

# Accessory Dwelling Unit Homeowner's Handbook



**City of Portsmouth, NH**



# Acknowledgments

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Accessory Dwelling Unit Homeowner's Handbook  
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[New Hampshire Housing](#)

City of Portsmouth Land Use Committee

City of Portsmouth Housing Blue Ribbon Committee

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This project is being supported, in whole or in part of, Federal award number SLFRP 0145 awarded to the State of New Hampshire by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

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*Accessory dwelling units are an important component of expanding New Hampshire's housing supply. ADUs (also known as in-law apartments and granny flats) are a proven way to expand the supply and diversity of housing without further land development. An ADU supports the efficient use of existing housing stock and infrastructure, and results in adding a more affordable housing option for individuals and families in all stages of life.*

*- New Hampshire Housing*

## Get Started

### What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit?

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a self-contained residential unit with its own living room, kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping facilities, located on a single-family residential property. It can be either attached or detached from the single-family home (also referred to as the primary dwelling unit or principal dwelling unit).

An ADU can be made from new construction that creates an addition or a partition of the main house, the conversion of an existing accessory structure that is located on the property, or from the development of a new standalone structure. ADUs are known by many names such as an accessory apartment, mother-in-law suite, garden cottage, or secondary dwelling unit. Whatever the name, an ADU is smaller than the principal dwelling unit. In Portsmouth, both residential dwellings must be in single ownership, the ADU cannot be sold or owned separately from the primary dwelling unit.

ADUs represent a low-density housing option that contribute to housing affordability and options in the City. They are a housing type that respond to changing household needs and lifestyles, adding housing supply, and infill development that facilitates better use of existing housing inventory and property. This handbook seeks to promote ADU creation, while providing stability and consistency with the established character of Portsmouth's residential neighborhoods.

### Benefits

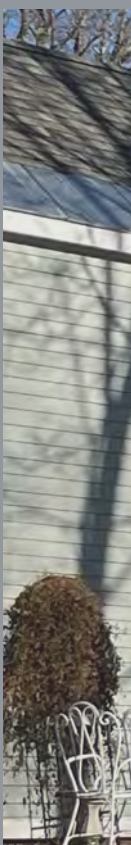
Creating an ADU offers an affordable housing option that benefits both the homeowner and the community. In a community with high housing demand, such as Portsmouth, an ADU offers an affordable way to increase housing stock, create a supplemental source of income for homeowners, provide housing for citizens wanting to age in place, and accommodate the increasing trend of family members who desire to stay near each other without foregoing an independent lifestyle.

*"An individual's housing needs change over time, and an ADU's use can be adapted for different household types, income levels, employment situations and stages of life.*

*- AARP*



Accessory Dwelling Unit









# The Many Types of ADUs

The two main categories of ADUs allowed in Portsmouth are attached and detached. The attached category includes units created from the conversion of space within a single-family residence or by creation of additional living space outward or upward from the home. The detached category includes units created from the conversion or construction of an accessory structure on the property.

Within each of the two categories are several types of ADU. Each type is depicted in the **Design Your ADU** section with examples showing potential configuration of size, architectural style, and location. There are descriptions and representative illustrations of floor plans and exterior views to portray how an ADU may be integrated into a single-family property in Portsmouth.

## ADUs can vary, but the following criteria always apply in Portsmouth:

- ADUs can be a maximum of 750 square feet of gross living space
- ADUs are only allowed on single-family properties
- Both dwellings must have the same owner
- The owner must claim one of the dwellings as their principal residence
- One off-street parking space must be provided for the ADU
- An ADU can have a maximum of two bedrooms

More information on the regulatory requirements regarding ADUs is available on the City of Portsmouth [Land Use and Zoning Regulations](#) page of the website. Use the chart located in the **Create Your ADU** section as a quick reference guide for the process. See the City's [Accessory Dwelling Units in Portsmouth](#) page for more information.

### Types of Attached ADUs (AADU)

- Internal Conversion
- Garage Renovation
- Outward Expansion
- Upward Extension

### Types of Detached ADUs (DADU)

- Garage
- Barn
- Carriage House

See the [Resource Links](#) section for a comprehensive list of all the links shared throughout this document



Accessory Dwelling Unit

# Create Your ADU

The size and shape of the property, City regulations, personal budget, and design preferences will make each ADU building experience unique. This handbook is meant to be a resource to provide the homeowner with information necessary to assess and develop an ADU on their property. It is not intended to replace the knowledge and experience of local designers, builders, and other housing development professionals with the technical knowledge to design, permit, finance, or construct an ADU.

ADUs offer benefits that address common development barriers such as affordability and environmental quality. ADUs are an affordable type of dwelling unit to construct because they do not require land acquisition by homeowners or significant infrastructure investment by municipalities.

Building a successful ADU requires a thorough plan. This Handbook outlines the process in clear, step-by-step instructions. Here are the steps involved:

- **Plan:** Assess the neighborhood, property, and identify lifestyle needs. Clarify objectives for creating an ADU.
- **Design:** Document an ADU type and develop a layout that reflects the long-term goals.
- **Apply:** Connect with Portsmouth’s Planning and Sustainability Department on the potential for creating an ADU.
- **Review:** Work with the City as the ADU application is reviewed.
- **Get approval:** Finalize the ADU design and required documents needed for City approval.
- **Create:** Begin construction, inspections, and final permitting to achieve occupancy of the ADU.

These steps are described in the following sections in greater detail. Planning and design suggestions are provided, supported by prototypical examples of ADUs, to help the homeowner prepare an ADU application that reflects their needs and financial capabilities. Information to assist the homeowner in the permitting, approval, and construction process is also provided.



*In 2024, there were 44 approved ADUs in Portsmouth. Of these:*



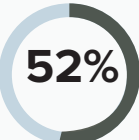
### Fully Permitted

18 ADU applications have received a Conditional Use Permit and are occupied.



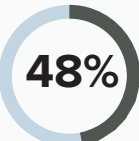
### As-of-Right

Since 2023, 9 ADUs have received an Administrative Approval.



### Attached

Since 2017, 23 ADU applications have been submitted for an AADU.



### Detached

Since 2017, 21 ADU applications have been submitted for a DADU.



# Plan Your ADU

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To begin the planning process, first understand the surrounding neighborhood and City zoning. Then, evaluate personal lifestyle, needs, and objectives to ensure a successful ADU development.



## Compatibility – Assess the Neighborhood and Property

The City of Portsmouth only allows the development of an ADU on a property with a single-family dwelling. Neighborhood characteristics of density, architectural character, and how homes are situated on their lots should be taken into consideration in the planning phase. The ADU needs to be designed to maintain the building scale, architectural character, and yard patterns seen in the neighborhood.

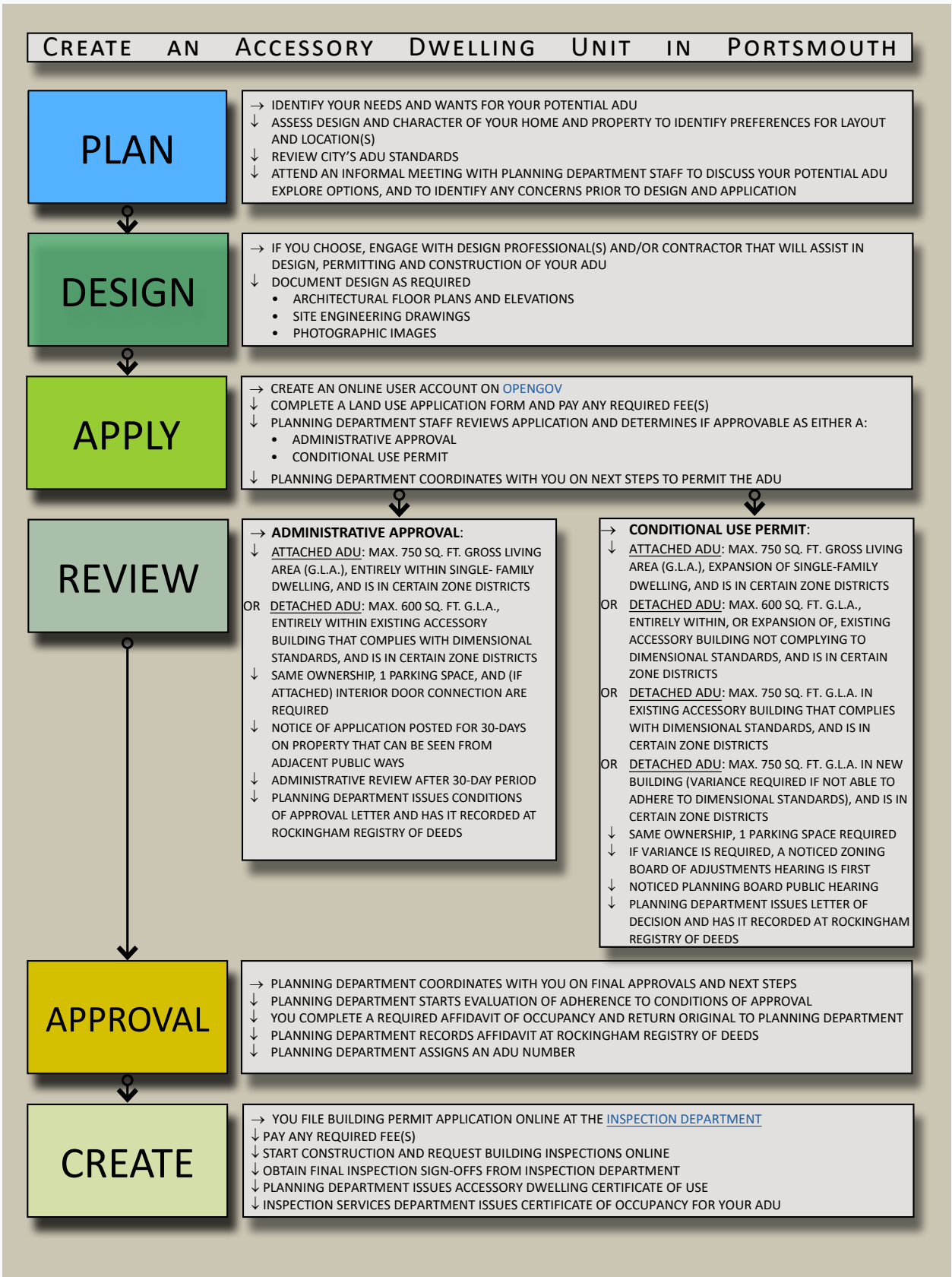
An ADU that is sensitive to the architectural character (which includes massing, roof forms, siding materials, window spacing and proportions, dormers, porches, and shutters) of the primary residential structure and neighborhood is an important aim of the City's regulations.

The next step for the homeowner is the assessment of their property to understand how an ADU might be placed. To start, the homeowner should visit the City's [MapGeo](#) page which offers a dynamic mapping tool that allows users to view a combination of thematic overlays to determine zoning, wetland buffers, floodplain regulations, and to perform tasks including measurements and map creation. Understanding the specific characteristics of the parcel allows the homeowner to understand the constraints in developing an ADU, and an overhead view of the parcel will help the homeowner better understand the physical features of the land.

An essential element of the homeowner's assessment of their own property is the primary residential dwelling. The building's location on the parcel will determine the ability to construct an attached or detached ADU. If there is adequate space within the dwelling to partition off an area for an ADU, then the homeowner can create an ADU as-of-right.

The homeowner also needs to assess the building's mechanicals and utilities. How the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems will integrate with the proposed ADU is significant in terms of cost implications.





*ADUs offer benefits that address common development barriers such as affordability and environmental quality. ADUs are an affordable type of dwelling unit to construct because they do not require land acquisition by homeowners or significant infrastructure investment by municipalities.*

## Identify Lifestyle Needs

A homeowner interested in creating an ADU needs to clearly define personal lifestyle needs and the ADU's purpose—is it for generating supplemental income, a home occupation, accommodating a family member, a caregiver, or part of a long-range plan to age in place? An advantage of an ADU is the dwelling type's adaptability. An ADU can be tailored to meet a wide range of lifestyle needs, offering a flexible and personalized housing solution for both current and future needs.



## Budget and Finances

Developing a budget estimate will help the homeowner further refine their plans. With strategic planning that considers the various ADU types and their nuances, and establishment of a budget and financial plan, the homeowner can ensure their ADU will fulfill its intended purpose, is appropriately integrated into the property, and is aligned with their long-term vision.



# Design Your ADU

After assessing the neighborhood, home, property, lifestyle needs, objectives, and finances, the homeowner can confidently move into the design phase of their ADU. This design step should reflect the opportunities and constraints of the homeowner, the property, and consider the following elements:

