

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) FAQs

What is an ADU?

An ADU, also known as a Second Dwelling or Granny Flat, is a completely self-contained housing unit located on the same lot as another home, called the primary dwelling. ADUs are considered accessory because they are typically smaller than the primary dwelling and are not the main use on the lot. An ADU can be detached, attached, or a conversion of an existing space (like a garage).

What is a JADU?

A JADU is a housing unit which is completely contained within the space of an existing or proposed residence, which is no more than 500 square feet and which meets certain bathroom, kitchen, and entrance requirements.

Where can I build an ADU?

ADUs may be constructed on any lot developed with an existing primary dwelling, or on a lot where a primary dwelling will be constructed at the same time as the ADU. Side, rear, and front setbacks may apply; please consult the City's ADU ordinance or planning staff for additional information.

What is the maximum size of an ADU?

Detached ADUs may be up to 1,000 square feet of livable space. Attached ADUs may be up to either 1,000 square feet or 50% of the size of the primary dwelling, whichever is less. For example, an 1,800-square-foot house may have an attached ADU of up to 900 square feet, or a detached ADU of up to 1,000 square feet.

Can I convert an existing structure to an ADU?

Yes, existing structures such as garages, workshops, guest quarters, or portions of a primary dwelling may be converted to an ADU. Some upgrades may be required for structures that were not originally meant to be inhabited to meet Building Code requirements.

How much parking does an ADU require?

One off-street parking space is required for non-ministerial ADUs, unless the ADU is located near public transit, a historic district, or where the ADU is

part of the existing primary residence or an existing accessory structure (see Brentwood Municipal Code § 17.100.005(E)(12) for more details).

How tall can my ADU be?

Detached ADUs may be up to 16' tall, or 18' if near a transit stop, or 20' tall to accommodate a roof pitch that aligns with the primary dwelling. An attached ADU may not exceed 25', or the same height set by the Zoning Code for the primary dwelling. ADUs may also be constructed above existing structures such as garages or as second-story additions to the primary dwelling.

Do I need a permit to build an ADU?

Yes, depending on the type and size of your ADU, you may need a building permit only, or a building permit and ADU permit.

Can I rent or sell my ADU?

An ADU can be rented separately from the primary dwelling, for periods of 30 days or longer. The property owner does not have to occupy one of the homes on the property to rent either home to other occupants. An ADU cannot be sold or conveyed separately from the primary dwelling except in limited circumstances by nonprofit affordable housing organizations.

What are the fees to build an ADU?

In addition to Plan Check and Permit Issuance fees, ADUs are subject to some – but not all – of the development impact fees and utility connection/capacity fees that primary dwellings are. Total fees will depend on the specific circumstances of your property and the scope of your project. Contact the Community Development Department at 925-516-5405 for questions regarding fees. Note that no city or county impact fees are charged for ADUs or JADUs of 750 square feet or less.

Please also see the HCD ADU Handbook on HCD's website for more information.