



Accessory Dwelling Unit Design Workbook

Part I - The Basics

A resource guide for homeowners, designers, and contractors

City of Folsom
Community Development
Department



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Part I - The Basics

ADU Process, Financing, Development and Design

Introduction

The City of Folsom offers this two-part design workbook as a resource for those interested in designing and building an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). In addition to providing information on design ideas, this workbook explains the City's review and approval process, illustrates the City's objective design standards set forth in [Chapter 17.105 of the Folsom Municipal Code](#), and identifies recommended design styles for the Historic District.

There are two parts to this workbook. Part I – The Basics provides general information on planning, designing and developing your ADU as well as design examples. Part II – The Historic District discusses the historic architectural styles and objective design standards that apply to larger ADUs there.

While the City's design standards only apply to ADUs that are larger than 800 square feet or taller than 16 feet, they serve as useful guidelines for anyone planning to build an ADU. This workbook expands on those standards and provides other helpful information such as information about financing an ADU and a showcase of ADU design ideas.

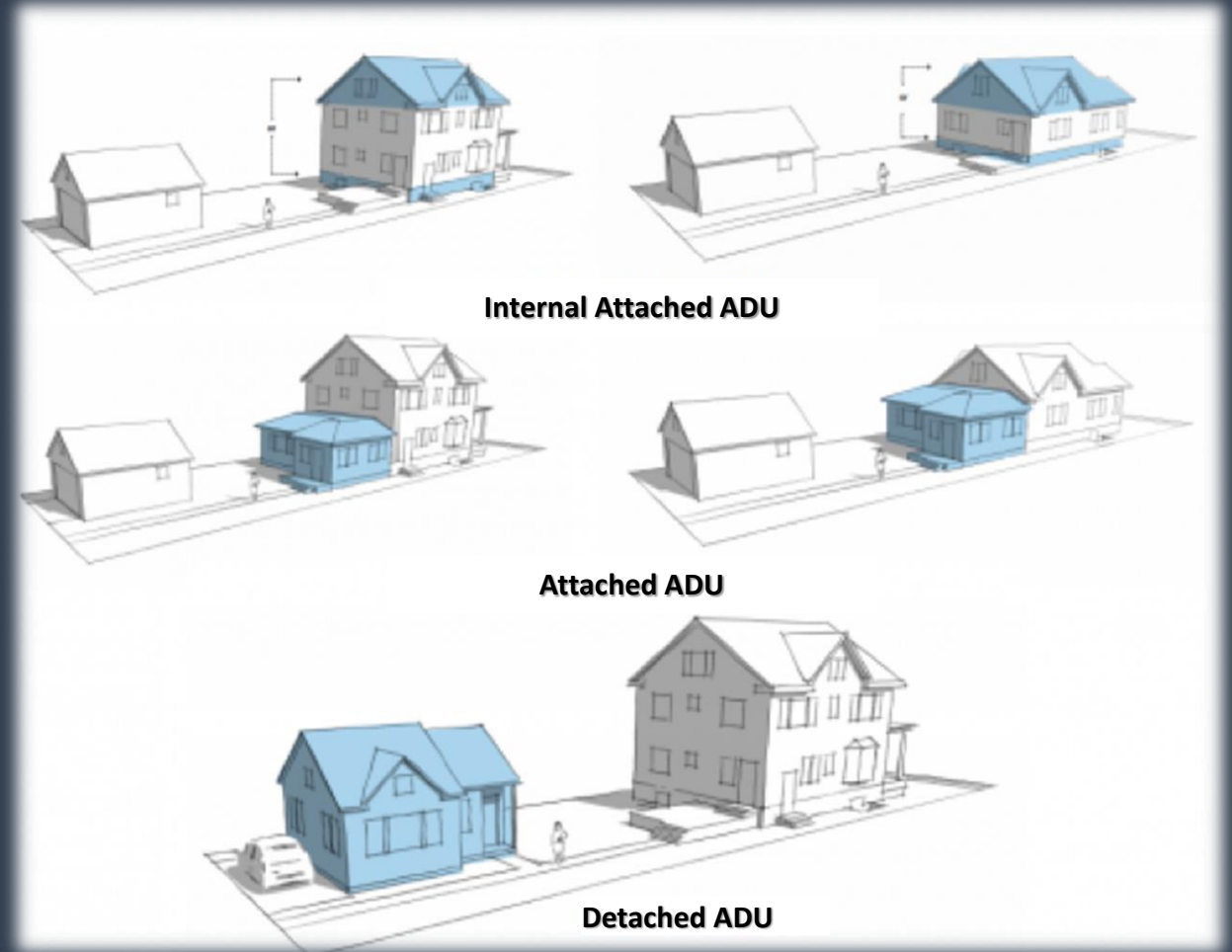


Accessory Dwelling Unit Types

An Accessory Dwelling Unit or ADU is a second residence on the same lot as the main home or apartment building. Also, known as second units or “granny flats,” these units can, if well designed, can add to property values and increase housing opportunities in existing areas without changing the overall character of the neighborhood. To be considered an ADU, the unit must include a kitchen, bathroom, and a place to sleep. ADUs in Folsom can range in size from 150 to 1,000 square feet.

There are several types of ADUs including:

- **Internal Attached ADU:** Conversion of space such as a room, basement or attic in a home into a separate unit.
- **Attached ADU:** Addition of a new structure to the existing home.
- **Detached ADU:** A stand-alone unit separate from the primary home. This category also includes:
 - **Garage Apartments:** ADU attached to the side or back of an existing detached garage (not shown).
 - **Above-Garage ADU:** An ADU built on top of a new or existing detached garage (not shown).