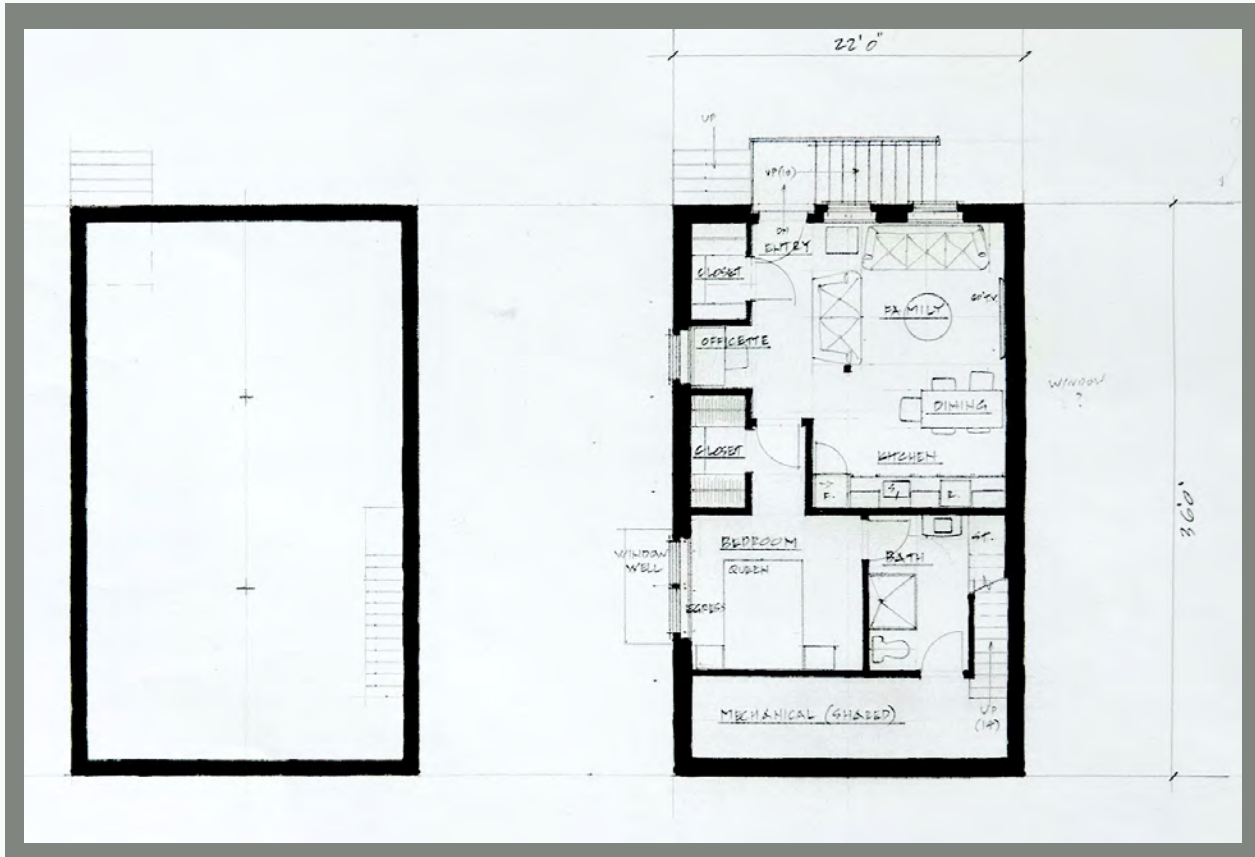
- **Materials:** Selection of materials that match the homeowner's personal aesthetic, compliment the exterior architectural style of their home, are durable, low maintenance, and cost-effective.
- **Space:** Regardless of ADU type, the footprint and gross living area cannot exceed 750 square feet. This area can be on a single floor or multiple floors. Functional and livable space, such as a foyer or stairway, which is mutually shared in function by both the ADU and primary dwelling unit, does not count toward the gross living area calculation.
- **Sustainability:** Eco-friendly design elements, such as energy-efficient appliances, sustainable building materials, and passive heating and cooling strategies should be incorporated into the design. This will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save the homeowner long-term costs whether they rent or occupy the ADU.
- **Privacy:** There should be an appropriate level of visual and physical separation between the main home and the ADU. State and local regulations require an interior door connecting the principal dwelling unit and an attached ADU. Yard setbacks vary across each residential zone and exist to maintain privacy between the ADU and adjoining neighbors. Zoning regulations will also limit the location of windows, dormers, and doorways.
- **Height:** An attached ADU created by an addition or expansion that increases building footprint cannot be greater than 75% of the existing building footprint. An ADU that is created with a new detached structure cannot be greater than 22 feet in height. Refer to the [zoning regulations](#) for how building height is calculated.
- **Parking:** Each ADU is required to provide one-off street parking space.
- **Landscape:** There are no landscape requirements in the ADU ordinance. Year-round plant materials should be considered when physical and visual separation of the ADU from neighbors is desired.



To assist in the planning phases, prototypical ADU types are provided on the following pages. Each ADU type is portrayed with representative illustrations showing potential location, configuration, and architectural style. Written descriptions outline the opportunities and challenges of integrating each ADU type onto a single-family property.

## Attached — Internal Conversion

This type of ADU is created with conversion of space existing within the principal residential dwelling. This conversion may occur on any floor of the residence. This attached ADU (AADU) type is allowed as-of-right if major exterior renovations are not required.



Existing Basement-Level Plan

Proposed Basement-Level Plan

Minor modifications allowed to the home may include the addition of a separate exterior door to provide direct access to the ADU. Additional minor modifications may include an emergency egress window, smoke alarms and electrical upgrades required for the ADU to conform to applicable building codes. If considering this type of ADU, the homeowner should meet with the City's Inspection Department during the planning process to understand what specific minor modifications might be needed.

A typical internal conversion is provided in the image below. In this instance, the AADU is created with an internal conversion of an existing basement within a single-family home having an approximate footprint of 792 square feet. The proposed AADU is 660 square feet as some of the basement floor area is dedicated to a shared stairway and mechanical area. The existing stairway to the principal dwelling meets the State and local requirements of an interior door connection.

This type of ADU is created with conversion of space existing within the principal residential dwelling. This conversion may occur on any floor of the residence. This attached ADU (AADU) type is allowed as-of-right if major exterior renovations are not required.

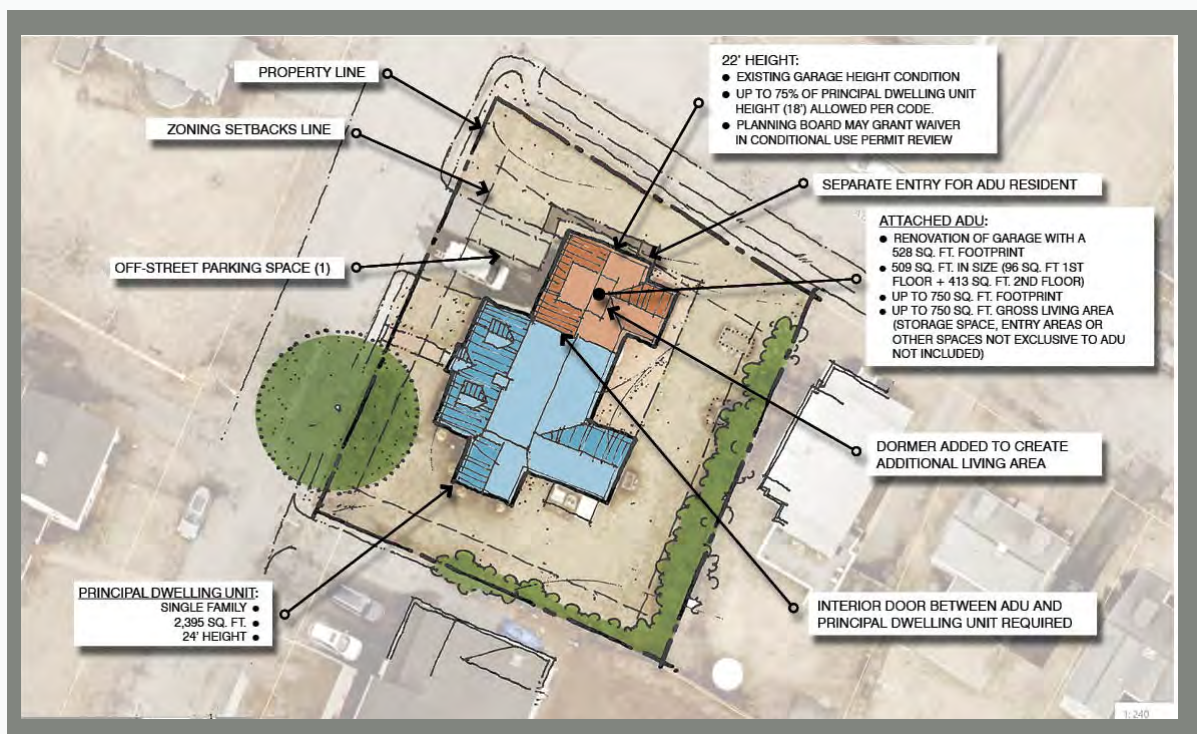


The basement has adequate height to meet building codes, but minor modifications are needed. An emergency egress is built into the foundation as well as a window well in the bedroom. The example shown takes advantage of the locations of existing utilities to reduce construction costs. Not shown is the one off-street parking space dedicated to the ADU that is required by the City's Zoning Ordinance.

## Attached — Garage Conversion

The prototype shown for this attached accessory dwelling unit (AADU) considers an existing two-car garage attached to a single-family home. The home and garage both conform to zoning yard setbacks. The garage is 528 square feet, is a story-and-a-half in height, and has interior stairs that allow access to the unimproved space on the level above.

To create an ADU within the unimproved space the interior stairs are removed, and the footprint is expanded to the back of the garage to create an entry and replacement stairs. As seen in the ground floor plan, a mudroom and closet are provided. Since this area is exclusive to the AADU, it counts toward the gross living area calculation. Expansion of the garage footprint is also allowed as the additional 96 square feet, combined with the existing 528 square feet of the garage, creates a 624 square-foot space that is less than the 750 square-foot maximum. Additionally, the expansion is not within any setbacks.

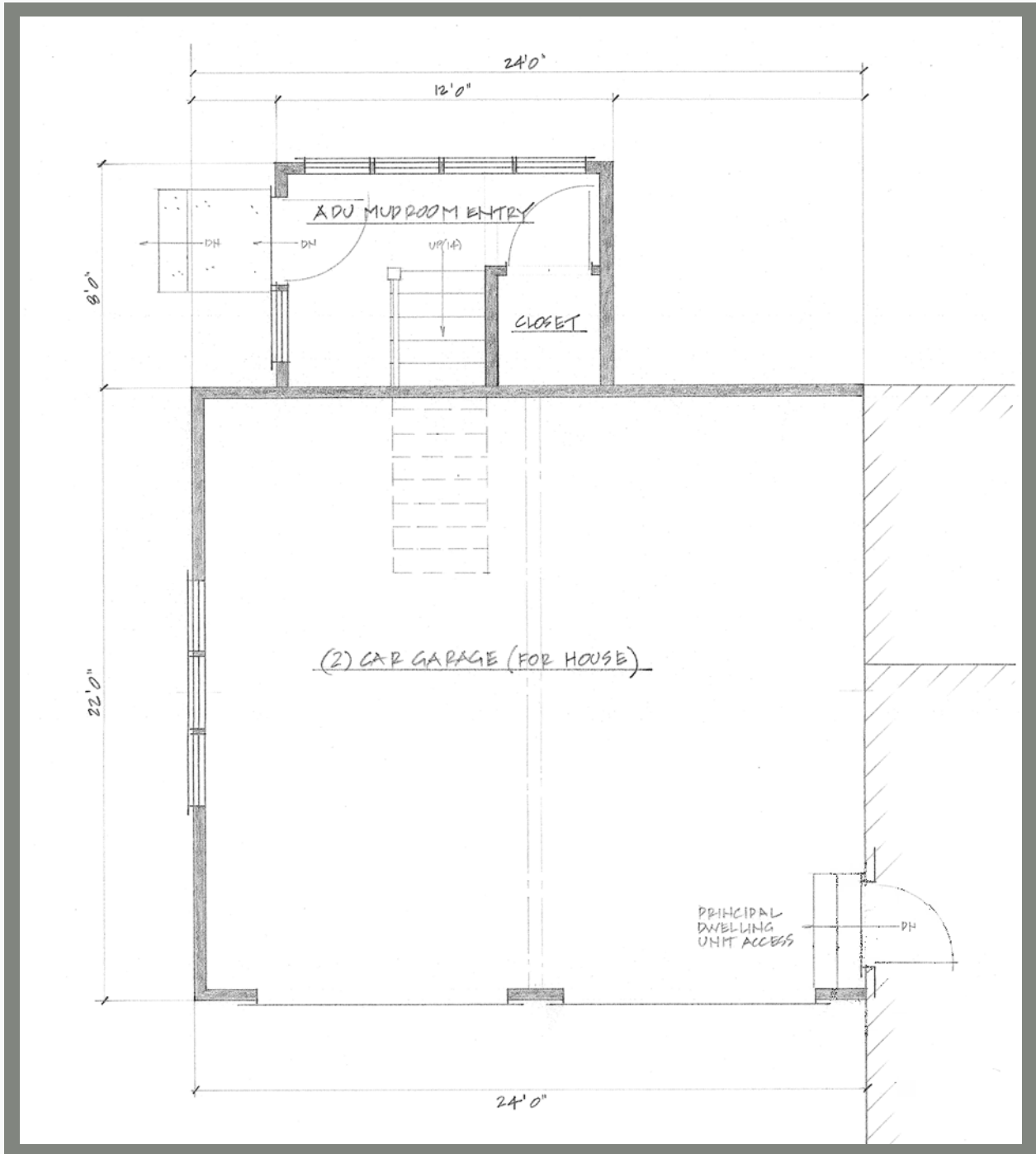


Conceptual Site Plan

See the [Apply For Your ADU](#) section for step-by-step instructions and helpful resources you can use throughout your application process.

Still have questions? See the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section or contact City staff.

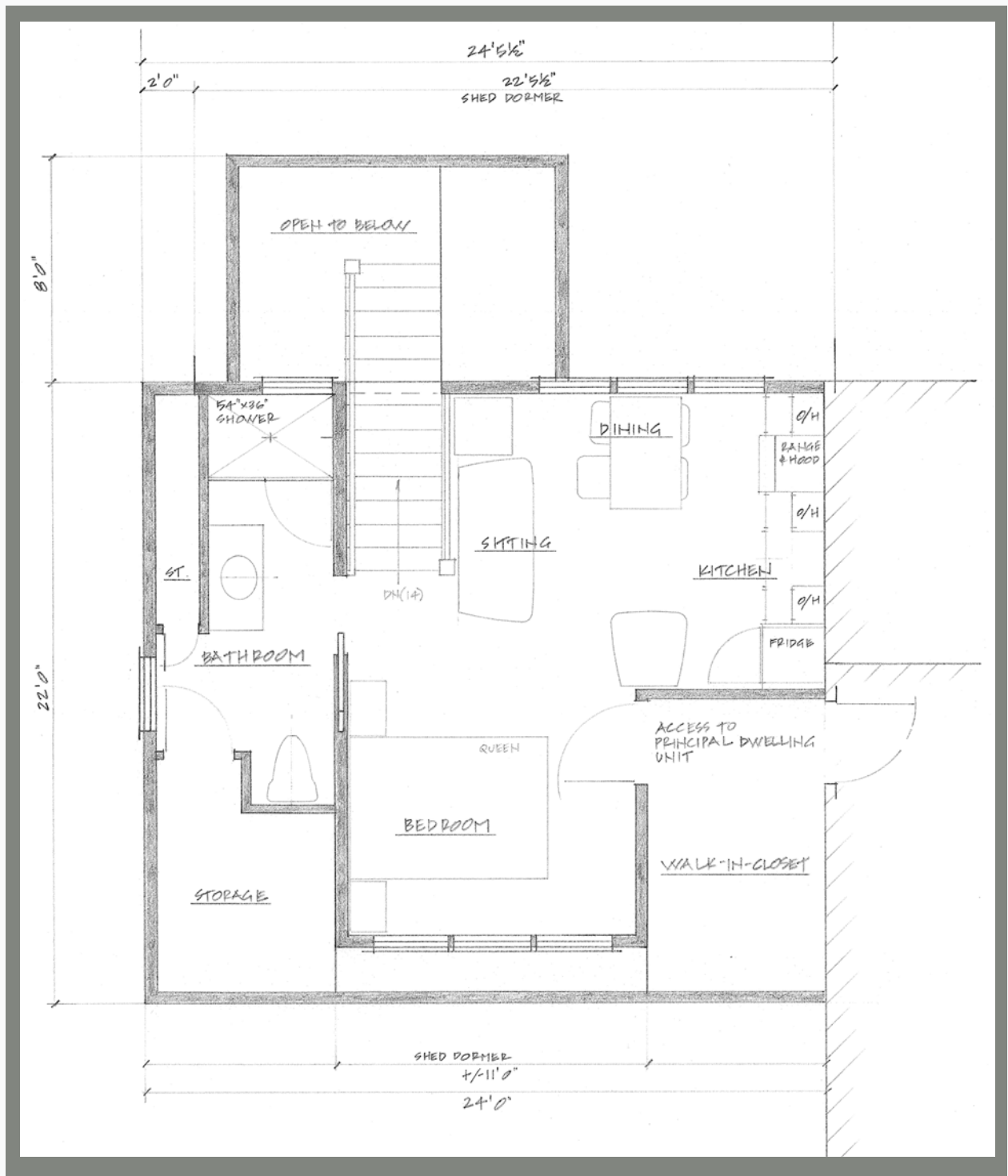
Renovations to the second floor create 413 square feet of livable space. The total gross living area of the ADU is 509 square-feet (96 square-foot ground level + 413 square-foot second floor) and within the maximum allowed size of 750 square-feet. The living area has a studio layout with primary living space placed under areas of full height ceilings. Secondary living spaces, such as storage and closet space, are placed under areas affected by the slope of the roof. Noted on the plan is the location of the interior door between the ADU and the principal dwelling unit as required by State and local ordinances. The design incorporates a pocket door to the bathroom for efficient use of the space.



