

HOW DO I GET A PERMIT FOR A SECONDARY SUITE?

The building permit process involves a few steps to obtain approval for a secondary suite, including but not limited to:

- 1) Review the Zoning Bylaw regulations to ensure eligibility.
- 2) Consult a qualified professional (Builder, Building Designer, Architect) to learn what you need to meet relevant BC Building Code requirements.
- 3) Submit a Building Permit Application for secondary suite in a Single Family Dwelling. Include all attachments, the signed and authorized owner declaration form, and application fee.

Note: If alternate compliance methods are proposed to be used in a Building Permit submission (as per the BCBC requirements for suites in an existing building), they must be clearly identified on the Building Permit plans submitted.

- 4) Building staff will review submitted materials. Once permit is approved and issued inspections will be required.
- 5) If all requirements are met, staff will issue an Occupancy Permit to authorize the suite.

WHEN IS A SUITE CONSIDERED LEGAL?

A suite is considered legal when all the required building, plumbing and electrical permits have been applied for and approved and where all work has been completed, inspected and a Occupancy Permit or Final Inspection Report has been issued by the District of Oak Bay.

CONTACT US



Building permit questions can be sent to Building staff at: inspections@oakbay.ca

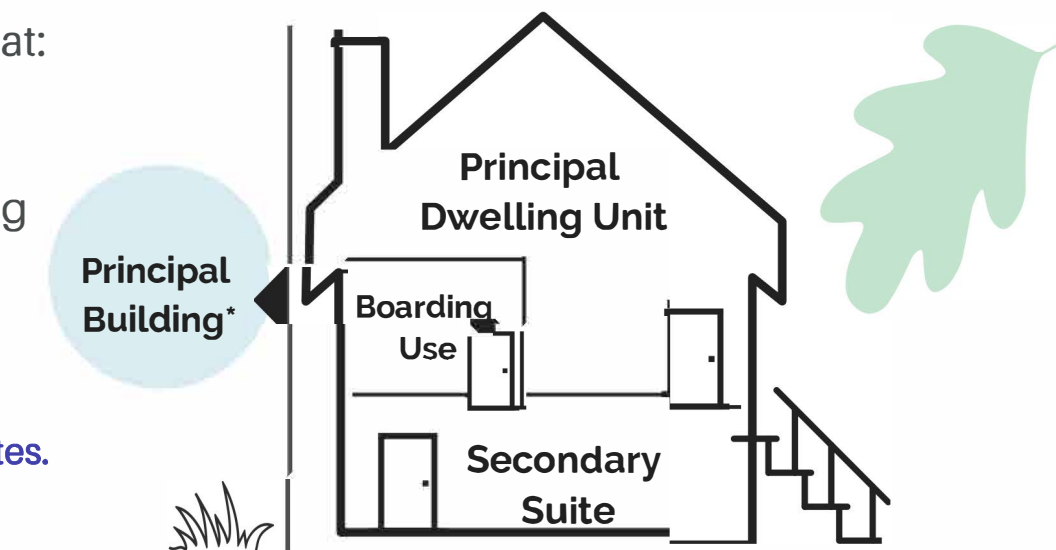
Zoning and land use questions can be sent to Planning staff at: planning@oakbay.ca.

More information:
oakbay.ca/municipal-services/building-inspection/secondary-suites.