Alternatives to Traditional ADUs

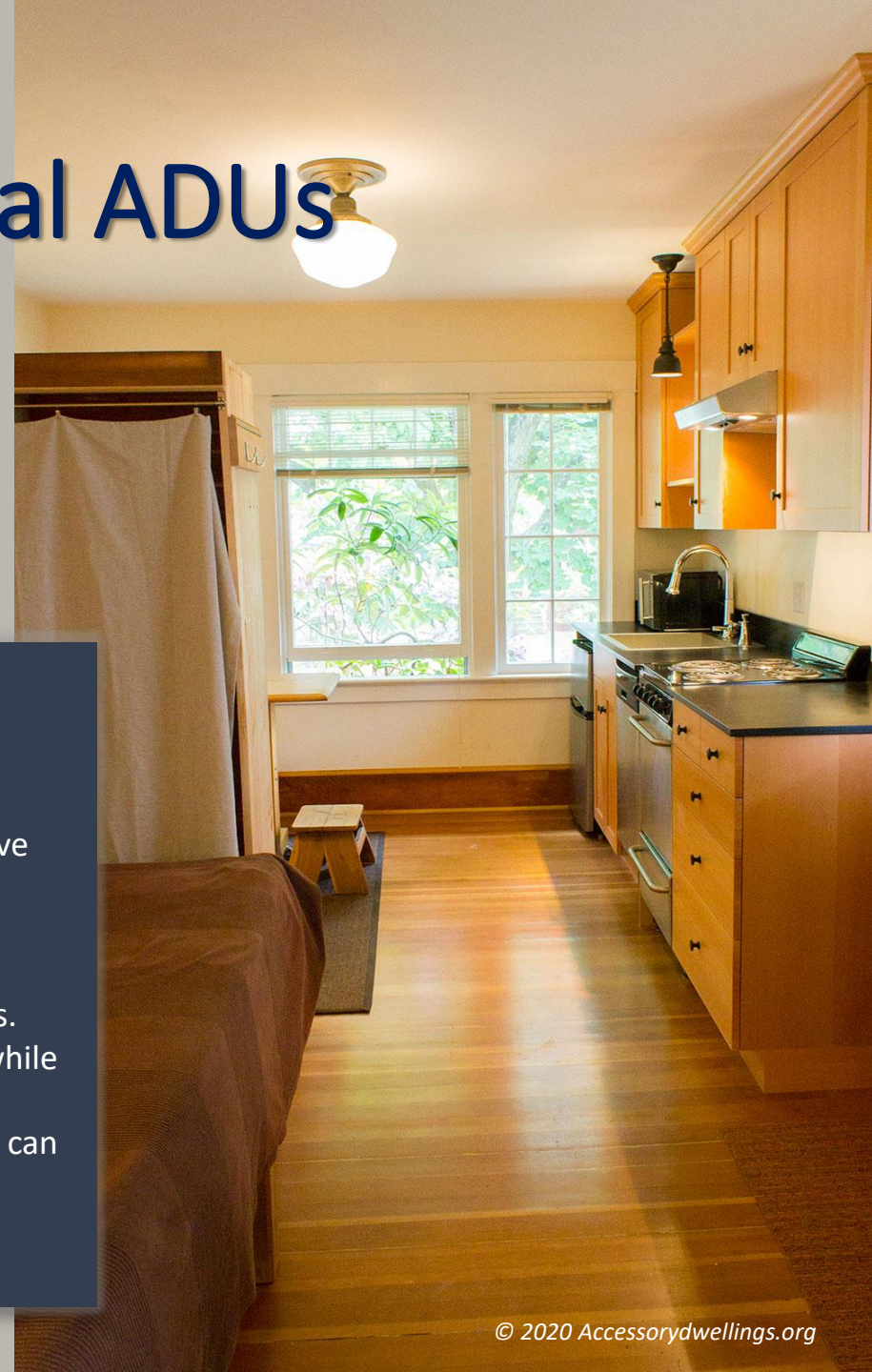
While there are many benefits to building an ADU, cost and financing options may be a limiting factor. There are other options to consider that can provide many of the same benefits. These include Junior Accessory Dwelling Units and Home Sharing.

Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs)

Junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs) are very small dwelling units constructed from an existing, legally-permitted part of a single-family residence. They can be up to 500 square feet in size and must include an efficiency kitchen (sink, microwave, cabinet and counter). Some JADUs have their own bathroom, while others share with the main house.

Home Sharing

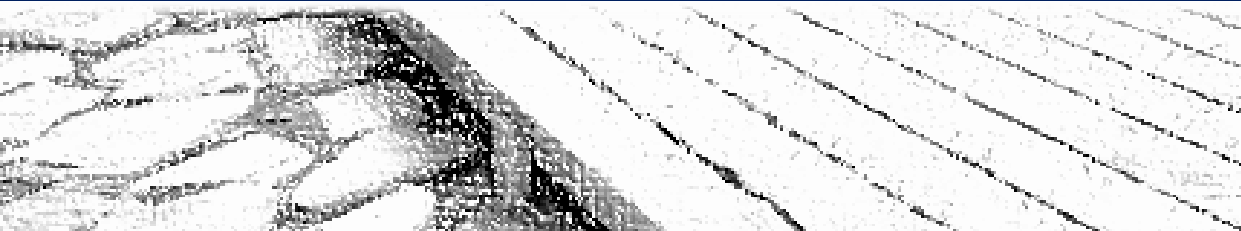
Home sharing can be a simpler and less expensive option for homeowners. Anyone with a spare bedroom can reduce costs and earn rental income while at the same time, offering a low-cost housing option to someone in the community. Home sharing can be a mutually beneficial arrangement that can help save money, support continued independence, and provide mutual assistance. Some homeowners even provide reduced rent in exchange for household chores.





Getting Started

From Plans to Project



The ADU Development Process

Following the steps listed on this and the following page can help ensure you have a successful project.



1 PLAN: First, figure out what you want, what you can build, the best location for the ADU, and what your budget is. Learn about City rules covering ADUs in [Chapter 17.105 of the Municipal Code \(FMC\)](#). Reach out to City staff to discuss your project with City Planning staff in the City's Community Development Department to understand the regulations that affect your property. This will help avoid any surprises later in the process.



2 TEAM: Decide on your project team. Will you be hiring a team with a project manager, licensed architect and contractor? Will you manage this yourself and select your own licensed architect and contractor or do you have enough design and construction experience to do this yourself? Will the project be built from scratch or will you use modular construction? Hiring an architect and contractor that have done similar projects in Folsom can be helpful since they should be familiar with the permitting process.



3 PRELIMINARY DESIGN: With your team, start the design of your ADU. Figure out size, layout, architectural style, privacy, and other specific needs such as storage areas, laundry room, kitchen location, etc. ADUs are limited in size to 850 square feet for studio and one-bedroom units and up to 1,000 square feet for units with two or more bedrooms. Be aware that any ADU larger than 800 square is subject to basic design standards. Those standards are illustrated in this workbook and are found in [Chapter 17.105 of the Folsom Municipal Code \(FMC\)](#).

ADUs in the Historic District must meet design standards that respect the historic character of that area. ADUs taller than 16 ft. must go before the Historic District Commission. In other areas of Folsom, ADUs taller than 16 feet must go through the Design Review Process explained in Section 17.06 of the FMC. ADU heights are limited to 25 ft. in the Historic District and 30 ft. elsewhere in Folsom.



4 CITY MEETING: Though not required, it can be useful to discuss your preliminary design with City staff. A pre-application meeting with Planning and Building staff allows you ask questions and address any critical issues before submitting your application and drawings.



5 DESIGN COMPLETION: Complete your ADU design and assemble all required documents based on the City's [ADU Application Checklist](#).



6 APPLICATION: To apply for permits, you will need to first complete an application and provide the detailed drawings and other required documentation. There are two types of approval: Planning approval and Building approval. Planning makes sure the plans meet the regulations in Chapter 17.105. Building review ensures the ADU meets State and local building codes and is safe to build and occupy. To find an application and checklist visit the City's [ePermit Center](#).



