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Planning
Development
Building Codes

November 24, 2023

To: All Interested Parties
From: Chuck Givens, Building Codes Manager
Subject: Townhouse Construction Compliance

There has been some confusion on code requirements for townhouse construction. For several days we have been in consultation with the International Code Council on this subject. After careful study and a code analysis on this subject, the City of Little Rock Building Codes Division have come up with the following regulations based on the 2021 AR Fire Prevention Codes, Vol I (Fire) Vol II (Building) Vol III (Residential) and other references codes. We think that this will clarify construction and code compliance with our Adopted Codes. Attached you will find the guidelines that we developed that will meet the intent of the code.

If you have questions, please contact one of the commercial plan examiners at 501-371-4724 or 501-371-4875.

cc: Jamie Collins, Director of Planning and Development
Davbram Flowers, Fire Marshal Chief
Plans Examiners

Townhouse Construction Requirements for the City of Little Rock, Arkansas

1. Framing Requirements:

- a. All Townhomes shall be constructed with 2-Hour Fire Barrier Wall extending through the roof and exterior walls or from the slab to the roof deck and front walls with a 1-Hour extension on both sides of the wall for 36" on the walls and 48" on the roof structure.
 - i. Doors and Windows must be fire rated if they are installed in this section of wall.
 - ii. Overhead doors are not allowed to be installed in the fire rated wall section listed above.
- b. 2-Hour Fire Barrier Walls shall be independently constructed from all roof and floor loads and must remain standing throughout a fire event. No framing members are allowed to pass through the fire wall.
- c. No power, gas, sewer, water, phone, security wiring, is allowed to be installed in the 2-Hour fire barrier walls. No exceptions will be granted.
- d. 2-Hour wall must extend out into the soffit to the back of the sub-fascia and down to the bottom of the soffit.
- e. Soffit Vents must be broken 48" from the 2-hour fire barrier wall.
- f. Ridge Bents must be broken 48" from the 2-hour fire barrier wall.

2. Utilities:

- a. Electrical
 - i. Separate Electrical Services are required. Each unit must have its own separate electric meter and disconnecting means on the outside of the unit.
 - ii. No electrical allowed in 2-hour fire barrier walls.

b. Water

- i. A single water meter is allowed but water must enter each unit from the outside with a water box / valve / union assembly before entering the unit.
- ii. Each unit is required to have its own water heater.

c. Sanitary Sewer

- i. A single sanitary sewer service is allowed in units that are leased to the occupants.
- ii. Each unit individually owned must have its own sanitary sewer service.
- iii. Each unit individually owned where the yard is also owned must have its own individual sanitary service on the property under ownership.
- iv. Cleanouts required at the entry and exit from the building.

d. Natural Gas

- i. A single natural gas meter is allowed in buildings that are leased to the occupants or units where the building unit is owned but not the yard.
- ii. Gas service must enter each unit from the outside and have a shutoff on the outside of each unit.
- iii. Each unit individually owned where the yard is also owned must have its own natural gas service meter and service. Services must be contained within each individual yard.

e. HVAC

- i. All units must have their own designated HVAC System. No sharing within the overall building or yard area.

NOTE: A site utility plan is required for all townhouse construction.

NOTE: Townhouse construction done in side by side construction methods must have separately derived utility services for Electrical, Water, Sanitary Sewer, Natural Gas and HVAC with all systems contained in front / back yard building lines extending to a shared utility easement.

NOTE: If Townhouse Units cannot comply with utility requirements they are classified as condominiums and are required to have fire sprinkler installations throughout and are allowed to be separated by 1-hour fire walls.