

Housing For All - ADU Code Changes

Public Hearing #2

September 10, 2025



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS

ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

What is an ADU?

“Accessory dwelling unit or ADU” means a secondary residential dwelling unit which provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons. It must include permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation, have a separate means of ingress and egress, and be located on the same lot as the principal dwelling or apartment building.



Why allow ADUs?

ADUs can be a means of increasing the supply of market-rate rental housing in a community and accommodating new growth without dramatic changes to the character of a neighborhood. They also offer solutions for families to provide housing for aging parents or adult children, and can provide an additional source of income to contribute to housing stability.



Types of ADUs:

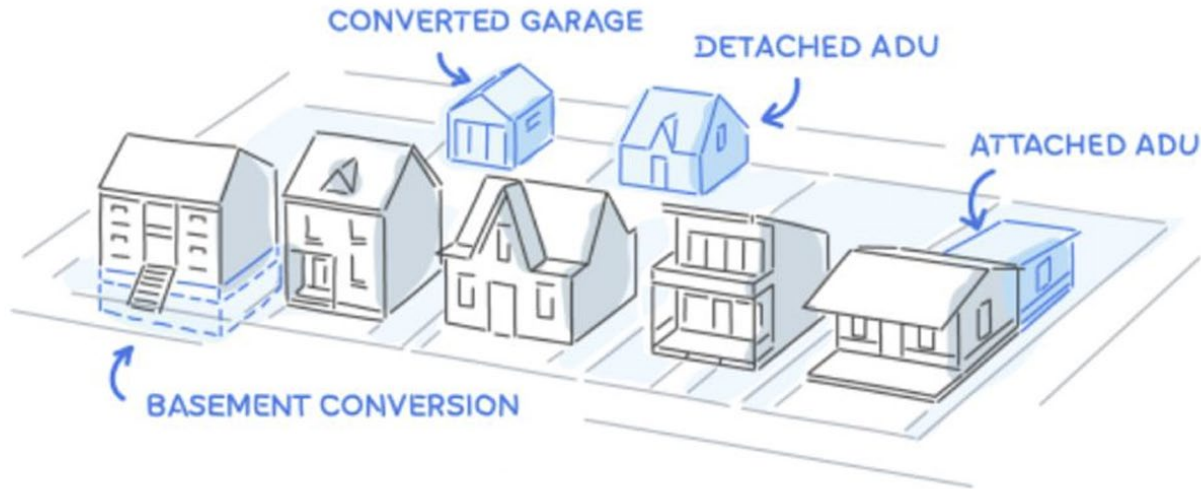


Image Source: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/sites/planning/assets/ADU---PSC-Presentation.pdf>

Interior/Internal ADUs:
Adding a dwelling by converting an area within an existing dwelling.

Attached ADUs:
Adding a dwelling unit through the construction of an addition.

Detached ADUs:
Adding a dwelling unit either by converting an existing detached structure into living space or constructing a new detached structure.

Not ADUs:



Image Source: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2023/slideshow-abc-of-adus.html>



Image Source: <https://abcmotors.com/products/elevation-park-model-rv-series-5-101-travel-trailer-rv?srsId=Afm8Oopn72L3pEqLGwuRBxcohRkwzMD-vi6YGuH057FFH7jyokybSRv>

ADUs must be permanently constructed with utility hookups.

Mobile tiny-homes and Recreational Vehicles as pictured above will not be allowed as ADUs.

Typical ADU Characteristics in Columbus:

44 approved ADUs were analyzed and were limited to the following:

- Years approved from **2019** to **2023**.
- Project statuses include **complete**, **legitimized**, and **permit issued**.

Arrangement:

- **100%** are detached;
- **80%** are 2nd story above garage;
- **20%** are single-story.

Square Footage:

- **100%** of ADUs are **smaller** than the principal dwelling.
- **722 SF** is the **average** unit size.

