

# Guide to Accessory Dwelling Units in Oak Park



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# Introduction

To keep up with the changing needs of the community, the Village of Oak Park now offers the option of adding an accessory dwelling unit, or ADU, to single-family residential properties. This guide is intended to help you determine if the investment needed to construct an ADU is right for you and your property.

## What is an ADU?

An ADU is a residential living unit that shares the same zoning lot as a single-family dwelling, providing a complete independent living facility for one or more persons. An accessory dwelling unit may take various forms — detached from the principal structure on the same zoning lot, attached to the principal structure or an interior unit that is part of a remodeled dwelling. These units should contain the same amenities as a standard-sized residence, including a kitchen, bathroom and areas for living and sleeping.

## Reasons you may want an ADU

An ADU can offer a wide range of benefits. These could include providing a home for a young family, an at-home workspace, an age-in-place retirement option, a rental unit for extra income, a studio space for a home business, an apartment for adult children or a home for a supportive healthcare worker.

# Village ADU regulations

Various specific types of ADUs are permitted in the Village of Oak Park. Types of ADUs include a coach house, a detached standalone structure, a structure attached to main house or a garage, or basement or attic conversion. General regulations governing ADUs are detailed in Section 9.3 of the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance and include the following;

**Either the single-family dwelling or the accessory dwelling unit must be owner-occupied**

**Only one accessory dwelling unit is allowed per lot**

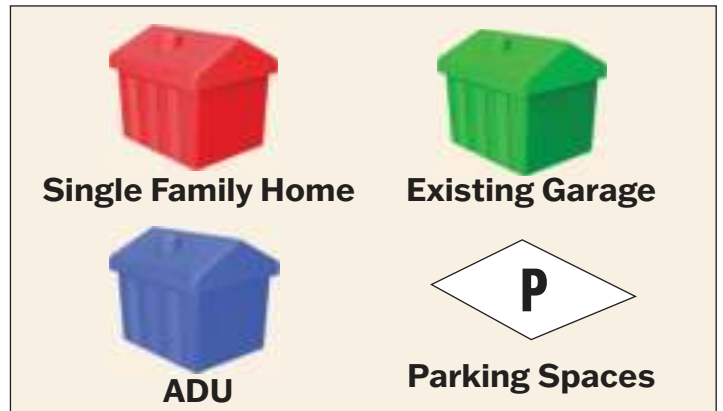
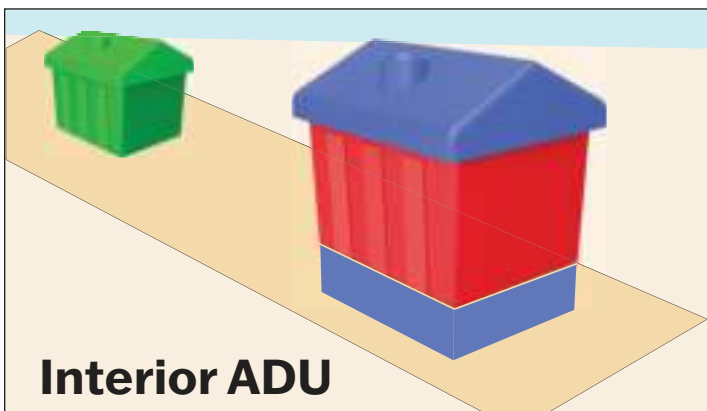
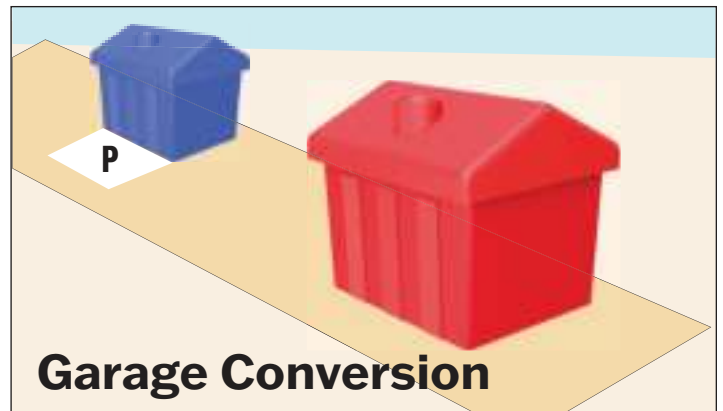
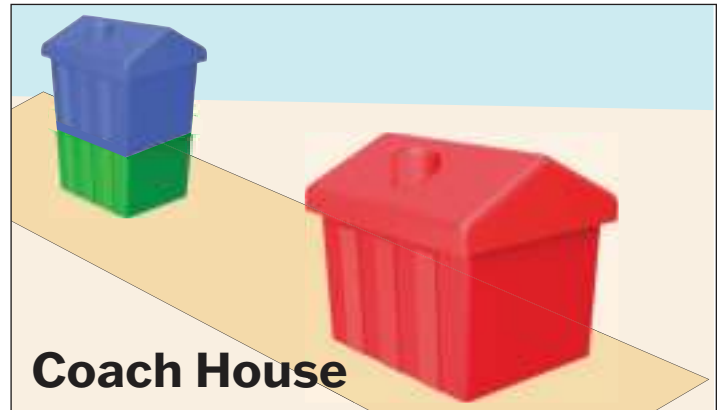
**No additional parking is required for an accessory dwelling unit**

