BMC 20.28 Infill Housing

20.28.010 Purpose.

This chapter establishes special development regulations for a series of housing forms that are different than the traditional detached single family dwelling unit. These regulations are intended to implement comprehensive plan goals and policies encouraging infill development, more efficient use of the remaining developable land, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, and creating opportunities for more affordable housing. The housing forms listed in this chapter are intended for use in city neighborhoods, urban villages, and in Bellingham’s urban growth areas as described in BMC 20.28.020.

20.28.020 Applicability.

A. The housing types in this chapter are permitted in all zones that allow residential uses except: Residential Single, Neighborhood Commercial, and property regulated by BMC 16.80 Lake Whatcom Reservoir regulatory chapter. In single family zones, these housing types may be permitted if approved as part of an amendment to this title through a Type VI process.

B. If the provisions of this chapter conflict with any other provision in BMC Title 18, Title 20, or Title 21, the provisions of this Chapter shall apply.

20.28.030 Process.

A. In accordance with BMC 21.10, all housing forms will use a Type II process, and all land use applications may be consolidated under the highest type. Design review applies as outlined in BMC 20.25 with additional design standards and guidelines as specified under each housing type.

B. Applicants may request minor modifications to the general parameters and design standards set forth in this chapter. The Planning Director or Hearing Examiner may modify the requirements if all of the following criteria are met:

1. The site is constrained due to unusual shape, topography, easements or sensitive areas.

2. The modification is consistent with the objectives of this chapter.

3. The modification will not result in a development that is less compatible with neighborhood land uses.

20.28.040 Definitions.

The following definitions apply to this Chapter:

A. Smaller Lot: Detached single family dwelling units on lots 1,800 square feet to 3,000 square feet in size.
B. **Small Lot**: Detached single family dwelling units on lots over 3,000 square feet but not more than 5,000 square feet in size.

C. **Cottage Housing**: A coordinated grouping of four to eight small detached single family dwellings clustered around common open space and having shared parking.

D. **Carriage House**: A second dwelling unit located above a parking garage and subordinate to a single family dwelling unit on the same lot.

E. **Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit**: A second dwelling unit subordinate to, and detached from a single family dwelling unit on the same lot.

F. **Duplex**: A building containing only 2 dwelling units.

G. **Triplex**: A building containing only 3 dwelling units.

H. **Shared Court Housing**: Four to six dwelling units oriented to a shared courtyard providing access for both vehicles and pedestrians but designed to give priority to pedestrians.

I. **Garden Court Housing**: Four to eight dwelling units clustered around a common open space or courtyard.

J. **Townhouse**: A dwelling in a row of units in which each unit has its own front and rear access to the outside, no unit is located over another unit, and each unit is separated from any other unit by one or more vertical common fire-resistant walls.

K. **Common Shared Structure**: A building or structure designed and intended for the common use of the residents of the cottage housing.

L. **Design Standards**: Requirements related to the design of the project. Developments are required to meet the design standards in this chapter.

M. **Design Guidelines**: Guidance for meeting the intended project design.

### 20.28.050 General Standards

A. **Density**: Density shall be as specified in the associated Area in the zoning table. If there is more than one density listed in the table, the maximum density applies.

B. **Lot requirements**: There are no minimum lot dimensions, lot sizes or minimum street frontage requirements unless otherwise specified in this chapter. Up to 8 dwelling units may take access from a single private lane in place of public street frontage.

C. **Subdivision**: Sites with cottage, shared court, garden court, and townhouse may be subdivided into lots that do not comply with development standards in BMC 18 individually, as long as the parent site as a whole complies with this chapter. The plat shall contain notice of any associated land use approvals. Subsequent alterations to buildings are subject to review and approval of plans such that they are consistent with the project as a whole.

D. **Common Facilities**: Legal documents identifying the rights and responsibilities of property owners and/or the homeowners association for use and maintenance of common facilities shall be submitted for approval by the Planning Director and recorded. When part of a subdivision they shall be noted on the plat.
E. **Encroachments into Required Setbacks.** The following architectural features are permitted to project 2 feet into the required setback: bay windows, chimneys, eaves, porches, balconies, façade treatment and other architectural features approved by the Planning Director.

F. **Private Lanes and Alleys.**

1. Each lot must abut a street or lane except lots for individual units in cottage, shared court, and garden court.

2. Private lanes and alleys must be surfaced with a hard material such as concrete, asphalt, pervious paving or grasscrete. Gravel or loose material is prohibited.

3. Lanes and alleys must be constructed and maintained to City Standards, and legal documents regarding common facilities and maintenance must be submitted for approval by the Planning Director and recorded.