7



REVIEW: City Planning and then Building staff will review your project. Your project team will need to respond to any City comments, revise your plans, if needed, and resubmit. Refer to the chart on p. 12 and on p. 6 in Part II for the Historic District for more detail on the City application and review process.

8



PERMITS: When your application and plans are approved and fees are paid, you can start construction. Please note that in some cases additional permits may be needed such as a grading permit, tree work or removal permit, etc.

9



CONSTRUCTION: Once you have your building permit, the licensed contractor that you hire can begin work. Inspections will be required by the City to check that the ADU is built according to the approved plans. Once the building and final inspection is complete, you will receive a Certificate of Occupancy.

Project Schedule

It is important to understand the time it takes for the process of planning, designing and building an ADU. Typically, it takes a homeowner about one to three months to get started and hire their development team. It then can take another one to six months to develop plans and apply. Planning approval can take no more than two months. Building review and approval usually takes about two to three months but can be as much as six months. Depending on the building method, construction can take between six months and a year. Modular construction can reduce the construction time. In total, most ADU projects take about one to two years to complete.

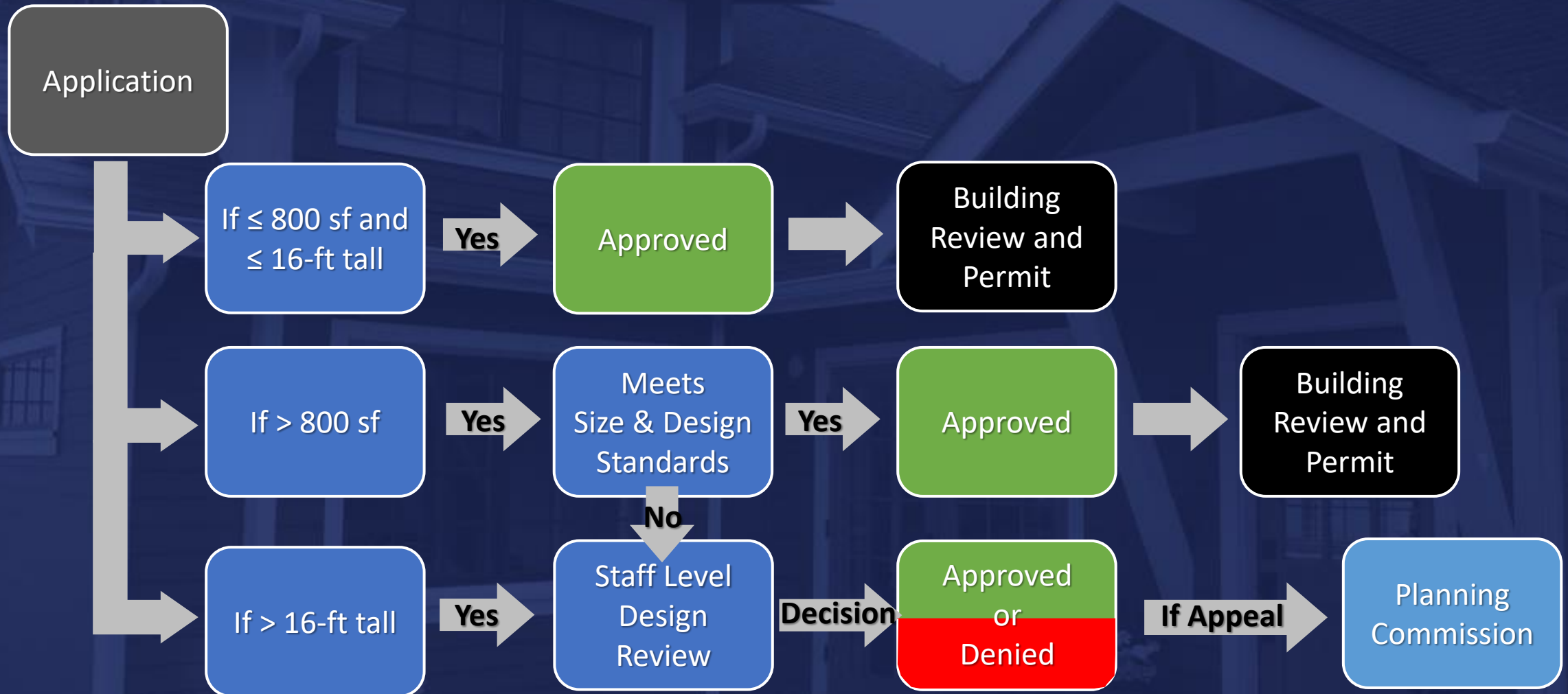
10



OCCUPY: It's now time to move in. If you are renting out your ADU, you will need to decide if you want to be the landlord or hire a management company to handle that. If you choose to be a landlord, please familiarize with State laws covering landlords and renters. See the Resources section of this Workbook for more information.



Citywide ADU Application and Review Process





Additional Considerations

When planning for an ADU, there are several things to consider:

SITE CONDITIONS

LOCATION: Finding the right location for your ADU is important. Generally, ADUs should be smaller than the primary residence and located to the side or rear of the property behind the home. Check to make sure there are no easements on your property that might prevent the use of that location in your yard.

ACCESS: Every ADU must have a separate entry from the primary home and a paved pathway to that entrance. Will that pathway be from the street or the alley? Will it be easily accessible?

TREES: Are there trees in your yard? Building your ADU on or right next to a protected tree can result in additional permits and fees. Talk to the City Arborist before designing your ADU. There may be ways to avoid this.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FEES

UTILITIES: A separate utility service for water and sewer is typically not required unless your ADU is large enough to require a larger pipe size to serve the main home and the ADU, which is unusual. If you plan to rent your ADU and bill your renter for utilities, consider adding a submeter to track water usage for your ADU.

FEES: ADUs that are 750 square feet or less do not have to pay any impact fees. You will still have to pay for City processing fees for the review and approval of your plans and building inspections during construction. ADUs greater than 750 square feet may be subject to impact fees, but those fees must be proportional to the size of the ADU.

TAXES: Construction of an ADU may affect your property taxes. Check with the Sacramento County Assessor before starting.

BUILDING CODES

SOLAR: A new detached ADU is a separate building and is required by the California Building Code to have solar panels. For an attached ADU or a JADU, solar panels are not required.

FIRE SPRINKLERS: If the existing home is required to have residential fire sprinklers then the new ADU must have them as well otherwise fire sprinklers are not required.

SETBACKS: Though an ADU can be 4 feet from the side and rear property line, if your ADU is less than 5 feet from a property line, then additional building code requirements apply, which may increase your construction cost.

TINY HOMES AND RVs: Tiny homes on wheels and RVs are NOT considered ADUs under the California Building Code. ADUs must be on a permanent foundation.

OCCUPANCY

RENTAL: If you plan to rent your ADU, familiarize yourself with your legal responsibilities as a landlord. The Sacramento Valley chapter of the California Apartment Association is a helpful resource.