Ground-level Plan

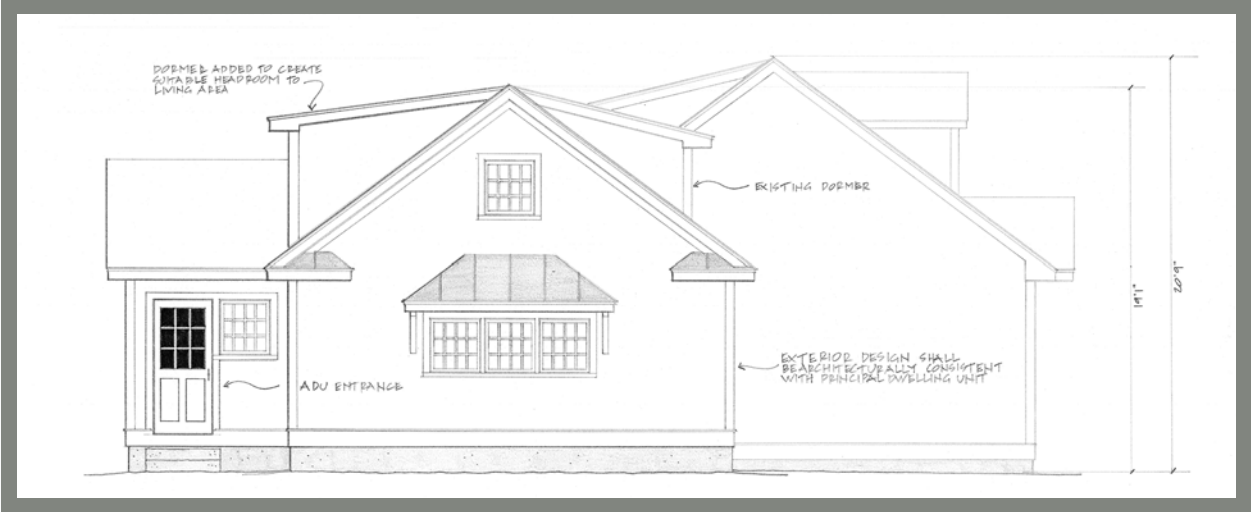
## Accessory Dwelling Unit



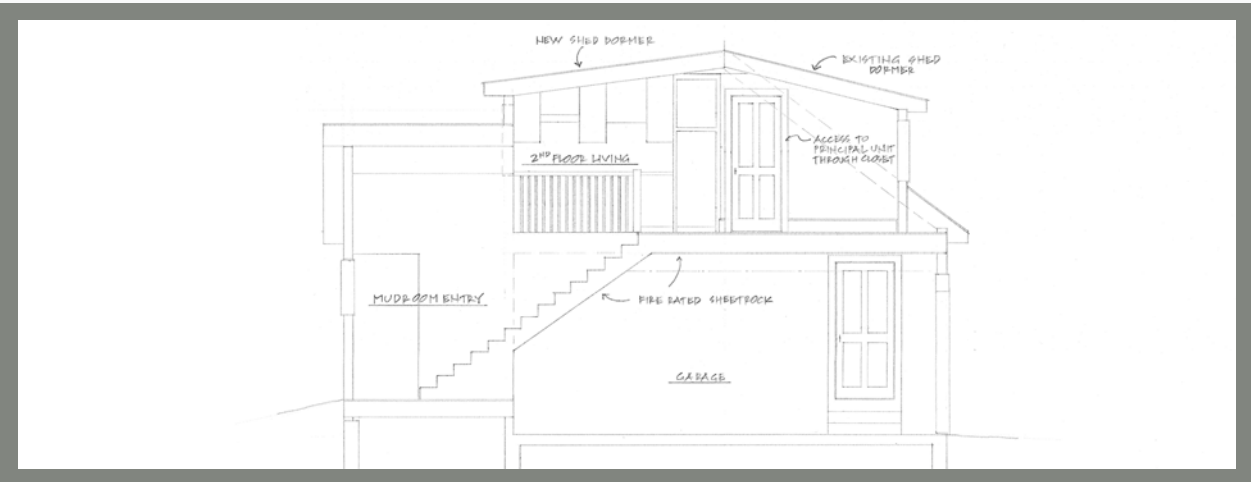


Second Floor Plan

The elevation highlights the exterior improvements needed to create a successful ADU. The outward expansion of the mudroom shows a door, window and other details incorporated into the design that match the same architectural elements of the existing garage and single-family home. The same architectural elements are also integrated into the new dormer added to the roof of the garage. The height of the garage has not been increased as the new dormer meets the roof at the peak. This dormer adds suitable headroom and functional living area to the second floor and meets the allowed dormer coverage specified in the ordinance. The exterior improvements also meet the architectural design standards as they are of scale, consist of matching materials, and visually subordinate to the principal dwelling.



Exterior Elevation



Section



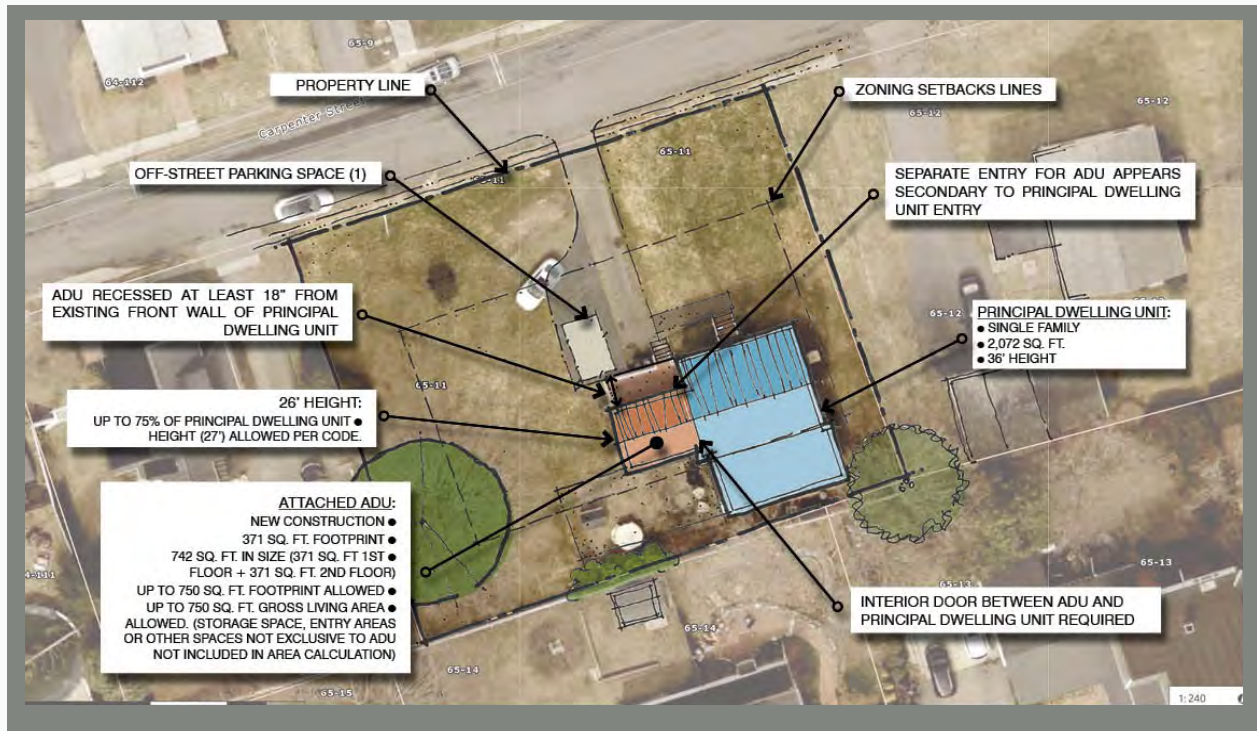
Street View Rendering

Accessory Dwelling Unit



## Attached — Outward Expansion

There are two alternative configurations shown for an attached ADU created by outward expansion. Both examples consider an existing two-and-a-half story single-family home with both additions placed on the same side of the home. The first configuration is a one-story addition, the second configuration is a two-story addition. In both instances, the home and ADU alternative conform to zoning in terms of building coverage and yard setbacks. As with all ADU types considered in the City's zoning regulations, there are no additional requirements for lot area, lot area per dwelling unit, or frontage beyond those required for a single-family dwelling.

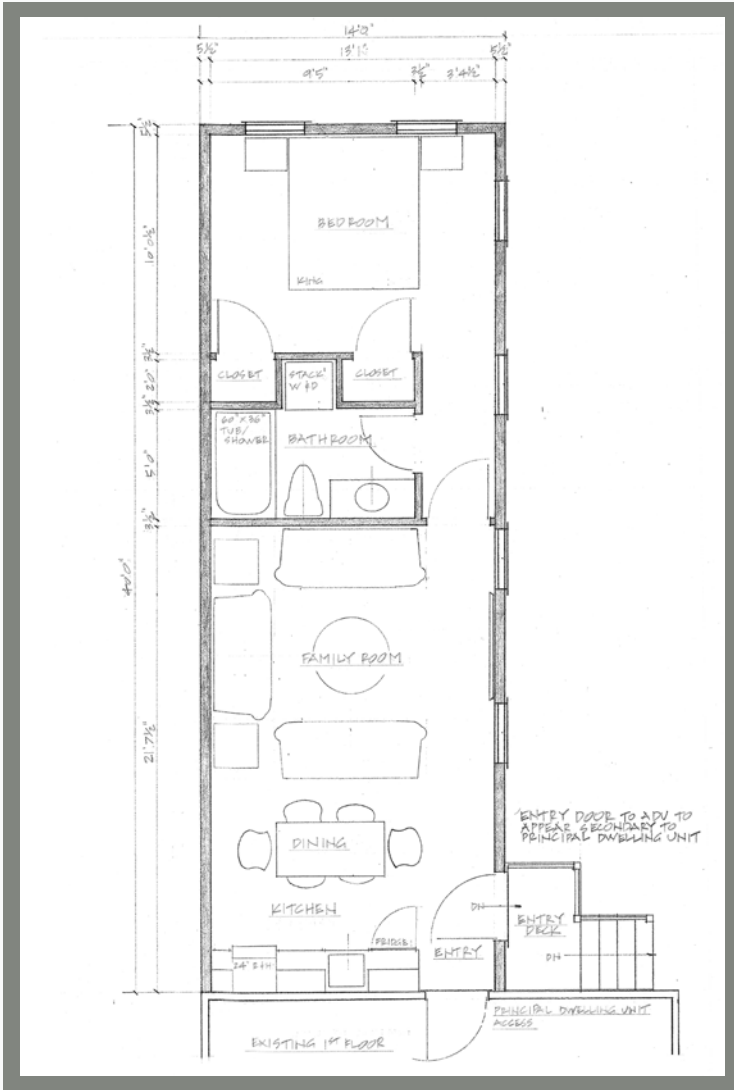


Conceptual Site Plan

The conceptual site plan shown considers both alternatives. The existing principal dwelling unit is 2,072 square feet in size and has a height of 36 feet as measured from the ground to the mid-point of the roof. The conceptual site plan depicts a location for the required single off-street parking space. Additionally, the plan notes that a proposed ADU would be allowed to have a maximum height of 27 feet. This height is determined by the zoning requirement that an attached ADU created by an addition is allowed to be up to 75% of the height of the principal dwelling unit. Also noted is how the proposed ADU meets the requirement of being setback at least 18 inches from the face of the principal dwelling unit. The intent of this zoning regulation requirement is to ensure the ADU is subordinate in scale, height, and appearance to the principal dwelling unit.

### Alternative #1 – Single-Story

The ground level floor plan for this configuration shows the required interior door between the principal dwelling unit and the AADU. For cost-effective reasons, the kitchen is located along the wall of the existing home to take advantage of existing plumbing and electrical infrastructure. The more active living areas are placed in the middle of the floor plan as they are close to the main entry. The bedroom is located farthest from the home to provide privacy for the occupant. There are no windows on one side to provide privacy for the ADU and single-family home occupants as there is an existing patio in the rear yard that is adjacent to the proposed ADU. There are a number of windows on the opposite side to provide ample natural light and to take advantage of the southern exposure. Overall, the ADU design shown in this alternative is 514 square feet in gross living area.



Ground Level Floor Plan

The elevation shows the windows placed along the southern side and the location of the exterior door. Also shown, is how this entry door appears secondary to the principal dwelling unit. Not shown, is the mailing address unique to the ADU. This address is provided by the City primarily for emergency response purposes.

A section of this ADU design is provided on the following page. This section shows a basement level that may be used for storage. As long as this storage area is not exclusive to the ADU, it will not count toward the gross living area calculation.

Integrated into the design is the exterior door to the ADU that is subordinate in appearance and location to the exterior door to the principal dwelling unit. As per the architectural design standards in the ADU ordinance, the addition incorporates elements of the principal dwelling unit. Elements such as roof form and slope, siding material and profile, window spacing, proportions and general detailing work together to be architec-



Exterior Elevation - Single Story Addition

Accessory Dwelling Unit

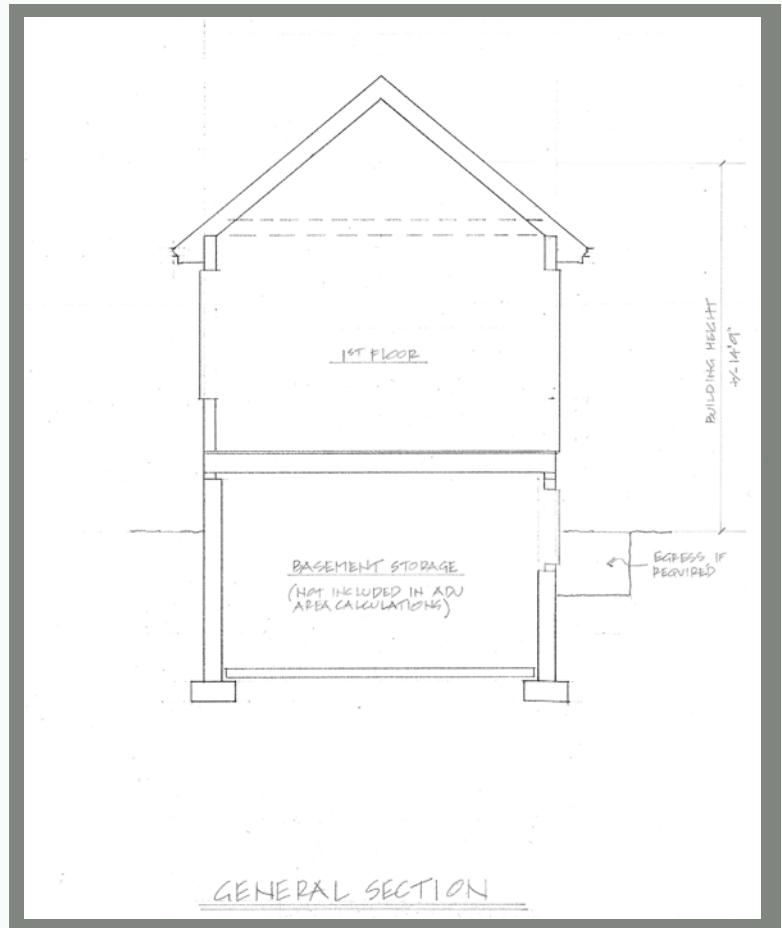


turally consistent with the character of the single-family dwelling.

