



laneway housing

HOW-TO GUIDE

current as of:
NOVEMBER 2016

Updated versions of this guide and laneway housing regulations & guidelines are available online at: <http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/building-your-laneway-house.aspx>

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OVERVIEW

in this section:

- how to use this guide
- what is a laneway house?
- why laneway housing?
- laneway housing principles

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how to use this guide

□ this guide can help you....

- asses whether your lot is **eligible** for a laneway house
- determine **what kind** of laneway house you can build
- understand the **permit application process**
- understand important **cost and feasibility** considerations

□ this guide contains....

- an **overview** of laneway housing **regulation and guidelines**
- a **step-by-step** guide to the application process
- diagrammatic and illustrative **examples** of laneway housing regulations and guidelines*

* The examples shown in this guide are **illustrative only**. In the case of any perceived discrepancies, the regulations and guidelines prevail.

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what is a laneway house?

- A laneway house is a **small house** at the rear of a lot near the lane and includes both a **dwelling unit** and **parking/accessory uses**.
- Laneway housing is allowed in all **RS** single family zones, RT-11/11N, RM-7/7N, RM-8/8N, RM-9/9N and RM-9A/9AN (see map on page 9).
- A laneway house can be permitted in addition to a **secondary suite** in the main house.
- A laneway house can be for **family use** or **rental**; strata-titling is not permitted.



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why laneway housing?

Vancouver residents gave many reasons for wanting laneway housing:



- to provide housing for a variety of users, such as **aging family members, adult children, caregivers**, and homeowners wishing to **downsize**.
- to provide **more choice** of housing type in single-family residential neighbourhoods.
- to contribute to the **rental housing** stock in the city.
- to support **sustainability** by providing more opportunities for people to live in the city close to jobs, services, and transit.

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laneway housing principles

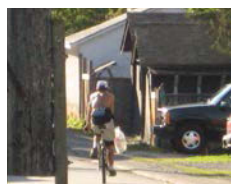
The following principles underlie laneway housing regulations and guidelines:



- 1 HOUSING CHOICE**
Laneway houses provide new housing choices for family members or renters in single family residential areas.



- 2 HOMEOWNER OPPORTUNITY**
Homeowners are able to add a laneway house while keeping their existing home, or build a laneway house along with a new main house.



- 3 LIVABLE AND NEIGHBOURLY UNITS**
Regulations and design guidelines ensure that laneway houses:
 - maintain backyard open space.
 - encourage one storey laneway houses to limit impact on neighbours.
 - provide for a variety of unit types.

- 4 LANE ENHANCEMENT**
Laneway housing makes lanes greener, more livable, and safer by providing living space, parking, and planting in the lane.



- 5 GREEN DESIGN**
Laneway houses comply with the Green Homes Program, as adapted for its small size.

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PLANNING

in this section:

- is my lot eligible?
 - zone
 - lot size
 - lane access
 - fire acces
 - minimum building separation

- what steps are involved?
 - step 1: site servicing research
 - step 2: pre-application review
 - step 3: application process

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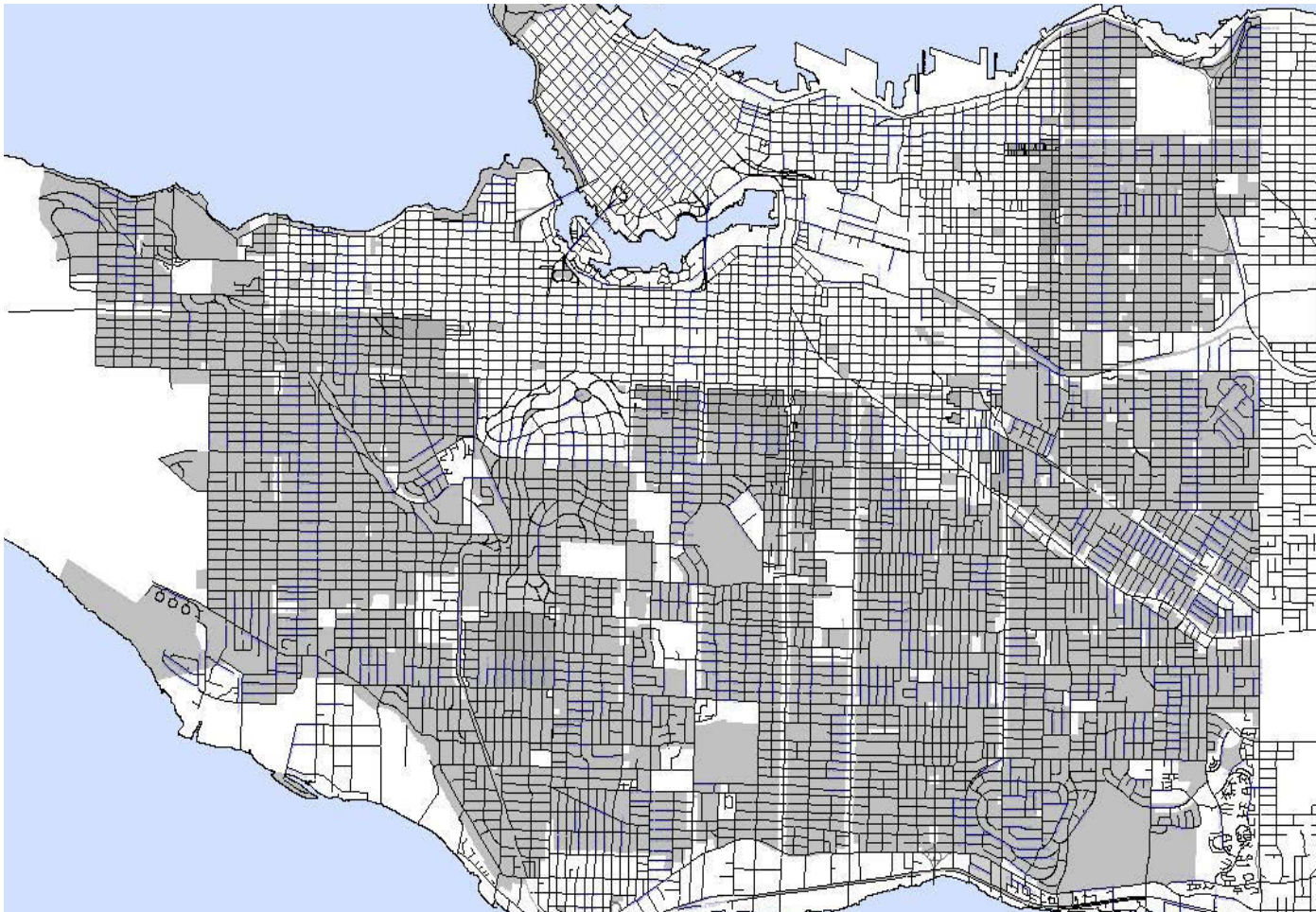
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is my lot eligible?

Laneway houses are allowed on lots in all RS single family zones, RT-11/11N, RM-7/7N, RM-8/8N, RM-9/9N and RM-9A/9AN which are shaded on the map below. The Development and Building Services Centre (604.873.7611) can help you determine whether your lot is zoned for laneway housing.

You can also access our web-based application, VanMap (http://vanmapp.vancouver.ca/pubvanmap_net/default.aspx), and turn on the Zoning Districts and the Zoning District labels under the Districts and Areas category to determine the zoning for your property.



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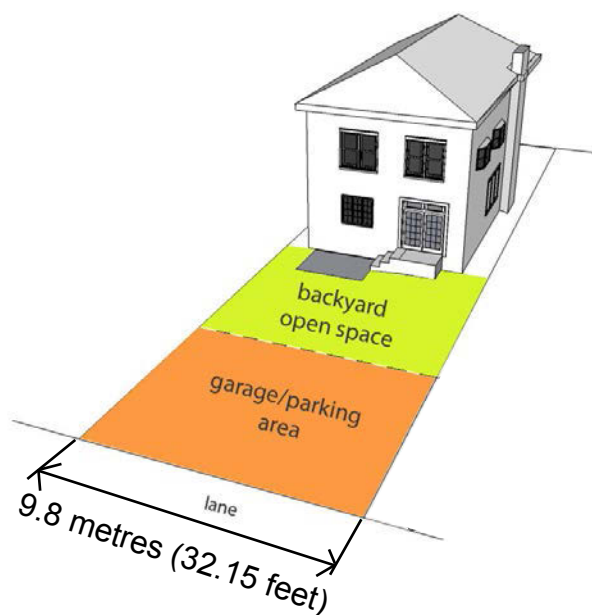
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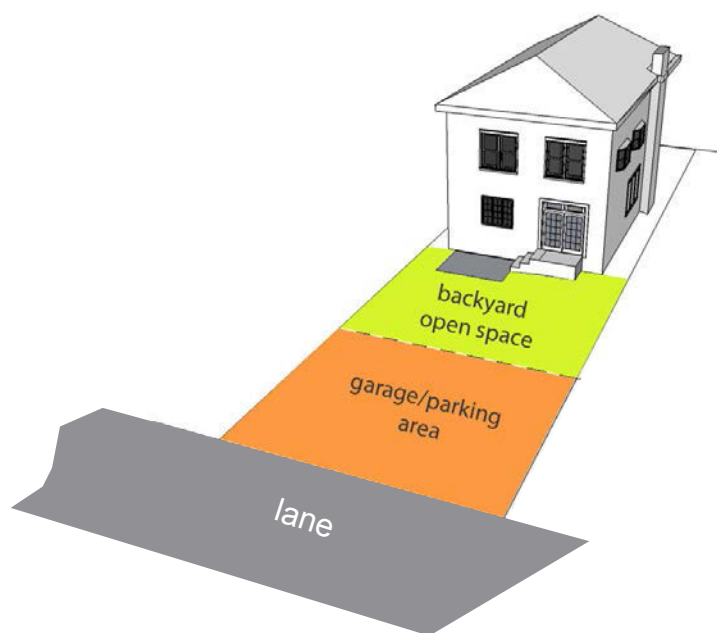
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is my lot eligible?



LOT SIZE

You may build a LWH if your site is a minimum of 9.8m (32.15ft) wide. The Director of Planning may approve a LWH on narrower lots if the site is at least 7.3m (24ft) in width, and the impact of massing on overlook and neighbourhood privacy is first considered.



LANE ACCESS

In order to build a LWH, your site must have access to an open lane, be located on a corner served by an open or dedicated lane, or be located on a double fronting site served by a street on both the front and rear.

To help determine if your lot is eligible, call the Development and Building Services Centre at 604.873.7611.

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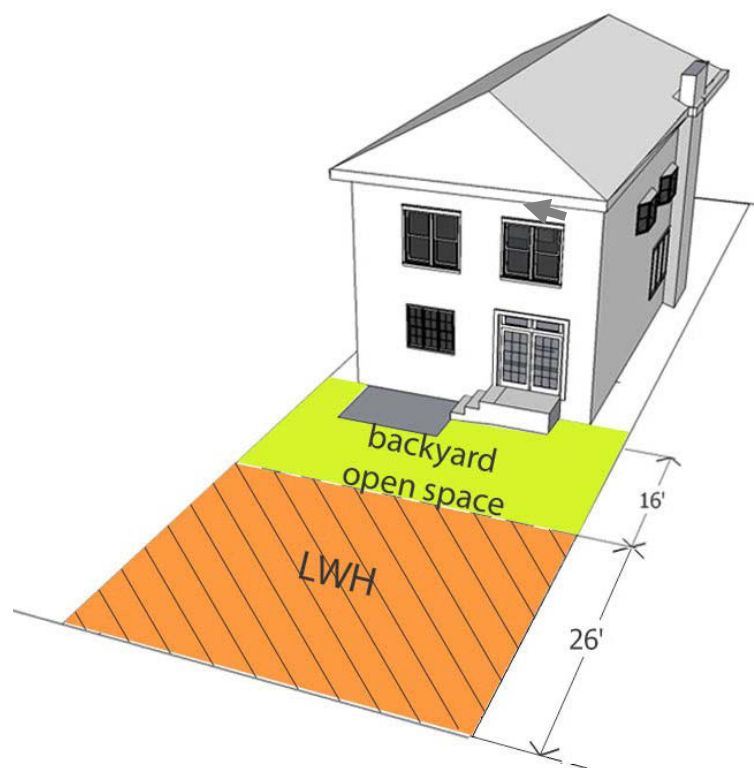
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is my lot eligible?



FIRE ACCESS

In order to add a LWH to your lot, a fire access path must be provided from the street along one of the sideyards to the entrance of the LWH. This path should be at least 900mm (3ft) in width and must be clear of any projections.

BUILDING SEPARATION

Your lot must be deep enough to allow for both a backyard and a LWH, which may extend up to 9.75m (32ft) inward from the rear property line for a 1 storey LWH, or 7.9m (26ft) for a 1½ storey LWH.