4. Improvement standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Travel Lane Width</th>
<th>Pedestrian Path Width</th>
<th>Total Width</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Lane (1-2 dwelling units)</td>
<td>9 feet</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Lane (3-5 dwelling units)</td>
<td>11 feet</td>
<td>4 feet, one side</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Lane (6+ dwelling units and lanes over 100 feet long)</td>
<td>12 feet</td>
<td>4 feet, both sides</td>
<td>20 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alleys</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 28.1  Typical alley plan and section  
Figure 28.2  Small lane plan and section*
5. Pedestrian paths must be delineated with a change in material, color or pattern.

6. No single lane may serve more than 8 dwelling units.

7. Parking is not allowed on a lane except when incorporated as pocket parking.

8. Lanes longer than 150 feet must either connect to an improved public street or provide a turn-around sufficient for emergency access.

9. Private lanes shall be considered streets for frontage, setback and design purposes.

10. Private lanes and alleys are not included in FAR and Open Space calculations.

20.28.060 Smaller Lot

A. Description

Smaller lot development consists of detached single family dwelling units on lots of 1,800 square feet and up to 3,000 square feet.

B. Site Requirements and Setbacks

1. Lot size: Minimum 1,800 square feet and maximum 3,000 square feet.

2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 28.5 and 28.6, except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 22 foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the Figures.
C. Bulk and Massing

1. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 0.4. Attached garages are included in FAR. Detached garages up to 220 square feet are exempt from FAR.

2. No single floor shall be greater than 600 square feet.

3. Maximum height is 25 feet under Definition #1 and 15 feet under Definition #2.

D. Open Space

1. A minimum of 60% of the site area shall be in landscaping and pervious materials (may include pervious paving and green roofs). Exceptions may be made in erosion hazard zones or areas with shallow bedrock as determined by the Planning Director.

E. Parking

1. Dwelling units under 1,000 square feet shall provide one on-site parking stall. Units of 1,000 square feet or larger shall provide two on-site parking stalls. The Planning Director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant’s demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least 9’ X 18’.

2. Tandem parking is allowed (may be exterior or interior).

3. If an alley exists, parking shall be accessed via the alley except when the Planning Director determines that alley access is impractical or environmentally constrained.

4. If a lane exists, but no alley, parking shall be accessed via the lane.

5. Adjacent properties may share a driveway upon approval of a shared access and maintenance agreement.

6. Detached garages may share a common wall along a property line if a shared maintenance agreement is in place.
7. Parking accessed from the public street shall be limited to one driveway of 20’ maximum width.

8. Parking setbacks from property line:
   
   Front:   25 feet  
   Side Flanking:   20 feet  

9. All common shared driveway, common wall or any common facility shall be approved by the Planning Director. Final documents are required to be recorded.

F. Design Standards

1. Each dwelling shall have a covered front porch with an area of 60 square feet or more, with no dimension less than 5 feet.

2. Dwelling units that front the public street or lane shall have entrances facing the public street or lane.

3. All fences in the front and side flanking setbacks are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60% opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side flanking setback.

![Annotated graphic of smaller lot](image)

**Figure 28.7 Annotated graphic of smaller lot**

G. Design Guidelines

Use context-sensitive site design and building details to help ensure that new infill development will enhance the neighborhood and respect the scale and character of the existing houses on a street.

1. **Building Design**
   
   a. Single story massing elements should be emphasized on the front facades, using porches and bays seen from the street.
   
   b. Gable roofs emphasize vertical proportions, create modulation and are strongly encouraged.
c. The massing should be varied with elements such as bays, dormers, etc.

d. A change of materials on different elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and additional variety and character.

e. Homes should minimize the impact of the garage on the streetscape by minimizing blank garage doors, through the use of windows and/or architectural detail on the garage door.

2. Site Design

   a. Front yards can provide small extensions of the entry porch for semi private activity. Front yard parking aprons are not allowed.

   b. Back yards should be designed for privacy from neighbors.

   c. Fencing, especially when seen from the street, should be designed to integrate into the architecture of the building and add visual interest in its detail, materials or color.

20.28.070 Small Lot

A. Description

   Small lots consist of detached single family dwelling units on lots over 3,000 square feet and up to 5,000 square feet.

B. Site Requirements and Setbacks

   1. Lot size: Minimum 3,001 square feet and maximum 5,000 square feet.

   2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 28.8 and 28.9, except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 22 foot parking backup distance (including alley width.) Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the Figures.