**If a garage is converted into an ADU, any displaced parking required for the single-family home must be accommodated on-site**

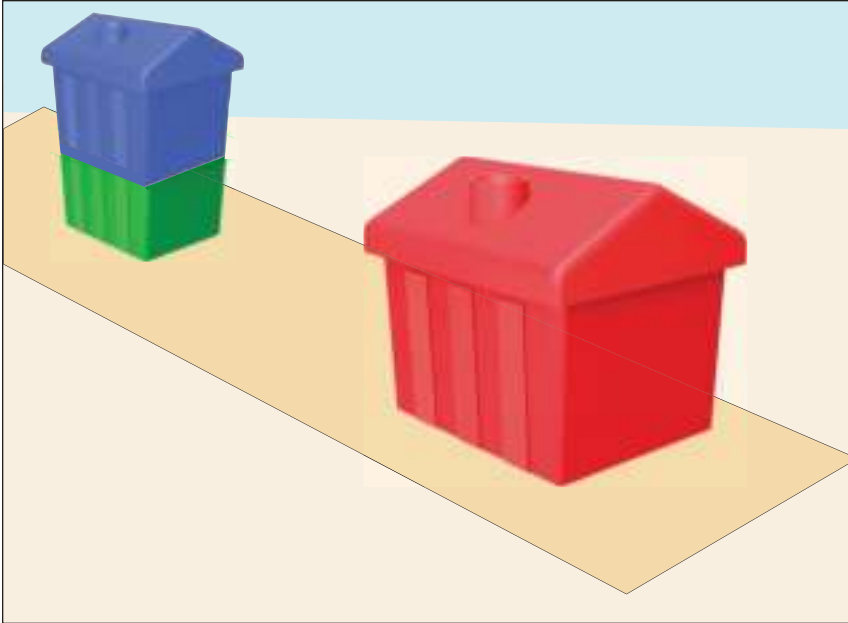
**Accessory dwelling units must meet *all* applicable zoning, building and fire codes**

# Types of ADUs

A wide range of ADU options are available for construction in Oak Park. These include...



# Types of ADUs



**Coach houses are permitted on a zoning lot used for a single-family dwelling.**

## **Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit – Coach House**

**Size:** Accessory structures are limited to 20 percent coverage of the lot.

**Location:** A coach house must be located on the upper floor of a detached garage, above parking spaces located on the ground level. A coach house is subject to all regulations applicable to detached garages.

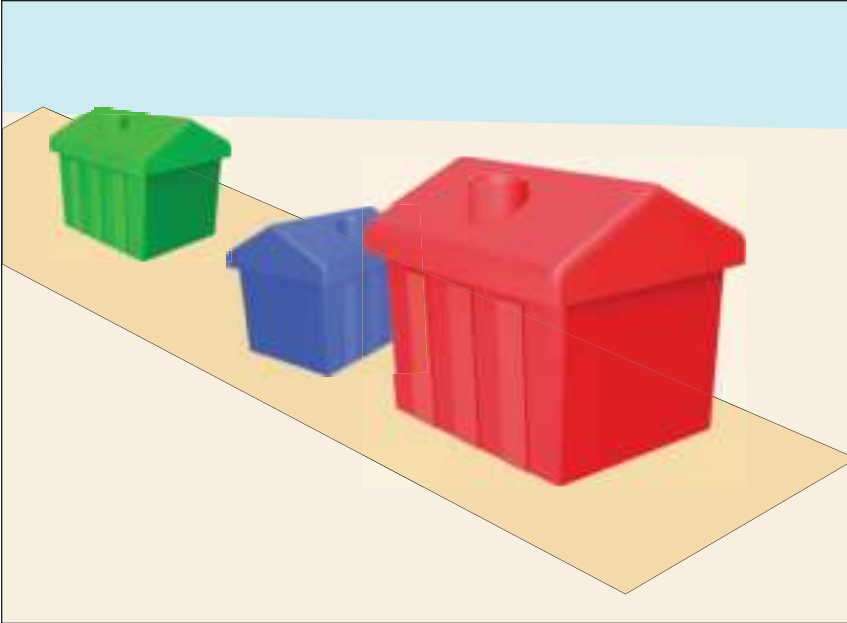
**Number:** Only one dwelling unit may be located in a coach house.