A minimum separation of 4.9m (16ft) between the LWH and the main house is required. Separation requirements may be difficult to meet on lots less than 122ft deep, or on lots with longer main houses, attached garages, or rear decks. See page 21 for more details.

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what steps are involved?

If you want to build a laneway house, follow the steps below to determine costs and feasibility, and obtain necessary approvals.

step **1** site servicing research

Investigate costs and requirements for sewer and water connections, electrical service, and gas installation.

step **2** pre-application review

Submit a site survey and other plans for Engineering, Design, and Landscaping pre-application reviews.

step **3** application process

Submit your permit application and meet related requirements, such as Homeowner Protection Office approval

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step 1 site servicing research

Once you have determined that your lot is eligible, you will need to investigate the cost and feasibility of service connections. Although a site survey and detailed plans are not necessary at this point, you will need a basic site plan to explore servicing options.

○ SEWER & WATER DESIGN

Call or visit **City of Vancouver Engineering Client Services** to investigate sewer and water connection fees and requirements.

Phone: **604.871.6730** Location: Crossroads Building, 507 W. Broadway, 5th Floor

<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/one-and-two-family-dwellings-and-laneway-housing.aspx>

○ ELECTRICAL SERVICING

Discuss your preliminary plans with **BC Hydro** to determine requirements and get an estimate of connection costs.

Phone: **1.877.520.1355**

<https://www.bchydro.com/accounts-billing/new-electrical-connections/laneway-housing.html>

Information on laneway house electrical installations is available on the Licences and Inspections website: <http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/electrical-permit-for-construction-or-renovation.aspx>

○ GAS INSTALLATION AND GAS LINE LOCATION

Contact **Fortis BC** for information on gas installation and existing gas line locations.

Phone: **1.888.224.2710** Call before you dig hotline: **1.800.474.6886**

<http://www.fortisbc.com/Pages/default.aspx>

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step 1 site servicing research

Table 1. Approximate site servicing costs

Service	Approximate Fee*	Variables
Sewer	\$2,060.40 or \$10,302 (plus a \$293 inspection fee)	A \$10,302 connection fee applies to sites without an existing separated sewer system. A \$2,060.40 inspection fee applies to sites with an existing separated sewer system. Deeper trenching may require additional fees.
Water	\$5,400	Fee applies only to: 1) sites with an existing house built before 1985 2) concurrent construction of a new house/LWH 3) sites that require upgrading for fire safet
Electricity (BC Hydro)	\$600 - \$20,000 (Standard Charge)	Adding a laneway house may require a service extension. Overhead extensions range from \$1,500 to \$9,000 or higher. Underground extensions range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 or higher.
Gas	\$25 and up	\$25 connection fee applies on streets that have an existing gas main and where the cost to connect is \$1,535 or less (Fortis BC charges only \$25 for the first \$1,535 in construction costs). Additional fees apply where connection costs exceed \$1,535, or on streets without gas mains.

* These fees are approximations and may be subject to change, and excludes construction costs for work done on your property.

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step **2** pre-application review

If site servicing is feasible, your next step is to prepare for the pre-application review listed below. Contact the issuing department to clarify submission requirements.

Pre-Application Review	Required Documents	Contact
Engineering	Site survey Sewer and water design	Engineering Client Services 604.871.6730

The site survey must be prepared by a Registered BC Land Surveyor. It is advisable to hire a design professional (house designer or architect) to coordinate the preparation of plans and application materials. An overview of some of the required plans and the professionals who prepare them is found on page 16.

A listing of professional associations is also found on page A5 of the appendix. More information on plan requirements can be found at <http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/application-forms-and-checklists.aspx>.

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step 2 pre-application review

Pre-Application Review	Required Documents**	Contact
Design and Landscape*	Site survey Site plan with zoning analysis Floor plans Elevations/sections Photos of site/neighbourhood Landscape plan (if needed) Arborist report (if needed)	Development and Building Services Centre 604.873.7611

* An optional pre-application review meeting is available for LWH applicants. Experienced applicants may choose to apply directly to the 1/2 Family Dwelling group without pre-application review. One storey LWH designs also may be submitted directly. For new applicants with 1½ storey designs, staff recommend pre-application review as well as for applicants with complex sites and new designs.

** This is not a comprehensive list. Staff will go over the submission requirements at the pre-application meeting.

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step **2** pre-application review

Table 2. Plan descriptions and contacts

Plan	Description	Contact
Site Survey	Plan view of existing site features: legal boundaries, topography, tree driplines, utility locations, and other features	Association of BC Certified Land Surveyors www.abcls.ca
Landscape Plans	Plan view of proposed plantings, plant lists, irrigation plans, and other landscaping specification	BC Society of Landscape Architects www.bcsla.org
Architectural Plans		
Site Plan	Plan view of proposed development: site including building footprint, paving, driveways, parking, drainage, utility lines, and landscaped areas	Architectural Institute of BC www.aibc.ca Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association www.gvhba.org
Floor Plans	Plan view of building interiors	
Elevations	View of building exteriors from each direction	
Sections	Vertical cross sections of building interiors and exteriors	

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step **3** application process

Once you have completed pre-application review, you can prepare your formal permit application (<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/dev-build-outright1and2family.pdf>). To submit your application, call 604.871.6526 to schedule an intake appointment. The following requirements warrant special consideration:

○ APPLICATION FEES

Fees are payable upon receipt of your combined development and building permit.

- ◇ Development permit fee: 1 storey - \$1,130, 1½ storey - \$1,730
- ◇ Building permit fee: based on project value
- ◇ Development Cost Levy fees: \$34.77 per m² of dwelling unit space at permit issuance
- ◇ Engineering fees
- ◇ Fees for trades permits and inspections (electrical, gas, and plumbing) and other approvals will apply after issuance of the combined development and building permit

○ NON-STRATIFICATION COVENANT

If you build a laneway house as part of a total site redevelopment, you must enter into a legal agreement with the City to ensure that the laneway house will not be strata-titled. This process happens concurrently with the application review process. Call the Development and Building Services Centre for details.

○ HOMEOWNER PROTECTION OFFICE (HPO)

Before you apply to build a laneway house, you must obtain approval from the HPO. The HPO provides consumer protection for owners of newly constructed homes. For more information, call HPO BC at 1.800.407.7757, or visit their website at <http://www.hpo.bc.ca>.

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DESIGN

in this section:

□ design basics

- location on the lot
- size & height
- parking
- landscaping
- tree protection

□ design in context

- neighbourly and livable design

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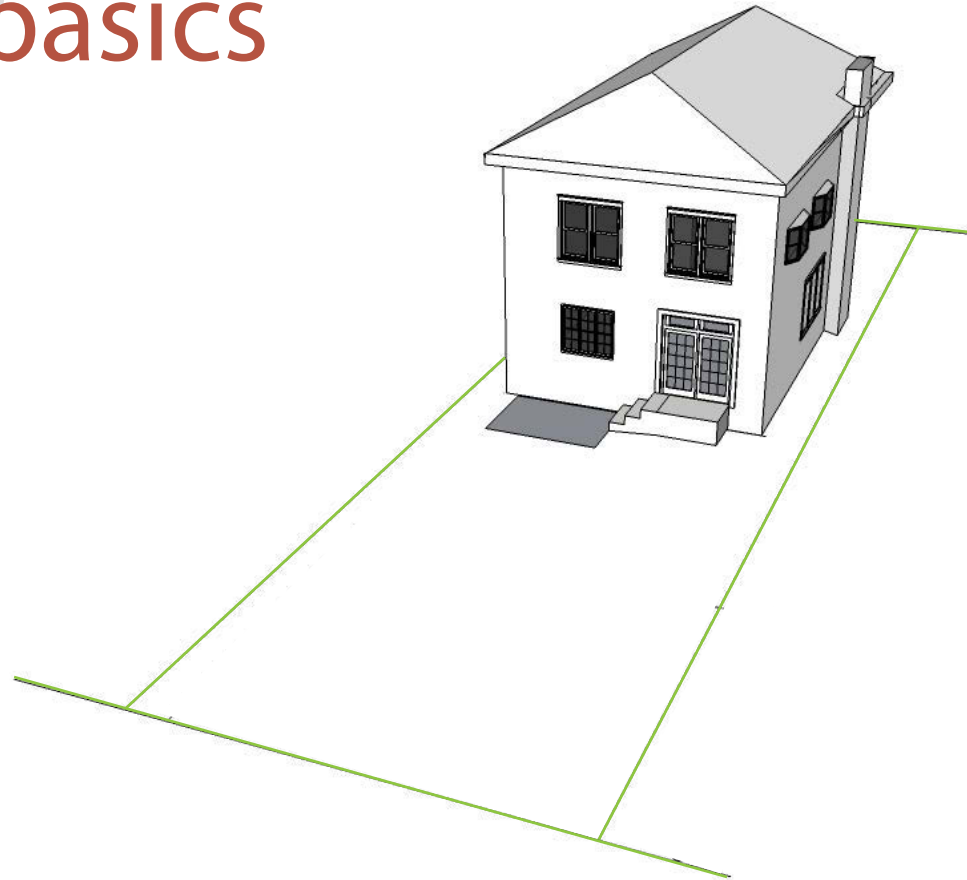
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design basics



Like main houses, laneway houses must be located in a defined portion of a lot and are subject to regulations regarding setbacks, size, height, parking, and tree protection. Together, these siting and design regulations provide a basic template for laneway house design.

This section illustrates that template using the above example, which depicts a 33ft-wide lot with an existing main house as viewed from the lane.

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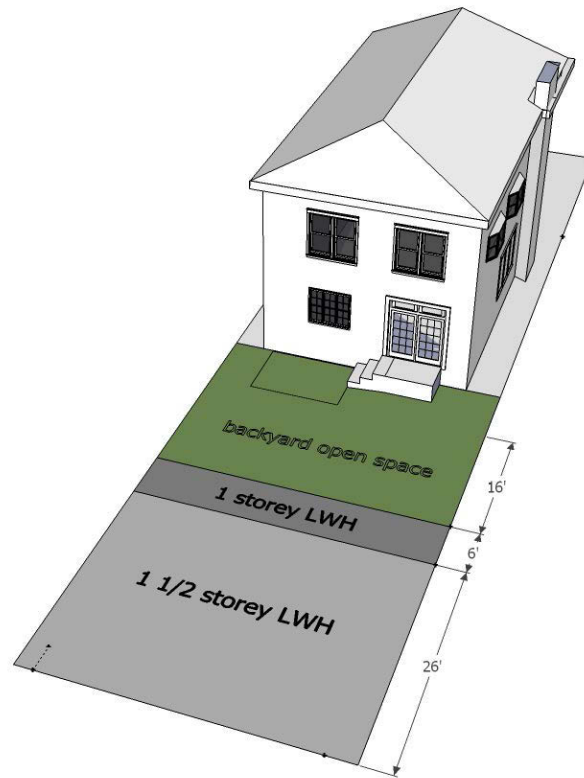
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location on the lot



backyard open space

A 1½ storey laneway house is limited to the rear 7.9m (26ft) of the lot to minimize impacts on neighbouring yards.

Where a 1 storey laneway house is proposed, it may extend a further 1.8m (6ft) to a maximum of 9.8m (32ft). This extension is required to achieve the permitted floor area at grade. Impacts on neighbouring yards are reduced by the 1 storey form.

minimum separation

There must be a minimum separation of 4.9m (16ft) between the laneway house and principal house for both 1 and 1½ storey laneway houses. This is to ensure that there is a reasonable amount of open space between the two structures to provide for urban agriculture, outdoor living, permeability and biodiversity.

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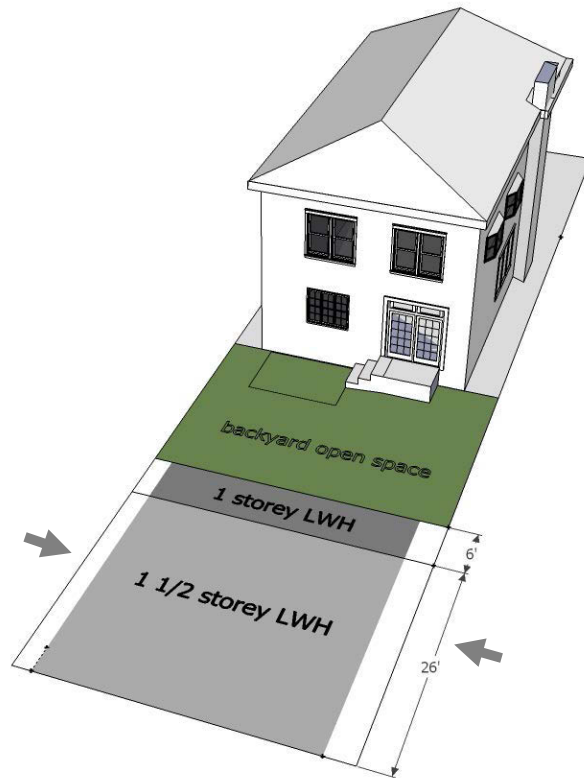
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location on the lot



sideyard setbacks

The laneway house is subject to the same sideyard setbacks as the main house or a minimum of 10% of the lot width if the laneway house is 1 storey.