   ![Figure 28.8 Setbacks – Main building](image1)

   ![Figure 28.9 Setbacks – Garages & Carports](image2)
C. Bulk and Massing

1. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 0.35. Attached garages are included in FAR. Detached garages up to 220 square feet are exempt from FAR.

2. No single floor shall be greater than 800 square feet.

3. Maximum height is 25 feet under Definition #1 and 15 feet under Definition #2.

D. Open Space

1. A minimum of 60% of the site area shall be in landscaping and pervious materials (may include pervious paving and green roofs). Exceptions may be made in erosion hazard zones or areas with shallow bedrock as determined by the City.

E. Parking

1. Dwelling units under 1,000 square feet shall provide one on-site parking stall. Units of 1,000 square feet or larger shall provide two on-site parking stalls. The Planning Director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant’s demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least 9’ X 18’.

2. Tandem parking is allowed (may be exterior or interior).

3. If an alley exists, parking shall be accessed via the alley unless the Planning Director determines that alley access is impractical or environmentally constrained.

4. If a lane exists, but no alley, parking shall be accessed via the lane.

5. Adjacent properties may share a driveway upon approval of a shared access and maintenance agreement.

6. Detached garages may share a common wall along a property line if a shared maintenance agreement is in place.

7. Parking accessed from the public street shall be limited to one driveway of 20’ maximum width.

8. Parking setbacks from property line:
   - Front: 25 feet
   - Side flanking: 20 feet

9. All common shared driveway, common wall or any common facility needs to be approved the Planning Director. Final documents are required to be recorded.

F. Design Standards

1. Shall have a covered front porch with an area of 60 square feet or more, with no dimension less than 5 feet.

2. Dwelling units that front the public street or lane shall have entrances facing the public street or lane.

3. All fences in the front and side flanking setbacks are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60% opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side flanking setback.
G. Design Guidelines

Use context-sensitive site design and building details to help ensure that new infill development will enhance the neighborhood and respect the scale and character of the existing houses on a street.

1. Building Design

   a. Single story massing elements should be emphasized on the front facades, using porches and bays seen from the street or lane.

   b. Gable roofs emphasize vertical proportions, create modulation and are strongly encouraged.

   c. The massing should be varied with elements such as bays, dormers, etc.

   d. A change of materials on different elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and adds variety and character.

   e. Homes should minimize the impact of the garage on the streetscape by minimizing blank garage doors, through the use of windows and/or architectural detail on the garage door.

2. Site Design

   a. Front yards should provide small extensions of the entry porch for semi private activity. Front yard parking aprons are not allowed.

   b. Back yards should be designed for privacy from neighbors.

   c. Fencing, especially when seen from the street, should be designed to integrate into the architecture of the building and add visual interest in its detail, materials or color.
20.28.080  Cottage

A. Description

Cottage housing is a grouping of small compact, detached single family dwelling units clustered around a common area and developed with a shared plan for access and parking, and a coordinated design for the buildings and site.

B. Site Requirements and Setbacks

1. Cottages may be located on a separate (fee simple) lot or several units may be located on a common parcel.

2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figure 28.11, except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 22 foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figure.

3. The height limit is 25 feet under Definition #1 or 15 feet under Definition #2.

C. Bulk and Massing

1. The minimum is 4 dwelling units and the maximum is 8 dwelling units in a single development.

2. No structure shall be larger than 1,000 square feet and no single floor area shall be larger than 600 square feet.

3. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.4.

4. Common shared structures are allowed, limited to the same bulk and mass restrictions as dwelling units, and are exempt from FAR.

D. Open Space

1. Each dwelling unit shall have at least 100 square feet of private usable open space with no dimension less than 5 feet. Decks may be included.

2. Private usable open space must be directly accessible from the dwelling unit, and be screened from shared spaces or paths and other units.

3. Common usable open space equivalent to 500 square feet per dwelling unit shall be provided. No single dimension shall be less than 20 feet, exclusive of parking or lanes except for emergency access. All units shall have direct access to shared open space.
4. A minimum of 60% of the site area shall be in landscaping or pervious materials (may include pervious paving and green roofs). Exceptions may be made in erosion hazard zones or areas with shallow bedrock as determined by the City.

E. Parking

1. Each dwelling unit shall provide at least one on-site parking stall. The Planning Director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant’s demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least 9’ X 18’.

2. Parking may not be located between structures or front directly upon a street.

3. If an alley exists, parking shall be accessed via the alley except when the Planning Director determines that alley access is impractical or environmentally constrained.

