

Bulletin

Access to Daylight, Views, and Ventilation in Dwelling Units

Effective: May 2, 2012

Last amended: June 14, 2022

Authority: Director of Planning

Background and Context

Access to adequate daylight, external views, and ventilation are basic requirements for habitable rooms in residential developments. In many districts these requirements are addressed by regulations governing the horizontal angle of daylight. In most cases this can be accomplished by providing each room with a window on an exterior wall.

Explanation

1 District Schedules with “Horizontal Angle of Daylight” Regulations

Development proposals are expected to comply with district schedule regulations at the time of submission, including those governing access to daylight.

These requirements can be met by ensuring that all habitable rooms have unimpeded access to natural light through a window or glazed balcony with adequate clearance from neighbouring developments. See Section 4.10 of the relevant district schedule for required angles and distances. See also calculation examples of horizontal angle of daylight in the diagram on page 3 of this bulletin.

In some districts, the clearance to adjacent development may be reduced as specified in the schedule. In general this reduction will only be appropriate for secondary rooms in a limited number of atypical dwelling units.

Floor plans may include a sleeping area (as seen in a studio apartment), that is located away from a window or balcony, so long as there are no partitions, doors, or any other elements around the sleeping area.

2 District Schedules without “Horizontal Angle of Daylight” Regulations

The same general standards of liveability are expected for dwelling units in an application for conditional approval.

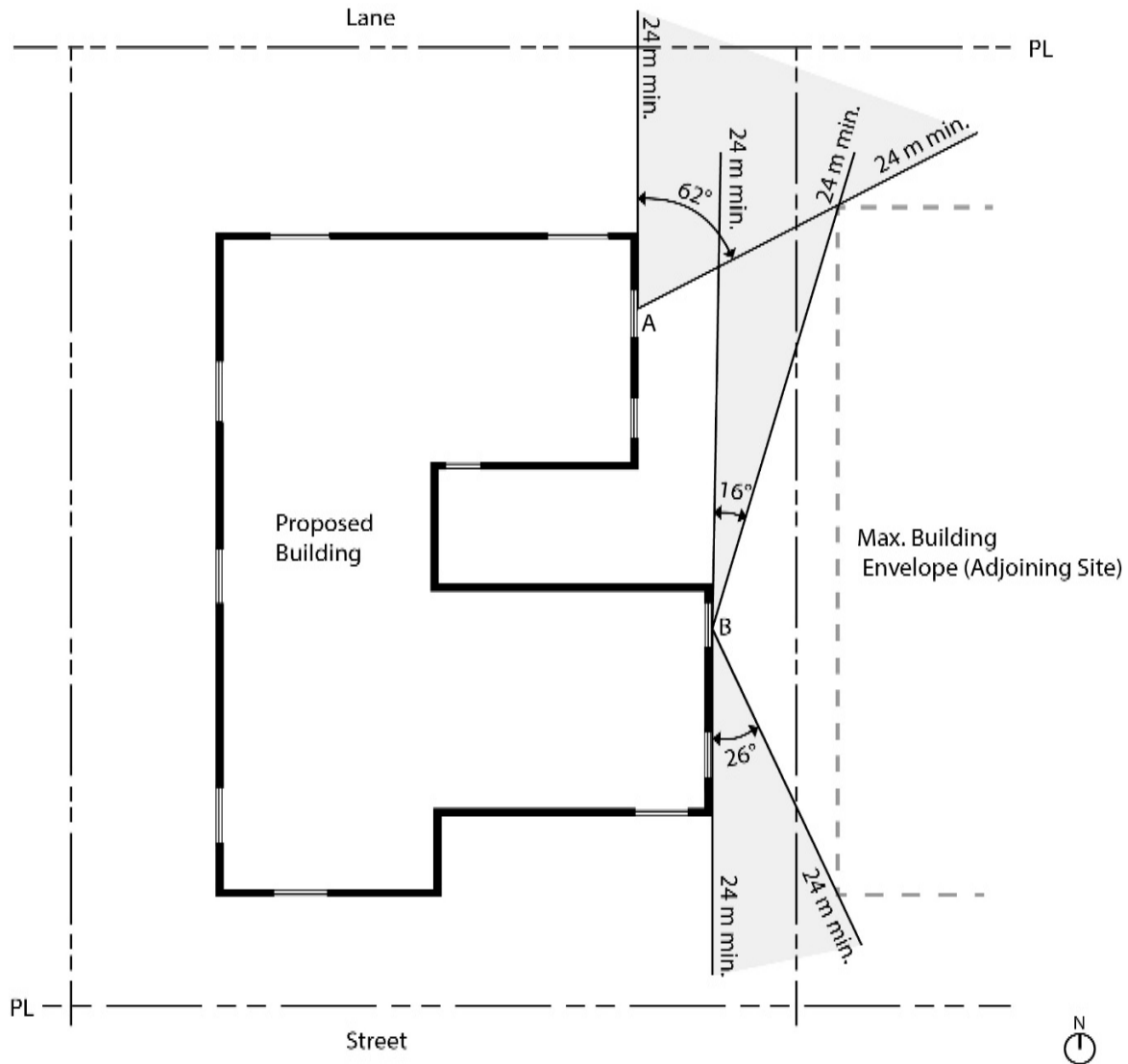
3 Areas with Guidelines Containing Habitable Room or Daylight Provisions

Where the applicable guidelines contain recommendations on habitable rooms or daylight, development proposals are expected to meet these guidelines in balance with other stated objectives.

4 Heritage Retention

Relaxations may be considered on development sites where the retention of a building on the Vancouver Heritage Register does not support a typical floor plan. Any proposals for internal rooms should be reviewed in detail with Planning staff before making an application. See Section 5.1.2 of the Zoning and Development By-law for more information.

Horizontal Angle of Daylight Diagram



Notes:

1. An obstruction would be the largest building that could be built on the adjacent site to the east. In this example, the adjoining site is zoned RM. We would use the minimum side, rear, and front yards for the calculation.
2. Window A satisfies the angle (min 50°) and distance (min 24 m) requirement.
3. Window B does not meet the min 70° angle for the sum of two angles (two angles only add up to 42°).
4. The same approach would apply to the windows on the west side of the proposed building.
5. District Schedules will specify what rooms within dwelling units are exempt from daylight angle requirements.