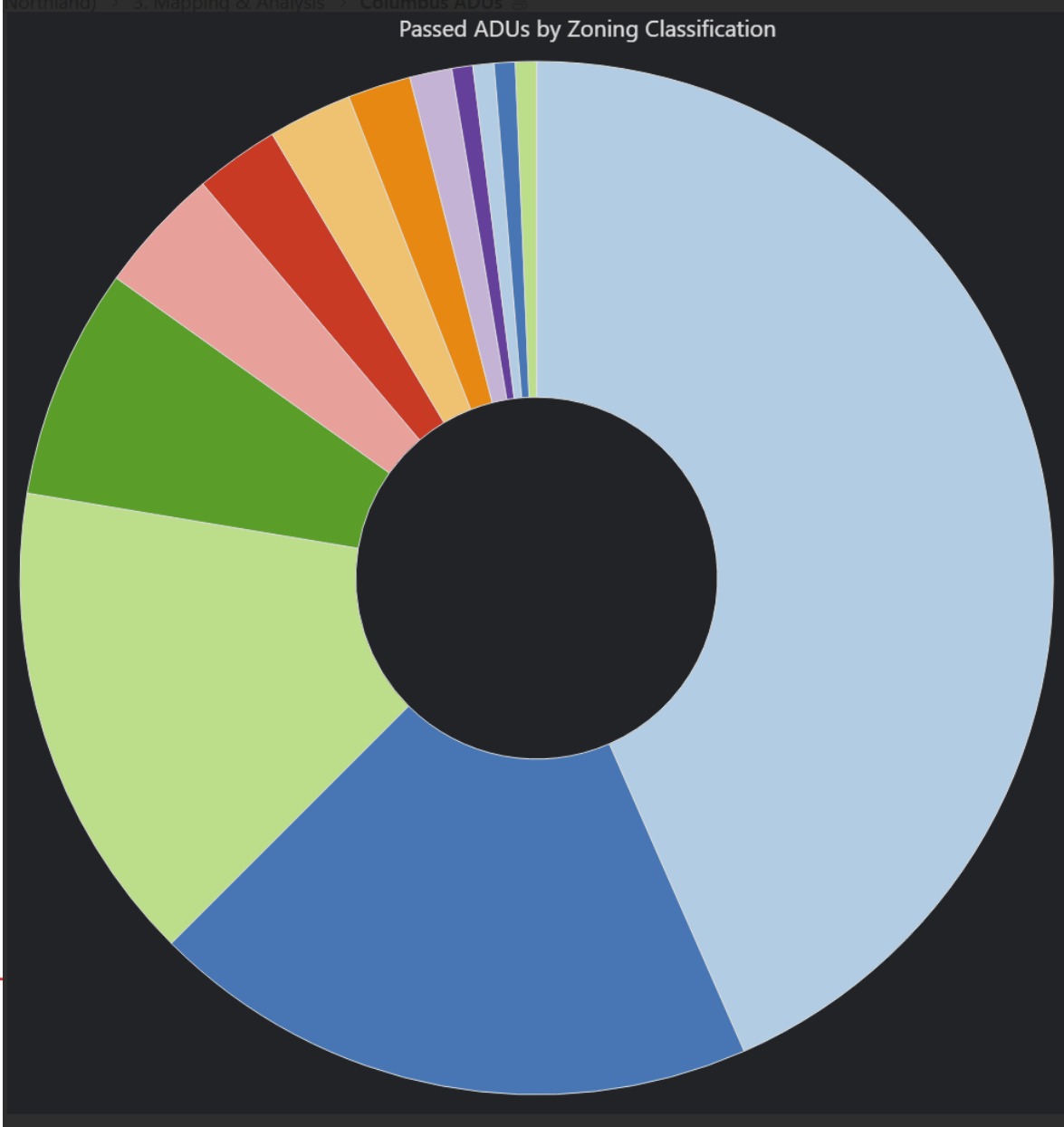
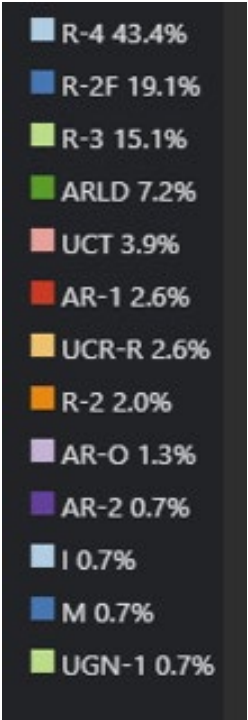
Height:

- **22ft** is the average **height**.