**Design:** New coach houses must relate to the design of the single-family dwelling.

**Height:** New coach houses cannot exceed 20 feet or the height of the single-family dwelling, whichever is less.

**Historic district:** If located within a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission review process applies.

# Types of ADUs



A ground-floor dwelling unit may be either a converted parking garage or a new detached accessory dwelling unit on a single-family dwelling lot.

## Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit – Ground Floor

**Size:** A ground floor detached dwelling unit must be less than 1,000 square feet of livable space and/or smaller than the single-family dwelling. Accessory structures are limited to 20 percent coverage of the lot.

**Location:** A detached dwelling unit must be located in the rear or side of a single-family dwelling and meet the dimensional requirements for an accessory structure. Detached dwelling units in a side yard must be set back a minimum of five feet from the front of the main building facade line and three feet from the interior side lot line.

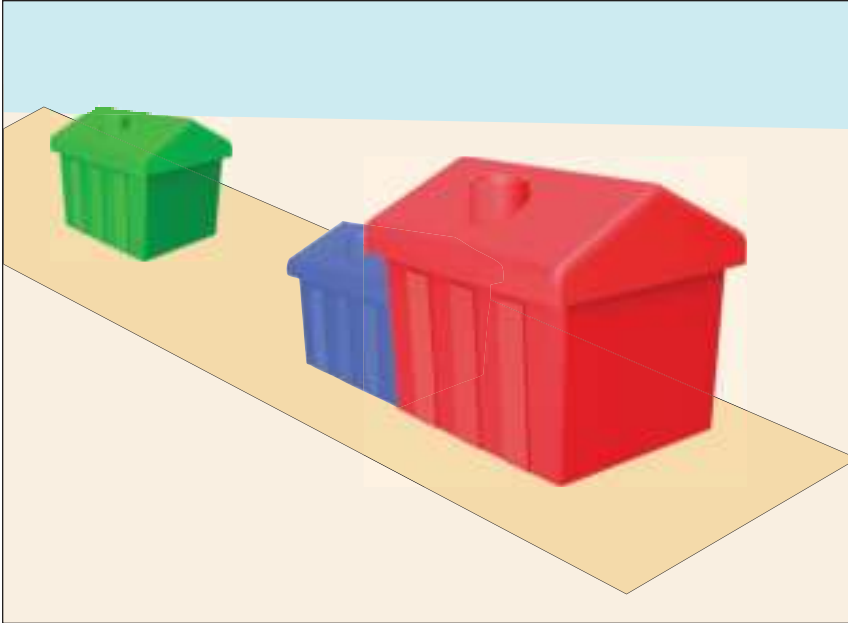
**Design:** New detached accessory dwelling units must relate to the design of the principal single-family dwelling.

**Height:** New detached accessory dwelling units cannot exceed 20 feet or the height of the single-family dwelling, whichever is less.

**Historic district:** If located within a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission review process applies.



# Types of ADUs



**Attached accessory dwelling units are permitted on a zoning lot used for a single-family dwelling.**

## **Attached Accessory Dwelling Units - Additions with separate entrances**

**Size:** An attached dwelling unit must be less than 1,000 square feet of livable space and/or smaller than the principal single-family dwelling.

**Location:** An attached dwelling unit must be located in the rear or side of a single-family dwelling and meet the same dimensional requirements as a single-family dwelling.

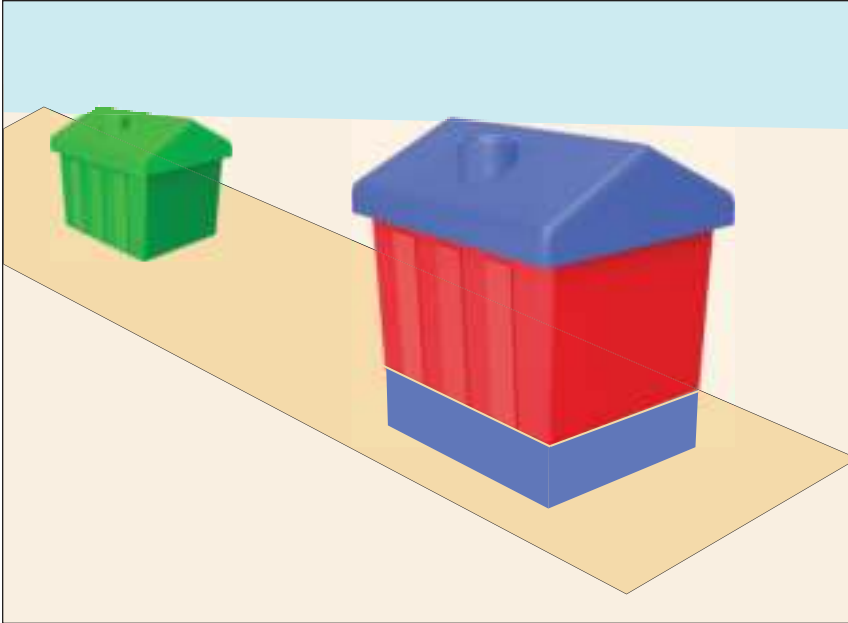
**Entrance:** An attached dwelling unit must have its own separate entrance from the single-family dwelling.

