



Form & Character Development Permit Application Guide

What is a Form & Character Development Permit Area?

The Form & Character Development Permit Area (DPA) regulates the appearance of commercial and multi-family residential developments in Smithers. Within the DPA there are guidelines to ensure that:

- The downtown core remains the focal point of the community.
- Development contributes to the existing character and identity of Smithers.
- New development fits appropriately into existing neighbourhoods

Do I need a Development Permit?

If your property is located in a DPA you will need Council's approval for your project through a Development Permit. Within a DPA, an owner must obtain a Development Permit before subdividing land, constructing, adding to, or altering the building unless specifically exempt.

What do I need to consider before applying?

There are a few things to consider before you submit an application. The Development Services Department can help verify the following:

1. Check the **Official Community Plan** to see whether or not your property is in a Development Permit Area or if any exemptions apply.
2. Review the Form & Character DPA **Guidelines** to ensure consistency with the overall design of your proposed project.
3. Check the **Zoning** of the property to ensure the proposed use and density are permitted. Zoning also specifies requirements for parking, loading, lighting, and landscaping.
4. Consider the required **off-site works and services** for your development. This includes lane paving, drainage, sidewalk construction, etc.

What must I include with my application?

You must include the following information:

- Application + \$400 fee.
 - Authorization from the property owner, if required.
 - Letter of intent/rationale describing your project.
 - Building elevation drawings illustrating all sides of the building(s).
 - Site plan showing buildings and structures, storage areas, garbage areas, parking, loading, landscaping, and access.
 - Exterior building colour samples and proposed signage details.
 - Site profile as per the *Contaminated Sites Regulation*.
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What is the approval process?

- 1 Application** – Begin the approval process by submitting a complete application, supporting documents/plans and fee.
- 2 Review** – Town staff review your application for conformance with the Form and Character DPA guidelines, Zoning Bylaw and the Subdivision Servicing & Development Standards Bylaw. At this time we may request additional information.
- 3 Advisory Planning Commission** – If any variances are included in your application, a staff report is prepared for the consideration of the Advisory Planning Commission (APC). The role of the APC is to make a recommendation to Council based on the merits of the application. You are invited to attend this meeting to present your application and answer any questions.
- 4 Council** – Council receives your application, staff report, and recommendation from the APC (if applicable) at the next available meeting. Council may approve your application, approve with conditions or deny your application.
- 5 Permit Signing & Security Deposit** – If approved, you will be asked to come into the Town Office to sign the permit. At this time, a refundable security deposit may be required to guarantee landscaping or the plans to be revised based on approval conditions.
- 6 Development Permit Issued** – Once the Development Permit is signed, conditions are met and security paid, it is sent to the Land Title Office for registration on title. If construction has not started within 2-years of permit issuance, your permit will lapse.
- 7 Next Steps** - Prior to beginning construction, you may be required to enter into an Off-site Works and Servicing Agreement, including refundable security. Security is based on an estimate submitted to the Town. If approved, you will be required to submit refundable security equal to 120% of the estimate. At this point, a Building Permit can be issued. Security is returned upon successful project completion.

How much does it cost?

A Development Permit application fee is **\$400**. Additional costs associated may include off-site works (i.e. lane paving or sidewalk construction), service connections, refundable security and building permit fees.

How long will it take?

A Development Permit can usually be issued within a 4-6 week period, provided that complete and accurate information is submitted.

For Further Information Contact:

Development Services Department

1027 Aldous Street
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

Telephone: (250) 847-1600 Fax: (250) 847-1601

Office Hours

Monday to Friday (except Holidays)
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

This brochure is meant for informational purposes only. Please consult the Local Government Act and its regulations, the Town of Smithers Official Community Plan, Development Procedures Bylaw and other bylaws for definitive requirements and procedures. Copies of all Town bylaws are available online: www.smithers.ca.
