Low Rise Apartments
Planning and Design Guidelines for Residential Infill in Mature Neighbourhoods

Using the Residential Infill Guidelines

These Guidelines are part of an overall set of Planning and Design Guidelines for Residential Infill in Mature Neighbourhoods. In reviewing these Guidelines for Low Rise Apartments, the following sections of the overall Infill Guidelines should also be consulted:

1. Section B, Objectives for Residential Infill;
2. Section D, General Guidelines for Residential Infill in Edmonton’s Mature Neighbourhoods; and,

In addition, other regulations established by the City of Edmonton may apply, including:
1. The City of Edmonton Zoning Bylaw, including the Medium Density Overlay;
2. An Area Redevelopment Plan may be in place which establishes specific requirements.

These Residential Infill Guidelines, together with the other plans and regulations, will determine whether or not a Low Rise Apartment development will be permitted and will establish any specific requirements that may need to be addressed before it can be approved.

Low Rise Apartments are three to four storey buildings that are designed in a variety of different configurations, depending upon the size and context of the site to be redeveloped. These buildings will normally contain many dwelling units that share a ground level entrance and share amenity space within the building or on the property.

Traditionally known in Edmonton as “Walk Up Apartments”, they are found in many mature neighbourhoods and were typically constructed as smaller buildings taking up only one or two lots and with no more than three storeys. More recent versions of Low Rise Apartments are often much larger and up to 5 ½ storeys high, which is not compatible with the smaller scale of development in mature neighbourhoods. Low Rise Apartments are an important form of housing in the City; the following infill Guidelines seek to encourage this form of housing while ensuring that it remains compatible with the neighbourhoods in which it is located.
Location + Distribution

1. Low Rise Apartment infill developments may be located in the following areas:
   a. On corner sites on the edge of the neighbourhood where the block face fronts onto an arterial or service road;
   b. On existing regional or community level shopping centre sites;
   c. On sites adjacent to neighbourhood commercial centres where the block face fronts onto an arterial or service road;
   d. Along the full length of old commercial strips;
   e. On Large Sites within mature neighbourhoods for which comprehensive plans have been prepared; or,

2. The maximum lot frontage for a Low Rise Apartment on a corner site or site adjacent to a commercial centre should be 46 metres.

3. The building should have direct access to a lane from which parking can be accessed.

f. On high frequency transit corridors as identified in the Transportation Master Plan.
Built Form + Design

1. The maximum height of a Low Rise Apartment should be four storeys; habitable basement development or lofts each count as one storey.

2. On sites abutting a Single Detached, Semi Detached or Row Housing zone, the height of the building adjacent to the side yard should be stepped down to the maximum height permitted in the adjacent zone.

3. To minimize visual impact on and maximize integration with the existing neighbourhood, Low Rise Apartments should:
   a. Incorporate fundamental design elements, proportions, and character found within the neighbourhood; and,
   b. Be constructed with durable, quality materials similar or complimentary to those found within the neighbourhood.

4. To optimize access to sunlight on adjacent properties, where a Low Rise Apartment building is proposed adjacent to a Single Detached Dwelling:
   a. The building mass should be stepped back or articulated; or
   b. The side yards should be increased.

5. The privacy of adjacent dwellings should be maintained by minimizing overlook from the building through:
   a. Setbacks and articulation of the building; and,
   b. Careful placement of windows, balconies, entrances and amenity areas.

6. The building should front onto a street.

7. The majority of ground level units with street frontage should have individual entrances that front onto a street. All other units should be accessed through a front entrance hall fronting onto a street.

8. Building facades should be modulated in plan and elevation and articulated to reduce the appearance of building bulk and to create visual interest. The building façade should be punctuated:
   a. At a maximum of eight metres along the building frontage with an indentation no less than two metres wide and two metres deep; and,
   b. At the primary street entrance to the building with an indentation of no less than two metres wide and two metres deep.

9. All units should have access to outdoor, ground level amenity space.

9. The maximum building length of Low Rise Apartments should be no more than 48 metres, permitting views through the site and limiting building mass along the block face.