The ADU zoning ordinance language requires the addition or expansion of an existing building for the purpose of creating an ADU be recessed or projected at least 18 inches from the existing front wall of the principal dwelling unit.

In this instance, the AADU is purposefully recessed approximately eight feet from the front wall to meet this requirement and provide a deck area for use by the ADU occupant.

See also the street view rendering of this alternative below. This graphic depicts many of the essential elements described above that combine to create a successful development of an AADU by outward expansion.



Section

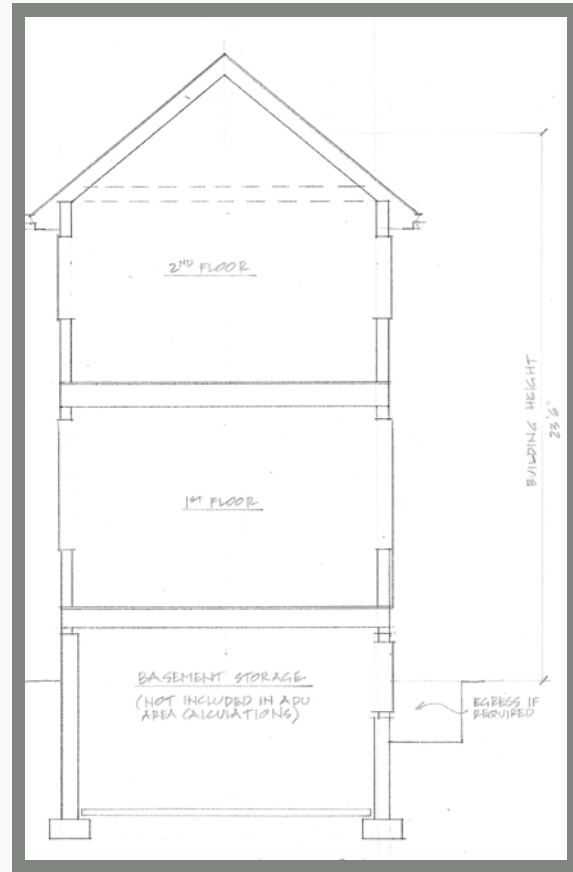


Street View Rendering - Alternative #1

## Alternative #2 – Two-Story

The ground level and second floor plans for this second alternative are shown on the following page. This configuration has a footprint of 371 square feet, smaller than the 560 square feet in the first alternative. The layout of the ground floor shows the required interior door between the principal dwelling unit and the AADU in the same location as the first alternative. The kitchen is now located along the back wall to accommodate the stairway needed to the second floor. The more active living areas are placed on the ground floor.

The bedroom and bathroom are situated on the second floor. There is a second interior door between the principal dwelling unit and the AADU on this floor. This is to allow the homeowner a choice in the location of the required door connection. The bedroom is located in the portion of the second floor farthest from the principal dwelling unit for privacy and to take advantage of windows on two sides.



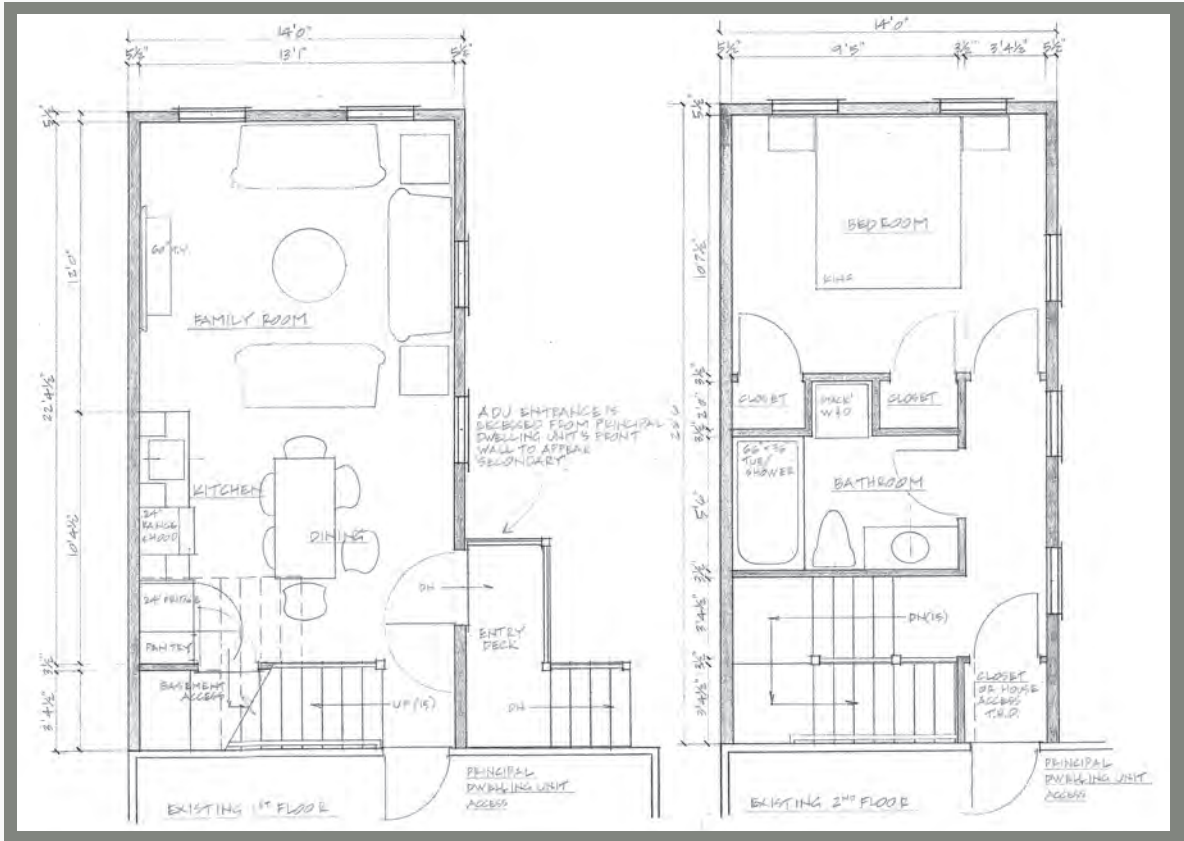
Section



Street View Rendering - Two Story Addition

Accessory Dwelling Unit





Ground Level Floor Plan

Second Floor Plan



Exterior Elevation - Two Story Addition

Similar to the ground floor configuration in Alternative #1, windows are not provided along the back side of the ADU to provide privacy for ADU and single-family home occupants due to an existing patio in the rear yard that is adjacent to the proposed ADU.

Overall, this two-story ADU design is 676 square feet in gross living area and is below the maximum 750 square feet gross living area allowed.

The section shows a basement level that may be used for storage. With this alternative having space dedicated in the floor plans for a stairway, there is potential for interior access to this basement level. As long as this area of the addition is not exclusive to the ADU, it will not count toward the gross living area calculation. If this space is provided for use only by the ADU, the additional 338 square feet would be added to the gross living area calculation for the ADU and exceed the allowed maximum 750 square-foot size.

Noted in the section is the 23.5 foot height of the ADU. In Portsmouth, building height is calculated from exterior ground level to the mid-point of the roof plane. The 23.5 foot height conforms to the height requirement of the ADU height not to exceed the 75% height of the principal dwelling unit requirement in the zoning ordinance.

The street view rendering of this two-story AADU depicts many of the essential elements to a successful outward expansion type of AADU. The exterior door to the ADU is subordinate in both appearance and location to the exterior door to the principal dwelling unit. The addition incorporates architectural features of the principal dwelling unit such as roof form and slope, siding material and profile, window spacing, and proportions. Note how the roof fascia and window trim on the principal dwelling unit are carried across onto the exterior design of the AADU. This detailing works together for the ADU to be architecturally consistent, as required in the architectural design standards in the ADU ordinance, with the appearance of the existing principal dwelling.

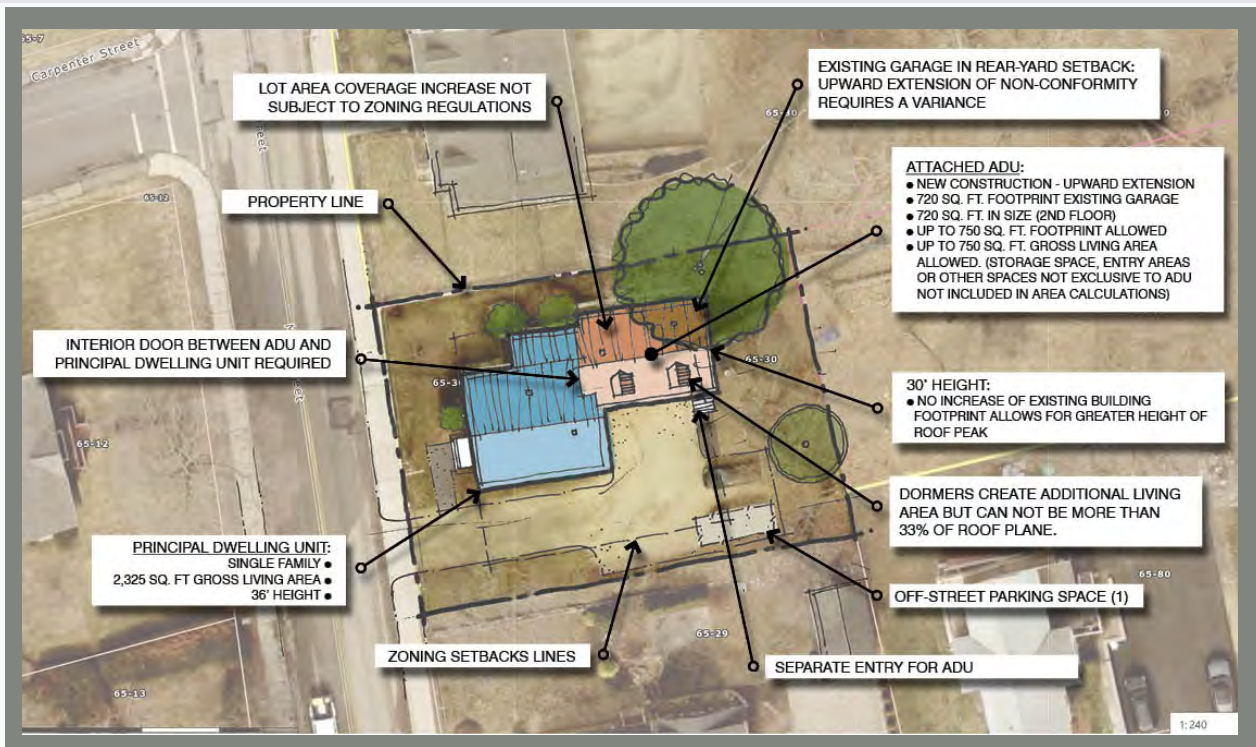
In this instance, the AADU is purposefully recessed approximately four feet from the front wall to meet the subordinate requirements and to provide an entry deck at the ADU entrance.

## **Attached – Upward Expansion**

The example provided describes this AADU type and considers an existing single-family home with an attached story-and-a-half, two-car garage. The single-family dwelling has 2,325 square feet of gross living area across two-and-a-half floors with a total height of 36 feet. The back of the garage lies within a portion of the side-yard setback. The additional floor area of the proposed ADU will not be subject to zoning regulations but the upward extension of the garage's non-conformity (in the setback) would not be allowed unless it were submitted for review and approval by the City's Zoning Board of Adjustment prior to application to the Planning Board for a Conditional Use Permit.

The existing garage is 705 square feet. The 30 foot width accommodates two nine-foot-wide garage doors along with an exterior door. The width also provides for existing stairs from the ground level to the second floor that will be converted to provide dedicated entry and access to the proposed AADU. The driveway has adequate area for vehicles to access the existing garage with the addition of the required off-street parking space for the AADU.



