

TO: CITY MANAGER 1998 October 14

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING OUR FILE:12.160

**SUBJECT: SUITES IN SEMI-DETACHED DWELLING AT 1215-1217 DUTHIE AVENUE**

PURPOSE: To respond to the issues raised in the letter to Council from the owner of 1215-1217 Duthie Avenue

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to:  
Thelma Anna M. Gilliatt  
6195 Grant Street  
Burnaby, BC V5B 2K7

**R E P O R T**

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

Appearing on the agenda of tonight's Council meeting is a letter from Thelma Anna M. Gilliatt that raises a variety of issues regarding the presence of suites in her semi-detached dwelling located at 1215-1217 Duthie Avenue (see attached map). The purpose of this report is to respond to the issues raised in the letter for the information of Council.

In June, staff received a written complaint regarding the presence of an illegal suite in the first storey (ground level) of the 1215 Duthie Avenue side of the dwelling. Upon inspection it was found that the suite contained its own cooking facilities and was being run as a separate household, and therefore did not constitute a boarding or lodging use, where the preparation of meals in a rental unit is not permitted. Bylaw enforcement staff ordered that the range in the suite be removed, which was completed and the premises re-inspected in September. Since then, the tenant who occupied the second storey of 1215 Duthie Avenue has moved.

## 2.0 1215-1217 DUTHIE AVENUE

The property at 1215-1217 Duthie Avenue is developed with a two-storey side-by-side semi-detached building with one confirmed suite. Under the prevailing R4 District zoning of the property, a two-family dwelling is a permitted use. The suite, therefore, does not conform to the prevailing zoning.

## 3.0 SECONDARY SUITES AS A HOUSING OPTION

As part of the Official Community Plan implementation, the issue of secondary suites in single family dwellings is identified as a topic for further review. The OCP noted that suites in single family dwellings are increasingly being viewed as a way to provide more affordable ground oriented housing in existing neighbourhoods as well as a revenue source for homeowners. Recent changes to the Building Code created new standards for secondary suites in single family houses in order to allow the creation of suites at a lower cost than previous regulations. As the writer of the letter notes, places such as Coquitlam have taken advantage of these changes to embark on a program to legalize suites subject to a number of conditions such as a maximum unit size, provision of parking and requirement to pay extra utilities.

It is important to note that the changes to the Building Code and the actions taken by other municipalities all involve *suites in single detached houses only*. The Code changes are built on the premise that suites in single detached houses are different, in terms of health and safety requirements, than either two-family developments or apartments. The new portions of the Building Code pertaining to secondary suites would not apply to the development of a suite in a two-family dwelling. Similarly, all of those municipalities who have pursued policy changes with regards to secondary suites have done so in the context of single detached units.

Allowing suites in two family dwellings would, from a land use perspective, involve rezoning specific sites or areas for multiple family dwellings. This would be contrary to Burnaby's long standing policy of protecting the integrity of single and two family neighbourhoods and directing multiple family development to designated Town Centre, Urban Village and Apartment areas that are better served by transit and other supporting land uses.

## 3.0 CONCLUSION

The City received a complaint regarding an illegal suite at 1215-1217 Duthie Avenue. Staff investigated according to the normal procedure, compliance was achieved and the file closed.

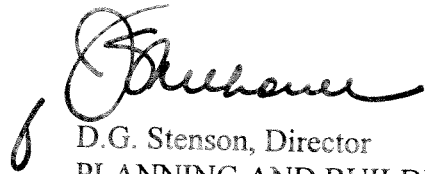
*Planning and Building*  
*Re: Suites in Semi-detached Dwelling*  
*at 1215-1217 Duthie Avenue*  
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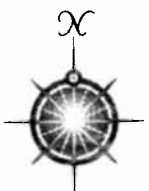
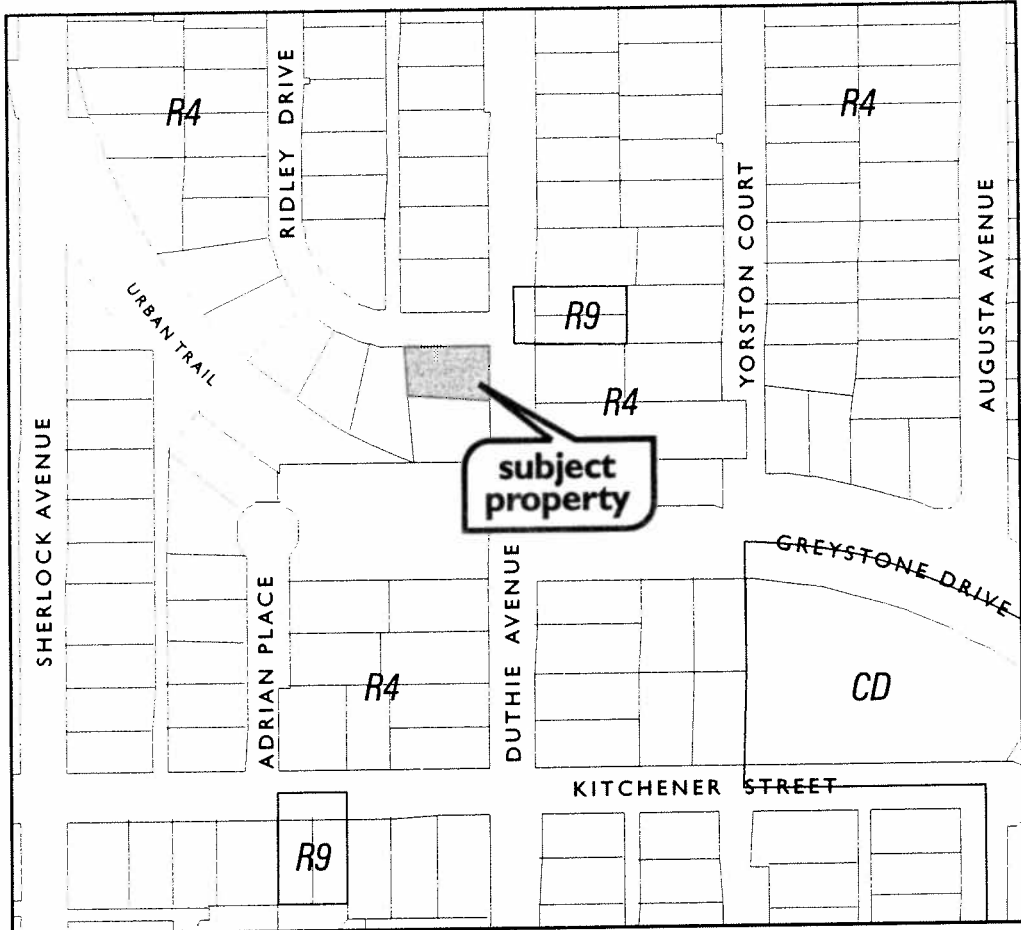
Arising from the Official Community Plan, the issue of secondary suites in single family houses has been identified as a topic for further review. However, the issue of allowing suites in two-family dwellings is outside the scope of this work considering the very specific Building Code amendments that were adopted affecting suites in single family houses only. In essence, allowing suites in two family dwellings would result in the creation of small multiple family buildings in single and two family areas.

This is for the information of Council.

  
BG\sa

cc: Chief Building Inspector

  
D.G. Stenson, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING



Subject Property  
1215 Duthie Avenue