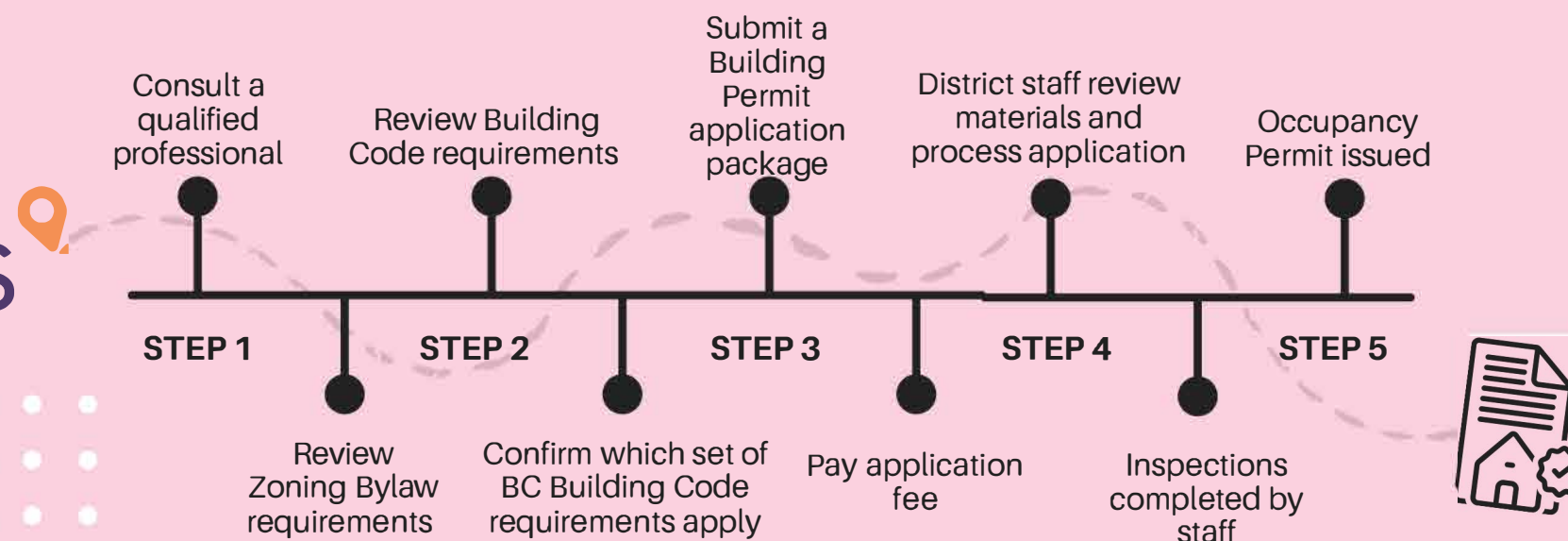
SECONDARY SUITES PROGRAM

WHAT IS A SECONDARY SUITE?

A secondary suite is a dwelling unit (with its own kitchen and living area, as well as separate external access) within a principal building that is used for residential purposes.



PERMIT PROCESS



There is a lot of information to consider when constructing or upgrading a suite. Both the District's Zoning Bylaw and the British Columbia Building Code will apply.



Tip: There are no minimum lot size, unit size or parking stall requirements for a secondary suite!

ZONING BYLAW REQUIREMENTS

Land Use

Secondary Suites are permitted in all Residential use (R) Zones in Oak Bay. No minimum lot size or unit size is required for a suite.

Building Separation

A secondary suite cannot be connected to the main part of a house by a breezeway or enclosed hallway.

Parking

To have a secondary suite additional off-street parking is not required, but an outdoor, labeled, energized outlet capable of at least Level 1 (110 v) charging for an electric vehicle, scooter or bike is required.



General Zoning Regulations

Every Secondary Suite in Oak Bay must meet all the following General Regulations identified in the Zoning Bylaw:

- Only one suite is permitted within a Principal Building.
- A suite is not permitted in an accessory building.
- Full BC Building Code requirements for newly constructed suites.
- Minimum of Alternate Compliance Methods (Division A) for existing non-compliant suites.
- A suite must not contain a Boarding Use.
- If both a Secondary Suite and a Boarding Use are found within the principal building, the total number of unrelated individuals living in the principal building must not exceed six.
- The property's registered owner must live in either the single family dwelling or the secondary suite as their principal residence.
 - i) With a Building Permit application, an Owner's Declaration form must be provided
 - ii) A secondary suite will not be approved without a completed Owner Declaration form.
 - iii) Any new owner needs to complete an Owner's Declaration form for the suite to remain authorized by the District.

BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

New Construction

For new construction, Part 9 of the BC Building Code governs the following aspects of residential construction that includes secondary suites:

- minimum ceiling height
- access/egress to bedrooms
- width of exit stairs
- the length of landings serving two dwellings
- height and width of exit doors
- fire separation rating of dwelling units, exits, and common rooms, furnace rooms, and doors that penetrate fire separations
- fire separation continuity
- smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms
- sound transmission
- ventilation

Alternate Building Code Compliance Methods (For Suites in Existing Buildings)

In order to remove barriers for the construction of secondary suites, the BC Building Code (BCBC) was amended by the province to allow special provisions for secondary suites constructed within existing buildings.

Note: The BC Building Code can be accessed online, free of charge, at bcpublications.ca.

This form can be found online here:

oakbay.ca/sites/default/files/Owners-declaration-form-secondary-suites.pdf