For a 1 storey laneway house, the sideyard setback on one side may be reduced to a minimum of 0.6m (2ft) to help achieve the permitted floor area at grade. Window glazing will not be permitted on the wall adjacent to the reduced side yard as per the Vancouver Building Bylaw (VBBL) regulations. These setbacks do not apply to surface parking. Call the Development and Building Services Centre at 604.873.7611 for details.

maximum width

The width of a laneway house, or a laneway house and an accessory building, must not exceed 50% of the lot width for sites in the RS-3/3A Districts and 67% of the lot width for sites in the RS-6 District.

The permitted width is determined by the formula $40\% \text{ site width} + 4.2\text{m (14ft)}$ for sites 16.8m (55ft) or wider in the RS-5 District.

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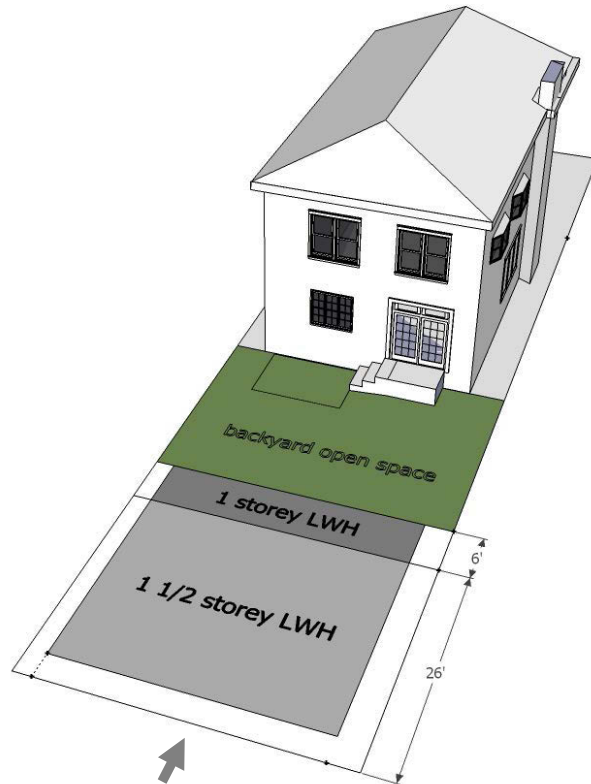
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location on the lot



setback from lane

The laneway house must be set back from the lane a minimum of 0.9m (3ft), and more where possible. Entries facing the lane should be set back a minimum of 1.5m (5ft) to allow safe access. This setback should be permeable and landscaped with plantings that add visual interest and beautify the public space of the lane.

The Director of Planning may relax the setback to 0.6m (2ft) on sites less than 30.5m (100ft) in depth.

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size & height

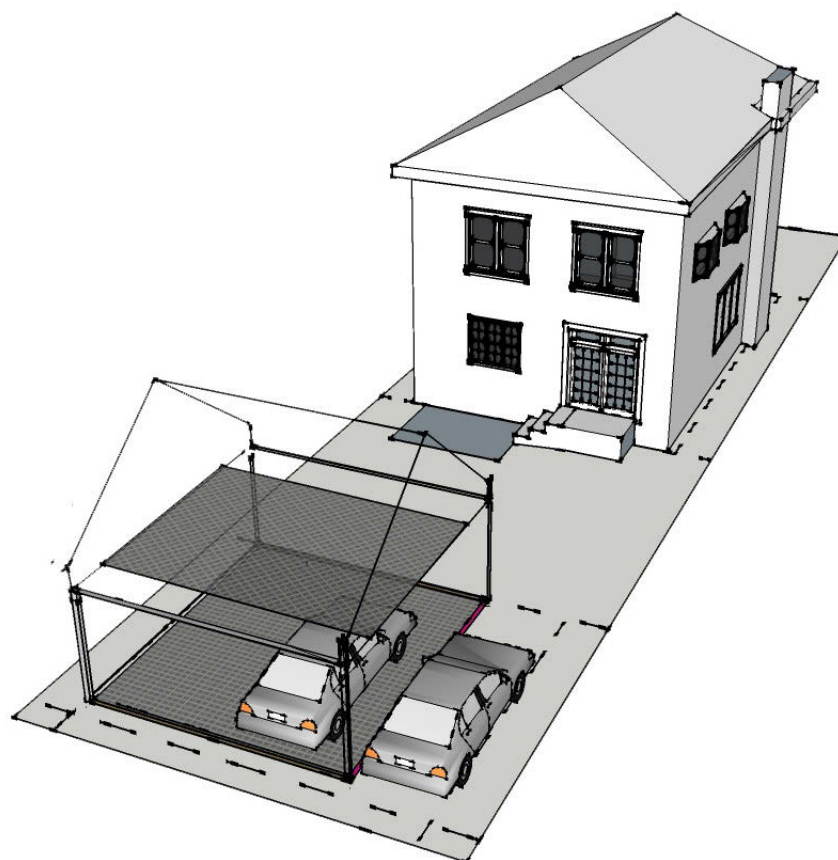
unit size

The **maximum** floor area of a laneway house is determined by multiplying the lot area by 0.16. This results in maximum unit sizes of approximately 56m² (644ft²) on standard 33' x 122' lots, and 84m² (900ft²) on 50' x 122' lots. The maximum size of a laneway house is 900ft², regardless of lot size.

These floor area limits include upper and ground floor living space as well as enclosed parking (where it is provided). A 40ft² exclusion for storage is available for all laneway houses. The storage space can be provided in the form of closets or as a separate storage room (e.g. for bikes, garden tools).

The floor area of a laneway house must be a **minimum** of 26m² (280ft²), with a possible relaxation down to 19m² (204ft²).

Stairs, underheight space, areas below sloped ceilings, and open-to-below space are not counted as floor area.



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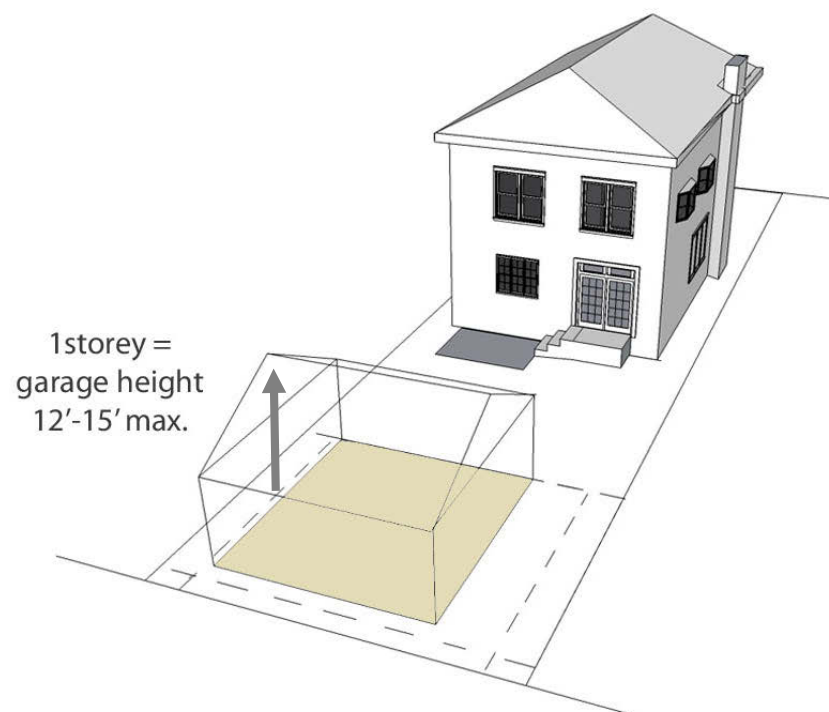
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size & height



height - 1 storey

A 1 storey laneway house is limited to the same maximum height as a garage, which ranges from 3.7m (12ft) if a flat roof or to 4.6m (15ft) for a sloped roof.

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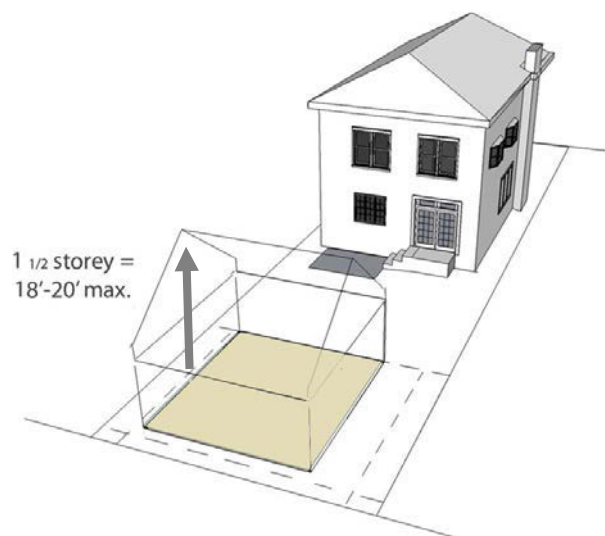
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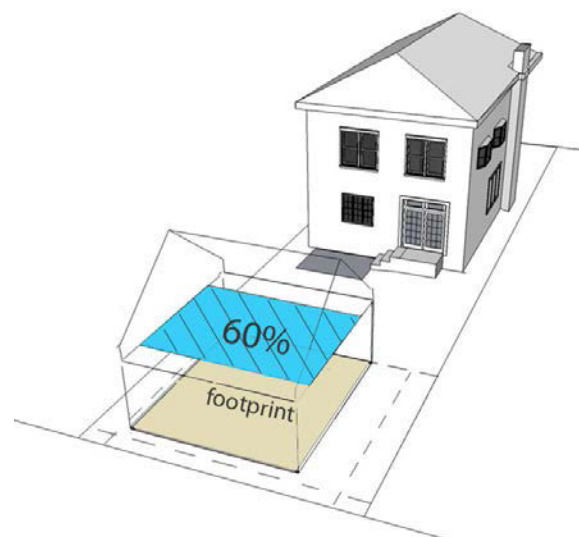
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size & height



height - 1½ storey

A laneway house with a partial upper storey can have a maximum height of 5.5m (18ft) to 6.1m (20ft) depending on roof type and pitch.



upper storey

The partial upper storey (measured to the extreme outer limits) is restricted to 60% of the footprint of the laneway house. This is intended to limit shadowing and overlook on neighbouring backyards.

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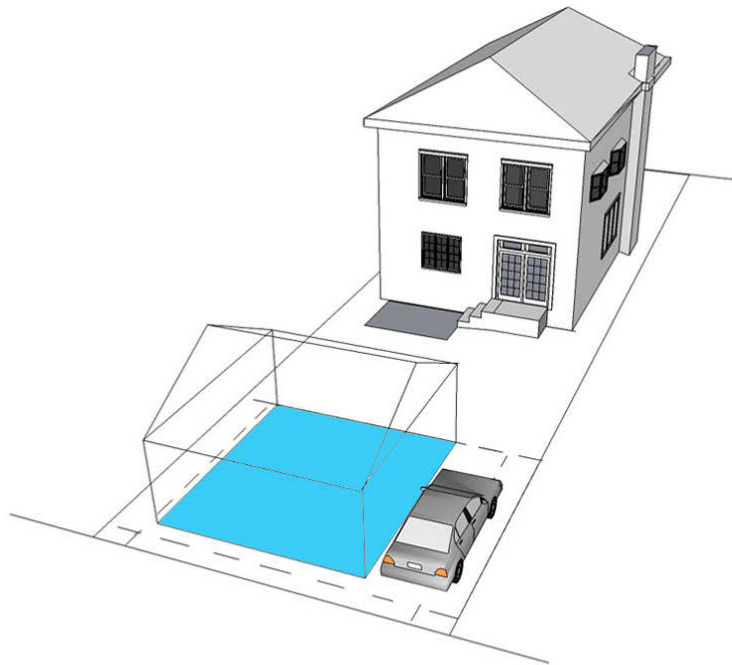
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parking



minimum requirement

A minimum of one unenclosed and uncovered parking space MUST be provided on site adjacent the laneway house for both one and 1 and 1½ storey laneway houses. The parking space may be for the use of any of the dwelling units on site.

For corner sites, the exterior surface parking space should be located at the interior side yard.