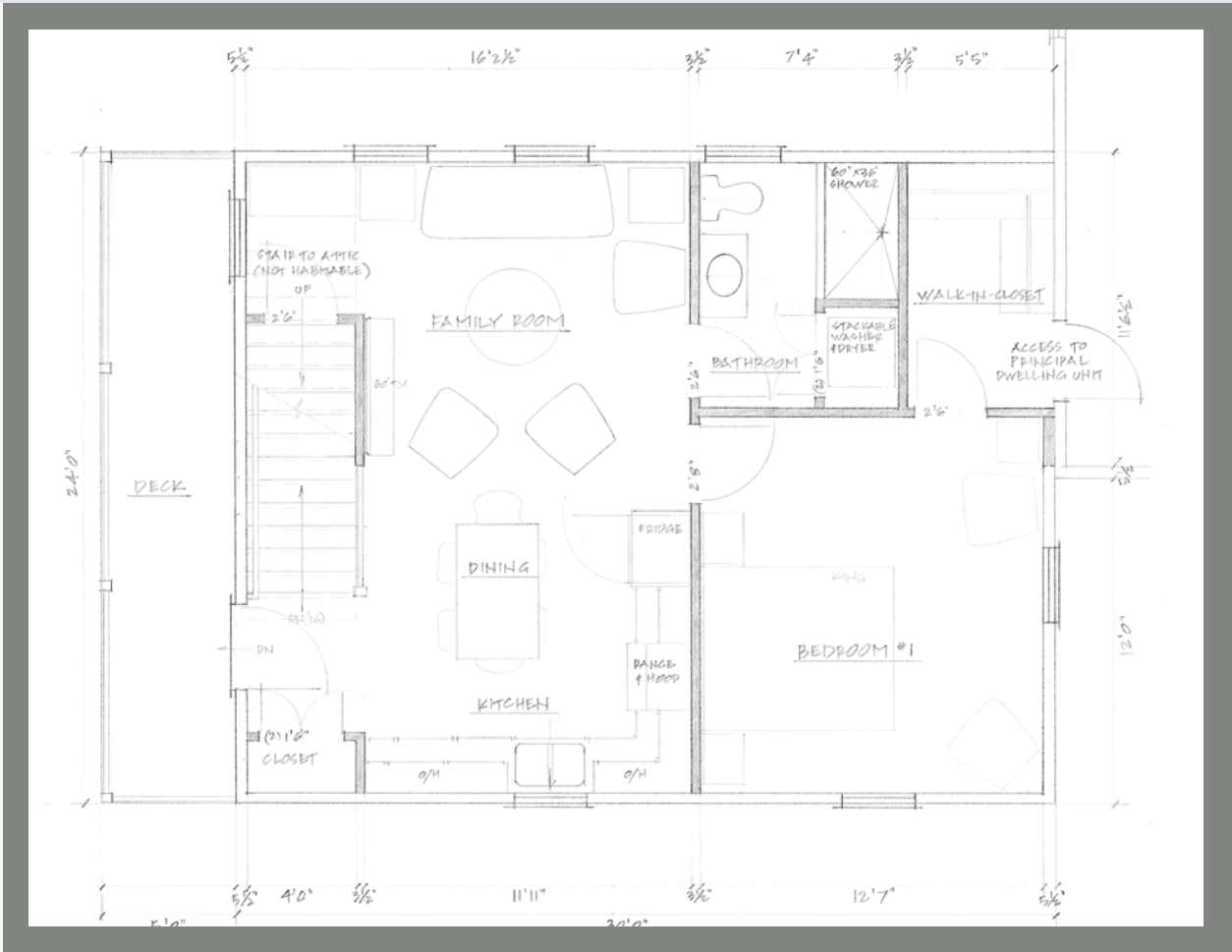


Conceptual Site Plan

In this instance, creating the AADU requires removal of the roof and new construction to create the second floor and roof above. The new floor will have the same footprint as the ground level garage, creating a 750 square-foot ADU. The area of the stairway counts toward the gross living area calculation since it is exclusive to the ADU. The entry area on the ground level does not count toward the calculation because it is shared access into the garage.

The layout of the second floor, detailed on the next page, shows the required interior door between the principal dwelling unit and the AADU. This door is situated in the walk-in closet as there is limited wall length shared by the principal dwelling unit and the ADU. There is flexibility in the floor layout as the open garage space below provides easy access for installation and servicing of electrical and plumbing. The bedroom is purposefully situated away from the stairs and from walls shared with the principal dwelling unit. The attic is created for storage purposes and is not intended for occupancy. Design and use of the attic area for habitation would raise the gross living area above the 750 square feet allowed. The floor plan also shows an exterior deck area. This added living feature will benefit the occupant and likely allow for a higher rent if the owner chooses to rent the ADU.

The street view rendering depicts the completed upward extension of the garage. The exterior design successfully incorporates architectural details and building materials of the principal dwelling unit into the new construction for the AADU. The same six-over-six windows as seen in the principal dwelling unit are integrated into the ADU using the same window spacing. Dormers are added to the roof to provide natural light and architectural interest. Additionally, dormers are added for potential integration of the attic space into the living area and function of the single-family home. Dormers are not allowed on the other side of the roof as they are not allowed by the zoning code, as this portion of the structure is located within the side yard setback.



Ground Level Floor Plan



Exterior Elevation

Acessory Dwelling Unit



The rendering also depicts the exterior of the ADU addition as physically and visually subordinate to the original building. This is accomplished with the use of the same color palette, exterior material, and profiles, and detailing such as trim that match the character of the principal dwelling.



Street View Rendering

## Detached – Garage Renovation

The prototype depicted for this type of detached ADU (DADU) considers an existing two-car garage not attached to the single-family home. The garage is a story-and-a-half in height and situated in the back portion of the property, within both side-yard and rear-yard setbacks. The principal dwelling unit's 2,487 square feet of gross floor area has 1,470 square feet of gross living area. It is 36 feet in height and has unique architectural features of clapboard siding on the ground level, cedar shake siding on the second floor and a porch along a portion of the front and right side. The existing garage is 576 square feet consisting of a 24 foot width and a 24 foot depth.

The conversion of this garage considers a design with most of the living area on the ground level. Modification of the second floor consists of a dormer adding 24 square feet of livable area. The combined 600 square feet of gross living area is the maximum allowed by the ADU ordinance due to the garage existing within two yard setback areas. In this instance, the proposed ADU will not require a variance as there is not an expansion of a dimensional (vertical or horizontal) non-conformity.

The layout of the ground floor, shown on the next page, places the kitchen and bathroom along the same wall. This wall faces the adjoining residential property. Due to this layout and the fact that the garage is within the side yard setback, there are no windows allowed above eight feet per the zoning ordinance. The dining and family room area of the layout are strategically placed along the southern wall. This wall has six half-windows installed to take advantage of the southern exposure consistent with the Cape Cod architectural style proposed for the garage renovation. The bedroom is placed off the family room and offset from the northern wall to provide

space for a wrapping stairway that leads to the upper floor. An egress window in the bedroom is provided to meet building code requirements.

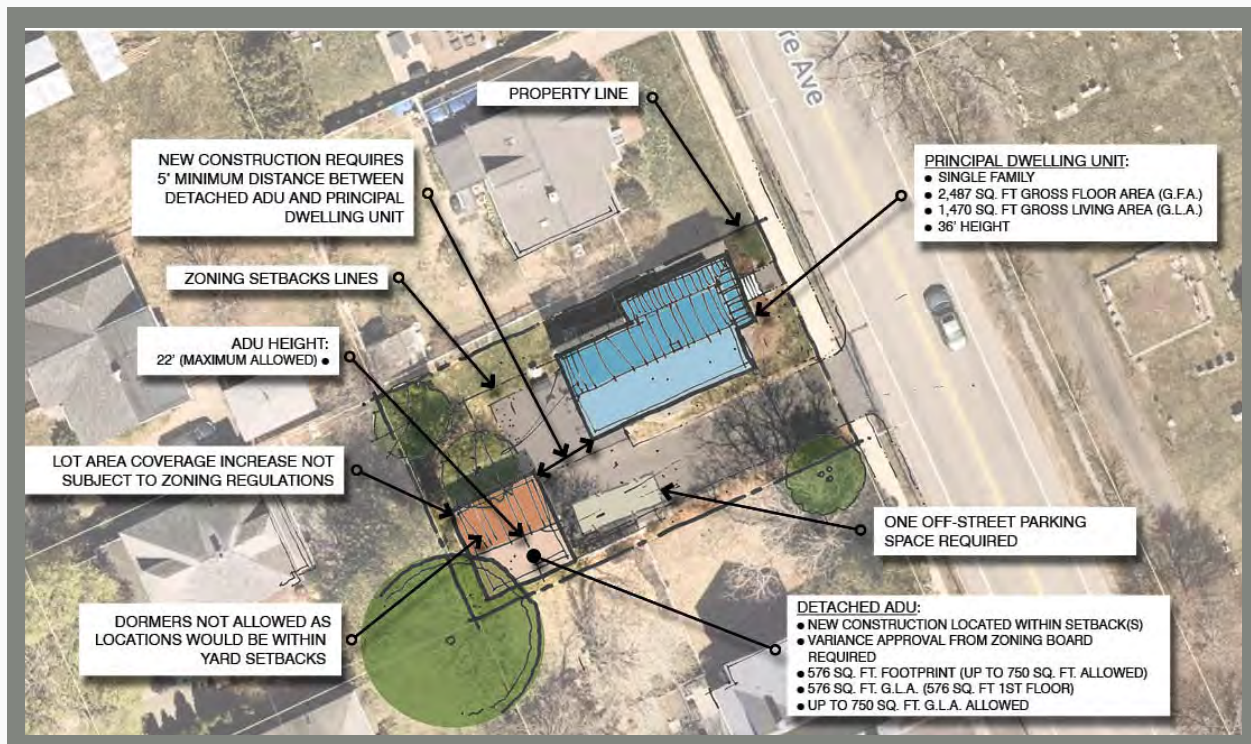
The creative and efficient layout of the ground level provides for single level living that is ideal for a homeowner considering downsizing and aging in place. This lifestyle is also supported by ample wall storage in the kitchen, accommodation for a stackable washer and dryer, and a substantial closet. The dwelling's mechanicals are placed in the upper floor to maximize livable area on the ground floor.

The second floor only has 24 square feet of gross living area even though there is a larger floor area shown. This is due to building code whereas, in simplified terms, for a room with a sloped ceiling due to a roof above, any portion of the room with a vertical ceiling height of less than seven feet, as measured from the finished floor, is not included in the gross living area calculation. In this design, floor area less than 3 feet 9 inches in ceiling height is portioned off with a knee wall and dedicated for storage and mechanical equipment. This limit is designated on the second floor plan with a dashed line.

The 24 square feet of usable gross living area is largely provided by the addition of the dormer on the side of the garage facing into the property. The size of the roof dormer is limited to 33% of the roof plane per the ADU zoning ordinance. A dormer is not allowed on the opposite side as the ordinance does not allow a dormer within a setback.

Shown on the next page is the front and a side elevation. The elevations show how the renovation has integrated architectural elements of the single-family home to meet the intent of the architectural design standards portion of the ADU zoning ordinance. Cedar shake shingles clad the exterior and there is a six-over-six window on the second floor.

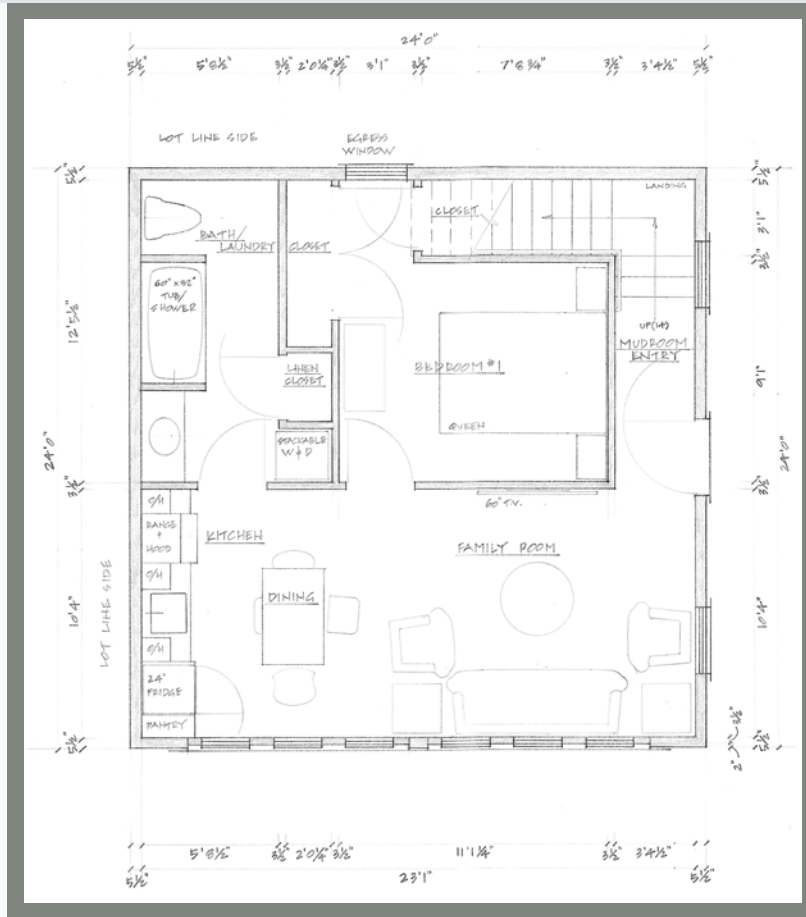
This design is distinctive in how it integrates the appearance of garage doors into the façade. This feature has a small roof that frames two, three-panel "garage doors" with each panel including a two-over-two window. This design element provides a unique interpretation of the ordinance requirement that a detached ADU be subordinate in appearance to the principal dwelling.



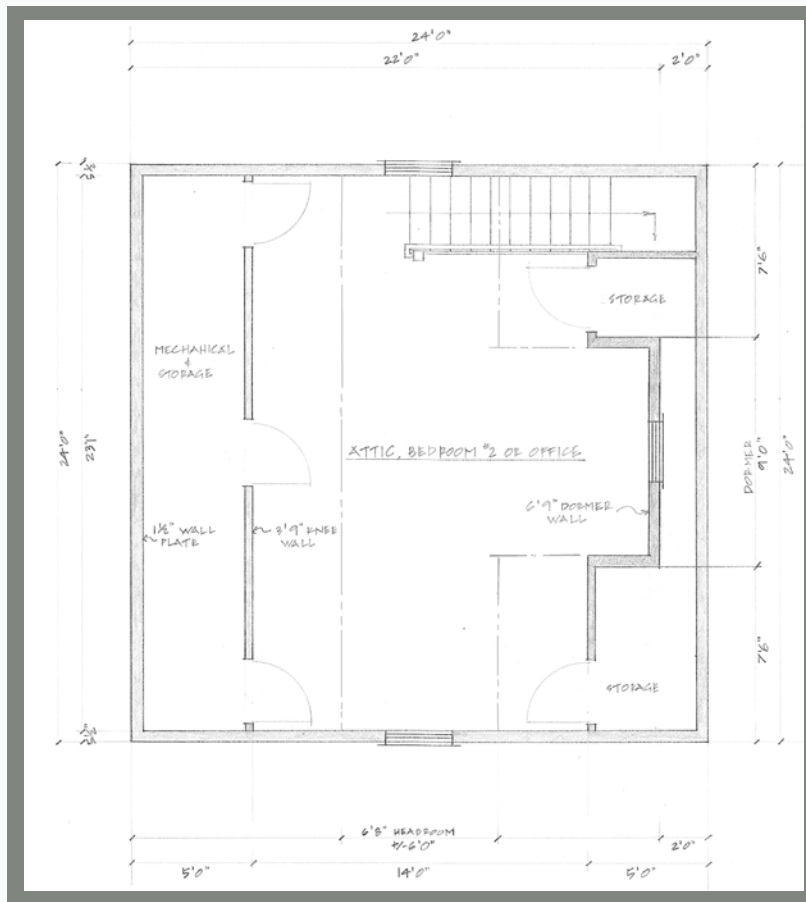
Conceptual Site Plan

## Accessory Dwelling Unit





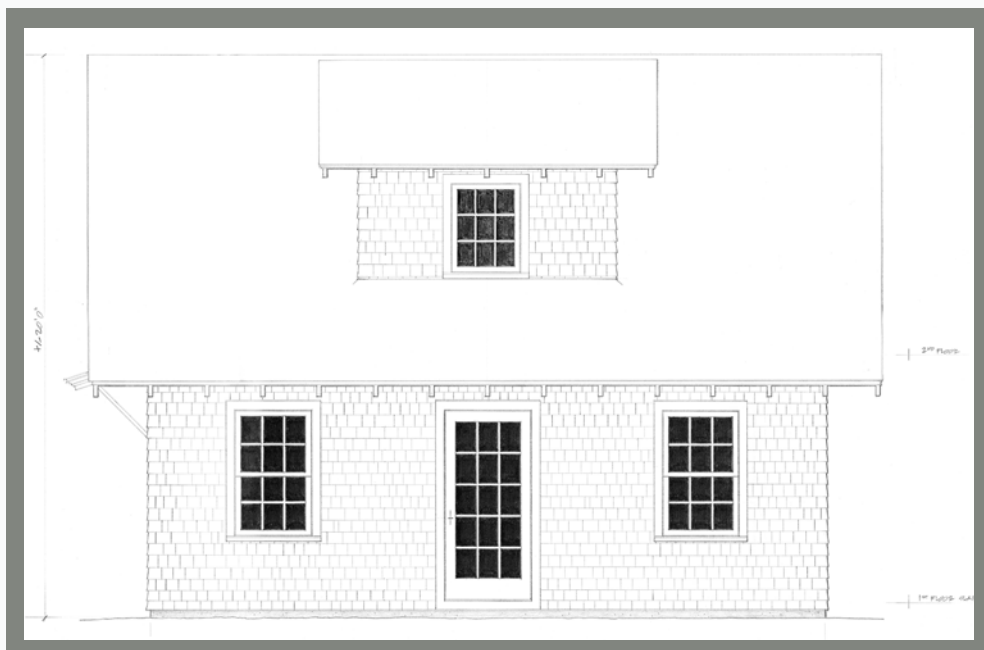
Ground Level Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan



Front Elevation



Side Elevation

The street view rendering shown on the top of the following page portrays the completed renovation of the detached garage into an ADU. The exterior design successfully incorporates architectural details and building materials from the principal dwelling unit in accordance with the architectural design standards required in the zoning ordinance.

