



## UNDERSTANDING R-CODES FOR LAND SUBDIVISION AND BUILDING

# INTRODUCTION

If you are thinking about getting into property development, then one of the first subject's worthwhile understanding is the residential planning codes, otherwise known as the R-Codes.

Understanding what the R-Codes are and how they are calculated will help you to evaluate the development potential of your land or the land in question.





# THE PURPOSE OF THE R-CODES

The R-Codes are a State Government Planning Policy that is applicable to all residential property developments.

Ultimately, the purpose of the R-Codes is to control and manage residential development throughout Western Australia.

The R-Codes apply to all properties whether single storey homes (villas), two storey homes (town houses) or multi-unit living (apartments).

They determine important design elements such as street and lot boundary setbacks, open space, building height and size, sight lines, outdoor living areas, landscaping, vehicle access and parking, solar passive design and visual privacy.



# INTERPRETING R CODES FOR LAND SUBDIVISION

The R Codes can be used to work out if a property qualifies to be subdivided. In simple terms, R codes tell you how many dwellings or lots can be created on a 1 hectare (10,000 square metres) parcel of land provided you meet the minimum and average lot size for each newly created lot.

Generally, the higher the R code number, the more lots can be created.

There are 3 tiers to the R-Codes for Land:

Low density – Codes less than R30

Medium density – Codes R30 to R60

High density – Codes R80 and above

The majority of Perth's suburbs are zoned R20 or below, with R30, R40 and R60 becoming more prevalent in certain locations or activity centres within suburbs that provide good public transport, infrastructure and local amenities.

To calculate how many lots your property can be subdivided into, you must first determine which code applies to your lot. This can be easily found on most council websites. Just search maps or mapping and enter your property address or simply call the planning department of your local council.

# INTERPRETING R CODES FOR LAND SUBDIVISION

Once you have the designated R code for your property, simply use the table below as a reference.

Table 1 Condensed

R-Code	Site area per dwelling (m <sup>2</sup> )	Minimum lot area/ rear battleaxe (m <sup>2</sup> )	Minimum frontage (m <sup>2</sup> )	Open space	
				Min total (% of site)	Min outdoor living (m <sup>2</sup> )
R20	Min 350 Avg 450	450	10	50	30
R25	Min 300 Avg 350	425	8	50	30
R30	Min 260 Avg 300	410	-	45	24
R35	Min 220 Avg 260	395	-	45	24
R40	Min 180 Avg 220	380	-	45	20
R50	Min 160 Avg 180	380	-	40	16
R60	Min 120 Avg 150	380	-	40	16
R80	Min 100 Avg 120	380	-	30	16

For example – if your property sits on a block size of 692 square metres and has a code of R30, you require an average lot size 300 square metres per lot.

Simply divide 692 by 300 = 2.30. So you can subdivide your block into two lots (always rounding down not up).

However, if the same property has an R code of R40, you would require an average lot size of 220 square metres per lot. Therefore, 692 divided by 220 = 3.14. The property can now be divided into 3 lots.

Its important to remember, that provided you meet the minimum lot size as per the table, the blocks are not required to be equal in size when subdivided.

# INTERPRETING R CODES FOR BUILDING

Once you've established that your block can be subdivided, the next step is to understand what can be built on that subdivided lot and what you need to consider when it comes to building design.

Using the same example and taking the code of R30, you simply take the land area of 692 square metres and multiply it by the open space percentage, in this case 45%, to find out what size home you can build on that lot.

Open space generally refers to the area of the lot that is not covered by the building/s excluding outdoor living areas such as alfrescos and porches that are not enclosed on two sides or more.

So to calculate the maximum area you can cover with buildings, you take the land area of 692 square metres and multiply it by 45% (open space required) = 311.4 square metres.

That means you need a total of 311.4 square metres of open space and the balance 380.6 square metres (55% of the land area) can be covered with buildings. This is often referred to as site coverage which is the percentage of the site that can be covered with a building/s.

Given you can create two lots in this example, you could effectively split the 380.6 square metres into two and create each home of 190.3 square metres each.

Provided you don't exceed the total site coverage, the two homes don't have to be of equal size.



# INTERPRETING R-CODES FOR MULTIPLE DWELLINGS (APARTMENTS)

The area of multiple dwellings or apartment building has so many variables with each council and planning department usually having its own internal planning policy that can sometimes conflict or compliment the R codes.

Unlike table 1, the R codes in this section refers to the total area or square metres that can be built in relation to the size of the original property. This is referred to as the plot ratio. The plot ratio is a percentage of living area as a proportion of the land area.

Table 4 Condensed

R-Code	Maximum plot ratio	Minimum open space (% of site)
R40	0.6	45
R50	0.6	45
R60	0.7	45



For example a property of 645 square metres with a code of R60 would be calculated in the following manner:

645 multiplied by .70 (70%) = 451.5 square metres

# INTERPRETING R-CODES FOR MULTIPLE DWELLINGS (APARTMENTS)

How you utilize the 451 square metres is totally dependant on how big each apartment will be. One bedroom, two bedroom or three bedroom apartments will all vary in size but provided the total area of 451 square metres is not exceeded, you can create any combination of these apartment types.

As a guide, 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom apartments are approximately 70 square metres so in this case divide 451 square metres by 70 = 6.45.

Again, by rounding down, this property could potentially have 6 apartments built on it provided it ticks all the other compliancy issues around setbacks, vehicle parking, height restrictions, landscaping etc.

With so many multiple dwelling R code variables and interpretations, it really is worthwhile speaking with experts in this field as other elements such as dual zoning or commercial zoning could have a substantial impact on the potential for the property particularly if exceeding the plot ratio or not achieving the required number of car spaces for occupants and visitors.

Good design and a strong knowledge of local planning policies is really important in planning any mutli unit / apartment type project so getting it right from the beginning will eliminate a lot of stress and time to achieve the ultimate outcome of a successful and profitable project.

Contact Vision One Projects for a complimentary assessment of your next project.



# 3 SIMPLE STEPS TO GET STARTED

1. Find out the exact land size of the property you own or are interested in – visit your local council website or give them a call.
2. Establish the zoning of the property – visit your local council website or give them a call.
3. Use the information and charts in this document to establish the development potential of the land.



# CONCLUSION

Subdividing and developing is not an exact science but the information provided will give you a good indication of what is achievable based on the current zoning rules and codes .

To fully maximize the potential of any property, good design and building practices go hand in hand with understanding the codes and how to interpret them for the best return.

For further advice and assistance talk to our experienced professionals at Vision One Projects.

Call us on 9240 6020 or send us an enquiry via [www.visiononeprojects.com.au](http://www.visiononeprojects.com.au)