4. Parking shall be consolidated in areas not less than 4 spaces.

5. Parking accessed from the public street shall be limited to one driveway of 20’ maximum width.

6. Parking shall be screened from the public street by landscape feature or fence.

H. Design Standards

1. A front porch with a minimum of 60 square feet and no dimension less than 5 feet is required for each dwelling unit (in addition to private open space requirements).

2. Dwelling units that front a public street or lane shall have a porch that faces the street or lane. Units that face the shared open space shall have a porch that faces the open space. In some cases, units will require two front porches to satisfy this criteria.

3. All fences in the front and side flanking setbacks, or between the common areas and the dwelling units, are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60% opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side flanking yard.

I. Design Guidelines

Cottage housing developments should architecturally blend into existing neighborhoods through careful attention to the design of the units, open spaces, parking and landscaping. Well proportioned cottage houses, with porches, small gardens, varied roof lines and dormers can fit comfortably into surrounding neighborhoods of older, detached homes.

1. Building:

   a. Buildings should employ variety in orientation, design, and layout between cottages while maintaining a similar character to help distinguish units and support a neighborhood feel.
b. Cottages should reflect common neighborhood design features such as porches, dormers, gables, and architectural detailing.

c. Changes in materials and colors to add visual interest and character to the development are encouraged.

2. Site Design

a. Provide small private open spaces in conjunction with a large shared open space.

b. Provide generous use of landscape structures such as trellises, gate houses, decks, patios, and raised beds to provide plenty of usable outdoor space with a variety of environments. Use planting materials and elements such as fencing to unify the overall site design.

c. Shared driveways are preferred.

d. Walkways should connect all dwelling units to the shared open space and consolidated parking and should utilize pervious materials.

20.28.090 Carriage House

A. Description

A carriage house is a second dwelling unit located above a parking garage and subordinate to a single family dwelling unit on the same lot.

B. Site Requirements and Setbacks

1. The parcel must have alley access, access to more than one public street or lane, or the parcel must be greater than 10,000 square feet.

2. Only one carriage house shall be allowed per lot.

3. At least one of the dwelling units must be owner-occupied.

4. Purchasers of homes with a Carriage House must register with the Department within 30 days of purchase. A covenant, approved by the Planning Director, must be signed and recorded which specifies this requirement and the requirement for purchaser registration. An affidavit must be submitted to the Department on or before January 1 of every odd numbered year attesting to owner occupancy.

5. The carriage house is exempt from density limitations.

6. The carriage house may not be divided from the property ownership of the primary dwelling.

7. The parcel may not contain more than one primary dwelling.

8. A single family home and a carriage unit shall have a minimum of one water meter and may share a common side sewer line to the sewer main.

9. Front and side flanking setbacks shall comply with the underlying zoning for the main building. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 28.13 and 28.14, except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 22 foot
parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.

10. A minimum of 6 feet of separation is required between the primary residence and the Carriage House.

C. Bulk and Massing

1. A majority of the carriage unit must be located over a garage.

2. The maximum carriage unit size is 800 square feet or 40% of the primary structure, whichever is less.

3. Height must be less than or equal to primary structure, and no higher than 25 feet under Definition #1.

4. The maximum single floor area shall be 500 square feet, excluding garage space.

5. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.5 including primary structure.

D. Parking

1. One parking stall is required in addition to the required parking for primary structure.

2. If the parcel abuts an alley, parking shall be accessed from the alley except when the Planning Director determines that alley access is impractical or environmentally constrained.

3. Parking accessed from a public street or lane shall be limited to one driveway with a maximum width of 20’.

4. Parking shall not be located in required front or side flanking setbacks.
E. Design Standards

1. The carriage house shall have a separate exterior entrance, not including the garage access.

2. It shall have similar roof pitch, siding and windows as the primary structure, or have other similar features that satisfy the design guidelines.

3. The entrance shall have direct access to a street, lane or alley via a pedestrian path or driveway.

F. Design Guidelines

Carriage units should architecturally blend into existing neighborhoods through careful design such that they may fit in with the nature of the primary structure so that the appearance is merely an extension of that structure.

1. Building Design

   a. Incorporate desirable elements of the primary structure into the design of the carriage house, such as building details, massing, proportions and materials.

   b. Stagger windows to not align with windows on adjacent properties to minimize privacy impacts.

   c. Small open space can often be incorporated within an upper level deck.

   d. A small stoop or covered step is encouraged to add character and distinction to the carriage house entrance.

2. Site Design

   a. Porches, patios and walkways are encouraged for carriage units since they can extend the living areas and serve multiple functions.

   b. Parking works best when located off the alley or off a second street frontage.

Figure 28.14 Annotated illustration of carriage unit
20.28.100 Detached ADU

A. Description

A Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (DADU) is a freestanding accessory dwelling unit that is not attached or physically connected to the primary single family dwelling unit.