VACATION RENTALS: Use of ADUs as vacation rentals (e.g., AirBnB, VRBO, Vacasa, etc.) is not allowed. All rental agreements must be more than 30 days.

OWNER OCCUPANCY: An owner does not have to live in the primary home or the ADU, but if it's a JADU then the owner must live in one of the two units on the property and a deed restriction must be recorded on the JADU.

ADDRESS: Like any new home, ADUs are required to have their own address even if they are attached to the existing home. This lets the Fire Department know that others are living in the home or on the property. ADU addresses should be the same as the main home but followed by ½ such as: 50 ½ Natoma Street. Multiple ADUs on a property should use Unit A or Unit B after the main address, such as 50 Natoma Street, Unit A.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

TRADITIONAL VS. MODULAR CONSTRUCTION: Modular, pre-fab, and panelized construction can often offer faster construction timelines than traditional construction methods. Increasingly, modular ADUs come in a variety of design styles.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN: This type of design offers accessibility for persons with disabilities and the ability for an older adult to age in place. This design typically includes no step entries and barrier free design (shown in the photo below). For more information, see the Universal Design section of this workbook.

PRIVACY: This is an important issue for your ADU residents as well as your neighbors. If you are doing a taller ADU, consider clerestory windows (shown at top of the bottom right photo), smaller upper floor windows, and screening of external stairs.

PARKING: Before starting your design, determine whether parking is required for your ADU. Many ADUs are not required to have parking. See the City's [ADU parking map](#) for more information.



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© 2020 propel studio

ADU Budget and Finance



Planning, designing, and building an ADU is a major undertaking. From start to finish, building an ADU can cost anywhere from as little as \$35,000 to over \$250,000 depending on the type and size of the ADU. This amount includes not only the “hard costs” for construction the ADU, but also “soft costs” such as planning, design and permit fees. When determining the costs of an ADU, you will need to determine your development costs, on-going expenses like maintenance and management (if it is a rental), and then potential revenues, if you plan to rent it out. The table below shows the type of costs to consider. Some ADU websites even have on-line calculators you can use to determine the approximate cost of your project.

Development Costs	Ongoing Expenses	Revenue
Construction Cost (\$/square foot)	Maintenance	Rent (if applicable)
Design Fees (5% - 20% of total project cost)	Utilities	
Permit Fees	Property Management Fees (if applicable)	
Total Project Cost	Annual Expenses	Annual Rental Income



Building a new ADU can be the single biggest expense that a homeowner undertakes. If you are planning to rent your ADU, you can use these expenses and revenue to determine the loan amount you can afford, what the payback period is, and what the long-term return on your investment might be. In some cases, the cost of an ADU can be recouped from rental payments over several years. So figuring in advance how to finance the project is critical. Options for financing an ADU include savings, second mortgage, home equity loan or line of credit (HELOC), home renovation loan, and financial assistance from family members that may live in the new ADU.

A detailed architectural blueprint is shown in a light blue, semi-transparent overlay. The drawing includes various geometric shapes, lines, and dimensions. In the foreground, several drafting tools are visible: a large metal compass, a pair of dividers, and a pencil. The overall aesthetic is clean and professional, typical of a design presentation.

Design

Key design elements to consider

Design and Neighborhood Compatibility

ADUs come in all styles and sizes. When you think about the ADU you want, consider how the ADU will fit into your neighborhood. This is especially important if your ADU is visible from the street or from surrounding properties. For example, if you live in a neighborhood where the predominant design is ranch-style, consider designing an ADU in a similar style or with ranch features. Alternatively, if you prefer a different style such as a contemporary design consider using similar materials and colors as the primary home.

Detached ADU over garage that matches the same design style of primary home using similar roof pitch, materials, trim, and colors. Note internal stairs.



Detached ADU using different color but similar style to primary home.



Even though the design styles are quite different, the contemporary ADU uses similar colors and materials to the primary home, is smaller, and not visible from the street.





Detached ADU matches same modern adobe design style of primary home.



Detached two-story ADU designed to match primary home. Notice the use of similar siding, trim, and roof pitch.



Attached ADU with separate entry that matches original home using same color, trim, horizontal siding, and roof shingles.



Varied roof form

Dormer

Variety of materials

Mass, Scale & Proportion

Scale refers to how the size of the ADU is relative to surrounding buildings while massing relates to the form of the ADU – the shape and size of the ADU. Proportion considers the relationship of the ADU to the primary home. How the mass, scale and proportion of your ADU are handled can have a substantial impact on how the ADU fits into the neighborhood and is perceived by your neighbors. If you are building a two-story ADU, breaking up the mass of the building can not only create visual interest, but it reinforces the secondary nature of the ADU in proportion to the primary home.

There are a number of approaches that can be used to break up the mass of a two-story ADU to create a more harmonious relationship between the ADU, the primary home and surrounding buildings.



Mass, Scale and Proportion

Regardless of whether the ADU design uses modern or traditional architecture, design elements can be incorporated to successfully address the mass and scale of taller ADUs. Design features that can help address the mass and scale of an ADU include:

- Use of dormers
- Varied roof forms
- Roof overhangs
- Recessed, stepback or inset elements
- A mix of different building materials and colors

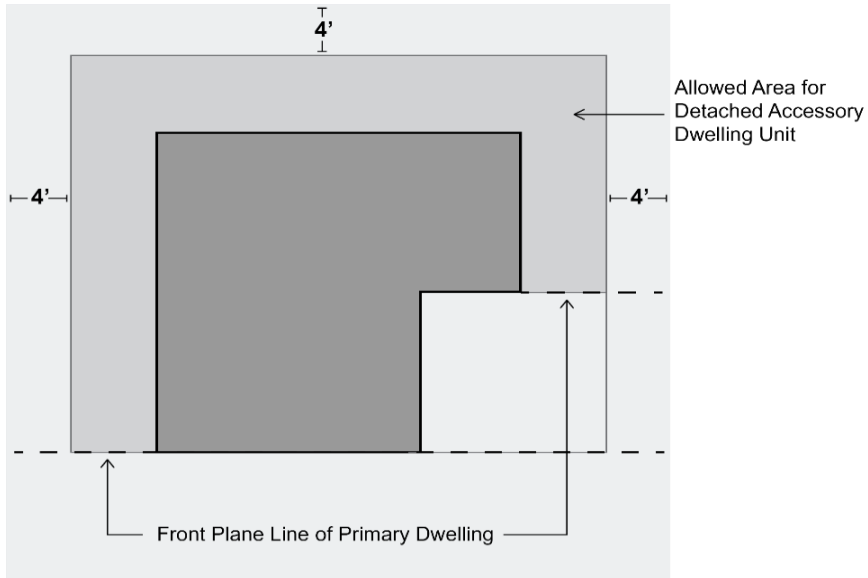


A Contrast in Mass, Scale and Proportion



While both ADUs are two-stories, the ADU on the left has no design features that break up or soften its imposing nature with respect to the primary home (in green on the right of the photo). The materials and colors of the two-story portion of the ADU are uniform and there is no recessed area or area setback on the second story that would soften the contrasting scale. As a result, this ADU is out of proportion with the surrounding homes. The ADU on the right, which is larger than the ADU on the left, is not as imposing because it uses design elements to address its mass and scale. It incorporates a varied roof form, dormers, a variety of exterior materials (i.e., board and batten and horizontal siding), roof eave overhangs, and a shed shade roof over the garage to break up the mass of the ADU. As a result, it is well-proportioned and remains secondary in scale to the primary residence (far right).