A second street view rendering is located on the bottom of the same page. This second rendering is provided to show how the ADU can interpret other architectural elements found on the primary residence into its design. The DADU is clad in clapboard siding to match the second floor of the house. The DADU is also shown with a slight variation of the faux garage doors.





Street View Rendering

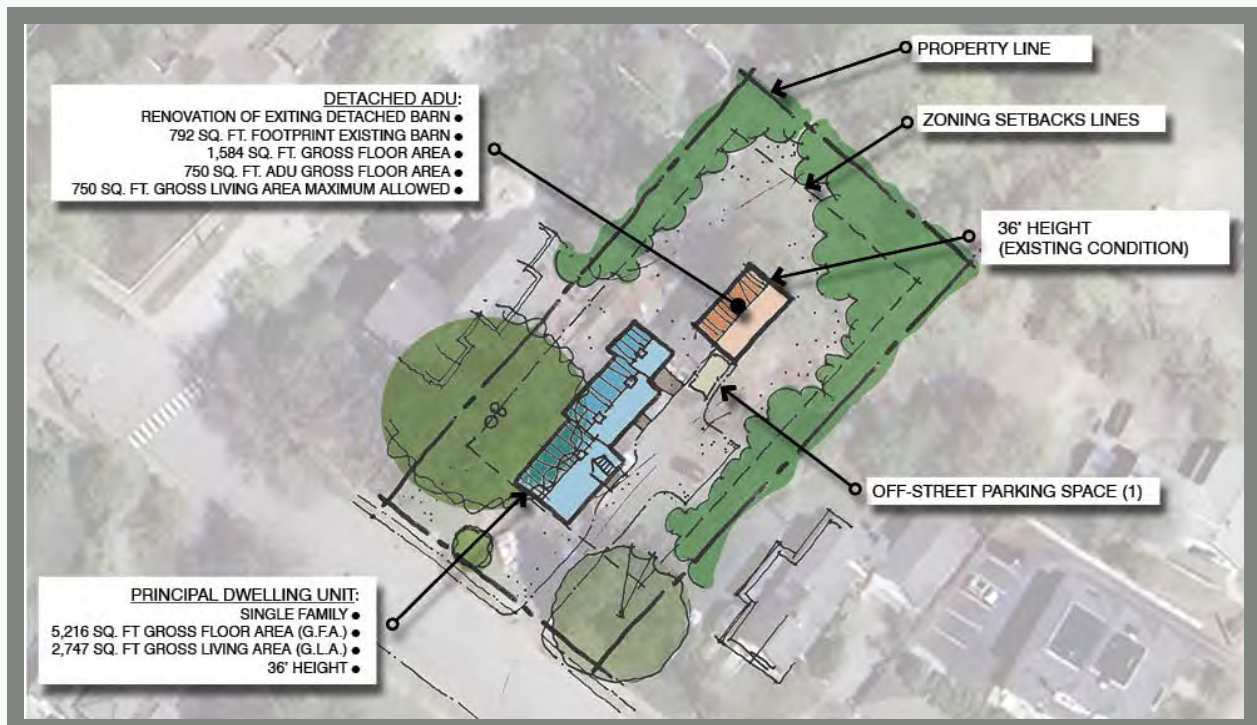


Street View Rendering - Alternative Exterior Finishes

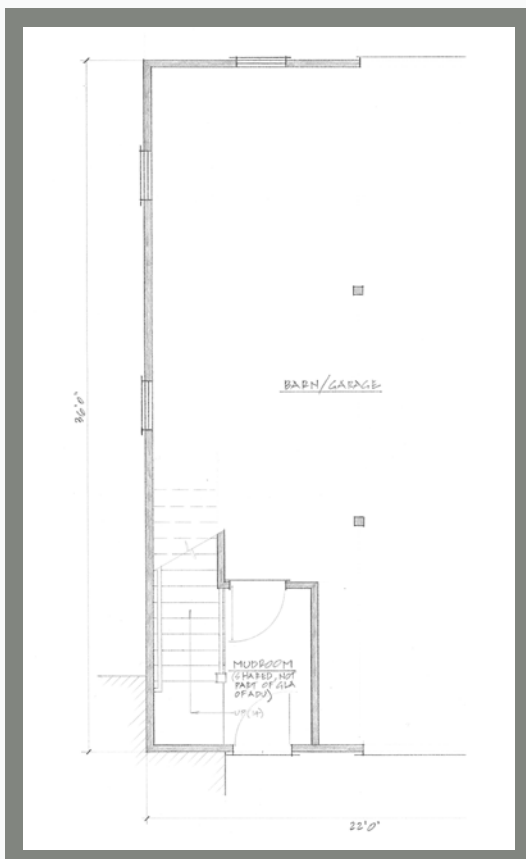


## Detached – Barn

This type of detached ADU considers an existing barn situated in the central portion of a single-family parcel of land. The example outlines renovation of this barn that is 36 feet in height, has two stories, and comprises 792 square feet. While the barn has 1,584 square feet of gross floor area, a maximum of 750 square feet of gross living area is allowed to be renovated to create an ADU.



Conceptual Site Plan



Ground Level Floor Plan

A small modification to the ground level is made to accommodate access to the ADU that will be created on the second floor. A mudroom is added to the existing entry door to provide storage space for the ADU occupant. This mudroom also provides a pass-through to the barn's interior for the property owner. Since the mudroom is shared space, the 115 square feet does not add to the calculated gross living area of the ADU. In the mudroom there are stairs that lead to the ADU on the second floor. Since these stairs are exclusive to the ADU, the square footage will be included in the ADU's gross living area calculations.

The ADU is created on the second floor. The stairs are to the left with the top landing in the active area of the ADU layout. The floor plan's configuration shows the front portion dedicated to kitchen, dining and seating area uses. This configuration can be modified to best suit the homeowner's requirements since the infrastructure would be easily installed and accessed from the ground level.

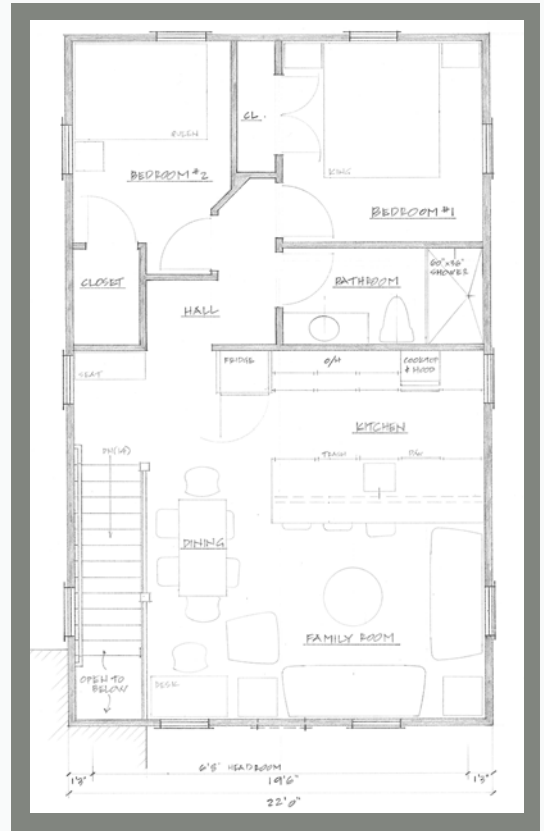
The back portion of the ADU is configured so that the bathroom and kitchen share a common wall for



plumbing. The floor plan shows easy access to the full bathroom from both the bedrooms and active living areas. The floor plan also shows a layout that integrates two bedrooms with ample closet space for each. The zoning ordinance states that an ADU shall not have more than two bedrooms, so this configuration conforms.

The second floor is 792 square feet which is more than the 750 square-foot size allowed. However, this ADU does meet the requirement. The roof slope creates living area on the second floor with less than seven feet of ceiling height. Building code considers, in a room with a sloping ceiling due to a roof above, that any portion of the room with a vertical ceiling height of less than seven feet, as measured from the finished floor, is not included in the gross living area calculation. The portion of the second floor under this height reduces the gross living area calculation of the ADU to 735 square feet.

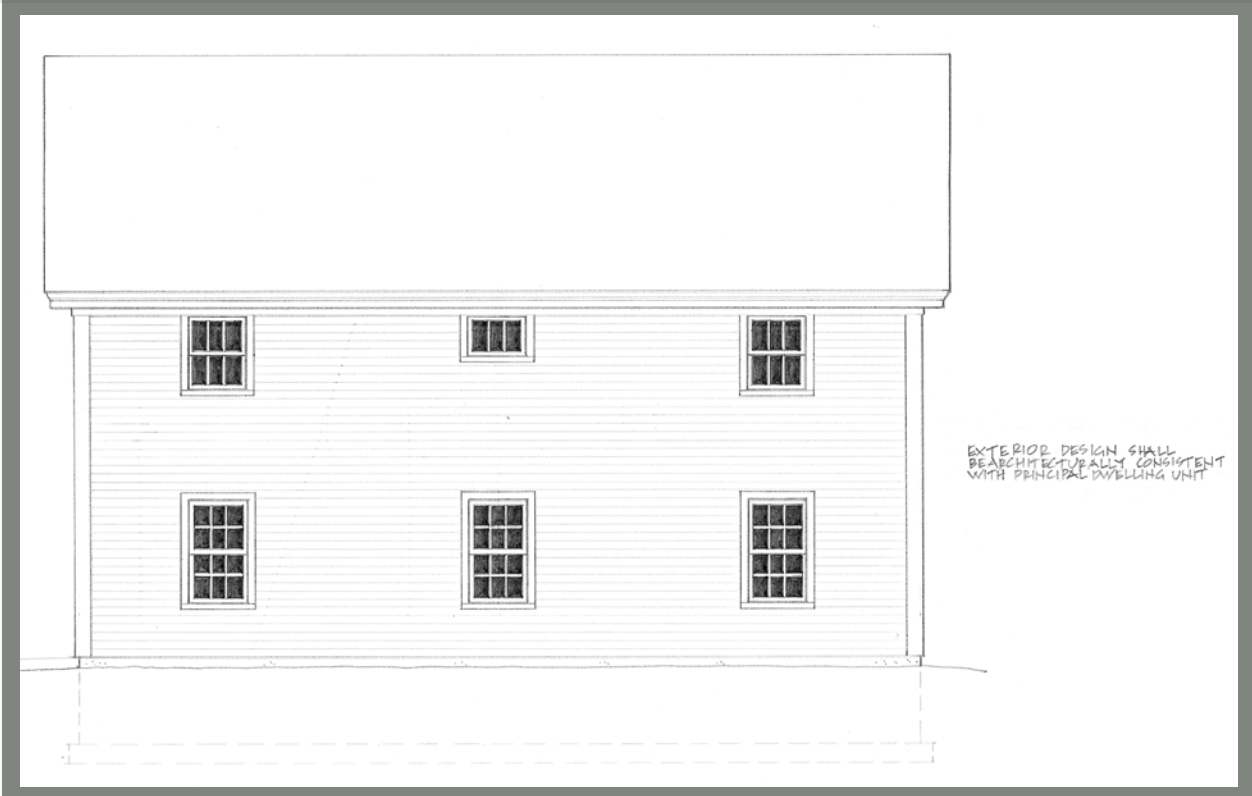
In this instance, the former function of the structure as a barn has the second floor open to the roof structure. This provides an open living concept for the ADU. The absence of attic space and the proposed second floor layout places mechanical equipment on the ground level.



Second Floor Plan



Exterior Elevation - Front



Exterior Elevation - Side

The front elevation and street view rendering shows exterior renovations to the barn that include updated doors and windows similar to the single-family home. Also added are simplified versions of architectural elements, such as window trim and fascia boards, existing on the exterior of the primary dwelling. The wooden garage door has been restored along with the exterior clapboard. The barn has been given a coat of red paint to invoke the character of a traditional New England barn and ensures the ADU is sensitive to the residential character of the neighborhood.



