

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) – Frequently Asked Questions

What is it?

An ADU is a separate and complete dwelling unit having its own kitchen, bathroom, and living space sharing the same lot as a primary dwelling unit. An ADU can be a **detached ADU**, such as a stand-alone cottage or it can be an **attached ADU**, which means that it exists with the primary structure, like a basement or attic apartment.

Why does Asheville permit ADUs?

ADUs have always been allowed in Asheville. They provide practical housing options for the elderly, disabled, empty nesters, young students, and new families, and can provide additional rental income for homeowners. ADUs can help to provide needed housing and do not require the extra expense of purchasing land, can be developed by converting existing structures, and do not usually require the extension of city infrastructure for the additional housing units.

What size of ADU is permitted?

The size of the permitted ADU depends upon the size of the primary dwelling. See below:

Detached ADU Size			Attached ADU Size			
Size of Home	The lesser of 800 SF...	% of primary	Size of Structure	Primary Dwelling	The lesser of 1,000 SF...	% of primary
	Or 70% of primary home				Or 70% of primary dwelling	
700 SF	490 SF	70%	700 SF	412 SF	288 SF	70%
800 SF	560 SF	70%	800 SF	471 SF	329 SF	70%
900 SF	630 SF	70%	900 SF	529 SF	371 SF	70%
1000 SF	700 SF	70%	1000 SF	588 SF	412 SF	70%
1200 SF	800 SF	67%	1200 SF	706 SF	494 SF	70%
1400 SF	800 SF	57%	1400 SF	824 SF	576 SF	70%
1600 SF	800 SF	50%	1600 SF	941 SF	659 SF	70%
1800 SF	800 SF	44%	1800 SF	1059 SF	741 SF	70%
2000 SF	800 SF	40%	2000 SF	1176 SF	824 SF	70%
2200 SF	800 SF	36%	2200 SF	1294 SF	906 SF	70%
2400 SF	800 SF	33%	2400 SF	1412 SF	988 SF	70%
2600 SF	800 SF	31%	2600 SF	1600 SF	1000 SF	63%
2800 SF	800 SF	29%	2800 SF	1800 SF	1000 SF	56%
3000 SF	800 SF	27%	3000 SF	2000 SF	1000 SF	50%

Can I build one?

If you live in a residential zoning district, one ADU is allowed on each lot that contains or will contain a single-family home. (Be sure there are no private restrictive covenants that disallow ADUs on your parcel, which may be recorded with the deed. The issuance

of a permit does not eliminate the responsibility of a property owner to comply with applicable private covenant restrictions.)

Do I need a permit?

Yes! You are required to get a permit through the Development Services Department before any work begins. We also recommend that you get a professional survey to be sure you comply with setback requirements and to understand the precise location of utilities (gas, sewer, water, etc).

Do I need a licensed architect to draw the plans?

No, a licensed architect is not required but you do need a licensed general contractor to complete the work. You cannot build an ADU unless you yourself are a licensed general contractor.

What is the process?

- 1) Submit an application and plans to the Development Services Department (161 S. Charlotte St, Asheville, NC 28801, 828-259-5846). The application and plans will be reviewed for compliance with the applicable standards for ADU's. You will be notified of any potential issues.
- 2) Once plans are approved and a permit is issued, you may begin work. Regular inspections will be required as you complete the various phases of your project.

I'm in a Historic District, can I build an ADU?

Yes, ADUs are permitted in local historic districts. In addition to any other necessary permits, ADUs in historic districts require a Major Work Certificate of Appropriateness with review by the Historic Resources Commission (HRC). The design would be reviewed based on the guidelines set forth by the district, which may be more restrictive than the underlying zoning. Get to know your local historic district guidelines before developing ADU plans. Learn more or contact HRC staff by phone at 828-259-5638 or online at www.ashevillenc.gov/hrc.