ADU Location



ADUs are meant to be secondary in size, scale, and location to the main home. The preferred location for an ADU is at the side or rear of the property or internal to the home, such as in an existing room, basement, attic or converted garage. It is preferable that the ADU not break the front plane of the home as shown in the illustration to the left. Locating an ADU in front of the home is discouraged unless there is no other location to place an ADU on the property.

Similarly, in multi-unit developments like apartments or condominium projects, ADUs are encouraged to be internal to the building such as in an unused storage room or waiting area. If the ADU is detached from the building, it ideally should be located at the side or rear of the property. Like ADUs in traditional single unit neighborhoods, ADUs can be allowed in the front but only if there is no other location.

Privacy

Being a good neighbor means respecting the privacy of adjacent properties when designing and building a new ADU. Simple design elements can make a big difference for privacy especially for two-story ADUs including ADUs on top of garages. Such design elements that can ensure privacy include:

- ✓ Reducing the massing
- ✓ Increased setbacks
- ✓ Internal staircases
- ✓ Staircases with landings screened from view
- ✓ Use of skylights instead of 2nd floor windows
- ✓ Lower level windows
- ✓ Clerestory windows
- ✓ Transom windows
- ✓ Glazed windows
- ✓ False windows



Privacy

To the right are some practical examples of how privacy can be addressed through design.



Use of clerestory window in 2nd floor bedroom allows for natural lighting but protects the privacy of neighbors.



© 2020 BuildingAnAdu.com

A skylight is another way of providing natural light in an ADU without allowing views into a neighbor's home or yard.



Internal staircases help maintain privacy of adjacent properties.



© 2020 Flexfence.com

A screened staircase landing protects the privacy of neighbors.

Universal Design

Universal design is the design of buildings to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability or other factors. ADUs offer the opportunity for multi-generational families to live together on the same property. Originally called “granny flats” or “in-law quarters”, ADUs often are used as living spaces for older family members or for adult children with disabilities. To allow for older adults to age in place, those looking to design an ADU should consider universal design features that allow for someone to continue to live there even as their mobility declines. Similarly, incorporating universal design can provide independent living spaces for family members with disabilities and renters with disabilities. Some simple considerations can make a big difference and can extend the time that an older person or a person with disabilities can live independently. These include:

- Accessible path of travel to the ADU
- No-step entry
- 32” wide interior doors to allow wheelchair access
- Wide and clear passageways
- A bathroom and bedroom on the first floor
- Handrails in showers
- Grab bar reinforcements in hallways
- Levers on doors and faucets

Visit the Resources section of this workbook to find more information on universal design from AARP and the California Housing and Community Development Department.



Universal Design Features

Examples:

The photos on the left showcase some simple design features that

- A. No-step front entry
- B. Accessible bathroom that includes no-step wheelchair-friendly shower with folding seat and grab bars
- C. Barrier free ADA accessibility throughout the ADU providing easy access to the kitchen, bedrooms, and patio – ideal for someone with mobility limitations.





Design Idea Showcase

ADU design examples



Cottage Plan 915-15

Cottage Plan 915-15

by Tumbleweed Tiny Homes

Size: 461 sq. ft.

Dimensions:

Depth: 30'

Width: 16'

Height: 17' 6"