Additional parking spaces may be provided on site but are not required.

enclosed/covered space

An enclosed or covered parking space may be provided in the laneway house and is counted as part of the permitted floor area. Carports (roof covers with open sides) are considered covered parking spaces and therefore count as part of the permitted LWH floor area

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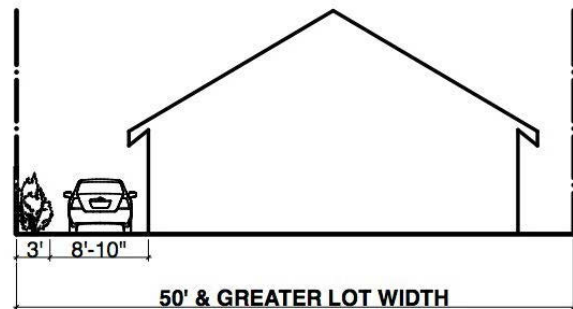
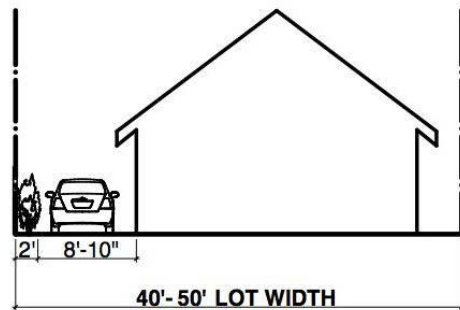
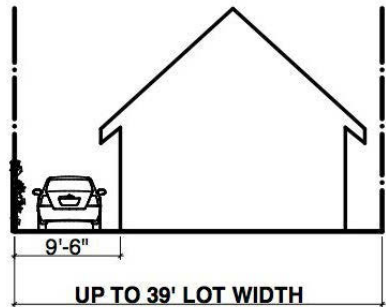
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parking



permeable surface

Any unenclosed and uncovered parking spaces must have a permeable surface, such as permeable pavers, gravel, grass-crete, or impermeable wheel paths surrounded by gravel or ground cover planting. Under no circumstance can the unenclosed and uncovered space be paved.

landscape setbacks

A 1.0m landscaped setback is typically required adjacent the side property line for parking spaces not located within a structure.

Depending on the site width, this setback may be reduced to accommodate the required unenclosed and uncovered space.

Lot Width:
Up to 39ft
40-50ft
50ft +

Landscape Setback:
0(zero)m
0.6m
1.0m

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landscaping

	Name		Exposure		
	Botanical	Common	Sun	Part-Shade	Shade
Groundcover	<i>Fragaria chiloensis</i>	Coastal Strawberry	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Kinnikinnick (Bear berry)	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Rubus calycinoides</i>	Creeping Raspberry	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Sedum</i> spp	Stonecrop	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Thymus</i> spp	Creeping Thyme	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Cotoneaster dammeri</i>	Bearberry Cotoneaster	✓	✓	✓
Perennials	<i>Achillea</i> spp	Yarrow	✓		
	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Purple Coneflower	✓	✓	
	<i>Iris germanica</i>	German Iris	✓	✓	
	<i>Liriope muscari</i>	Lily turf	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Hemerocallis</i> spp	Daylily	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Tiarella trifoliata</i>	Foamflower	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Bergenia crassifolia</i>	Heartleaf Bergenia		✓	✓
Grasses and Ferns	<i>Festuca glauca</i>	Blue Fescue Grass	✓	✓	
	<i>Stipa</i> spp	Feather Grass	✓	✓	
	<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i>	Dwarf Fountain Grass	✓	✓	
	<i>Dryopteris</i> spp	Wood fern		✓	✓
	<i>Polystichum munitum</i>	Western Swordfern		✓	✓
Vines and Climbers	<i>Vitis</i> (various)	Grapevine	✓	✓	
	<i>Clematis armandii</i>	Evergreen Clematis	✓	✓	
	<i>Clematis montana</i>	Anemone Clematis	✓	✓	
	<i>Wisteria</i>	Wisteria	✓	✓	
Shrubs	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	English Lavender	✓	✓	
	<i>Rosa nutkana</i>	Nootka Rose	✓	✓	
	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Boxwood	✓	✓	
	<i>Azalea</i>	Japanese Azalea		✓	✓
	<i>Gaultheria Shallon</i>	Salt		✓	✓
	<i>Mahonia nervosa</i>	Dull Oregon Grape		✓	✓

suggested plant list

To the left is a suggested plant list compiled primarily with five factors in mind:

- 1) low-maintenance,
- 2) drought-tolerance & hardiness,
- 3) scale (all plants under 3ft high not including vines & climbers),
- 4) availability, and
- 5) variety & interest.

The plants identified for each category represent a small selection of possibilities. Sun exposure (sun, part-shade, shade) is indicated for each plant.

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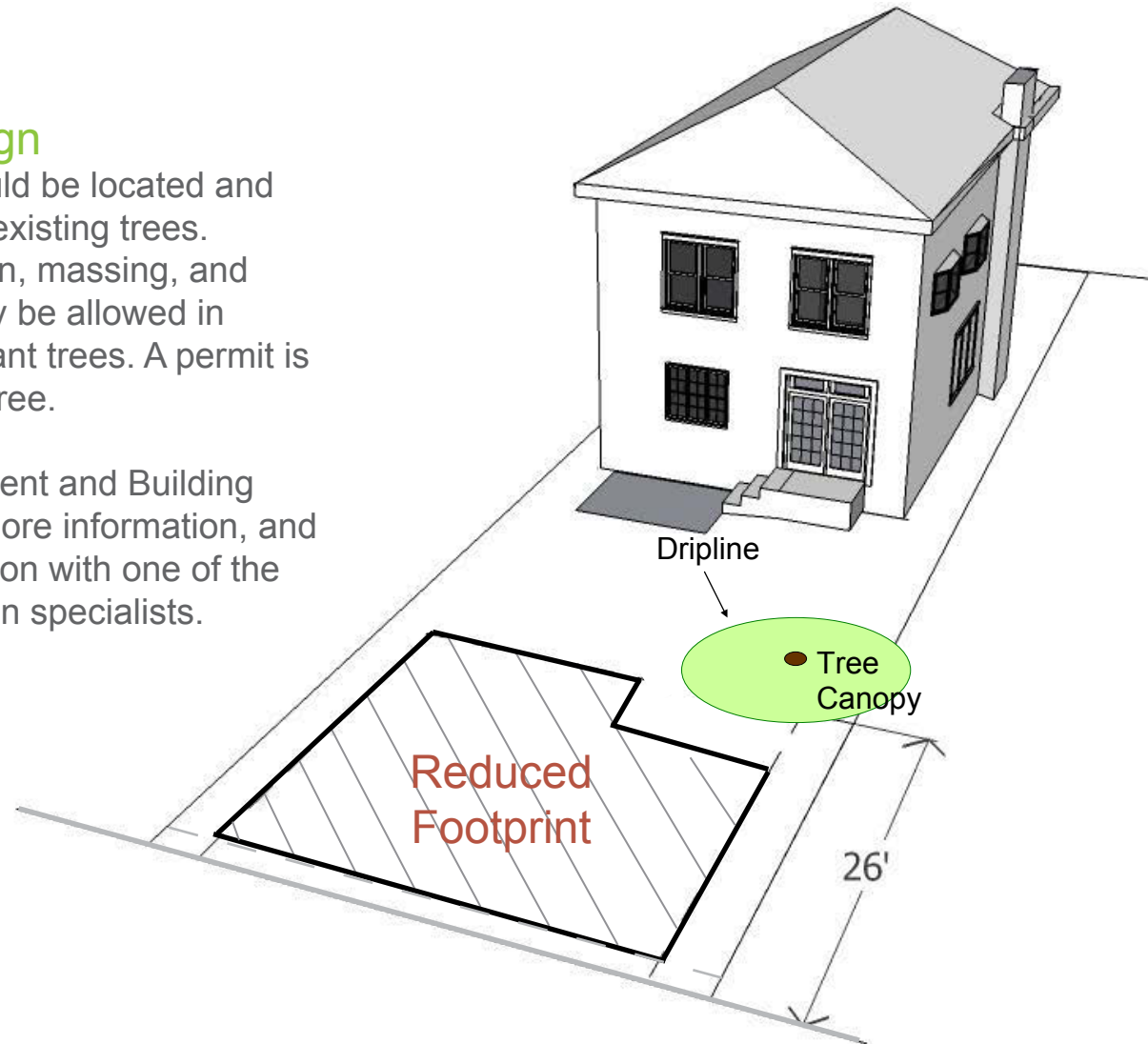
Note that sunlight reflected off the lane might provide enough light to a north-facing yard to support plants that require full sun. Please research the plants to understand whether its characteristics and needs, including watering requirements, can be met by the specifics of your site.

tree protection

location and design

A laneway house should be located and designed to preserve existing trees. Relaxations for location, massing, and parking standards may be allowed in order to retain significant trees. A permit is required to remove a tree.

Contact the Development and Building Services Centre for more information, and to arrange a consultation with one of the City's landscape design specialists.



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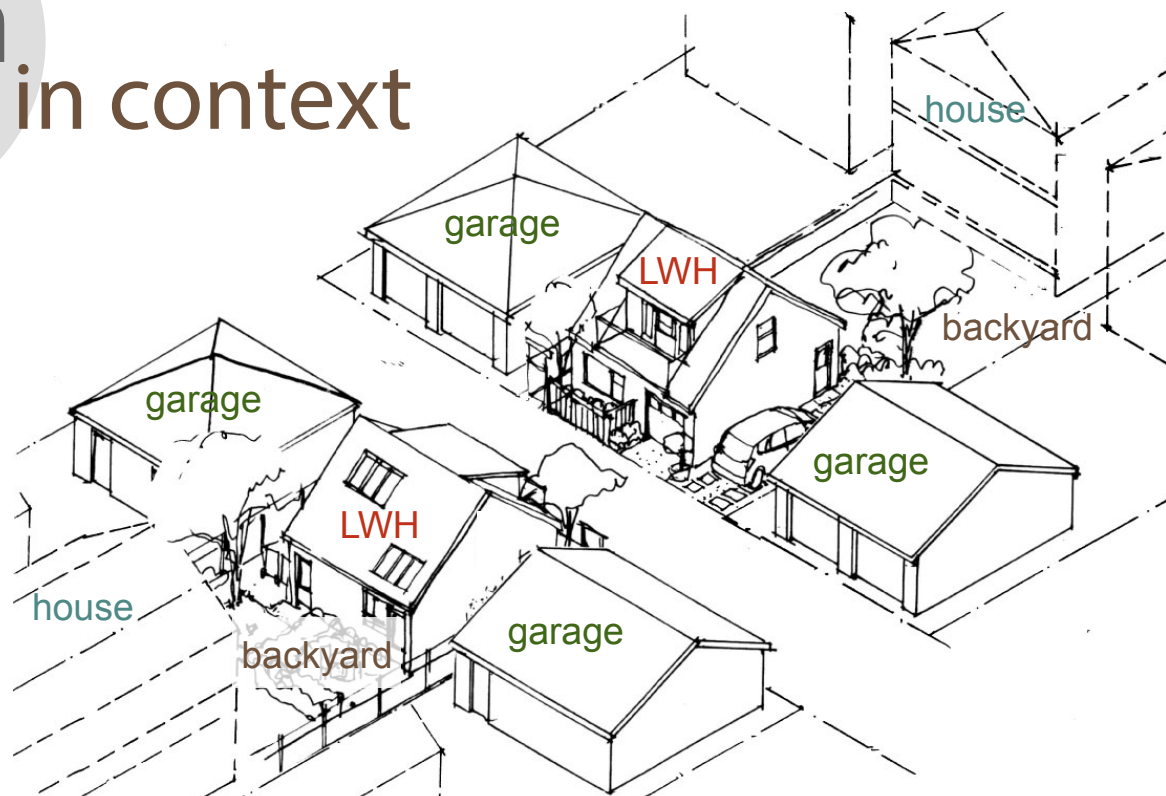
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design in context



Laneway housing regulations and guidelines allow for a full range of architectural approaches and building forms, from traditional to contemporary. However, special design considerations for upper storeys, windows, landscaping, and lane frontages are necessary to enhance neighbourliness and livability. This section illustrates those design features using the above example.

The drawings on this page illustrate a 644ft² laneway house with a partial upper storey on standard lots (33ft by 122ft). This drawing shows both an external and an enclosed parking space. They show the same laneway house design as viewed from the lane on one side and from the backyard on the other. Main houses are shown in dashed lines. The garages represent the height and size that is allowed for accessory buildings.