B. Site Requirements and Setbacks

1. The parcel must have alley access, access to more than one public street, or the parcel must be greater than 10,000 square feet.

2. Front and side flanking setbacks shall comply with the underlying zoning for the main building. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 28.15, except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 22 foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.

3. A minimum of 6 feet of separation is required between the primary residence and the DADU.

4. Only one DADU shall be allowed per lot.

5. The DADU is exempt from density limitations.

6. At least one of the dwelling units must be owner-occupied.

7. Purchasers of homes with a DADU must register with the Department within 30 days of purchase. A covenant, approved by the Planning Director, must be signed and recorded which specifies this requirement and the requirement for purchaser registration. An affidavit must be submitted to the Department on or before January 1 of every odd numbered year attesting to owner occupancy.

8. The DADU may not be divided from the property ownership of the primary dwelling.

9. The parcel may not contain more than one primary dwelling.
A single family home and a DADU shall have a minimum of one water meter and may share a common side sewer line to the sewer main.

C. Bulk and Massing

1. The DADU is limited to 800 square feet or 40% of the primary structure, whichever is less.

2. A single floor area is limited to 500 square feet.

3. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.5 including the primary structure.

4. Height must be less than or equal to the primary structure, and no higher than 25 feet under height Definition #1.

D. Parking

1. One stall is required for the DADU.

2. If parcel abuts an alley, parking shall be accessed from the alley except when the Planning Director determines that alley access is impractical or environmentally constrained.

3. Parking accessed from the public street or lane shall be limited to one curb cut per street or lane with a maximum width of 24’.

E. Design Standards

1. The DADU shall have similar roof pitch, siding and windows as the primary structure, or have other similar features that satisfy the design guidelines.

2. It shall have an entrance with direct access to a public street, lane or alley via a pedestrian path or driveway.

F. Design Guidelines

1. Building Design

   a. Design the size and proportions of the new structure to give the appearance that it is secondary to the primary structure on the site.

   b. Incorporate desirable elements of the primary structure such as building details, massing, proportions and materials.

   c. Stagger windows to not align with windows on adjacent properties to minimize privacy impacts.

   d. Provide a small stoop or covered step associated with a separate entrance to the DADU.

Figure 28.17 Annotated illustration of DADU
2. Site Design
   a. Both single-family residence and DADU entries should be oriented to the street.
   b. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to
      minimize disruption of privacy and outdoor activities in adjacent buildings.

20.28.120  **Duplex/Triplex**

A. Description
   A duplex/triplex is a single structure comprised of two or three dwelling units on a single lot,
   either side-by-side or on different floors.

B. Site Requirements and Setbacks
   1. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 28.18 and 28.19, except garage and
      carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 22 foot parking backup
      distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas
      shown in the figures.

C. Bulk and Massing
   1. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.5.
   2. Maximum dwelling unit size is 1,000 square feet.
   3. The height limit is 25 feet under Definition #1 or 15 feet under Definition #2.

D. Open Space
   4. Each dwelling unit shall have 75 square feet of private open space with no dimension
      less than 5 feet. It may be accommodated with a deck or porch.
5. No less than 40% of the site area shall be landscaping or pervious material (may include pervious paving and green roofs). Exceptions may be made in erosion hazard zones or areas with shallow bedrock as determined by the City.

E. Parking

1. Each dwelling unit shall provide at least one on-site parking stall. The Planning Director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant’s demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least 9’ X 18’.

2. Parking setbacks from property line:
   - Front: 25 feet
   - Side Flanking: 20 feet

3. If an alley exists, parking shall be accessed via the alley except when the Planning Director determines that alley access is impractical or environmentally constrained.

4. Parking accessed from the public street or lane shall be limited to one driveway per street or lane with a maximum width of 20’.

F. Design Standards

1. At least one entrance must be visible from the public street.

2. Dwelling units that front the public street shall have entrances facing the public street.

3. All fences in the front and side flanking setbacks are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60% opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side flanking setback.

G. Design Guidelines

A duplex/triplex should be designed as either a larger, single family composition or as distinct separate units.

1. Building Design
   a. The design should break the home’s facades into several distinct elements.

   b. Gable roofs emphasize vertical proportions, create modulation and are strongly encouraged.

   c. The massing should be varied with elements such as bays, dormers, etc.

   d. A change of materials on building elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and additional variety and craftsmanship.

   e. Buildings should minimize the impact of garages on the streetscape by utilizing garage doors with windows or other architectural features.

