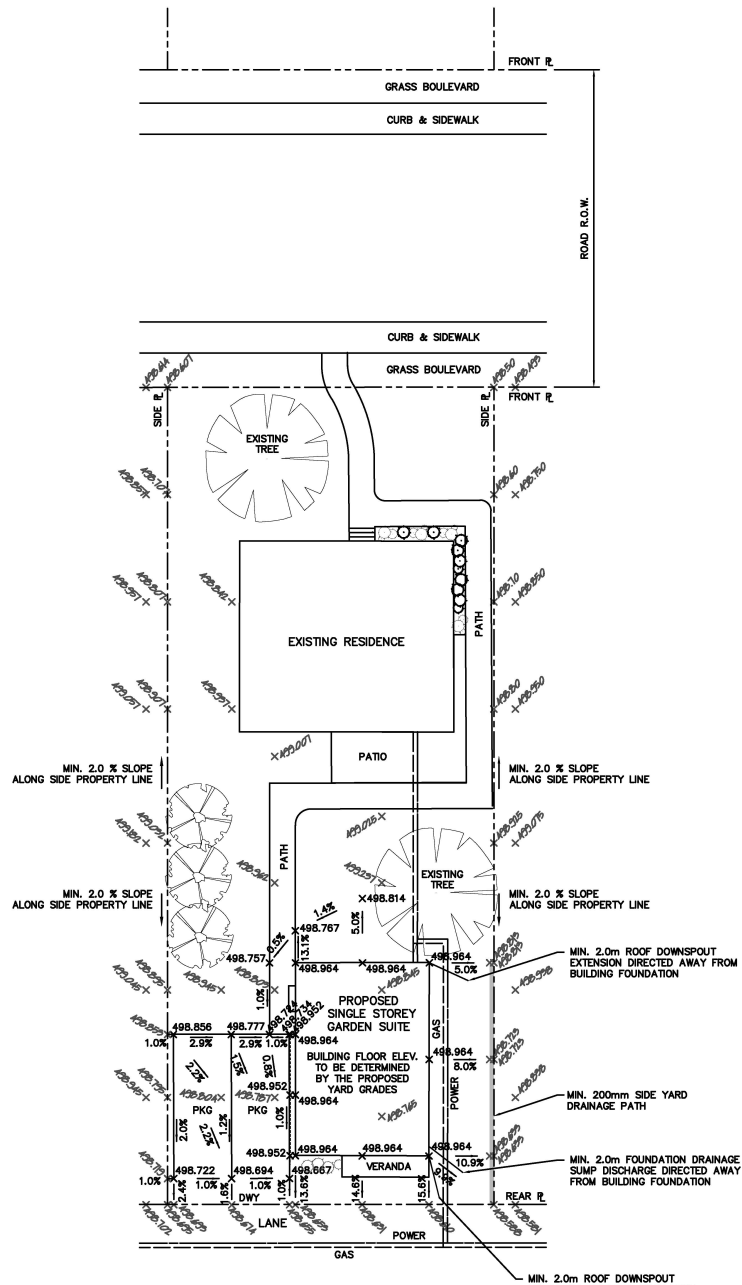
## SITE PLAN – EXAMPLES

### Garden Suite – Site Plan Category 2



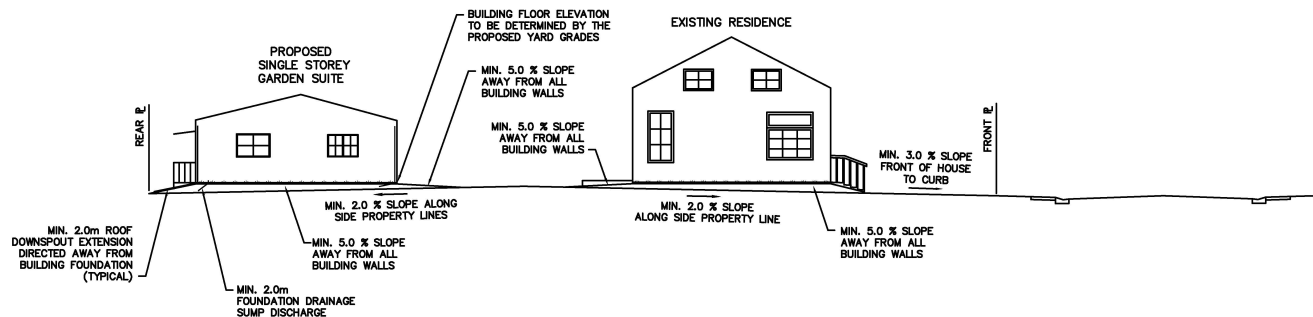
# DRAINAGE PLAN - EXAMPLES

## Plan view



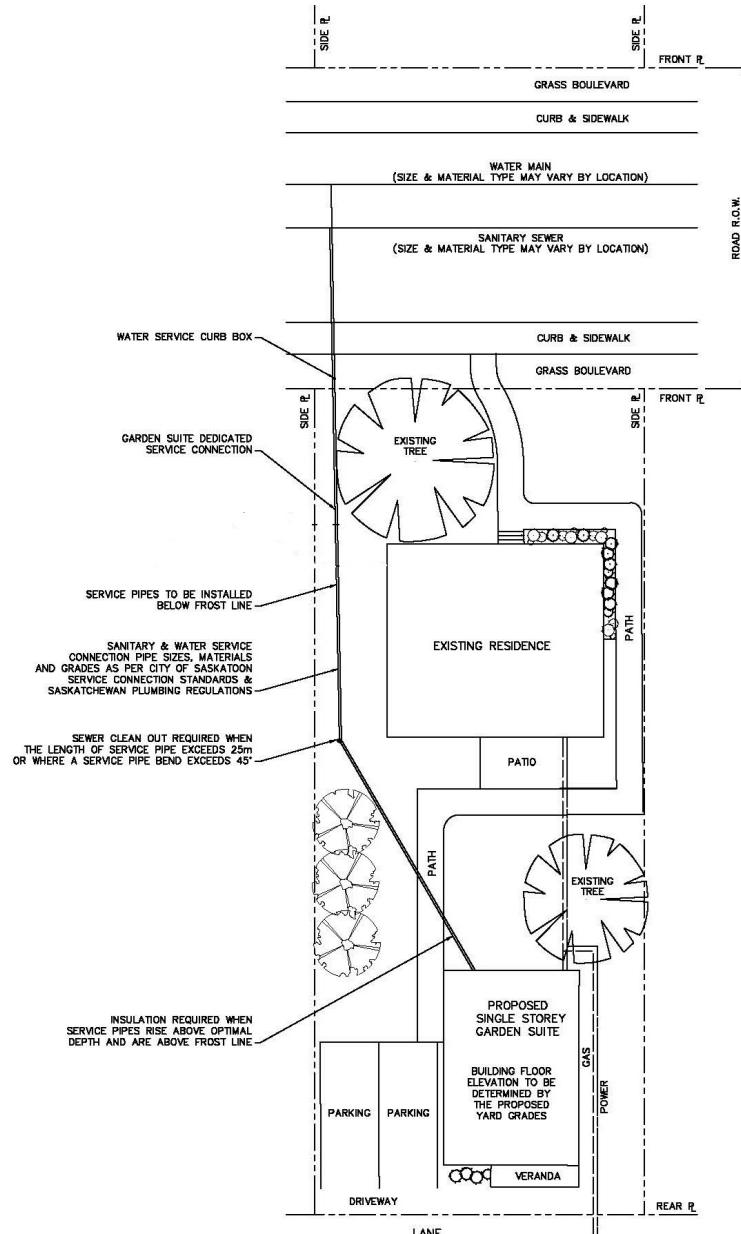
# DRAINAGE PLAN - EXAMPLES

## Side view



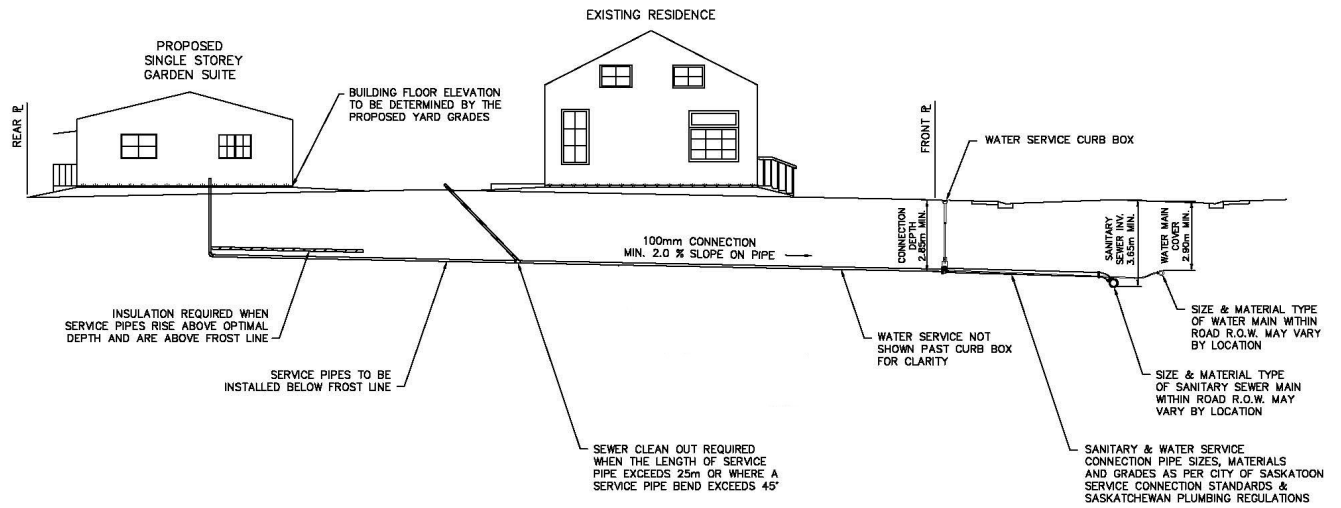
# UTILITY PLAN - EXAMPLES

## Plan view



# UTILITY PLAN - EXAMPLES

## Side view



## Things to keep in mind for your garden or garage suite

**It is important to discuss your garden or garage suite project with your neighbours so they know what to expect and so any issues can be addressed.**

- ❖ Familiarize yourself with City of Saskatoon regulations.
- ❖ Inform all surrounding neighbours about your plans and estimated duration of construction. Let them know that there may be noise and disturbances during the project.
- ❖ Provide them with your contact information for any concerns.
- ❖ Keep the site clean.
- ❖ Respect hours of work and noise regulations.
- ❖ Do not block driveways and keep streets and lanes accessible.





*City of*  
**Saskatoon**  
Planning & Development

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Development Review Section

**P** 306.975.2645 **E** [Development.Services@Saskatoon.ca](mailto:Development.Services@Saskatoon.ca)

[www.saskatoon.ca](http://www.saskatoon.ca)