Image Source: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/safety-inspections/building-and-construction/construction-permits-and-inspections/building-permits-inspections/accessory-dwelling-units>

Distribution of Approved ADUs by Zoning District (2019-2023):



City of Columbus ADU Allowance Chart

DISTRICT	USE	MIN LOT AREA OR MAX DENSITY	MAX ADU ALLOWANCE
R, Rural	One Single-Unit Dwelling	5 Acre Minimum	One ADU in addition to one single-unit dwelling.
<u>LRR</u> , Limited Rural Residential	One Single-Unit Dwelling	1 Acre Minimum	Same as above.
RRR, Restricted Rural Residential	One Single-Unit Dwelling	20,000 sq. ft.	Same as above.
<u>RR</u> , Rural Residential	One Single-Unit Dwelling	10,000 sq. ft.	Same as above.
<u>SR</u> , Suburban Residential	One Single-Unit Dwelling	7,200 sq. ft.	Same as above.
R-1, Residential	One Single-Unit Dwelling	7,200 sq. ft.	Same as above.
R-2 Residential	One Single-Unit Dwelling	5,000 sq. ft.	Same as above.
R-3, Residential	One Single-Unit Dwelling	5,000 sq. ft.	Same as above.
R-2F Residential	One Single- or Two-Unit Dwelling	6,000 sq. ft. for single-unit dwelling; 3,000 sq. ft. per unit for 2-story two-unit dwelling; 3,600 sq. ft. per unit for 1-story two-unit dwelling	One ADU in addition to one single-unit or one two-unit dwelling.
R-4, Residential	One Single-, Two-, Three-, or Four-Unit Dwelling, or a Multiple Dwelling Development	Same as R-2F except 5,000 sq. ft. for single-unit dwelling; 2,500 sq. ft. per unit for three- and four-unit dwellings; 20,000 sq. ft. with multiple dwelling development with each dwelling containing up to four units each	Two ADUs in addition to a single-, two-, or three-unit dwelling, and one ADU in addition to a four-unit dwelling; or up to a 5% increase for ADUs over the maximum number of allowable units in a multiple dwelling development.
MHD, Manufactured Home	One Single-Unit Manufactured Home	7,200 sq. ft.	One ADU in addition to one single unit manufactured home.
AR-12, Apartment Residential	Dwellings or Apartments	12.1 units/acre	Two ADUs in addition to a single principal dwelling or apartment house; or up to a 5% increase for ADUs over the maximum number of allowable units in an apartment complex or multiple dwelling development.
ARLD, Apartment Residential	Dwellings or Apartments	17.4 units/acre	Same as above.
AR-1, Apartment Residential	Dwellings or Apartments	36.3 units/acre	Same as above.
AR-2, Apartment Residential	Dwellings or Apartments	54.4 units/acre	Same as above.
AR-3, Apartment Residential	Dwellings or Apartments	Unlimited	Same as above.
AR-4, Apartment Residential	Dwellings or Apartments	36.3 units/acre	Same as above.
AR-O, Apartment Office Residential	Dwellings or Apartments & Offices	Unlimited	Same as above.
All Chapter 3332 and 3333 Districts	Nonconforming Residential Uses	Base District Standards	One ADU in addition to the existing nonconforming residential use.

Provisions for ADUs (per 8/12/25 Public Draft):

- Allowed in all Residential and Apartment Residential Districts of Chapters 3332 and 3333 in Title 33, Zoning Code.

Note that ADUs are already allowed in the DD, Downtown District, EF, East Franklinton District and TND districts in Title 33, and mixed-use districts of Title 34 .

- Must be clearly accessory and subordinate in scale to the principal building.
- Must not exceed 65 percent of the floor area, or 1,000 square feet, whichever is greater, but in no case shall the ADU exceed the size of the principal building.
- Must not exceed the height of the principal building, or 25 feet, whichever is less. Exception: An ADU located within a legally established building taller than 25 feet may use the same building height.



Provisions for ADUs (Continued):

- Not subject to area district lot width requirements and area district requirements (lot area per dwelling unit).
- Total lot coverage shall not exceed 65 percent on a lot with an ADU.
- A home occupation is allowed in an ADU per the standards in Chapters 3332 and 3333.
- Must be located on the same parcel or lot as the principal dwelling or apartment house.
- No additional parking is required for an ADU.
- Districts with limited overlay text for density maximums or square footage minimums do not apply.