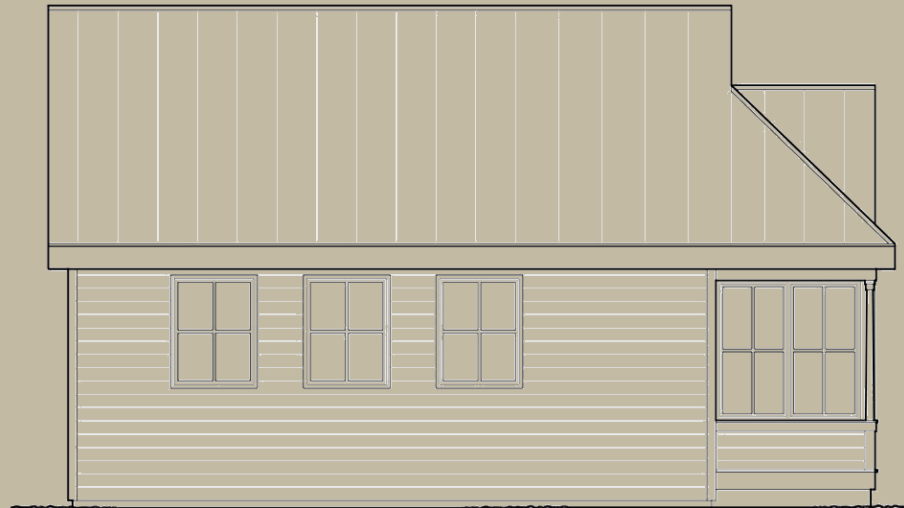
Roof Pitch: 12/12

Bedrooms: 1

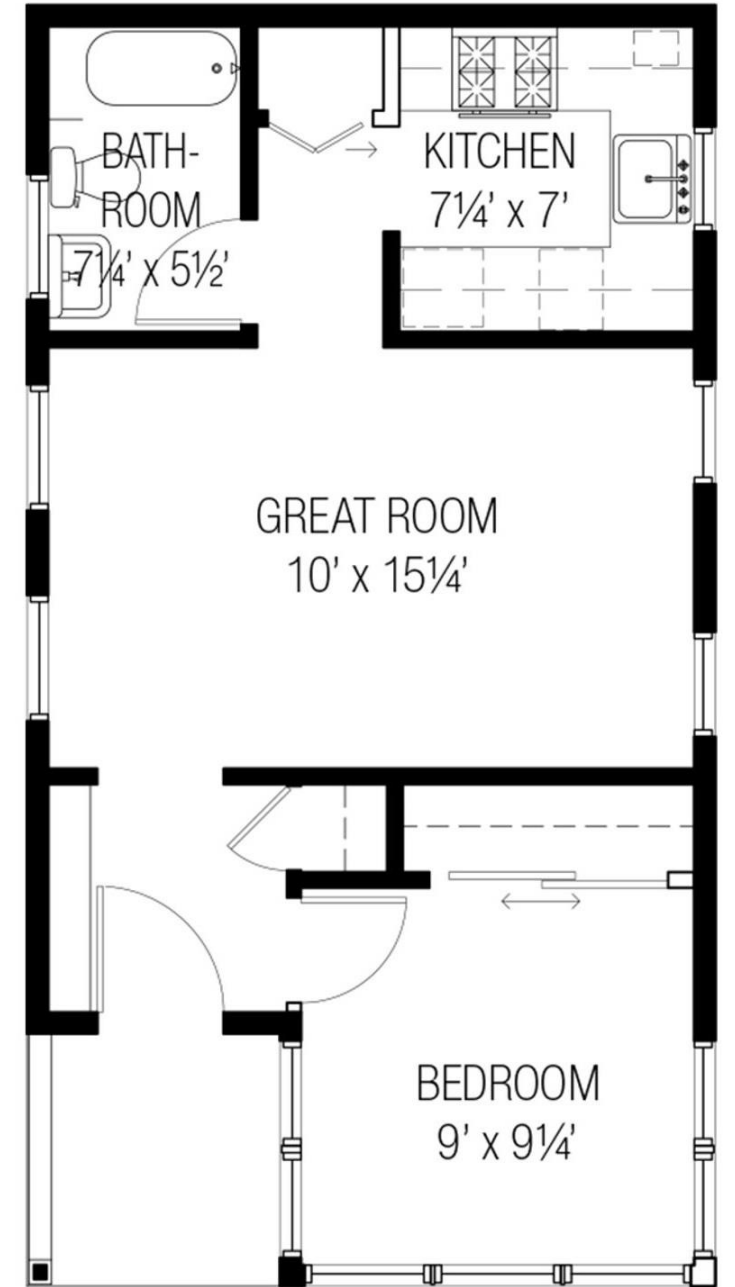
Baths: 1

Garage: 0

Covered Front Porch



Left Side View





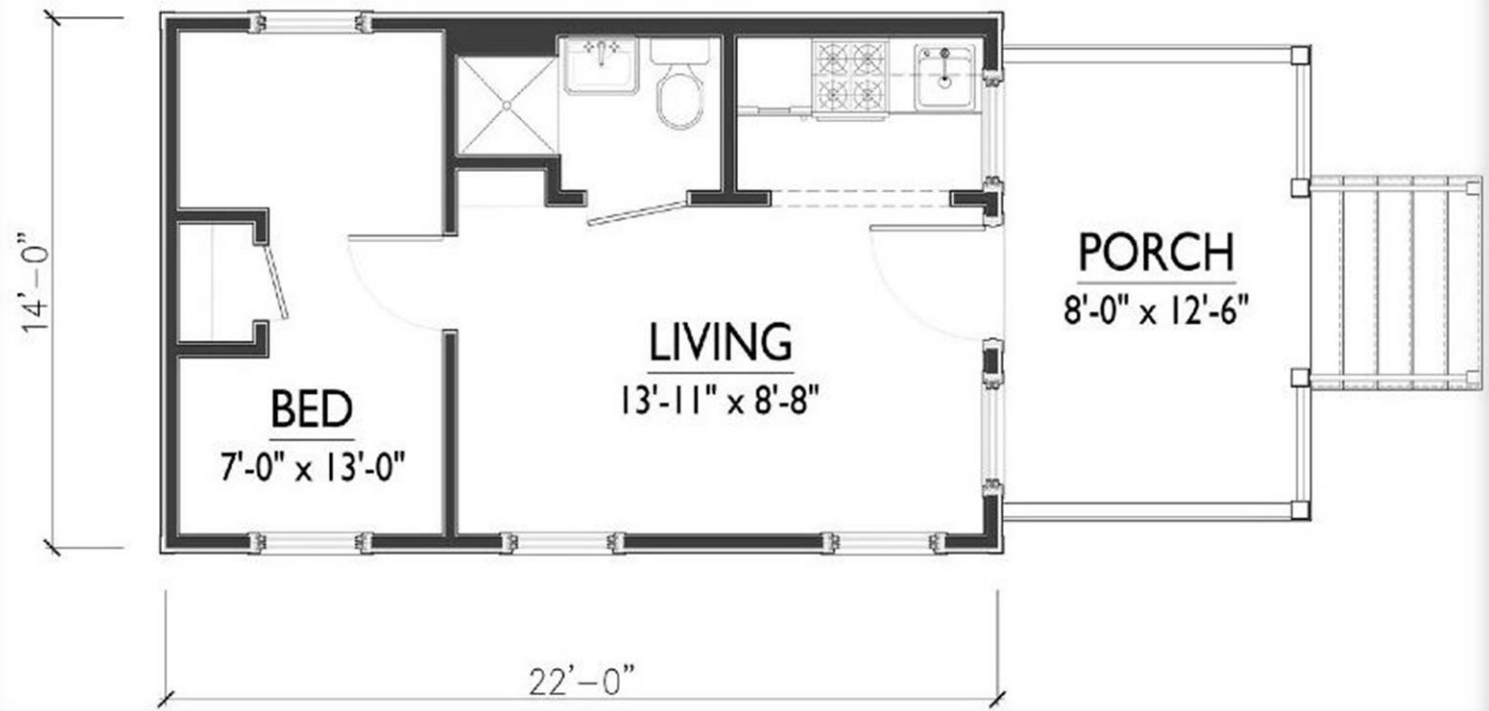
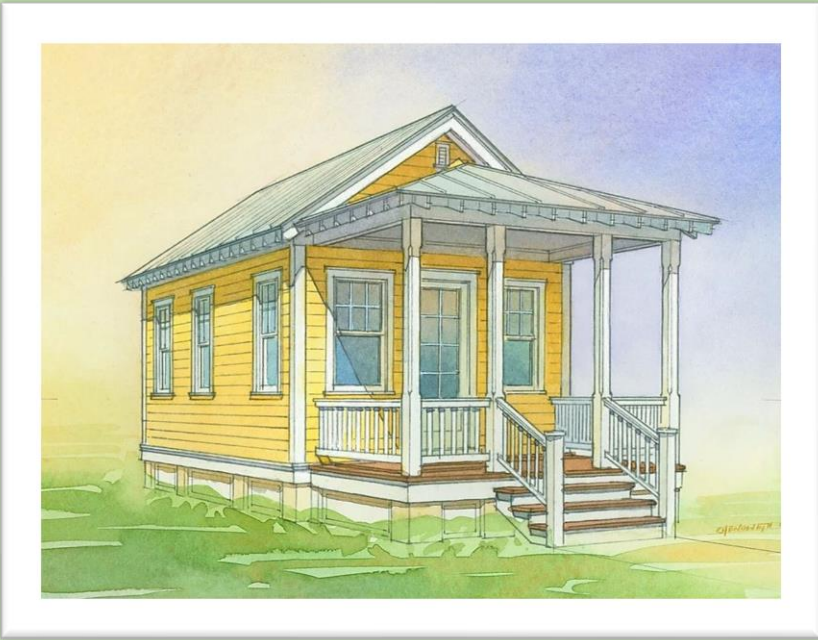
Katrina Cottage 308

by Marianne Cusato

Marianne Cusato

Katrina Cottage 308

by Marianne Cusato



Size: 308 sq. ft.

