



FREE GUIDE · NSW

Can I build a duplex on my block?

Five checks to run before you pay for plans,
with the official source behind every number.



GUIDE

Duplex site checklist

STUDIO

Zen Drafting Studio

IMAGE

Design

OF 06

01



CHECKS 01-02 · ZONE AND LOT

Start with the zone, then the lot.

01 Is the land zoned R2, or another zone that allows a duplex?

Since 1 July 2024, dual occupancies are permitted with consent in R2 zones across NSW. Your council's LEP may allow them in other zones too. Some land is excluded, so check your lot, not just the street. Find the zone on the NSW Planning Portal Spatial Viewer or on a section 10.7 planning certificate.

02 Is the lot big enough, and wide enough?

Your council's LEP usually sets the minimum lot size, and it varies widely. In mapped Low and Mid-Rise Housing areas (generally within about 800 m walk of nominated town centres and stations), these state standards apply, and a stricter council control can't be used to refuse a duplex that meets them:

LOT SIZE	450 m ² minimum
LOT WIDTH	12 m minimum
FLOOR SPACE RATIO	0.65:1 maximum
HEIGHT	9.5 m maximum
PARKING	1 space per dwelling

EXAMPLE: CITY OF RYDE

Ryde lists 580 m² and 15 m at the building line for a complying development duplex (12 m with rear lane access). Other councils ask for more, or less.

General information only, not planning or legal advice. Rules change and councils differ. Checked against NSW Government sources on 12 Oct 2026.

SOURCES NSW Planning, Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy (updated 16 Jul 2025) and Summary of key provisions (updated 21 Mar 2025), planning.nsw.gov.au. City of Ryde, Low Rise Housing Diversity Code page, ryde.nsw.gov.au (undated, read 11 Oct 2026). NSW Spatial Portal map is indicative only.



CHECK 03 · FRONTAGE AND ACCESS

Then walk the street front.

03a Does the lot face a public road?

Each home generally needs its own street frontage, and width is usually measured at the building line, not the kerb. A battle-axe lot with no road frontage generally can't use the complying development path.*

03b Is there room for two driveways?

Each home usually needs its own driveway, a kerb crossover and a path to the front door. Street trees, power poles, stormwater pits and bus stops along the frontage can block a second crossover, so note them.

03c Is the land affected by a hazard or heritage?

The Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy doesn't apply on bushfire-prone land, some flood-prone land, heritage items and some other land, or anywhere in the Bathurst, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury or Wollondilly council areas. There, your council's own controls decide.

TIP

Photograph the full frontage from across the road, kerb to kerb. It answers most of these questions in one picture.

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SOURCES NSW Planning, Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy exclusions (updated 24 Apr 2026), planning.nsw.gov.au. *Not confirmed against the current Codes SEPP text on 12 Oct 2026; based on the NSW Low Rise Housing Diversity Design Guide (Jul 2020). Your council or certifier will confirm. Driveway points are general practice; controls sit in each council's DCP.



CHECK 04 · CDC OR DA

Two ways to an approval.

CDC

DA

WHO APPROVES

Your council or a registered certifier

Your council

THE TEST

Must meet every standard in the code

Assessed on merit against the LEP and DCP

TIME

Can be approved within 20 days

Generally longer; varies by council

HERITAGE

Not available on heritage items or in heritage conservation areas

The usual path on heritage land

LOT SIZE

The LEP minimum, or 400 m² if the LEP sets none

The LEP and DCP

THE QUICK TEST

If the land isn't excluded and the design meets every standard in the Low Rise Housing Diversity Code, a CDC may be possible. Miss one standard and it is generally a DA.

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SOURCES NSW Planning Portal, Low Rise Housing Diversity Code (last updated 20 Dec 2023), planningportal.nsw.gov.au. NSW Planning, Guide to Complying Development (rev. Aug 2023), planning.nsw.gov.au. Complying development applies only in R1, R2, R3 and RU5 zones where the LEP already allows the use. Proposed reforms may change this; re-check before you lodge.



CHECK 05 · WHAT TO GATHER

What to gather and send.

ORDER OR FIND

- ☐ **Section 10.7 planning certificate (from council)**
Shows the zone, the controls that apply and whether complying development is possible.
- ☐ **Title search and deposited plan**
Shows easements and restrictions on the title.
- ☐ **Detail and level survey**
By a registered surveyor. We design to it.
- ☐ **Sewer service diagram**
In Sydney, from Sydney Water. Shows where the sewer runs.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

- ☐ **The address, or the suburb and lot/DP**
- ☐ **What you want: two homes to keep, sell or rent**
- ☐ **Photos of the street front and the backyard**
- ☐ **Your rough timeline, and any survey or plans you already have**

You don't need all of it to start. The address alone is enough for a first look.

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SOURCES Council section 10.7 certificate pages (e.g. Sutherland Shire, Greater Hume). Survey and sewer diagram notes are general practice.



NEXT STEP

Send us your address. We'll check your block.

We look at the zone, the lot and your council's controls, then tell you which approval path looks likely and what it needs. Every project is quoted on its own.

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