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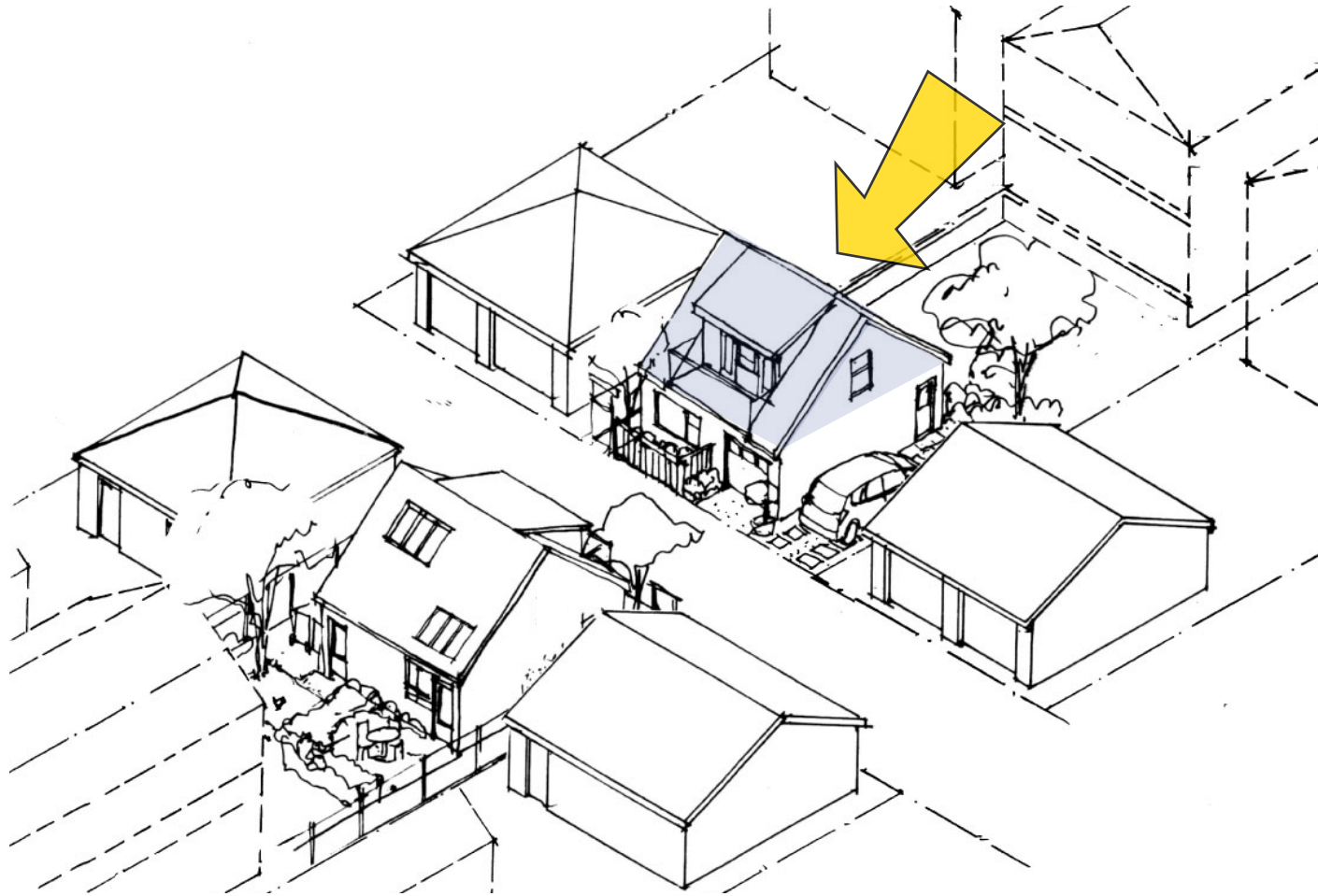
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upper storey



reduced upper storey

The size of the upper floor is limited to reduce scale and massing

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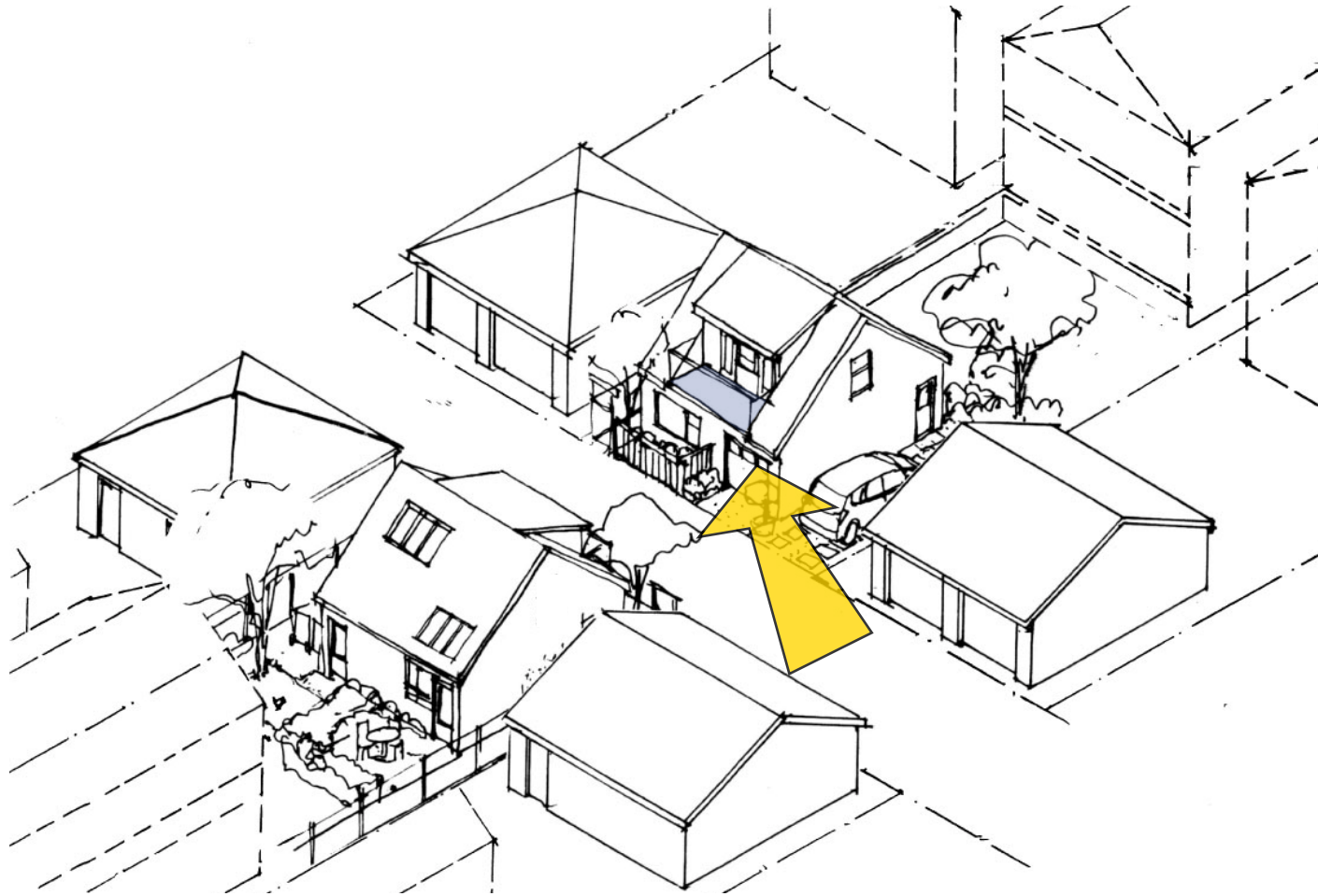
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upper storey deck



upper level decks facing lane

To enhance both livability and neighbourliness, upper level decks are allowed, but are limited in size and must face the lane, not the backyard or a neighbouring garden.

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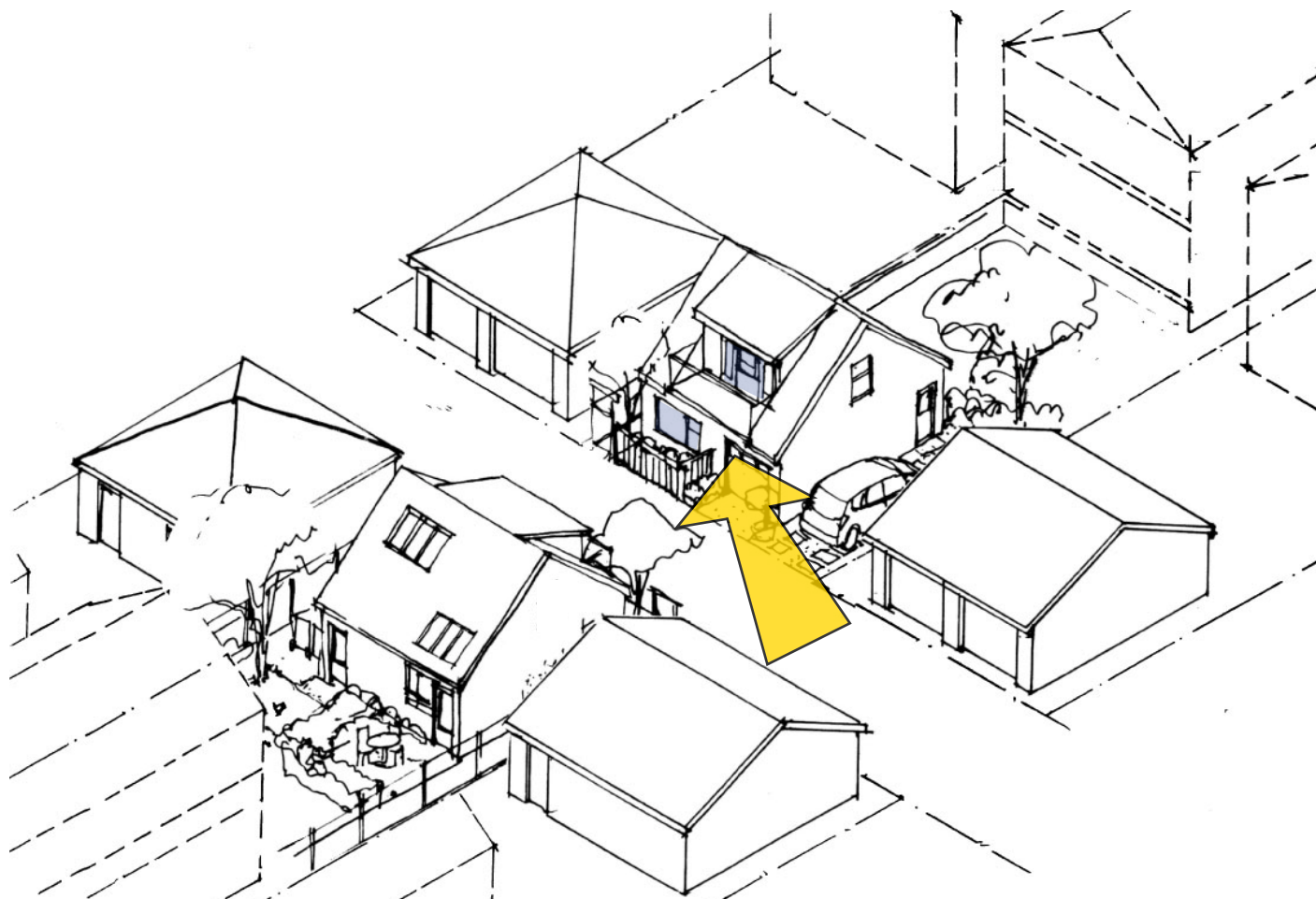
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windows



main windows to lane

Guidelines direct upper level windows and overall orientation to the lane.

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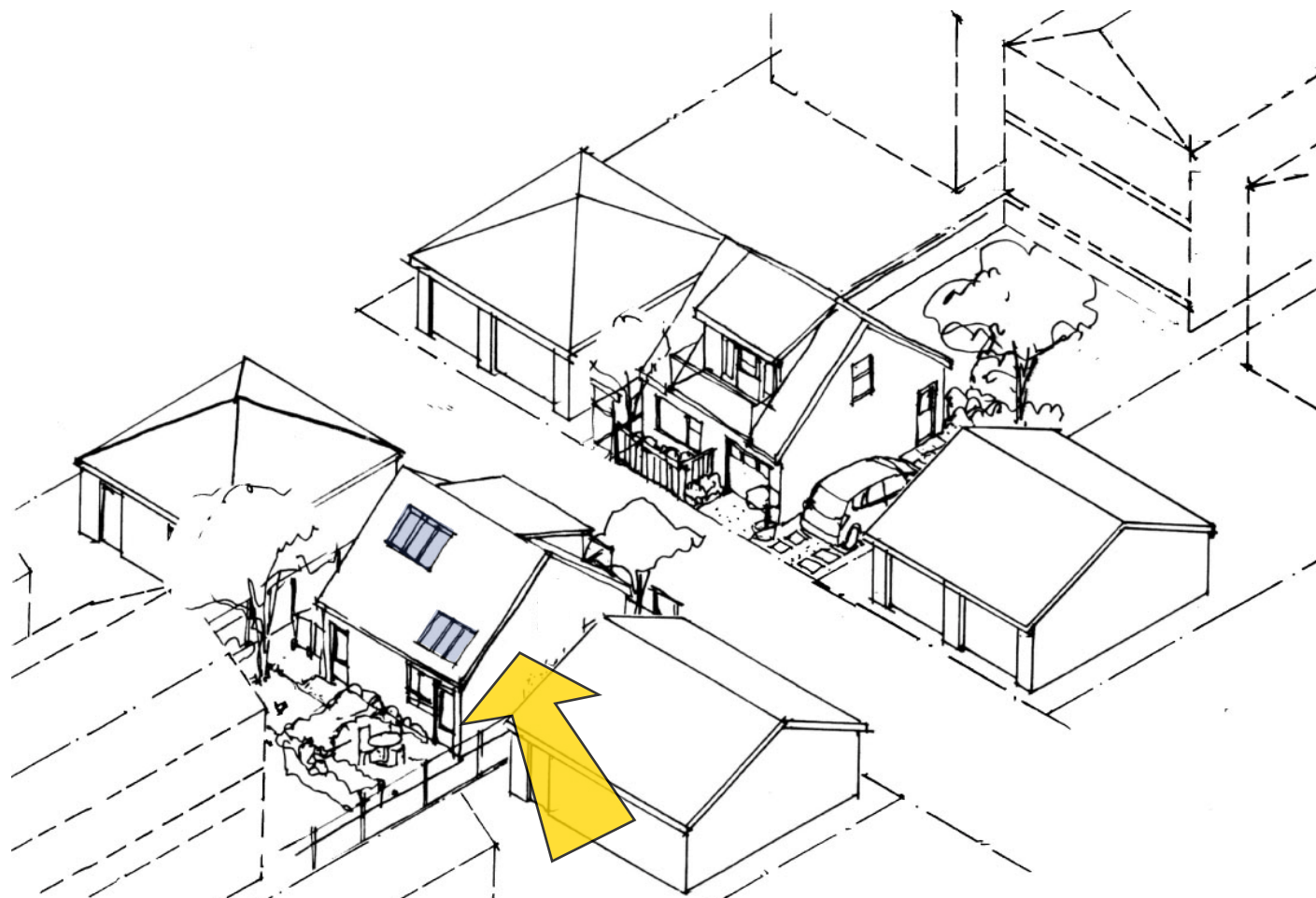
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windows