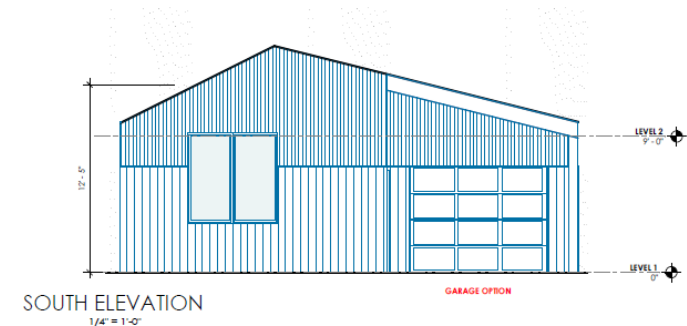


Image Source: City of Columbus Draft ADU Pilot Program

Additional Provisions for Detached ADUs:

- Must be located in the rear yard area, and must meet the minimum required side yards of the underlying zoning district. Exception: An ADU located above or within a legally established garage building may use the same side yards as the garage.
- Exempt from fronting and 25% rear yard requirements subject to:
 - One detached ADU may occupy up to 45 percent of the required rear yard of the principal dwelling or apartment building.
 - In districts allowing three or more dwelling units, two separate or adjoining detached ADUs may occupy up to 55 percent of the required rear yard.



Image Source: <https://engardio.com/blog/adu>

Other Zoning Code changes included:

- Parking exemption for ADUs.
- Side yards: Lots 40 feet in width or less, maximum (total) side yard of 6 feet, and minimum side yard of 3 feet.
- Chapter 3325, University District Zoning Overlay: exempt ADUs from various conflicting development standards.
- Habitable space in detached garages (not a complete unit) will also be allowed.
- Chapter 3370, Limited Overlay: exempt ADUs from density limitations.
- Provisions for sheds, fences, and utility enclosures (not directly related to ADU code changes).

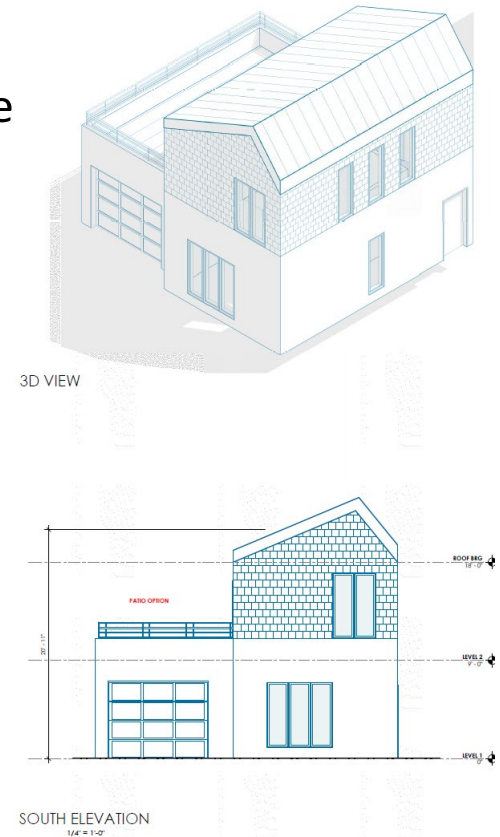


Image Source: City of Columbus Draft ADU Pilot Program

Columbus ADU Case Study 1:

2405 McCutcheon Road

Zoning: R-1, Residential District

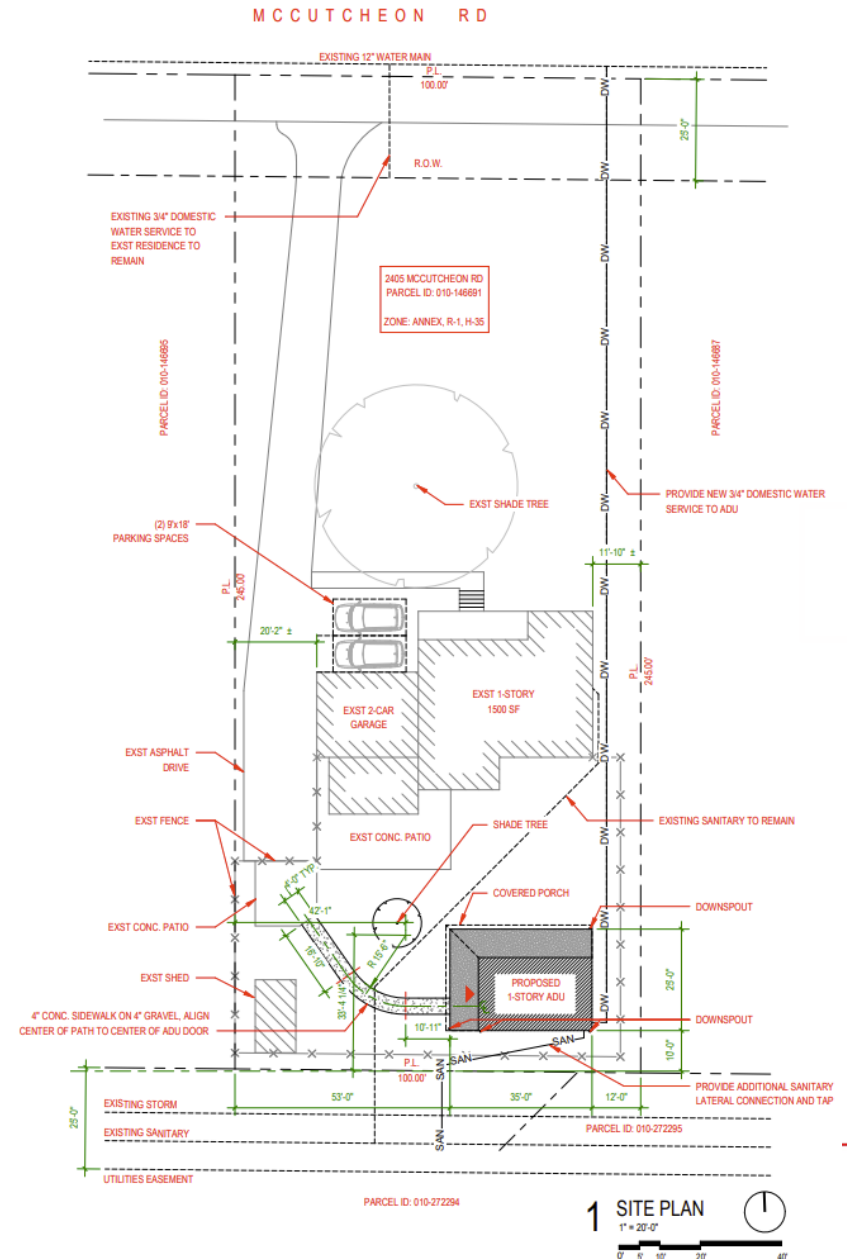
Lot size: 24,500 SF

Single-unit detached 504 SF ADU

Building Width 18 feet

Building Depth 28 feet

Building Height 13.5 feet



Columbus ADU Case Study 3:

1225 Sunside Alley

Zoning: ARLD, Apartment Residential District

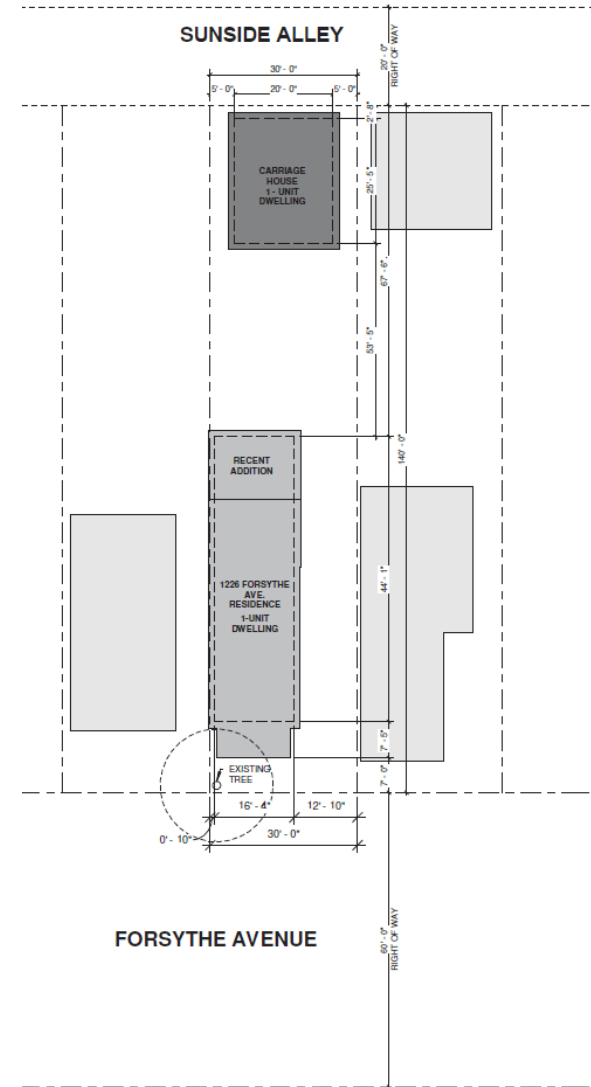
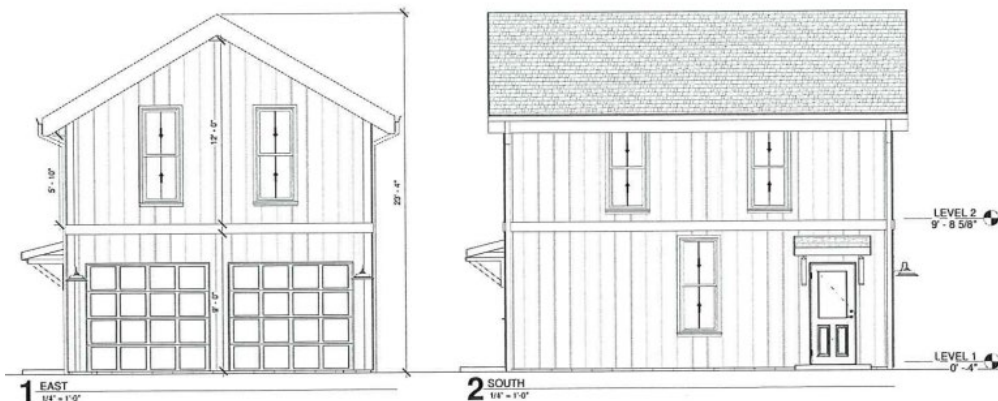
Lot size: 4,500 SF