Dimensions:

Depth: 30'

Width: 14'

Ceiling Height: 9'

Bedrooms: 1

Baths: 1

Garage: 0

Covered Front Porch



The Screen ADU

by Propel Studios



propel studio

www.propelstudio.com
(503) 479-5740

The Screen ADU

by propel studio

Size: 750 sq. ft.

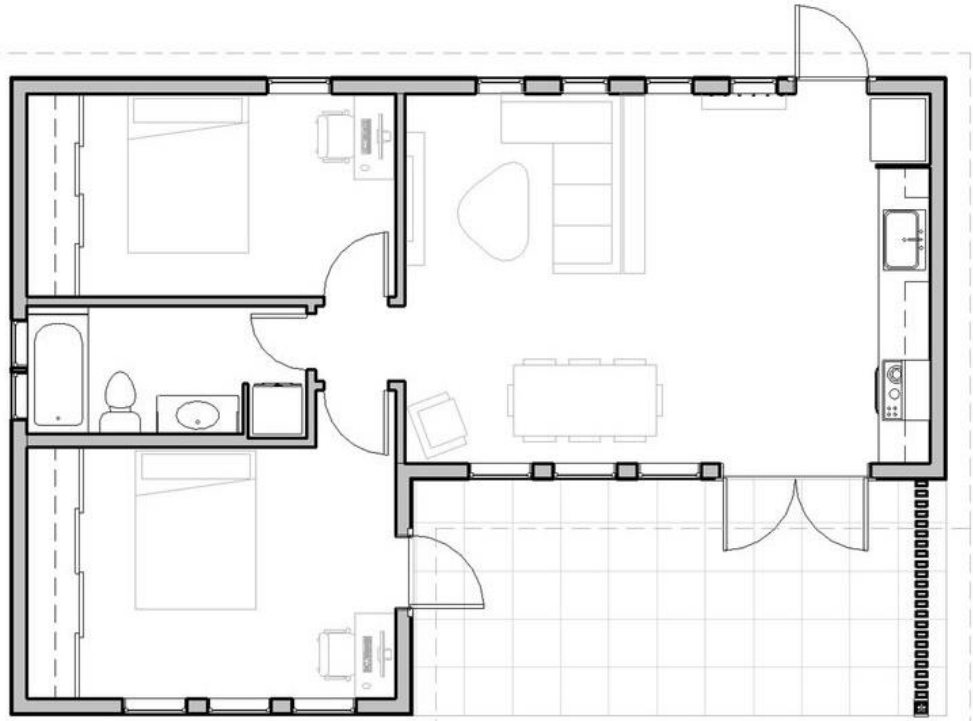
Bedrooms: 2

Baths: 1

Garage: 0

Additional Features:

- Porch Trellis Element
- Sustainable Design & Construction
- Barrier Free ADA Accessibility

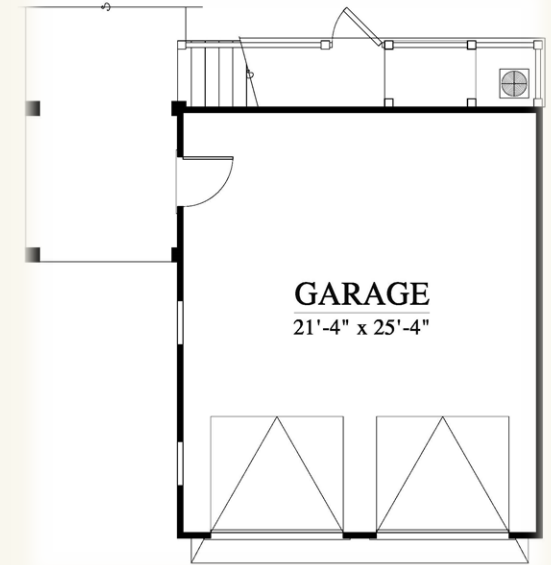
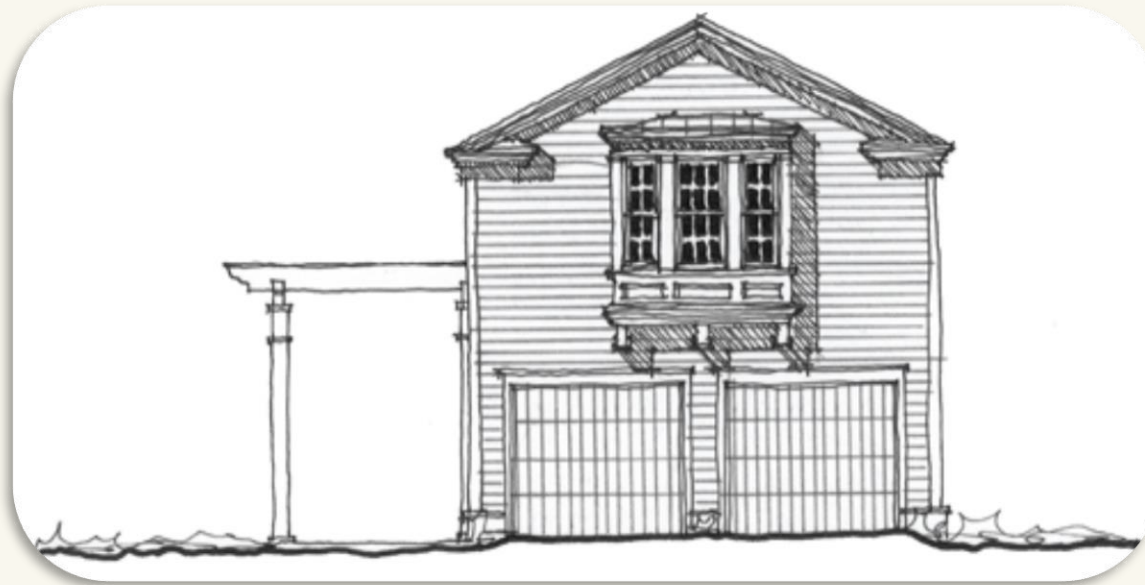