limited upper level sideyard and garden facing windows

Upper level windows facing sideyards and gardens are limited and/or designed to increase privacy and reduce overlook of neighbouring properties. If a 0.6m (2ft) sideyard setback is provided, windows are not permitted along the side facing the sideyard.

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outdoor space



access to private outdoor space

A laneway house should have access to private outdoor space in the backyard and/or on an upper level deck facing the lane.

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tree retention



retention of existing trees

Existing trees should be retained where possible. Relaxations for location, massing, and parking standards may be allowed in order to retain significant trees. Replacement trees are required as per the Protection of Trees Bylaw.

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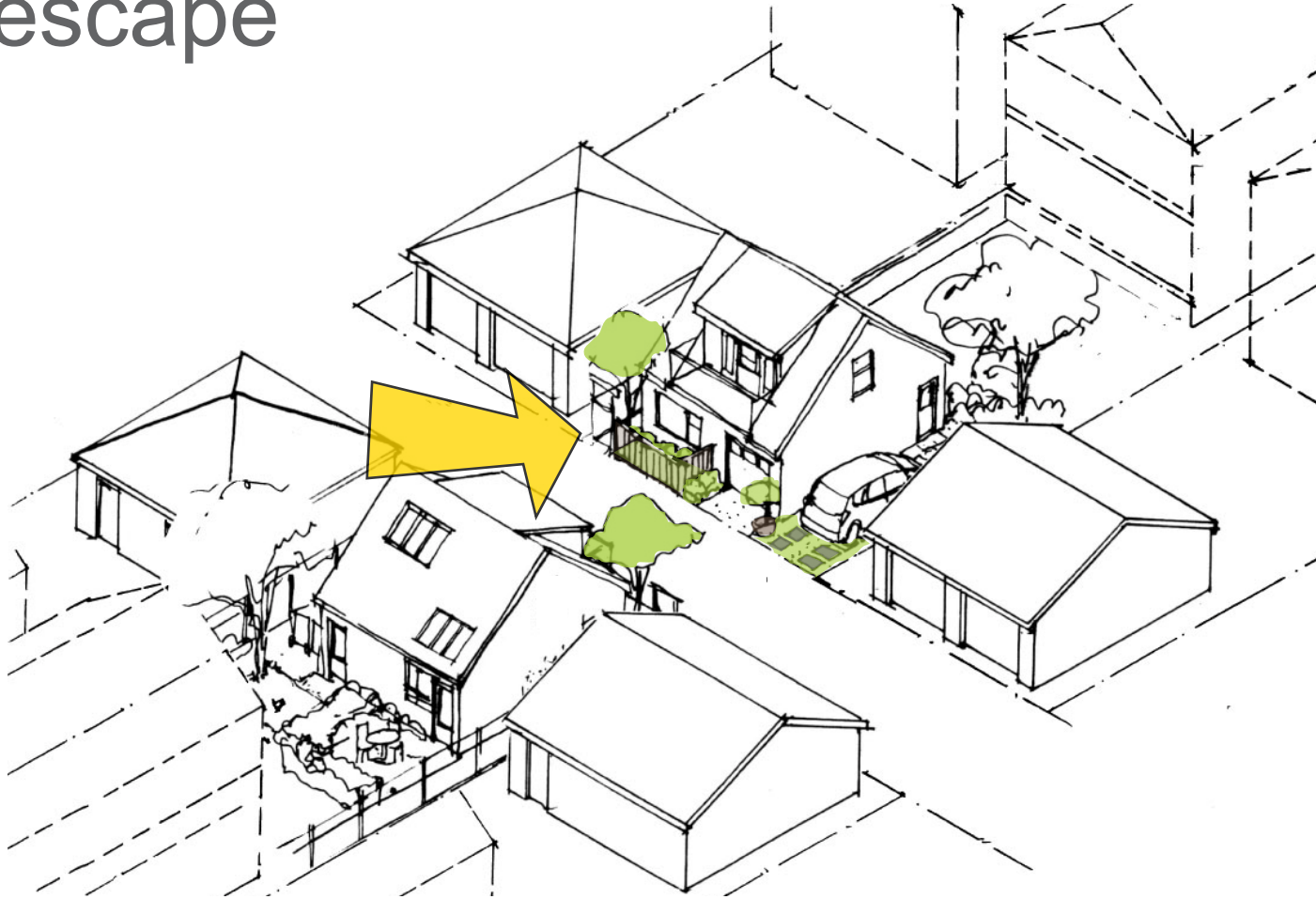
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lanescape



lanescape

Landscaping is encouraged along the edge of the lane. A permeable surface is required for parking areas. Green roofs, green walls, and drought-tolerant plantings and deciduous trees are also encouraged. See suggested list of drought-tolerant plants on page 29.

Pedestrian-friendly lighting, such as porch lights or bollard lights, help make the lane a safe and welcoming public space.

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ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

in this section:

- 33ft wide lot
- 50ft wide lot
- lane frontage

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33 ft wide lot

Concept 1A Interior view

- single level unit
- 644ft² + 40ft²
- 2 bedroom
- 1 exterior parking space



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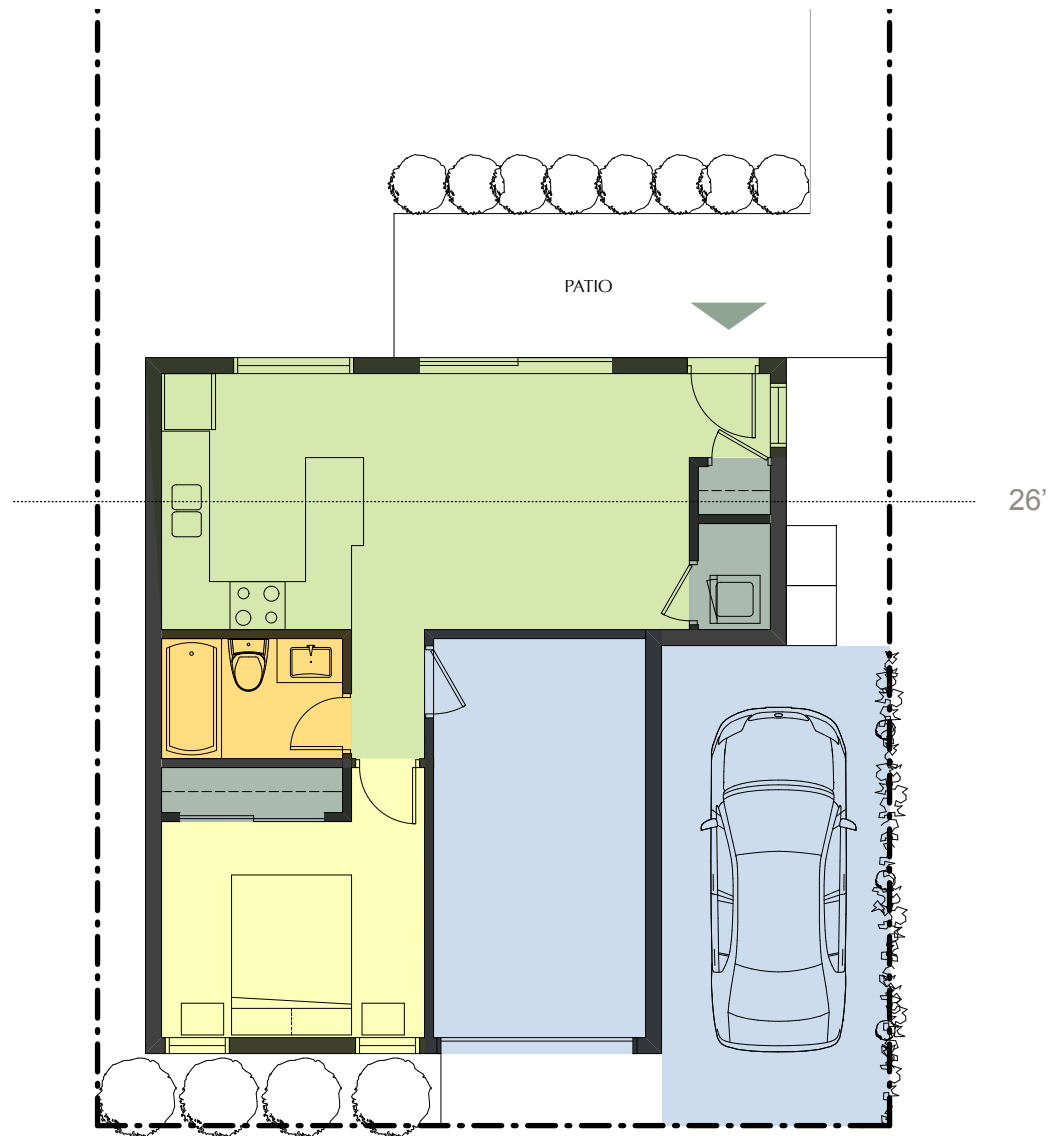
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These plans are illustrative examples only. They are intended to be diagrams of possible configurations and may not be fully resolved as final plans. Other configurations are also possible.

33 ft wide lot

Concept 1B Interior view

- single level unit
- 644ft² + 40ft²
- 1 bedroom
- 1 exterior parking space, 1 garage



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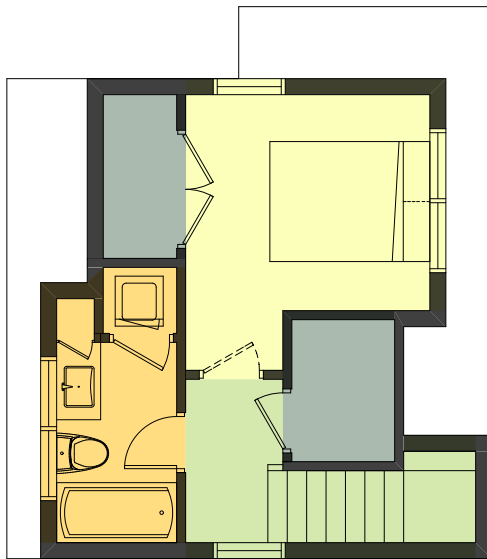
These plans are illustrative examples only. They are intended to be diagrams of possible configurations and may not be fully resolved as final plans. Other configurations are also possible.

