



FAQ: ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (“ADUs”)

City of Burbank - Planning Division
Community Development Department

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WHERE CAN I BUILD AN ADU?

- ADUs are allowed on lots zoned R-1, R-1-H (Horse Keeping), R-2, R-3, R-4, MDR-3, and MDR-4.
- In the R-1-H Zone, ADUs may be created only by converting an existing garage, guest dwelling, or square footage within the main dwelling unit; horse keeping facilities cannot be converted into an ADU.
- In the Mountain Fire Zone or the R-1-H Zone, no more than one ADU *or* one Junior ADU is permitted.
- Unless otherwise determined by the Public Works Director, all existing and proposed structures must be located outside of any easement or dedication.

WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM SQUARE FOOTAGE?

- Regardless of A) the size of the existing residence, B) maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR), C) maximum lot coverage, or D) maximum density, an attached or detached ADU can be built on any lot where an ADU is permitted.
- The maximum sq. ft. of a detached or attached one-bedroom/studio ADU is 850 sq. ft.
- An ADU greater than 850 sq. ft. must provide at least two bedrooms, and cannot exceed 1,000 sq. ft.
- The maximum sq. ft. of an attached or detached ADU in the Mountain Fire Zone is 800 sq. ft.
- Lots with ADUs built prior to December 17, 2019 cannot subtract the existing ADU square footage from the existing FAR to build an addition to the main dwelling.
- When an attached balcony, porch or patio is provided in conjunction with an ADU, if said structure is covered, it shall count towards the total ADU square footage.
- If a cover such as a porch or similar type structure is provided over the main entrance of the ADU, and is supported by posts, 25 square feet of the said cover will not count towards the maximum allowable square footage of the ADU.

WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM HEIGHT ALLOWED?

- ADUs attached to the main dwelling have a height limit of 20 feet to the top of plate and 30 feet to the top of the roof or architectural feature(s).
- When a detached ADU is built on top of a garage, an accessory structure, or another ADU, the height is limited to 20 feet to top of plate and 23 feet to top of roof or architectural feature(s).
- When an ADU is not built on top of another structure or when it is not attached to a single-family dwelling, it is limited to one story with a maximum height of 12 feet to top of plate and 17 feet to the top of roof or architectural feature(s).

WHAT ARE THE REQUIRED SETBACKS?

- The required rear and side-yard setback for an ADU is 4 feet, whether attached or detached from the main dwelling.
- When an ADU is built on top of a garage or accessory structure, a 4-foot rear and side yard setback is required.
- The minimum required front setback is the same as the minimum setback for the zone in which the ADU is located.
- The required separation between ADU walls and the walls of other structures is 5 feet, and 4 feet from eave-to-eave.
- When a permitted garage, portion of the main dwelling, or accessory structure is converted into an ADU, any legal-nonconforming setback can be retained; any portions or additions that go beyond this footprint must meet the required setback requirement.

- When a permitted garage, portion of the main dwelling, or accessory structure is demolished to facilitate the construction of an ADU, the ADU must maintain the vertical and horizontal dimensions (“envelope”) of the non-conforming structure within the nonconforming setbacks.

IS PARKING REQUIRED?

- Parking for an ADU is not required when the property is located within one-half mile walking distance from public transit or when the street requires a parking permit.
- When an existing parking structure is demolished or converted to facilitate the construction of an ADU, that parking does not have to be replaced.
- When an ADU is not exempt from required parking, one covered/uncovered space per ADU shall be provided onsite.

ARE THERE ANY DESIGN STANDARDS?

- ADUs must match the design of the main dwelling (e.g. roof forms, materials, architectural details, etc.)
- When a garage is converted into an ADU, the garage door must be removed and replaced with design treatments that are consistent with the overall architectural design of the primary dwelling unit.
- ADUs must have a separate entrance when attached to the main dwelling.
- All ADUs must have a separate entrance. In detached ADUs, the entrance orientation must be compatible with the neighborhood character as determined by the City Planner.

WHAT ABOUT ADUs IN MULTI-FAMILY ZONES?

- Up to two detached ADUs from the main dwelling(s), may be built on a multifamily-zoned lot. The two ADUs can be attached or detached from each other. These ADUs must also provide the required wall-to-wall separation of 4 feet and eave-to-eave separation of 5 feet.
- Additional ADUs may be created from existing, non-livable spaces within or attached to the existing multifamily building such as attics, basements, and garages. The number of such ADUs is at minimum one but no more than 25% of the number of existing units in the multifamily building(s).

WHAT IS A JUNIOR ADU?

- A Junior ADU is a unit created within the envelope of an existing single-family home or attached garage located within the R-1 or R-1-H zone. A Junior ADU must have a separate entrance from the main dwelling.
- Where allowed, Junior ADUs cannot exceed 500 sq. ft.
- Parking is not required for a Junior ADU.
- A cooking facility with appliances that meet the definition of Kitchen as defined in Section 10-1-202 of Title 10, Chapter 1 of the Burbank Municipal Code must be provided.

IS OWNER OCCUPANCY REQUIRED FOR AN ADU?

- Owner occupancy and covenant is required with the construction of a Junior ADU. The owner is required to live in either the main dwelling or the Junior ADU.
- Owner occupancy is not required when only an ADU is constructed.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

- All non-ADU structures not associated with the construction of an ADU or not providing internal access with said ADU must be reviewed under a separate permit.
- For instructions on how to apply for a building permit for an ADU please visit the link below:
<https://www.burbankca.gov/departments/community-development/submit-building-permit-applications>
- For the full text of the ADU Ordinance and submittal process:
<https://www.burbankca.gov/departments/community-development/planning/accessory-dwelling-units>