   Figure 28.20 Annotated illustration of Duplex/Triplex
2. Site Design
   a. Front yards should provide small extensions of the entry porch for semi private activity. Front yard parking aprons are not allowed.
   b. Back yards should be designed for privacy from neighbors.

20.28.130  Shared Court

A. Description
   A shared court is a multi-family development that shares a courtyard that also allows vehicular access to parking. The structure is arranged in a “U” shape around a central court. Design details, paving and landscape should create the impression of a small, intimate courtyard when viewed from the street.

B. Site Requirements and Setbacks
   1. Shared Court units may be located on a separate (fee simple) lot or several units may be located on a common parcel.
   2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 28.21 and 28.22, except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 22 foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.

C. Bulk and Massing
   1. There shall be a maximum of 6 dwelling units and a minimum of 4 dwelling units clustered around a shared court.
   2. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.5. Projects meeting Green Factor requirements in section D.4. below may request additional FAR up to 0.7 with approval by the Planning Director.
3. The maximum dwelling unit size is 2,000 square feet.

4. No single floor area shall be larger than 1,000 square feet per dwelling unit.

5. The height limit is 25 feet under Definition #1 or 15 feet under Definition #2.

D. Open Space

1. Each dwelling unit shall have at least 150 square feet of private open space with no dimension less than 5 feet. Some or all of the requirement may be accommodated in a deck.

2. All private open space must be directly accessible from the dwelling unit and shall be screened from shared pathways, driveways, and other units.

3. No less than 40% of the site area shall be landscaping or pervious material (may include pervious paving and green roofs). Exceptions may be made in erosion hazard zones or areas with shallow bedrock as determined by the City.

4. Use of the Green Factor is strongly encouraged. When used as a FAR bonus option in Section C.2. above, a Green Factor landscaping score of 0.6 is required.

E. Parking

1. Dwelling units under 1,000 square feet shall provide at least one on-site parking stall. Units of 1,000 square feet or larger shall provide two on-site parking stalls. The Planning Director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant’s demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least 9’ X 18’.

2. Parking shall not be located between structures and a public street.

3. Parking accessed from a public street or lane shall be limited to one curb cut with a maximum width of 24’.

F. Design Standards

1. Each dwelling unit must have a separate, ground-related entrance. Units that front the public street shall have entrances facing the public street; all other units shall have entrances facing the shared open space.

2. No roof pitch shall be less than 2:12 (may be shed type) except for green roofs.

3. Each dwelling unit shall have a covered front porch no less than 50 SF with no dimension less than 5’, this is in addition to the private open space requirement.

4. Garbage/recycling areas shall be consolidated and screened from public view.

5. All fences in the front and side flanking setbacks, or between the common areas and the dwelling units, are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60% opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side flanking setback.
6. The following design standards shall be met to define the shared courtyard space, enhance the function as a shared, attractive, and usable open space, and unify site elements through the use of paving and landscape materials:

a. Provide clear direction to primary building entries and enhance circulation paths with trees, lighting, and plant materials.

b. At least 35 percent of the total shared court area shall be landscaped.

c. Poured surfaces (e.g., asphalt or concrete) may be used for vehicle treaded areas up to 10 feet in width but are not acceptable for area paving. The remaining unplanted areas shall be paved with unit pavers (e.g., brick, concrete, or tile) set or covered with gravel; OR Grasscrete is an acceptable paving option for all unplanted, shared court area.

d. The incorporation of courtyard amenities is required. Courtyard areas shall include at least two of the following elements:

   (1) Benches, bench-type edges for planters

   (2) Fountain or other water feature

   (3) Ornamental shrubbery and landscape trees.

G. Design Guidelines

1. Site Design

a. Provide for the functional and visual integration of buildings, vehicular access and parking, and the “outdoor room” function of the shared court.

b. Define and contain the shared court space through a combination of building, landscape, and other site furnishings.

c. Provide a walkway from each dwelling unit to the shared court and street.
2. Building Design
   a. The design should break the facades into several distinct elements.
   b. Gable roofs emphasize vertical proportions, create modulation and are strongly encouraged.
   c. The massing should be varied with elements such as bays, dormers, etc.
   d. Changing materials on building elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and add variety and craftsmanship.
   e. Buildings should minimize the impact of garages on the streetscape by utilizing garage doors with windows or other architectural features.

20.28.140 Garden Court

A. Description
   A garden court is a multi-family development that shares a landscaped courtyard. The structure is arranged in a “U” shape around the garden court with parking typically consolidated and located to the side or rear of the development.

B. Site Requirements and Setbacks
   1. Garden Court units may be located on a separate (fee simple) lot or several units may be located on a common parcel.
   2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 28.24 and 28.25, except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 22 foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.