33 ft wide lot

Concept 2A

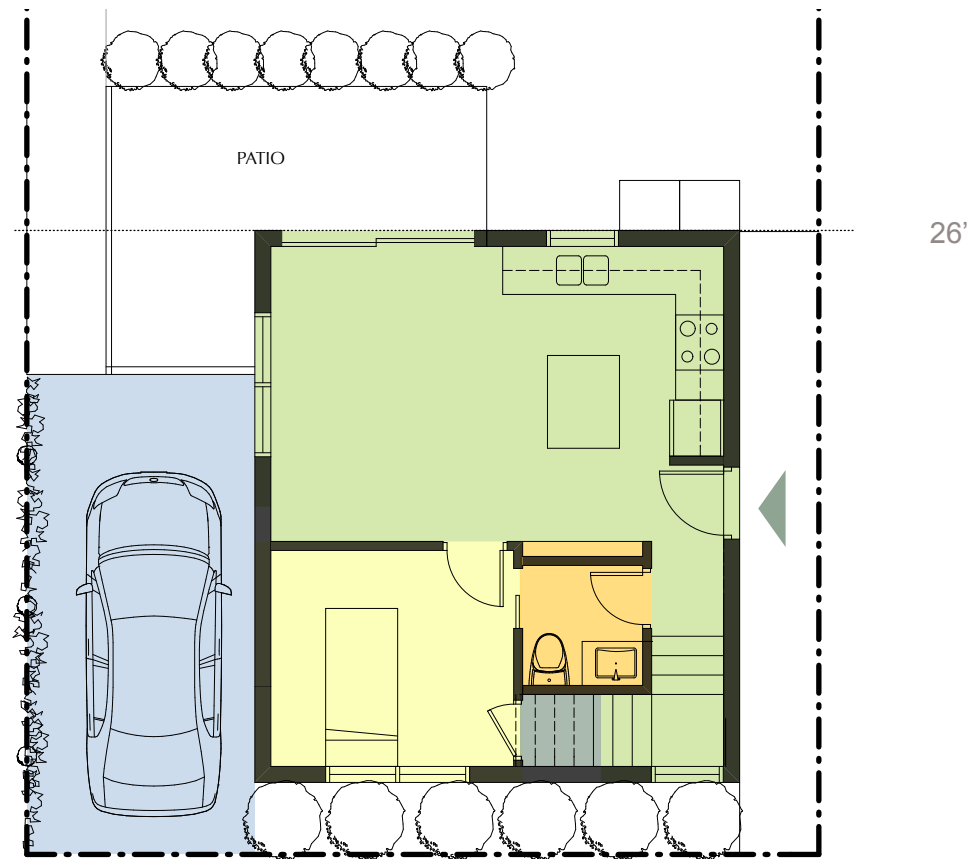
Interior view

- 1½ storey unit
- 644ft² + 40ft²
- 2 bedrooms
- 1 exterior parking space



upper floor

ground floor



These plans are illustrative examples only. They are intended to be diagrams of possible configurations and may not be fully resolved as final plans. Other configurations are also possible.

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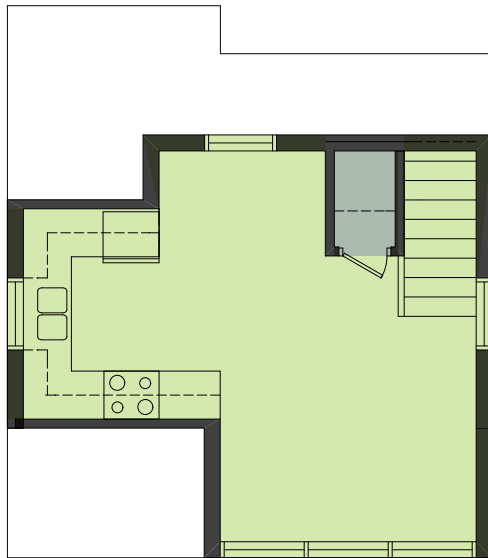
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33 ft wide lot

Concept 2B

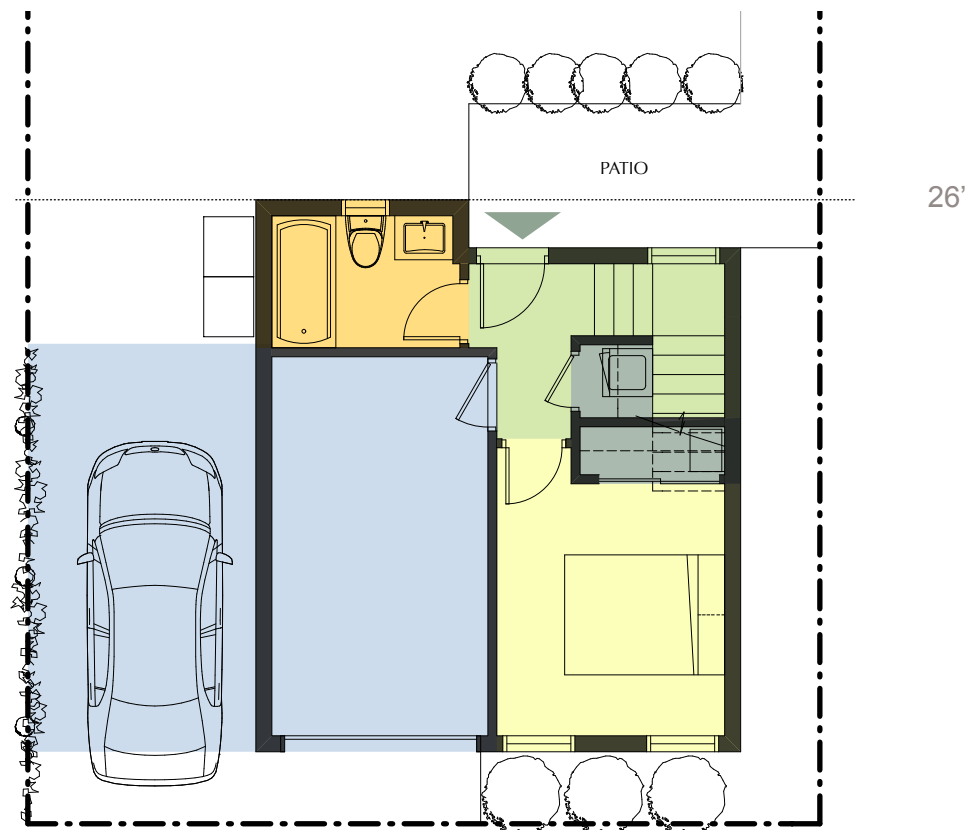
Interior view

- 1½ storey unit
- 644ft² + 40ft²
- 1 bedroom
- 1 exterior parking space, 1 garage



upper floor

ground floor



These plans are illustrative examples only. They are intended to be diagrams of possible configurations and may not be fully resolved as final plans. Other configurations are also possible.

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50 ft wide lot

Concept 3A Interior view

- 1 storey unit
- 900ft² + 40ft²
- 2 bedrooms
- 1 exterior parking space



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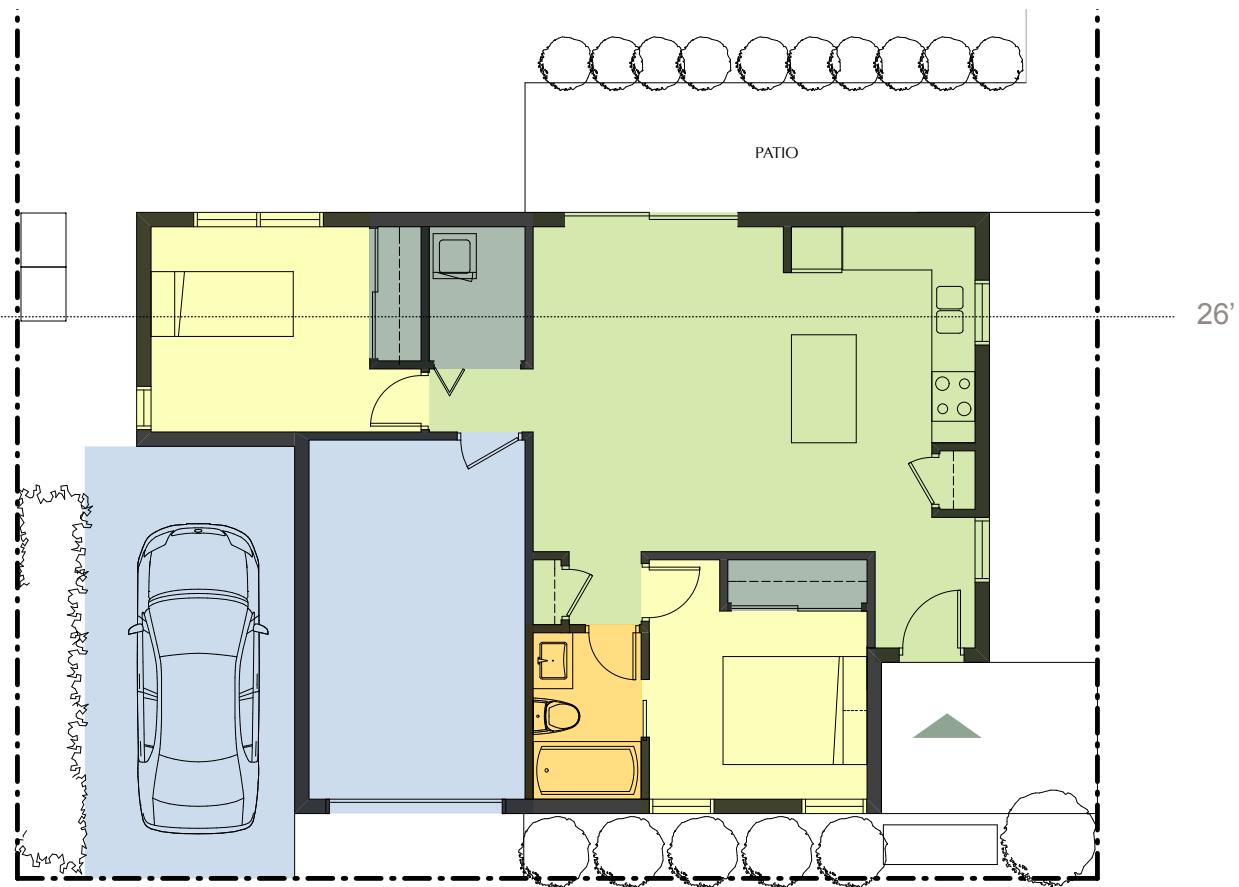
These plans are illustrative examples only. They are intended to be diagrams of possible configurations and may not be fully resolved as final plans. Other configurations are also possible.

50 ft wide lot

Concept 3B

Interior view

- 1 storey unit
- 900ft² + 40ft²
- 2 bedrooms
- 1 exterior parking space, 1 garage



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These plans are illustrative examples only. They are intended to be diagrams of possible configurations and may not be fully resolved as final plans. Other configurations are also possible.

50 ft wide lot

Concept 4A Interior view

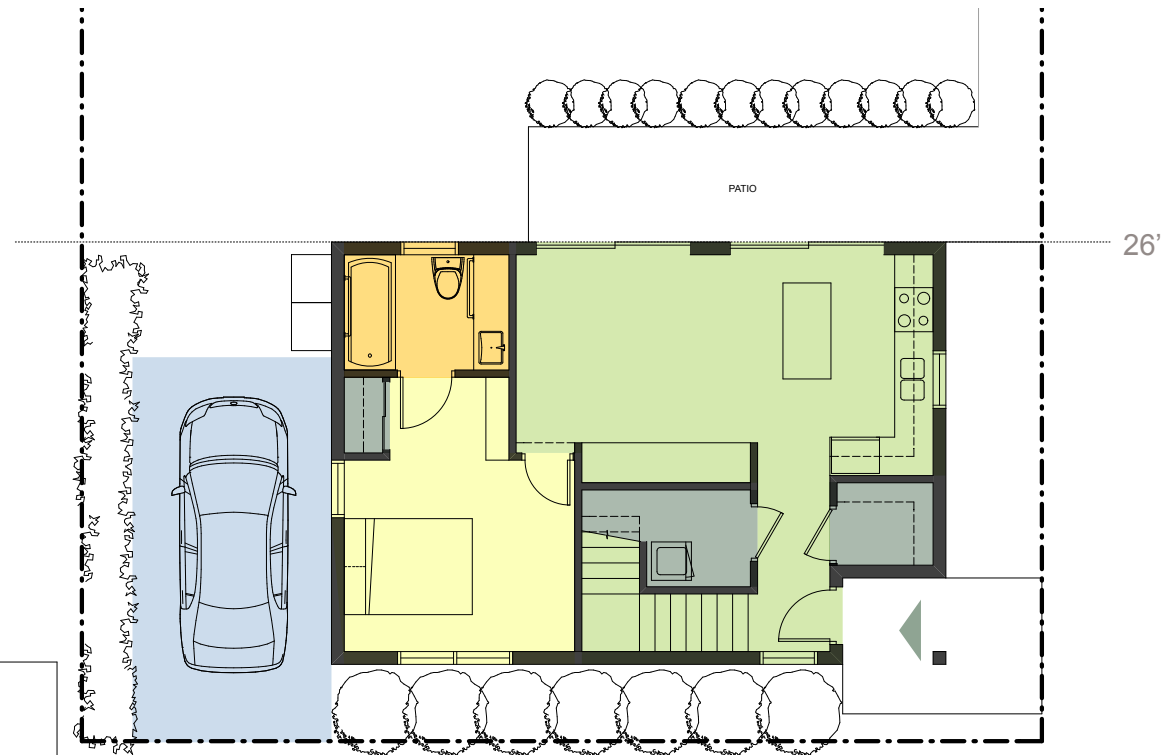
- 1½ storey unit
- 900ft² + 40ft²
- 2 bedrooms
- 1 exterior parking space



upper floor

These plans are illustrative examples only. They are intended to be diagrams of possible configurations and may not be fully resolved as final plans. Other configurations are also possible.