Above-Garage ADU

House Plan G0044

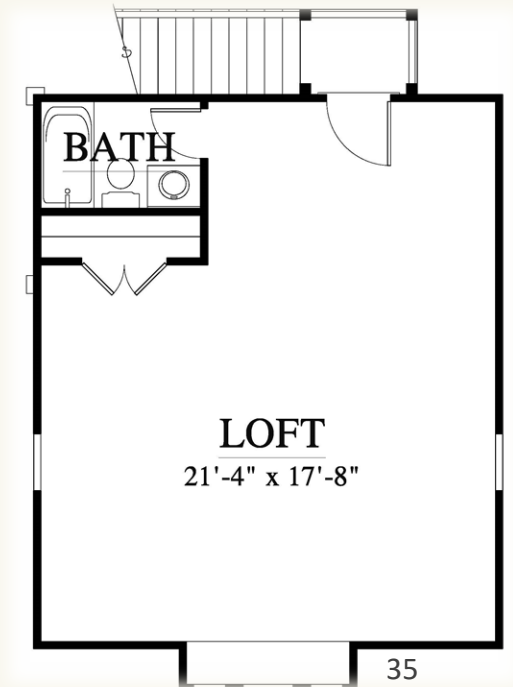
ARA
ALLISON RAMSEY
Architects creating sustainable timeless design



Above-Garage ADU

Plan G0044 by Allison Ramsey Architects

Size:	1,161 sq. ft.
Garage (1 st floor):	572 sq. ft.
ADU (2 nd floor):	589 sq. ft.
Dimensions:	
Width:	22'
Depth:	26'
Bedrooms:	1
Baths:	1
Garage:	2 spaces



NEXTGEN Homes

THE HOME WITHIN A HOME

by **LENNAR**





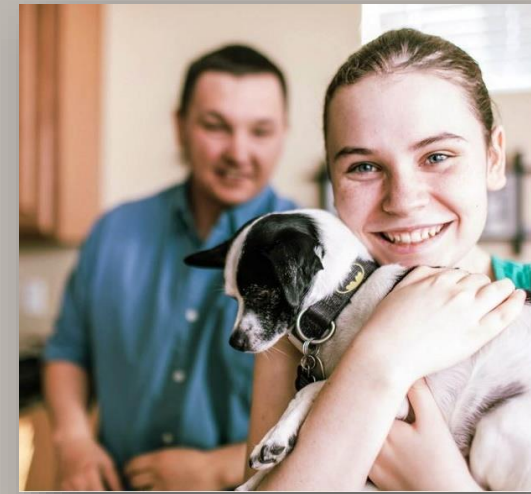
NEXTGEN first floor plan with separate suite area shown in blue. Bedrooms and additional living area for main home are on second floor (not shown).

Independence

Next Gen gives a valued sense of independence

The Wilkinson Family

Every parent wants to help their child succeed. For Chris and Marshall Wilkinson, finding a new home which would allow their autistic daughter, Savannah, to grow and build independence was important for bettering her life.



Shared Mortgage

With Next Gen, there is no need to pay a second mortgage or elderly housing costs.



The Conrad Family

Wade and Dana, along with their two children Bryce and Sydney have bounced around the world and back again. Bouncing around abroad for work kept the family away from their grandparents for years at a time. But once Bob and Myrna were ready to retire the family decided it was time to plant some real roots.

Glossary

ADU: Accessory Dwelling Unit.

Angled Bay: Also, referred to as a “bay window” or “canted bay window,” this is an angled portion of the home that protrudes outwards from the facade typically with windows on the center and sides. The angle breaking the facade is less than a right angle, thus enabling a canted facade to be viewed as part of the home rather than an addition. Bay windows frequently have canted or angled sides.

Cantilever: This is a rigid structural element which extends horizontally from a flat vertical surface such as a wall and is supported at only one end.

Corbel: Projection jutting out from a wall to support the eave above it.

Cross-Gabled Roof: A gable roof, where two gable roof lines intersect at a 90-degree angle.

Eave: The part of a roof that meets or overhangs the walls of a building.

Gabled roof: A roof supported by roof trusses or rafters that consists of two roof sections that slope in opposite directions and placed such that the highest, horizontal edges meet to form the roof ridge. The pitch of the roof can vary greatly.

HDC: City of Folsom Historic District Commission.

Hipped roof: A roof with the ends inclined, as well as the sides.

Roof pitch: This is the steepness of the roof expressed as a ratio of the number of inches the roof rises for every 12 inches of horizontal roof length (example: 4/12). The larger the rise, the steeper the roof (e.g., 10/12). Low pitch roofs are considered any ratio of 4/12 or less while a steep roof pitch is 9/12 or more.

Soffit: The underside of an architectural structural such as overhanging eaves. Soffited eaves are eaves covered in wood that extends out and connects the bottom edge of the eave with the building.

Universal Design: The design of buildings or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability or other factors.

Resources

General ADU Information:

City of Folsom – ADU Website

www.folsom.ca.us/adu

AARP - All About Accessory Dwelling Units

www.aarp.org/ADU/

Accessory Dwellings Blog

<https://accessorydwellings.org/>

California Housing and Community Development Department: Accessory Dwelling Units

www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/site-inventory-analysis/accessory-dwelling-units.shtml

Building an ADU Blog

www.buildinganadu.com

ADU Budget and Finance Resources:

Housable: How to Finance an ADU

www.housable.com/adu-guides/how-to-finance-an-adu

San Mateo County Second Unit Resources Center – ADU Cost Calculator

<https://calculator.secondunitcentersmc.org/>

Universal Design, Aging in Place, and Accessible Design:

State of California Model Universal Design Ordinance

<https://hcd.ca.gov/building-standards/state-housing-law/universal-design.shtml>

AARP – HomeFit Guide

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AARP – Planning the Future of Retirement

www.aarp.org/home-family/your-home/info-2016/planning-the-future-of-retirement.html

Resources for Landlords and Tenants:

Sacramento Chapter of the California Apartment Association

<https://caanet.org/local/sacramento-valley/>

Sacramento County – Fair Housing

www.saccounty.net/FairHousing/Pages/default.aspx

Renter’s Helpline Website:

www.rentershelpline.org

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Design Idea Showcase:

Allison Ramsey Architect (South Carolina)
www.allisonramseyarchitect.com

Marianne Cusato (Florida)
www.marianneCUSATO.com

Lennar – NextGen Homes (Nationwide)
www.lennar.com/productsandservices/nextgen

Propel Studio (Oregon)
www.propelstudio.com

Tumbleweed Homes (Colorado)
www.houseplans.com/exclusive/tumbleweed-tiny-house-company

ADU Information and Images:

Accessory Dwellings Blog
www.accessorywellings.org

Builder House Plans
www.builderhouseplans.com/collection/italianate-house-plans

Building an ADU Blog
www.buildinganadu.com/adu-photo-assortment

ePlans
<https://www.eplans.com/>

Habitat for Humanity – Aging in Place
www.habitat.org/impact/our-work/aging-in-place

HomePlans
www.homeplans.com/

Prefab ADU
www.prefabadu.com/

Taylor Morrison – Multi-Generational Suite
www.taylormorrison.com

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For more information on Accessory Dwelling Units in Folsom, visit:
www.folsom.ca.us/adu

City of Folsom
Community Development
Department