![Diagram of Setbacks – Main building(s)](image1)

![Diagram of Setbacks – Garages & Carports](image2)
C. Bulk and Massing

1. There shall be a maximum of 8 dwelling units and a minimum of 4 dwelling units clustered around a shared open space.

2. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.6. Projects meeting Green Factor requirements in section D.4. below may request additional FAR up to 0.75 with approval by the Planning Director.

3. No dwelling units may be larger than 2,000 square feet.

4. The single floor area is limited to 1,000 square feet per dwelling unit.

5. The height limit is 25 feet under Definition #1 or 15 feet under Definition #2.

D. Open Space

1. Shared open space shall be provided in the amount of 200 square feet for each dwelling unit. It shall be consolidated, with no dimension less than 20 feet.

2. Each dwelling unit shall have at least 100 square feet of private open space with no dimension less than 5 feet. Up to 50 square feet of deck space may be included.

3. Private open space must be screened from public rights of way, shared paths, shared open space, and lanes.

4. Use of the Green Factor is strongly encouraged. When used as a FAR bonus option in Section C.2. above, a Green Factor landscaping score of 0.6 is required.

E. Parking

1. Dwelling units under 1,000 square feet shall provide at least one on-site parking stall. Units of 1,000 square feet or larger shall provide two on-site parking stalls. The Planning Director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant’s demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least 9’ X 18’.

2. Parking may not be located between structures or between structures and a public street; parking shall be located to the rear or side only.

3. Parking may be consolidated.

4. Parking accessed from a street or lane shall be limited to one curb cut with a maximum width of 24’.

F. Design Standards

1. Each dwelling unit must have a separate, ground-related entrance. Units that front the public street shall have entrances facing the public street; all other units shall have entrances facing the shared open space.

2. Each dwelling unit shall have a covered front porch no less than 50 SF with no dimension less than 5’, this is in addition to the private open space requirement.

3. Garbage/recycling areas shall be consolidated and screened from public view.

4. No roof pitch shall be less than 2:12 (may be shed type) except for green roofs.
5. All fences in the front and side flanking setbacks, or between the common areas and the dwelling units, are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60% opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side flanking setback.

![Figure 28.26 Annotated illustration of Garden Court](image)

G. Design Guidelines

1. Site Design

   a. The courtyard should address the street, and be easily accessible from the street, with a spacious, clearly defined entry.

   b. At least a portion of the courtyard should be visible from the street. The courtyard is best located at street level, or a foot or two above or below the street.

   c. Create opportunities for exposure to, and shade from sun as well as weather protection.

   d. Define the garden court space through a combination of building, landscape, and other site furnishings.

   e. Provide a walkway from each dwelling unit to the garden court and street.

2. Building Design

   a. The design should break the facades into several distinct elements.

   b. Gable roofs emphasize vertical proportions, create modulation and are strongly encouraged.

   c. The massing should be varied with elements such as bays, dormers, etc.

   d. Changing materials on building elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and add variety and craftsmanship.
20.28.150 Townhouse

A. Description

A townhouse is one of a row of homes sharing common walls, each with its own front and rear access to the outside.

B. Site Requirements and Setbacks

1. Townhouses may be located on a separate (fee simple) lot or several units may be located on a common parcel.

2. The required setbacks are as shown in Figures 28.27 and 28.28, except garage and carport setbacks from an alley shall be as needed to provide a 22 foot parking backup distance (including alley width). Buildings shall be placed within the shaded areas shown in the figures.

C. Bulk and Massing

1. Maximum attached dwelling units is 8.

2. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.75.

3. The height limit is 25 feet under Definition #1 or 15 feet under Definition #2.

D. Open Space

1. Each dwelling unit shall have 200 square feet of private open space with no dimension less than 5 feet. Up to 100 square feet of deck or structure may be included.

2. Private open space must be screened with low fencing from public right of way, paths, and lanes.

3. Private open space must be directly accessible from the dwelling unit.

4. A Green Factor landscaping score of 0.6 is required (See BMC 20.12.030).
E. Parking

1. Dwelling units under 1,000 square feet shall provide at least one on-site parking stall. Units of 1,000 square feet or larger shall provide two on-site parking stalls. The Planning Director may reduce parking requirements based on applicant’s demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard. Parking stalls shall be at least 9’ X 18’.

2. Parking may be consolidated.

3. Parking accessed from a street or lane shall be limited to one curb cut with a maximum of 24’. Individual driveways may access a private lane.