ground floor



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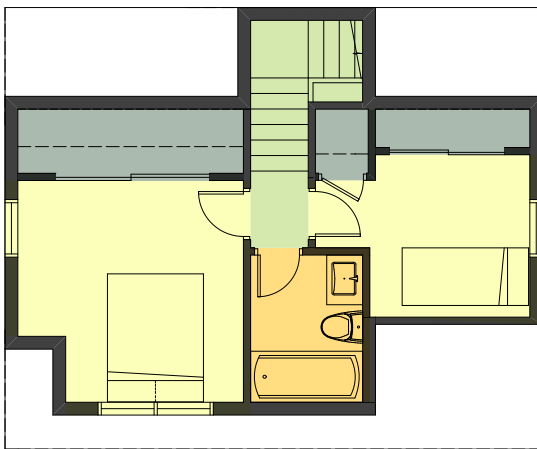
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50 ft wide lot

Concept 4B

Interior view

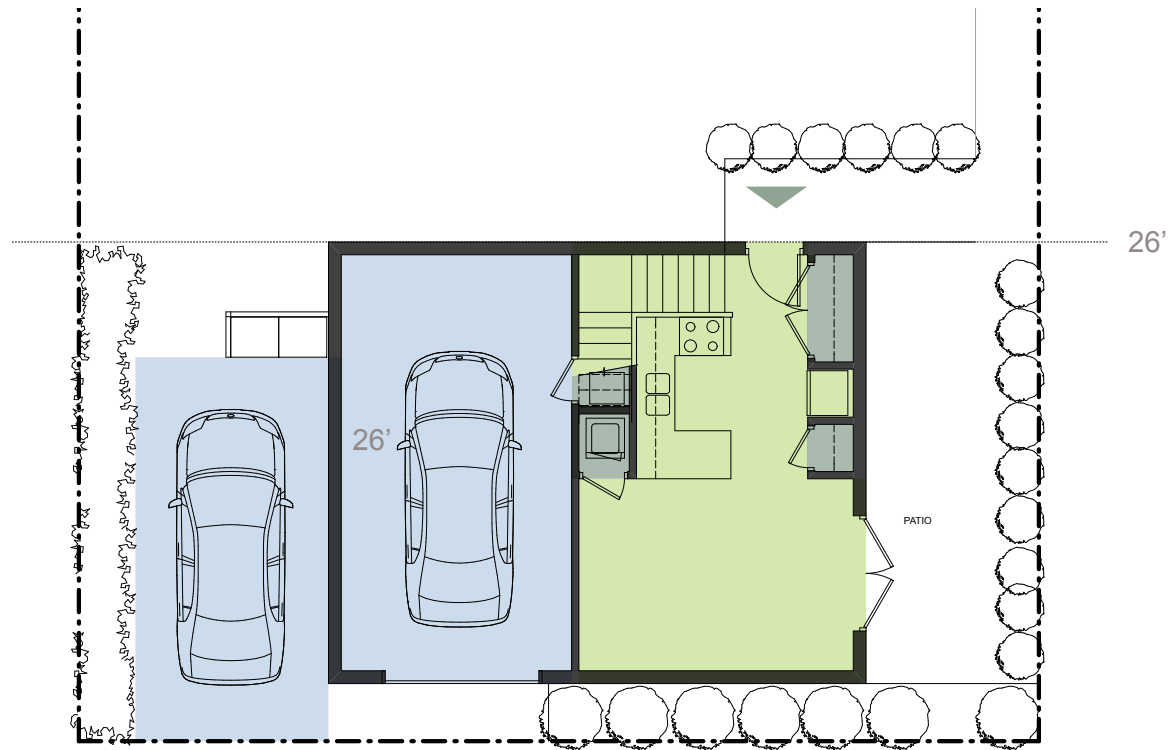
- 1½ storey unit
- 900ft² + 40ft²
- 2 bedrooms
- 1 exterior parking space, 1 garage



upper floor

These plans are illustrative examples only. They are intended to be diagrams of possible configurations and may not be fully resolved as final plans. Other configurations are also possible.

ground floor



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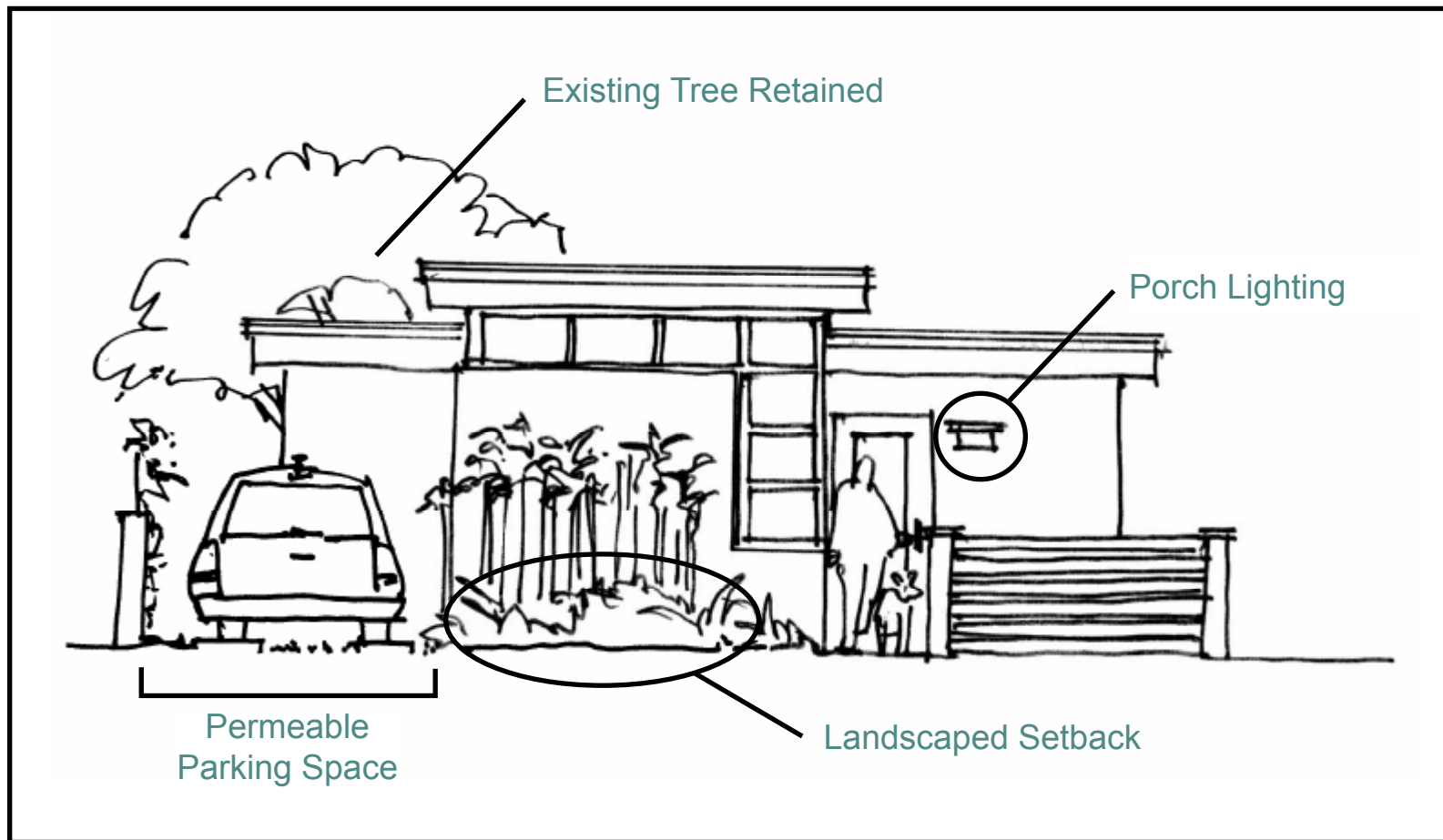
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lane frontage



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These sketches are illustrative examples only. Many other configurations are possible

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in this section:

- resources & contacts
 - ▣ city contacts
 - ▣ city regulations and guidelines
 - ▣ site servicing contacts
 - ▣ professional associations
- frequently asked questions

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resources & contacts

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- General Information
- Design Questions
- Application Requirements
- Regulations & Guidelines
- Application Submission



DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING SERVICES

CENTRE

604.873.7611

csg.enquiry.centre@vancouver.ca

- Sewer Connections
- Water Service



ENGINEERING CLIENT SERVICES

604.873.7323

<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/one-and-two-family-dwellings-and-laneway-housing.aspx>

resources & contacts

City Regulations and Guidelines

- LANEWAY HOUSING ZONING REGULATIONS
<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/BYLAWS/zoning/sec11.pdf>
- RS DISTRICT ZONING REGULATIONS
<http://vancouver.ca/your-government/zoning-development-bylaw.aspx>
- LANEWAY HOUSING GUIDELINES
<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/L007.pdf>
- LANEWAY HOUSING SUBMISSION CHECKLIST
<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/laneway-housing-checklist.pdf>
- GREEN HOMES PROGRAM
<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/green-home-building-policies.aspx>
- WATER WISE LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES
<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/waterwise-landscape-guidelines.aspx>
- PROTECTION OF TREES BY-LAW
<http://vancouver.ca/your-government/protection-of-trees-bylaw.aspx>

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Other Resources

- BC HYDRO
1.877.520.1355
<https://www.bchydro.com>
- FORTIS BC
Natural gas: 1.888.224.2710
Electricity: 1.866.436.7847
<http://www.fortisbc.com>
- HOMEOWNER PROTECTION OFFICE (HPO)
1.800.407.7757
<http://www.hpo.bc.ca>

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resources & contacts

Professional Associations

- GREATER VANCOUVER HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION
<http://www.gvhba.org>
- ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA CERTIFIED LAND SURVEYORS
<http://www.abcls.ca>
- ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
http://www.aibc.ca/pub_resources/aibc_outreach/ask_arch_faq.html
- BC SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
<http://www.bcsla.org/consulting/roster.asp>
- INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF ARBORICULTURE
<http://www.isa-arbor.com/home.aspx>

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frequently asked questions

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What is a 1½ storey laneway house?

The upper storey of a 1½ storey house has a smaller footprint than the first storey. The upper storey footprint can be no larger than 60% of the first storey. In addition, the upper storey should be designed to look smaller than the first storey. This is most easily done with pitched roof forms although flat and shed roof designs are possible

Are basements allowed in laneway houses?

Yes, basements are allowed. The floor area of the basement counts toward the total allowable floor area

Are garages allowed in laneway houses? How big can they be?

Yes, garages are allowed. Garage floor area is included in the maximum allowable floor area allowed for the laneway house and the parking space must conform to the minimum size as prescribed in the Parking Bylaw.

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frequently asked questions

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Q Can I have a garage in addition to the required exterior parking space?

Q Can I keep my existing garage and build a separate laneway house?

Possibly. Your lot size determines the floor area permitted for buildings in the rear yard of residential lots, as well as the number of parking spaces allowed. Contact the Development and Building Services Centre for further advice.

Q Will adding a laneway house have property tax implications?

Yes. Adding a LWH will increase the assessed value of your property, as would any addition or renovation to your home. This increased value may be reflected in increased property taxes and may impact your eligibility for the Homeowner Grant. However, as of 2016 homeowners with a laneway house may qualify for partitioning, which allows the value of the property to be divided by the number of residences. To find out if you are eligible to partition your property please refer to: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/reduce/home-owner-grant/>

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frequently asked questions

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Q My lot is steeply sloped. Can I still build a laneway house?

A Possibly. Contact the Development and Building Services Centre and/or a design professional to explore the possibilities for your site. A pre-application review meeting is recommended for steeply sloped sites.

Q Can I have a laneway house and a basement secondary suite?

A Yes. You can have both a laneway house and a secondary suite in all RS zones.

Q Can I park in the setback from the lane?

A No. The space between the lane and the laneway house is intended for landscaping and other permeable surface areas that enhance the lane.

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frequently asked questions

What types of permeable paving can be used for surface parking?

There are a number of options; permeable pavers, grass-crete, and gravel are some of the most common choices. Acceptable designs include a combination of paved wheel paths with ground-cover planting in the centre and along the sides.

Please note that permeable pavers will be considered *impermeable* area in the calculation of *permeable* and *impermeable* area, though we accept permeable pavers for surface parking.

Can the main access walkway come from the lane, or must it come from the street?

A fire access path that is at minimum 3ft wide must be provided from the street to the entrance of the laneway house.

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Questions?

If you have questions about this guide or laneway housing policy, please e-mail us at laneway.housing@vancouver.ca.

For permitting information and site-specific inquiries, please contact the Development and Building Services Centre at csg.enquiry.centre@vancouver.ca, or call 604.871.7613.

For general information, please visit our website at <http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/laneway-houses-and-secondary-suites.aspx>

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