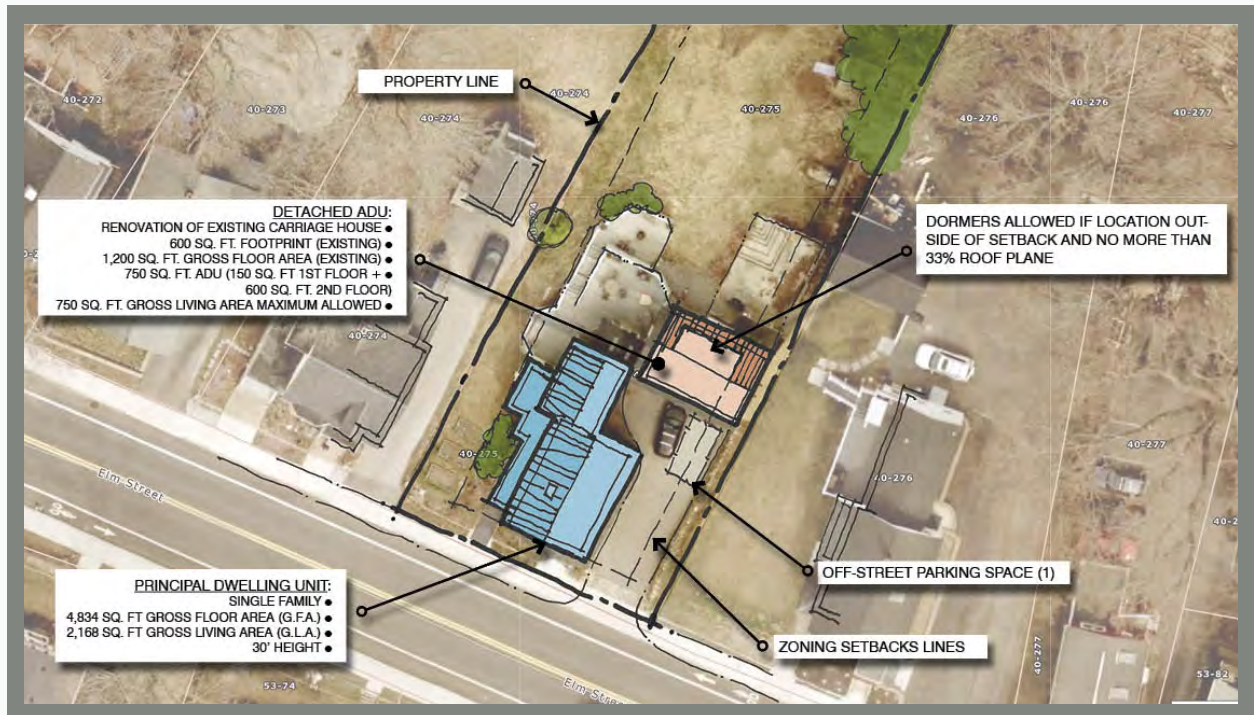
Street View Rendering

Accessory Dwelling Unit



## Detached – Carriage House

Initially built to stable horses and store horse-drawn carriages and materials, most of these structures are now used for the homeowner's contemporary needs of vehicle parking and surplus storage. The prototype explored for this type of detached ADU is an existing two-and-a-half story structure that is partially within a side-yard setback.

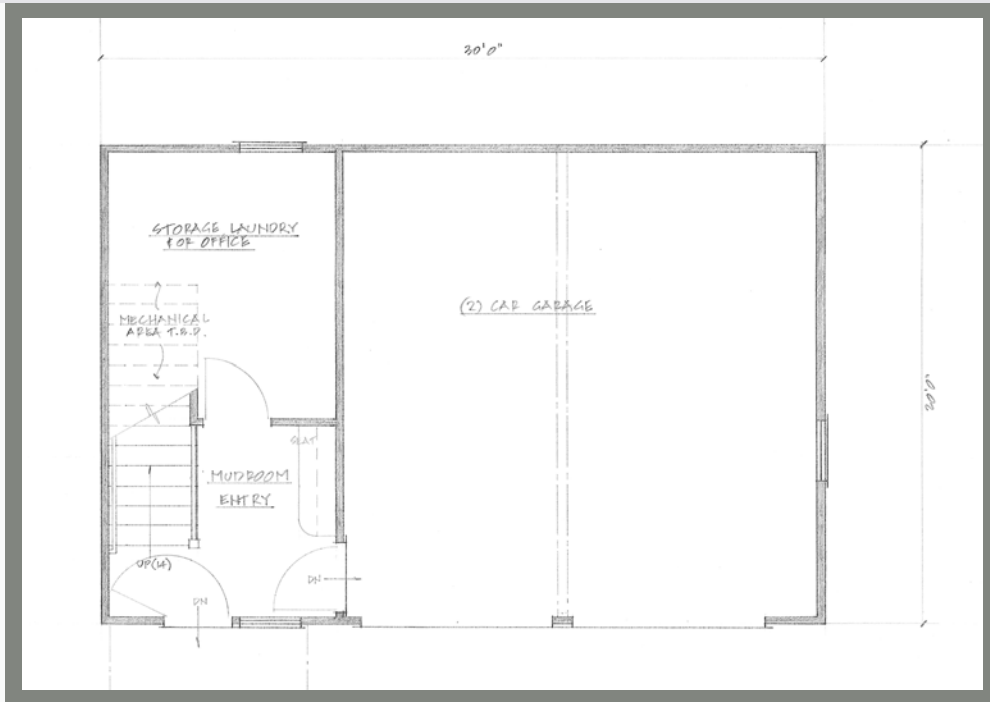


Conceptual Site Plan

The existing, unimproved structure is 600 square feet and is currently used as a two-car garage and for storage purposes. The structure has two floors that combine for 1,200 square feet of area. Up to 750 square feet can be renovated into gross living area for an ADU. There is a large driveway that can easily accommodate the required off-street required parking space.

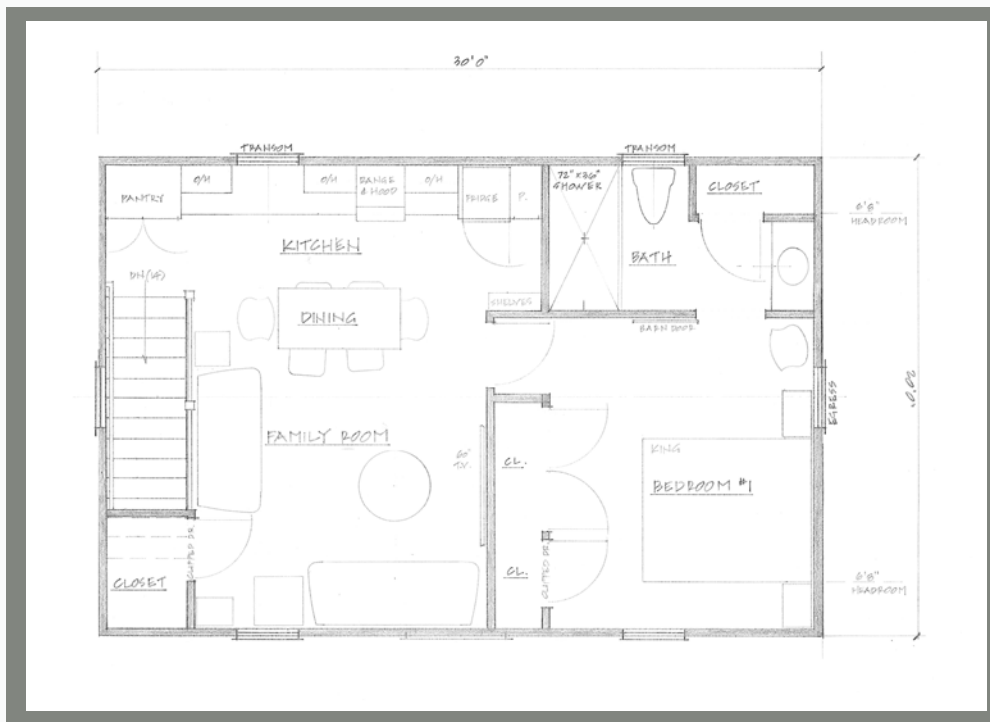
The floor plans are shown on the following page. These plans depict improvements that mostly occur on the second floor. The existing garage use on the ground level remains in place. The structure is accessed by an existing door on the left side with an existing set of stairs providing access to the second floor. The ground level layout shows a shared mudroom area, space for the ADU's mechanicals, and area for storage, laundry, and home office use by the ADU occupant. The mudroom area is shared so it does not add to the ADU's gross living area calculation. The spaces set aside for the stairs, laundry, home office and mechanical equipment combine for an area of 177 square feet. Since these areas are exclusive to the ADU, the 177 square feet is included in the ADU's gross living area calculation.

The proposed second floor layout has the landing at the top of the stairs and is situated to the side of the kitchen area. The layout places the more active areas of the ADU to the left portion of the floor plan. This is intentional for purposes of privacy, as there is an existing patio on the ground level adjacent to the structure that is primarily for use by the homeowner. This configuration can be modified to best suit the homeowner's requirements since the ground level ceiling provides accessibility for the installation and maintenance of wiring and plumbing for the ADU on the second floor.



Ground Level Plan

The second floor is 600 square feet but only 551 square feet will be used in the gross living area calculation. This carriage house has a roof slope that impacts a portion of the second floor ceiling height. In a room with a sloping ceiling, building codes consider any portion of the room with a vertical ceiling height of less than seven feet, as measured from the finished floor, as not included in the gross living area calculation. The second floor has 49 square feet of floor area under seven feet in height. The 551 square feet of gross living area on the second floor and the 177 square feet of gross floor area on the ground level combine for a total 728 square feet, under the maximum 750 square feet allowed.



Second Floor Plan

## Accessory Dwelling Unit





Exterior Elevation

The front elevation depicts simplistic but valuable improvements to the exterior of the carriage house. The existing exterior door has been replaced with a door of similar construction to the upgraded garage doors and a faux hay loft door. Architectural elements such as the transom windows above the garage doors, vertical wooden board construction of the doors, window trim, corner board, and a smaller scale shed roof over the door are simplistic interpretations of the same details installed on the principal dwelling unit. These simplified elements combine to provide a carriage house architectural character that adheres to the design standards requirements of the zoning ordinance. The renovated structure has been painted in the same color scheme as the single-family home. This provides visual continuity, in concert with the simplified architectural elements; the carriage house appears subordinate to the principal dwelling structure.



Street View Rendering

# Apply For Your ADU

This document has reviewed the homeowner's needs, financial requirements, the City's ADU standards, and suggested meeting with City staff to informally discuss the ADU approval process and develop documentation, including plans and elevations. This next stage of creating an ADU involves formalizing an application with the City of Portsmouth.

The application process is straightforward, with a step-by-step description provided below.

## Accessory Dwelling Unit Application Instructions

These instructions are provided to assist you in making an application for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), which is described in [Section 10.814 of the Zoning Ordinance](#).

- **Confer with Planning and Sustainability Department Staff:** The homeowner should meet with staff informally at the outset to discuss the potential ADU, explore options and identify any concerns prior to making an application.
- **Establish An Account in the City's Online Permitting Portal:** [OpenGov](#) is the online software that powers the City of Portsmouth's application center. In order to file an application for an ADU, the homeowner will need to create an account and register online with OpenGov.

The person completing the online application should be the primary point of contact for the project. If the applicant is not the owner of the property, an authorization from the property owner must be provided. All automatic notifications from OpenGov on the application's status, approvals, and staff comments will only be sent to the email address of the primary point of contact and only this person can add additional information to the application once it has been submitted.

- **Complete a Land Use Application:** The next step is to complete the Land Use Application form and provide payment of any required application fees. The applicant will need to upload and provide one hard copy of all supporting documents, plans, and exhibits. If a Conditional Use Permit is required, the application will need Planning Board approval.

[Land Use Application Fees](#) are available from the Planning and Sustainability Department, in person and online. If the project will need multiple land use approvals from different boards, a single online land use application record should be used for the entire permitting process.

- **Ensure Completeness:** The Planning and Sustainability Department reserves the right to refuse applications that do not meet the minimum requirements. Additional information and/or exhibits that illustrate the scope of the project may be requested by staff.

It is the obligation of the applicant to submit adequate plans and exhibits which demonstrate compliance with [Section 10.814 of the Zoning Ordinance](#). The applicant may use the City's online mapping program [MapGeo](#) to help provide plans showing existing and proposed conditions including:

- Scale legend, title, project address, date, and source of displayed data
- Front, side and rear setback / yard dimensions and distance between buildings
- Lot dimensions
- Abutting street(s) and street names
- Dimensions (size and height) of single-family dwelling and other (if any) accessory buildings
- Labeled photo(s) of existing structures / buildings on property
- Scaled building plans and elevations of any proposed new construction or renovations

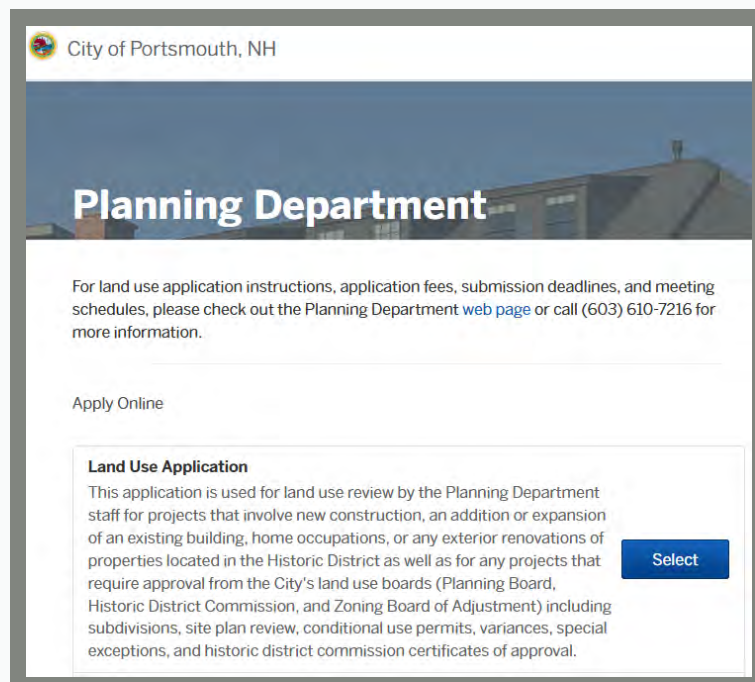


- Scaled floor plans of the proposed ADU that include total gross floor area and number of bedrooms
- **Provide Supporting Document:** It is suggested that a detailed project description cover letter be provided by the applicant that explains the proposed ADU project and contains:
  - The principal and accessory dwelling units will remain under common ownership.
  - The principal or accessory dwelling shall be occupied by the owner of the dwelling as their principal place of residence. (The owner will also provide an affidavit document that one of the units is their principal place of residence later in the application process).
  - Neither the principal nor accessory dwelling shall be used for any business, except that the owner may have a home occupation use in the unit that they occupy as allowed by the zoning ordinance.
  - Where municipal sewer service is not provided, the septic system shall meet NH DES requirements for the demand for total occupancy of the premises.
  - The accessory dwelling will not result in excessive noise, traffic, or parking congestion.
  - If applicable, the applicant will provide a detailed explanation for any requests to the Planning Board to modify a specific dimension and/or parking standard.

The applicant is encouraged to consider the following when completing the application:

- Provide neat and clearly legible materials
- Use color or highlights to identify pertinent areas on submitted plans
- Review the application with a member of the Planning and Sustainability Department staff prior to submittal
- Discuss the project with neighbors

This information is also available in the [Accessory Dwelling Unit Application Instructions](#).



OpenGov Screenshot

## Review Of Your ADU

After the homeowner has submitted their land use application for an ADU, City staff will review the materials and documents provided for completeness. Staff will coordinate with the applicant using the online permitting portal during this review process and may request more information to consider the application complete.

Once complete, staff will evaluate the application and determine if the proposed ADU meets the requirements of an Administrative Approval (AP) or if it will require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process with the Planning Board. Criteria for this assessment is outlined in [Section 10.440 Table of Uses](#) in the City’s Zoning Ordinance provided on the opposite page.

