



ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS & ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

December 23, 2020

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADU)

Accessory dwelling units (ADU) are permitted in all residential districts subject to the following requirements:

- **Number.** One (1) ADU shall be allowed per residential lot in conjunction with any detached single-family structure (See Olympia Municipal Code [OMC], Section 18.04.080(A)(3) regarding ADUs in new subdivisions).
- **Location.** The ADU shall be permitted as a second dwelling unit added to, created within, or detached from the primary dwelling. The ADU shall be oriented in a way that maintains, to the extent practical, the privacy of residents in adjoining dwellings (See OMC, Chapter 18.175, Infill and Other Residential Design Guidelines).
- **Size.** The ADU shall have a gross floor area of no more than eight hundred fifty (850) square feet.
- **Occupancy.** No more than one (1) family (defined in Chapter 18.02, Definitions) is allowed to occupy an ADU.
- **Existing ADUs.** Accessory dwellings created prior to June 19, 1995, may be approved subject to applicable requirements. If the owner of an existing unauthorized ADU applies to make the unit legal, but cannot meet all of the standards, he/she will be allowed a "grace period" of six months from date of application to comply with applicable standards. However, where health and safety is an issue, the Building Official will determine when the necessary modifications must be made. If the owner cannot meet the standards, the unauthorized accessory unit must be removed or its use as a dwelling must be suspended.
- **Deviation from Requirements.** The Director or the Director's designee may allow deviation from the requirements of this section (18.04.060(A)) as follows:
 - To allow use of the entirety of a single floor in a dwelling constructed two (2) or more years prior to the date of application in order to efficiently use all floor area; and
 - To enable ADUs to be established in structures constructed prior to June 19, 1995, which are located in rear or side setbacks, provided that Building Code requirements and the Development Standards contained in Section 18.04.080 are met.

Other requirements to consider when constructing an ADU:

- Connections to city sewer and water services can share the same connections as the primary home.
- Setbacks -
 - Structure must be five (5) feet from any interior side property line and ten (10) feet from a flanking street side yard.
 - Detached ADUs may encroach into the rear yard. However, if the rear yard does not abut an alley, the accessory unit must be set back ten (10) feet from the rear property line.
- **Building Height** Maximum height of detached ADUs is **24 feet**, measured at mid gable.
- **Design Review** of the ADU is required. The review is conducted through the building permit application process. Design review fee and Residential Design Review Application id needed (design criteria below).
- **Impact fees** are applicable and are paid at building permit issuance (*see current rate schedule for fee amounts*).
- **ADU Fire Sprinklers** OMC 16.04.020, 16.04.040(6). Fire sprinklers shall be provided in all new ADUs permitted for construction after September 19, 2014. This shall apply to attached and detached ADUs. When attached, only the new ADU portion is required to be sprinkled. The attached structure is recommended to be sprinkled as well but it is not required. Detached ADUs shall be fully sprinkled.
- **Parking** A parking space is allowed but not required. Some areas of the city require a [residential parking pass](#) to park on the street.

DESIGN REVIEW for ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADU)

BUILDING DESIGN

REQUIREMENT: Reflect the architectural character of the primary residence in an ADU through use of related building features.

GUIDELINES:

1. Replicate or approximate roof forms and pitch found on the existing residence.
2. Use window patterns and proportions similar to those on existing residence.
3. Use building facade material and colors that match or are compatible with those used on the existing residence.



ADU ENTRY FEATURES

REQUIREMENT: Provide a clearly defined building entry for an ADU that is easily accessible from the street or the existing residence. Provide a well-lighted, paved sidewalk to the building entry.

GUIDELINE:

1. The entry to an ADU may be shared with the primary residence.
2. When there is a separate entry, construct an identifying feature, such as a porch, stoop and/or an eave overhang that is integral to the ADU structure.
3. When an exterior stairway to the main entrance to the ADU is needed, avoid the use of open metal, prefabricated stairs



ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

Accessory structures are permitted in all residential districts subject to the following requirements:

- **Time of Establishment.** Accessory structures shall not be built prior to commencing construction of the main building on the lot. However, lots may be created which contain an accessory structure (without an associated primary use) constructed prior to submission of the subdivision application.
- **Subordination to Primary Use.** Accessory structures shall be clearly incidental and subordinate to the use of the lot (e.g., structures used for storage of personal property or the pursuit of hobbies) or used for agricultural purposes. In low density residential zoning districts each accessory structure shall not exceed eight hundred (800) square feet in size, except for structures accessory to an agricultural use which are located on a parcel one (1) acre or larger in size.
- **Garages.** Private garages shall meet the following standards:
 - Garages shall not exceed a total of eight hundred (800) square feet of floor space per dwelling unit.
 - Garages exceeding eight hundred (800) square feet per dwelling unit may be permitted as conditional uses in the districts specified in Table 4.01 provided that they will not be adverse to the public interest and are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The Hearing Examiner shall establish a maximum size for garages receiving conditional use approval. See Section 18.04.080.
 - Maximum building height on detached accessory structures is **16 feet**, measure at mid-gable.

SETBACKS

A **detached garage** may be set on the property line if the garage door is at a right angle to the alley entrance. Garage walls on or within 3 feet of the side property line, however, must be fire walls and have no windows or other openings. A detached garage may be set on the rear property line, but if the garage door faces a side yard (flanking street), it must be set back 20 feet from that side yard. In this case, the wall on the rear property line needs be a fire wall. A detached garage may be set on both the rear and side property lines if it has access from the front yard. In this case, both walls must be fire walls. If the garage doors face the alley, it must be setback 10 feet from the alley.

A **detached accessory structure** may be located anywhere within the rear forty feet of the lot, except when adjacent to a flanking street side yard (10-foot setback). The structure must be at least 6 feet from other structures.