F. Design Standards

1. Each townhouse unit shall front a street or lane, and have an entrance that faces a street or lane.

2. Entrances for each unit shall be separate.

3. Each unit shall have direct access to both the public street or lane and parking.

4. Each unit must have a covered, main entry-related porch or stoop area of at least 50 square feet with no dimension less than 5 feet.

5. Buildings must be modulated along the public street at least every 30 feet. Building modulations must step the building wall back or forward at least 4 feet.

6. All fences in the front and side flanking setbacks, or between the common areas and the units, are limited to 42 inches in height and may be no more than 60% opaque. Chain link or cyclone fencing is not allowed in the front or side flanking setback.

7. Garbage/recycling areas shall be consolidated and screened from public view.

*Figure 28.29 Annotated illustration of Townhouse*
G. Design Guidelines

1. Building Design
   a. Reduce the potential impact of new townhouse development on established neighborhoods by incorporating elements of nearby, quality buildings such as building details, massing, proportions, and materials.
   b. Avoid mimicry of historical architectural styles; new townhouses should not appear to have been constructed during a past era, and references to period architecture should be interpreted in a contemporary manner.
   c. Use regulating lines and rhythms to create a human scale streetscape. Regulating lines and rhythms include vertical and horizontal patterns as expressed by bays, belt lines, doors and windows.

2. Site Design
   a. Front yards can provide small extensions of the entry porch for semi private activity.
   b. Provide generous use of planting materials and landscape structures such as trellises, raised beds and fencing to unify the overall site design.
20.12.030 Landscaping Section – Add Green Factor as (E) under existing section so as to be referenced by other projects, not just toolkit.

E. Green Factor.

1. The green area factor score for a lot is determined by:
   a. Multiplying the square feet, or equivalent square footage where applicable, of each of the existing and proposed landscape elements by the green area multiplier shown for that element.
   b. Adding together all the products computed under 2.a. above to determine the total green area factor.
   c. Divide the total green area factor by the lot area to determine the green area factor score.

2. If multiple landscaping elements occupy an area (for example, groundcover under a tree), the full square footage or equivalent square footage of each element is used to calculate the product for that element.

3. Public right-of-way is not included in parcel size calculation.

4. Landscape elements that are in rights-of-way may be counted to calculate the score if they are contiguous with the parcel.

5. For vegetated walls, use the square footage of the portion of the wall covered by vegetation.

6. For all elements other than trees, large shrubs and vegetated walls, square footage is determined by the area of the portion of a horizontal plane that underlies the element.

7. Permeable paving may not qualify for more than one-third of the green factor numerator for any one site.

F. Green Factor Landscape Elements.

1. Landscaped areas (select one of the following for each area):

   a. Landscaped areas with a soil depth of less the 24” 0.1
   b. Landscaped areas with a soil depth of 24” or greater 0.8
   c. Bioretention facilities 1.0

2. Plantings (credit for plants in landscaped areas above):

   a. Mulch, ground covers, or other plants less than 2’ tall at maturity 0.2
   b. Plants 2’ or taller at maturity, calculated at 16 sq. ft. per plant (typically planted no closer than 18” on center) 0.3
c. Tree canopy for “small trees” in the Bellingham List of Approved Street Trees or equivalent (canopy spread of 15’) calculated at 50 sq. ft. per tree 0.3

d. Tree canopy for “small/medium trees” in the Bellingham List of Approved Street Trees or equivalent (canopy spread of 20’) calculated at 100 sq. ft. per tree 0.3

e. Tree canopy for “medium/large trees” in the Bellingham List of Approved Street Trees or equivalent (canopy spread of 25’) calculated at 150 sq. ft. per tree 0.4

f. Tree canopy for “large trees” in the Bellingham List of Approved Street Trees or equivalent (canopy spread of 30’) calculated at 200 sq. ft. per tree 0.5

g. Tree canopy for preservation of “exceptional trees” or other large existing trees 6” or greater in diameter, calculated at 15 sq. ft. per inch DBH 0.8

3. Green Roofs

   a. Over at least 2” and less than 4” of growth medium 0.4

   b. Over at least 4” of growth medium 0.7

4. Vegetated Walls

5. Approved Water Features

   0.7

6. Pervious Paving

   a. Pervious paving over at least 6” and less than 24” of soil or gravel 0.3

   b. Pervious paving over at least 24” of soil or gravel 0.5

7. Structural Soil Systems

   0.2

8. Bonuses

   a. Drought-tolerant or native plant species 0.1

   b. Landscaped areas where at least 50% of annual irrigation needs are met through the use of harvested rainwater 0.2

   c. Landscaping in food cultivation 0.3