Single-unit detached 509 SF ADU over two-car garage

Building Width 20 feet

Building Depth 25.42 feet

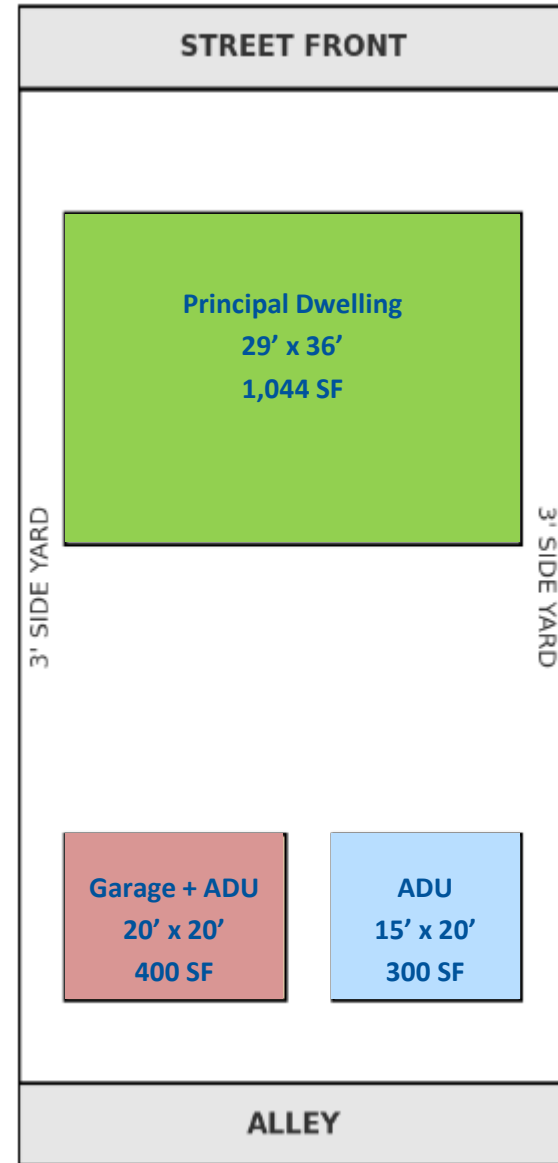
Building Height 23.33 feet



Example Scenarios:

Scenario 1: R-4 Lot with Two ADUs

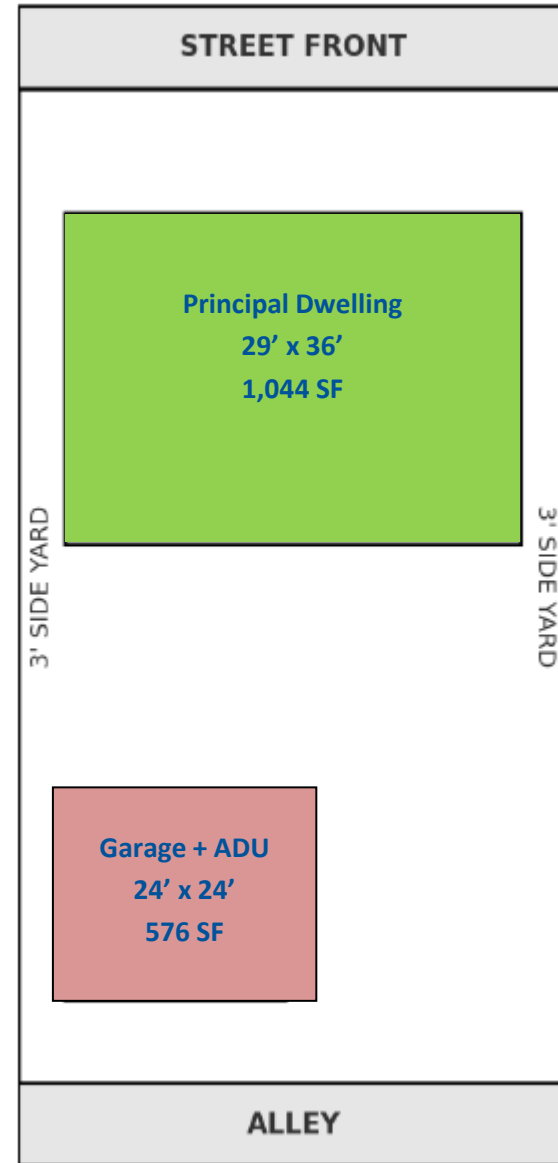
- Principal dwelling with 10' setback from fronting street, plus two ADUs (one above a garage at the alley, and one detached unit next to it).
- Lot size: 40' x 105' – 4,200 SF
- Building coverage: 1,744 SF
- Maximum Lot Coverage: 65%
- Proposed Lot Coverage: 41.52%
- Required Rear yard: 1,050 SF (25%)
- Minimum Rear Yard: 577.5 SF (55% of a 25% rear yard)
- Proposed Rear Yard: 1,940 SF



Example Scenarios:

Scenario 2: R-3 Lot with One ADU

- Principal dwelling with 10' setback from fronting street, plus one ADU above a garage at the alley.
- Lot size: 40' x 105' – 4,200 SF
- Building coverage: 1,620 SF
- Maximum Lot Coverage: 65%
- Proposed Lot Coverage: 38.57%
- Required Rear yard: 1,050 SF (25%)
- Minimum Rear Yard: 472.2 SF (45% of a 25% rear yard)
- Proposed Rear Yard: 2,064 SF



Other Considerations:

- Building Code requirements must be met and building permits will be required.
- Certificate of Appropriateness or Certificate of Approval will be required in historic and architectural review areas.
- Permit-ready plans could help to defray design costs.
- Be aware of Homeowners Association restrictive covenants.
- Be aware of easements on the property and any building restrictions associated with them.

