

4A. WHAT IS AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT?

Sometimes called “in-law units” or “granny flats”, an ADU is an additional smaller unit on the same property as an existing single-family home. ADUs can take many forms, including new detached units, additions to an existing home or garage, or the conversion of existing space to a new habitable unit (a “Junior ADU”).

Typologies

ADUs come in many shapes and sizes, but are always a self-contained home that is smaller than the main house and legally part of the same property.

ADUs always contain a kitchen, bathroom, and place to sleep. ADUs typically range from 220-square-foot studios to over 1,000-square-foot homes with multiple bedrooms.



What is a Junior ADU?

Junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs) are very small dwelling units converting part of a single-family residence.

They can be up to 500 square feet in size and must include an efficiency kitchen (sink, stove, fridge, and counter) or wet bar, depending on your city. Some JADUs have their own bathroom, while others share with the main house.



Detached: New or converted freestanding structure, such as a backyard cottage



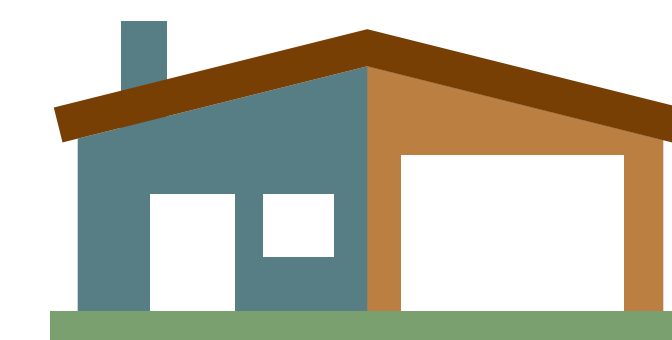
Attached: New or converted sharing at least one wall with the primary house



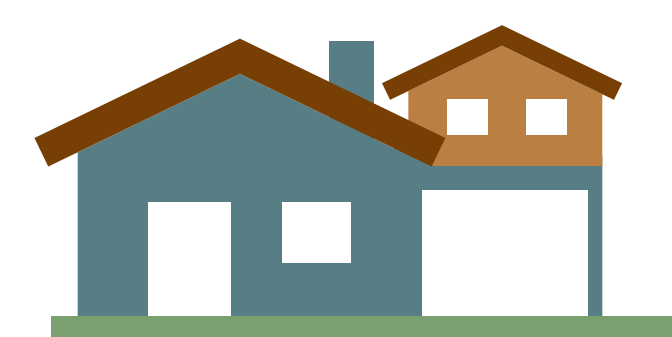
Remodel or expansion: New and converted space with square footage added to the primary house



Interior conversion: Converted existing space (ex. an attic or a basement)



Garage apartment: Converted former garage space



Above or below garage: New or converted above or below garage space

Based on diagram from Marin County ADU Handbook.

ADU Typologies



Conversion ADU



ADU above a Detached Garage

How can they help?

- ADUs are a simple way to add housing to our community while respecting the unique and historic character of our neighborhoods.
- No need to subdivide the land to create new parcels.
- Since they are typically smaller than a single-family home, they can be “affordable by design,” meaning they cost less to build, buy, or rent.
- They can offer opportunities for lower income households, including home help workers, seniors, or teachers.

What’s allowed now?

The Town passed an ADU ordinance in 2020 that spells out requirements for design and construction of ADUs and JADUs. Any proposed ADU/JADU that complies with these requirements can be approved at the planning counter with no need for a public hearing or design review.

Requirements include:

- Separate Kitchen and Bathroom
- 16 feet Height Limit
- Maximum 2 Bedrooms
- 1 Parking space per ADU is required, except with 1/2 mile of transit
- Subject to the size limitations shown in Table 1
- Separate entryway and efficiency kitchen (JADUs only)
- Located within existing single family residence (JADUs only)

Note: Discretionary permit required for any exceptions.

Table 1: ADU Maximum Floor Area

ADU Type	Maximum ADU Floor Area
Attached	
One bedroom or less	50 percent of the existing primary dwelling or 850 sq. ft., whichever is less
More than one bedroom	50 percent of the existing primary dwelling or 1,000 sq. ft., whichever is less
Detached	
One bedroom or less	850 sq. ft.
More than one bedroom	1,000 sq. ft.
Junior	
Junior ADU	500 sq. ft.

1. The Town Council may grant an ADU size increase to 1,200 square with ADU Exception.

