



ACCESSORY LIVING UNITS

To maintain the character and safety of single family residential neighborhoods, Planning and Building permits are required for accessory living units. Please refer to SMC 19.68 for additional information.

An accessory living unit (also known as granny flats, in-law quarters and secondary dwelling units) is a one-bedroom dwelling unit that provides independent living accommodations for one or more persons.

PLANNING DIVISION REQUIREMENTS

The Planning Division reviews all accessory living units to ensure they comply with size, location, design and other requirements of the Sunnyvale Municipal Code. The required permit is a Miscellaneous Plan Permit (MPP), which is a staff level review. The following are the planning review requirements for accessory living units:

SIZE AND LOCATION REQUIREMENTS

Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size
R-0 and R-1	9,000 sq. ft.
R-2, DSP Blocks 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12	5,000 sq. ft.
Any other zoning district	Not permitted

- An accessory living unit cannot exceed 700 square feet and is limited to only one bedroom.
- Detached accessory living units may not be located in front of the main residence.
- The entrance or stairway to an accessory living unit may not be located on any building side facing a street.

PARKING REQUIREMENTS

- At least one uncovered parking space must be provided on-site for the accessory living unit in addition to the two covered and two uncovered parking spaces required for the primary dwelling.
- Conversion of garages or carports to an accessory living unit is not allowed unless covered parking can be provided elsewhere on the site and all applicable zoning ordinance requirements can be met.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- The property must be owner-occupied for a minimum of 20 years upon construction of the accessory unit (see sidebar).
- Lots with an accessory living unit located in the R-2 Zoning District must provide a total of 1,000 sq. ft. of usable open space.
- The unit must comply with applicable zoning standards (setbacks, lot coverage, building height, open space). Accessory living unit design should match the design of the main residence.

BUILDING PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Building permits are required for all accessory living units to ensure safe construction and conformance with code requirements.

Fire sprinklers may be required to be installed when adding an accessory living unit. Please consult with the Building Division staff for specific fire sprinkler requirements and other code standards.

NUMBER OF ACCESSORY UNITS
Only one accessory unit is permitted per lot.

DEED RESTRICTIONS
Prior to issuance of the building permit, the applicant shall file a deed restriction on the property that states the property shall be owner-occupied for a period of twenty years from the date the deed restriction is recorded.

PERMIT PROCESS

PLANNING DIVISION REVIEW

1. Submit for an MPP application and plans for Planning review.
2. The City makes a decision, usually within two weeks of application submittal.
3. The decision may be appealed to the Planning Commission within 15 days of the decision date. The appeal process usually takes six to eight weeks.
4. Once the MPP is approved, staff will prepare the necessary paperwork to record a deed restriction.

BUILDING PERMIT REVIEW

5. Once your Planning Permit has been approved, submit for a building permit.
6. Accessory living units that are single story and attached to the main house are reviewed by the Building division between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon, Monday through Friday.

Accessory living units that are located on the second-story or detached from the main house and submitted for a 21-day plan review.

7. After a Building Permit is issued, field inspections are completed to ensure compliance with all applicable codes. The accessory living unit is not allowed to be occupied until final approval is given by the building inspector.

PLANNING REVIEW APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS (2 copies of each item unless noted otherwise)

- Application signed by the property owner. (1 copy)
- Site Plan showing the location of the accessory living unit, main home, and property lines.
- Floor plan showing proposed layout for accessory unit.
- Elevations showing all four sides of the exterior of the building.
- Photos of existing main home (1 copy)
- Fee (non refundable) _____

BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS (3 or 5 copies of each item, depending on the review process)

- Required plans and documents are based on the location, configuration, and scope of the project. Please consult with the Building Division staff for specific requirements.
- Fee _____