Section 10.440 Table of Uses – Residential, Mixed Residential, Business and Industrial Districts																		
Use	R	SRA SRB	GRA GRB	GRC (A)	GA/ MH	MRO CD4- L1	CD4- L2	MRB	CD5 CD4	GB	G1	G2	B CD4- W	WB	OR	I	WI	Supplemental Regulations
<b>I. Residential Uses</b>																		
1.10 Single family dwelling	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	N	N	P	P	N	N	N	N	N	
1.20 Accessory dwelling unit	10.814 (Accessory Dwelling Units)																	
1.21 Attached accessory dwelling unit (AADU)																		
1.211 Up to 750 sq. ft. GLA and entirely within an existing single-family dwelling	AP	AP	AP	AP	N	AP	AP	AP	CU	N	CU	CU	N	N	N	N	N	
1.212 Up to 750 sq. ft. GLA and in an expansion of an existing single-family dwelling	CU	CU	CU	CU	N	CU	CU	CU	N	N	CU	CU	N	N	N	N	N	
1.22 Detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU)																		
1.221 Up to 600 sq. ft. GLA and entirely within an existing accessory building that conforms with the dimensional requirements of this Ordinance.	CU	CU	AP	AP	N	AP	AP	AP	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
1.222 Up to 750 sq. ft. GLA and entirely within an existing accessory building that conforms with the dimensional requirements of this Ordinance.	CU	CU	CU	CU	N	CU	CU	CU	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
1.223 Up to 600 sq. ft. GLA in an existing accessory building that does not conform with the dimensional requirements of this Ordinance or includes the expansion of the existing accessory building.	CU	CU	CU	CU	N	CU	CU	CU	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
1.224 Up to 750 sq. ft. GLA on a lot and in a new building that complies with all lot and building dimensional standards of this Ordinance for a single-family dwelling	CU	CU	CU	CU	N	CU	CU	CU	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	

P = Permitted AP = Administrative Approval S = Special Exception CU = Conditional Use Permit N = Prohibited

As Amended Through August 19, 2024 4-8

Table of Uses

## Administrative Approval

In Portsmouth, a proposed ADU that is within the principal dwelling unit, conforms to the current standards of the City’s Land Use Regulations and Zoning Ordinance, and does not require expansion of the existing home’s footprint or floor area is permitted through an as-of-right process. Any minor modifications to the principal dwelling unit that are proposed for the ADU, such as the addition of a second entry door for the ADU, will be evaluated by staff. In this instance, City staff will advise if the additional door is, or needs to be, subordinate in appearance to the main door of the house as required by the City’s regulations.

If all criteria are met, City staff will establish the dates of the required 30-day review and public notice period. The City will mail required notices to abutting property owners within 100 feet of the property. Also, the City will produce the required placard that the applicant will place on the



property in a location easily seen by passers-by on the public right-of-way for the 30-day review period. The public has this 30-day period to provide comments and concerns to City staff regarding the AADU.

## Conditional Use Permit

When an ADU application requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), City staff will review the application for completeness including the project narrative, plans and photos and schedule the application for a public hearing at a Planning Board meeting. At the public hearing, the Planning Board will hear testimony from the applicant and will evaluate if the proposed ADU conforms to all applicable zoning and use standards.

The Board will consider any requests for modifications from ADU regulations set forth in sections 10.814.26 and 10.814.30 through 10.814.50. The Planning Board cannot modify the standards for the maximum size or height of the ADU. The Planning Board will consider use standards such as if the exterior design of the ADU is architecturally consistent with or similar in appearance to the existing principal dwelling on the lot, if the site plan provides adequate and appropriate open space and landscaping for both the ADU and the principal dwelling unit, provides the required one off-street parking space, and is compatible with the character of adjacent and neighborhood properties.

## Approval Of Your ADU

An as-of-right ADU application is given approval after the 30-day review period. The City's Planning and Sustainability Department Director issues a Letter of Decision (LOD) with conditions that approves the ADU application. Conditions will include requirements such as, the homeowner must occupy one of the dwellings on the property and may not rent either dwelling for a term of less than 30 days. Conditions unique to the application may be added. At this time, staff assigns a unique ADU land use record that the City and homeowner will use for all future correspondence through the online permitting program.

If the ADU application requires Planning Board review and issuance of a CUP, the Planning Board will issue a LOD either granting or denying the application. This finding usually occurs after one public meeting and usually within 60 days of the ADU application being determined as complete by City staff. The steps following approval by the Planning Board are the same as described above for an as-of-right ADU.

The next step for the homeowner is to complete and sign the required Accessory Dwelling Unit Owner Affidavit. This affidavit documents an agreement between the City of Portsmouth and the homeowner that the homeowner understands the conditions in the LOD, and what will occur if the conditions stop being met. This affidavit, along with the LOD, will be recorded by the City at the Rockingham County Registry of Deeds. The homeowner will be responsible for paying the recording fees. Afterwards, the homeowner can proceed with filing a building permit with the City's Inspection Department to start construction of their ADU.

## Create Your ADU

Embarking on the construction of an ADU is a substantial investment in enhancing the property's functionality and financial value. It is recommended the homeowner hire a general contractor before applying for a building permit.

The homeowner, having thoroughly planned and designed their preferred ADU, should seek bids from different contractors to compare construction costs. The homeowner may have used an architect or designer to document their ADU design. The homeowner should also confirm the contractor has an updated contractor license and insurance, and consider meeting with several different contractors before making a final decision.

A key member of the homeowner's team creating the ADU is the City's Inspection Department. During this period, the Inspection Department is the homeowner's primary contact at the City. They will help guide the construction process and provide oversight using the online permitting program and in-person when inspecting the ADUs construction.

The construction timeline will vary as it depends upon the ADU type and schedule of the selected contractor. An ADU created by conversion of space internal to a single-family home usually requires few modifications and will take the least amount of time. Creating a detached ADU usually takes the longest as it will involve site work, numerous building trades, and a number of inspections.

After construction of the ADU is complete and signed off by the City's various inspectors, the process to create the ADU is nearly complete and returns to the responsibility of staff within the City's Planning and Sustainability Department. Staff will assess if all conditions have been met. If they have not, staff will coordinate with the homeowner and assist in resolving any outstanding issues. If all conditions have been met, Planning staff will issue a Certificate of Use and then the Inspection Department will issue a Certificate of Occupancy. This process is mostly administrative and usually takes less than 30 days.

The process to create the ADU is complete, and the homeowner can proceed with using and enjoying their accessory dwelling unit.

On an annual basis, the City will coordinate with the homeowner on the status of their ADU. This coordination occurs using the online permitting program. The effort consists of the homeowner reviewing, signing, and returning to the City an attestation stating they still own the property and, if applicable, continue to meet the requirements of the LOD that granted the right to have an ADU on their property.



Accessory Dwelling Unit



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## FAQs — Zoning-Related

### **Where is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) allowed in Portsmouth?**

An ADU is allowed on any lot containing a single-family dwelling, as long as the potential ADU conforms to specific zoning regulations detailed in Zoning Ordinance §10.814.13.

### **Is there a limit on how many ADUs can be on the same property, street, or in my neighborhood?**

Only one ADU is allowed on the same property per State statute and local zoning. There is no limit on the number of ADUs on the same street or in the neighborhood.

### **Can an ADU that does not conform to all zoning regulations be approved?**

In certain instances, yes. Zoning Ordinance §10.814 Accessory Dwelling Units allows for an ADU that does not meet requirements for lot area, lot area per dwelling unit, or frontage beyond those required for a single-family dwelling. A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) from the Planning Board or approval from the Zoning Board of Adjustment may be required.

### **My property has conditions that do not conform to zoning. Can I still create an ADU?**

An Attached ADU is allowed on existing non-conforming lots and within an existing non-conforming building. A proposed Detached ADU is required to meet side and rear yard setbacks. Specific provisions are made for creating an ADU in a detached structure that does not meet dimensional requirements.

### **Are setbacks required for an Attached or Detached ADU?**

An ADU is subject to setback requirements. If an Attached ADU is created with new construction, or a Detached ADU is created by renovation or new construction, and it does not meet setback requirements then it is not allowed unless a variance request is submitted and receives approval by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

### **What are the distance requirements between a Detached ADU and other structures on the lot?**

A Detached ADU is required to be separated from the principal single-family dwelling on the same property by a minimum distance of five feet.

### **Can I convert my existing garage into an ADU if it is in the front yard portion of my property?**

Yes.

### **Does the development of an ADU create a multi-family residential use condition?**

No.

### **Can I build an ADU in the Historic District?**

Yes, but if any exterior changes are made it will require review and approval by the Historic District Commission.

### **Can an ADU be created by converting existing space inside my house?**

Yes, if the ADU does not change the outward appearance of the single-family residence it is usually allowed as-of-right.

### **My single-family residence has an existing unlawful apartment. Can I convert this apartment into an ADU?**

Conversion of an existing unlawful apartment into an ADU is allowed and encouraged.

**Can I create an ADU if there are multiple detached dwellings existing on my lot?**

No. An ADU is allowed on a lot that has one or more non-residential use structures.

**Can I convert an existing accessory structure that is on my property into an ADU?**

Yes, if it meets the requirements in Section §10.814.13 of the Zoning Ordinance and applicable building codes.

**Does Portsmouth's ADU zoning apply design and development standards?**

In certain instances, yes. Those instances and their requirements are set forth in Section §10.814.50 Architectural Design Standards. Other development standards specific to an Accessory ADU or a Detached ADU are detailed in other portions of Section §10.814.

**FAQs — Development Standards****Does my property need to be a minimum lot size to create an ADU?**

No. An ADU is allowed on a single-family residential property that does not conform to lot area.

**Do maximum lot coverage or gross floor area requirements apply in the creation of an ADU?**

Yes, an ADU is allowed on a single-family residential property that does not currently conform to lot coverage. Gross Floor Area calculations do apply for a detached ADU.

**Are there minimum and maximum unit sizes established for an ADU?**

Yes. Minimum and maximum sizes for an ADU are detailed in Section §10.440 Table of Uses and explained in Section §10.814 Accessory Dwelling Units.

**Does the size of my existing home limit the size of an ADU?**

The Gross Living Area (GLA) of an attached ADU is limited to 750 square feet. The maximum Gross Living Area (GLA) of a detached ADU is 600 square feet or 750 square feet depending upon conformance to dimensional requirements. This is detailed in Section §10.440 Table of Uses.

**Can a unit size exceed 750 square feet?**

No, an ADU cannot exceed 750 square feet in Gross Living Area (GLA). Refer to minimum and maximum sizes for an ADU in terms of GLA that are detailed in Section §10.440 Table of Uses.

**The shape of my property is unusual. Can I still build an ADU?**

An Attached ADU is allowed on existing non-conforming lots and within an existing non-conforming building. A proposed Detached ADU is required to meet side and rear yard setbacks. Specific provisions are made for creating an ADU in a detached structure that does not meet dimensional requirements.

**Is there a limit on the height and/or number of stories of an ADU?**

Yes, there are limits on height and these limits depend upon if the potential ADU will be attached or detached to the single-family residence. Allowed height will determine the number of stories.

**Is there a limit on the number of bedrooms in an ADU?**

Yes, there cannot be more than two bedrooms.

**Is an ADU able to be exempt from parking requirements?**

No. One off-street parking space is required for an ADU. An ADU is not allowed to designate an on-street parking space to meet the one parking space requirement in the zoning ordinance.

## FAQs — Permitting

### What type of permits do I need from the City to create my ADU?

Depending upon the type of proposed ADU, either a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required from the Planning Board, or an Administrative Approval is issued by the Planning and Sustainability Director. A Certificate of Occupancy (COO) from the Inspections Department will be required for any ADU. In certain instances, review and approval from the Zoning Board of Adjustment and/or Historic District Commission may also be required.

### Are ADUs permitted as-of-right?

An ADU that is created by converting existing space within a single-family residence and does not change the outward appearance of the single-family residence is usually allowed as-of-right.

### Is there a streamlined permitting process for ADU applications?

Depending upon the type of ADU, the approval process usually takes 90 days. Administrative Approval for certain attached ADUs takes the least amount of time. If the review and approval by the Zoning Board of Adjustment and/or Historic District Commission is required, the approval process can take longer.

### Are there any fees to permit and create an ADU?

There are application and inspection fees associated with the approval and permitting process. These vary depending upon the type and timeline for the ADU. Specific [fees are explained on the City's website](#).

### Who is responsible in the City for enforcement of ADUs to ensure they comply with City, State and federal laws?

The City's Inspection Department oversees building code enforcement and compliance. The City's Planning and Sustainability Department oversees zoning ordinance conformity specific to land use regulation requirements.

## FAQs — Costs

### How much will my ADU cost?

The total design, permitting and construction costs will vary according to size, design and materials used in the creation of the ADU. It is best to work with a professional contractor who is knowledgeable in the residential home industry to best evaluate personal needs and resources to create an ADU appropriate for your budget.

### Is there financial assistance or funding available for the development of an ADU?

The City of Portsmouth does not provide any financial assistance or funds for the creation of an ADU. Lending options specific to the development of an ADU are becoming an increasingly common service provided by regional banks and other lending institutions.

### What are the rental terms required for myself and the tenant if I rent the ADU or the single-family home?

All rental leases are required to meet Federal Fair Housing mandates. The City of Portsmouth does not allow any rental units to be rented for any term less than 30 days.

## FAQs — Owner and Renter Stipulations

### Are there any owner-occupancy requirements for ADUs?

Section 10.814.22 of the City's Zoning Ordinance requires the property owner to reside in either the principal dwelling unit or the ADU and claim it as their legal and primary residence.

### Can I sell either my ADU or single-family home and then live in the other?

No. A property owner must retain ownership of both the ADU and the single-family residential dwelling and is not allowed to sell one of them separate from the other.



# Resource Links

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*“Attached and detached ADUs offer potential increase to housing affordability for both renters and homeowner in their ability to create a wider range of housing choices.”*

*– California Department of Housing and Community Development Accessory Dwelling Unit Handbook*

## City of Portsmouth Contacts

Planning and Sustainability Department Staff — [portsnh.co/contactplanning](https://portsnh.co/contactplanning)

Inspection Staff — [portsnh.co/contactinspection](https://portsnh.co/contactinspection)

## Terms and Definitions

Many terms this ADU Handbook uses to discuss the planning, design, and construction of an ADU can be found in the City of Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance at [portsnh.co/ordinances](https://portsnh.co/ordinances).

## ADU, Permitting, and Ordinance Links

Accessory Dwelling Units - [portsnh.co/adu](https://portsnh.co/adu)

Land Use and Zoning Regulations - [portsnh.co/landusezoning](https://portsnh.co/landusezoning)

Zoning Ordinance Section 10.814 - Accessory Dwelling Units - [portsnh.co/aduzoning](https://portsnh.co/aduzoning)

MapGeo - [portsnh.co/mapgeo](https://portsnh.co/mapgeo)

OpenGov - [portsnh.co/permit](https://portsnh.co/permit)

Land Use Application Forms and Fees — [portsnh.co/landuseapp](https://portsnh.co/landuseapp)

New Hampshire State Statute 674:71 – 73 — [portsnh.co/stateadu](https://portsnh.co/stateadu)



Accessory Dwelling Unit





# Accessory Dwelling Unit

## Homeowner's Handbook



**City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

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A handbook about how to create accessory dwelling units in Portsmouth.