

Last revised: July 2025

Carriage House Guide

Note: As of June 2025, carriage houses no longer require a form and character development permit.

What is a carriage house?

A carriage house, also known as a garden suite, laneway home, or garage suite, is a separate, secondary living space that's located on the same property as a principal dwelling. To be considered as a carriage house, the space needs to have its own kitchen, bathroom, living space, and amenity space.

A carriage house may be a purpose-built structure or a renovated garage or accessory building. Carriage houses cannot be sold separately from the principal dwelling.

Carriage houses must meet the City of Penticton's Zoning regulations, Building Bylaw requirements, and the BC Building Code regulations.



Where are carriage houses permitted?

Urban Zones	Rural Zones*
R4-L – Small Scale Multi-Unit Residential: Large Lot	FG – Forestry and Grazing
R4-S – Small Scale Multi-Unit Residential: Small Lot	A – Agriculture
	RC – Country Residential
* Properties located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) may have additional regulations.	

What is the carriage house approval process?

- Building Permit Application
 - An application package may be found [online](#) or picked up at City Hall (171 Main Street).
- Other Important Information
 - Prior to the rental of a carriage house, a business license must be obtained from the City's Business License Department. Please contact businesslicences@penticton.ca or 250-490-2501.

Zoning Bylaw Requirements

Carriage houses are expected to be designed to meet the following criteria, in addition to the requirements of their zoning:

Carriage House Zoning Bylaw Development Regulations (Section 8.2.3)		
.1	Maximum building footprint for <u>rural</u> zones:	150 m ² , or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less.
.2	Maximum building footprint for <u>urban</u> residential zones:	90 m ² , or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less.
.3	Maximum height for <u>rural</u> zones:	7.0 m and two storeys.
.4	Maximum height for <u>urban</u> residential zones:	Where a carriage house is accessed from a lane or is located on a double fronting lot, the maximum height is 7.0 m and two storeys. Where no lane exists, the maximum height is 5.0 m and one storey.
.5	Setbacks	The setbacks for a carriage house shall meet the setback provisions for a principal dwelling for the zone in which the subject property is located, except the rear yard setback shall be 1.5 m in all zones.
.6	Siting in <u>rural</u> zones:	A carriage house may be located anywhere on the parcel, subject to setback requirements.
.7	Siting in <u>urban</u> residential zones:	A carriage house shall be located no closer to the front lot line than the principal dwelling.
.8	Minimum amenity space, outdoor	15 m ² shall be provided individually for both the principal dwelling and the carriage house.
.9	Overlook in <u>urban</u> residential zones:	A carriage house shall not include any decks, balconies, or roof top patios.
.10	Maximum Carriage House Floor Area for <u>rural</u> zones:	150 m ²
.11	Maximum Carriage House Floor Area for <u>urban</u> residential zones:	135 m ²
.12	Privacy	In the case of a carriage house having windows on a side yard within 1.5 m of another property, all windows on that building face must be opaque.
Access	At a minimum, a dedicated, unobstructed, hard surfaced path of 1.2 m in width must be provided, linking the carriage house to the street frontage on the property.	

Note: As of June 2024, carriage houses no longer require any on-site parking spaces.

Carriage House Approval Process

Step 1: Submit Building Permit Application

A building permit/plumbing permit must be applied for and issued prior to constructing a carriage house. Building permit applications are submitted to the Building Department and must include sufficient information for staff to evaluate the plans against the BC Building Code requirements, building bylaw, zoning bylaw regulations and servicing bylaws. If a structure needs to be removed (i.e. garage, shed), a separate demolition permit is required. Approval of these permits must be obtained before any demolition or construction begins. A list of complete building permit application requirements can be found [here](#).

Step 6: Building Permit Application Reviewed

After the building permit application and plans have been reviewed and accepted by the Building Department, the appropriate building permits will be issued. The building permit ensures the carriage house is constructed safely and in accordance with applicable bylaws and Building Codes. If the project conflicts with any of these regulations, changes may be required.

It is expected that the approved plans will be followed. Any deviations from the approved plans should be discussed with the Building Department prior to construction.

Step 7: Construction

Get the shovels out! Undertaking a construction project in your backyard may be disruptive for you, but you also need to think of the disruption for your neighbours. Make sure to talk to your neighbours about what is going to happen and share with them any construction equipment or deliveries that may inconvenience them through the construction process. This allows your neighbours to plan accordingly and will help maintain a positive relationship with the people in your community. If you are going to be closing the sidewalk, laneway (alley), part of the road, etc. you will need a Road Closure Permit. Please contact Development Services at 250-490-2501 to obtain a [Road Closure Permit](#). The City of Penticton's [Infill Construction Guide](#) also contains helpful information.

Step 8: Inspections

A Building Official will conduct inspections at predetermined construction benchmarks to ensure compliance with BC Building Code requirements. These inspections will be outlined in your permit condition letter when your building permit is issued.

Step 9: Occupancy Permit

An occupancy inspection by a City Building Official will be required and must be 'Passed' before the carriage house can legally be occupied. Your carriage house is now ready to become a home!

Step 10: Business License

Prior to the rental of a carriage house, a business license must be obtained from the City's Business License Department. For any business license questions, please contact businesslicences@penticton.ca or 250-490-2501.

Have questions? We're here to help. Please contact Development Services at 250-490-2501 or development@penticton.ca for more information.