**Design:** New additions must relate to the design of the single-family dwelling.

**Historic district:** If located within a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission review process shall apply.



# Types of ADUs

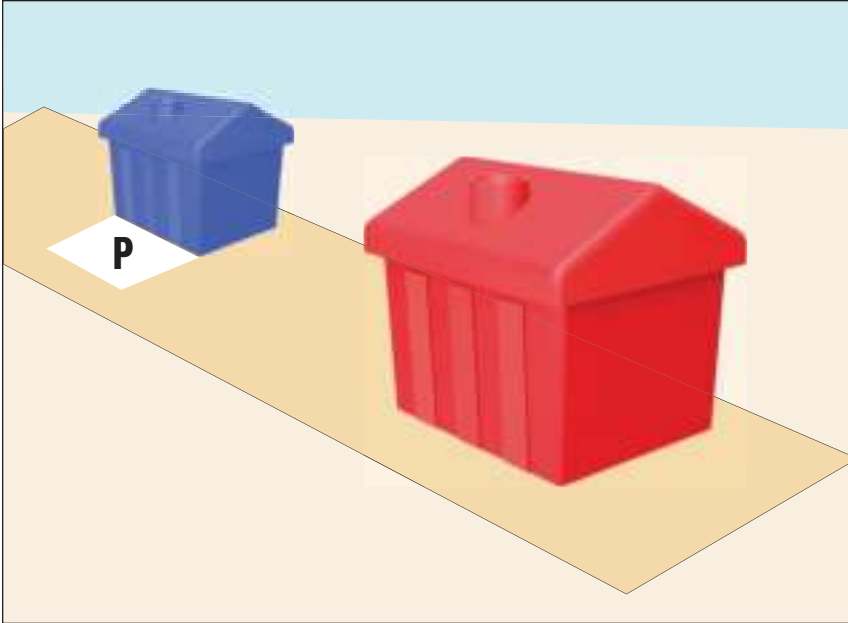


## **Interior Accessory Dwelling Units – Basement and attic conversions with separate entrances**

**Entrance:** An attic or basement accessory dwelling unit must have its own separate entrance from the single-family dwelling.

**An attic or basement accessory dwelling unit is permitted on a zoning lot within a single-family dwelling.**

# Types of ADUs



**A garage conversion dwelling unit must be located in the rear or side of a single-family dwelling.**

## **Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit – Garage Conversion**

**Size:** A garage conversion dwelling unit must be less than 1,000 square feet of livable space and smaller than the single-family dwelling. Accessory structures in aggregate are limited to 20% coverage of the lot.

**Location:** A garage conversion dwelling unit must be located in the rear or side of a single-family dwelling and meet the dimensional requirements for an accessory structure in this section. Garage conversion units in a side yard must be set back a minimum of five feet from the front building facade line and three feet from the interior side lot line.

**Historic district:** If located within a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission review process applies.

# Historic Districts and Landmark Properties

ADUs are subject to the same historic preservation review processes as other projects in any of Oak Park's three historic districts or on landmark properties.

Applications for coach houses, detached units and attached units in a historic district or on a landmark property, must receive historic review.

If the project involves demolition of historic materials and is visible from the street, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required from the Historic Preservation Commission and the project must meet the Village's Architectural Review Guidelines.

If no demolition is involved, but the project is visible from the street, an advisory review by the Historic Preservation or its Architectural Review Committee may be required. The review process entails attending a Historic Preservation Commission or Architectural Review Committee meeting, where recommendations based on the Architectural Guidelines will be provided.

For more information on the review process, email the Village's Historic Preservation staff at [historicpreservation@oak-park.us](mailto:historicpreservation@oak-park.us).

# ADUs start to finish

Building an ADU is a major undertaking that will involve professionals such as architects, builders and contractors. The general process you will need for Village approval is as follow:

**1**

**Research your project**

**2**

**Hire a professional architect**

**3**

**Contact the Zoning Administrator at [zoning@oak-park.us](mailto:zoning@oak-park.us) and the Historic Preservation Planner at [historicpreservation@oak-park.us](mailto:historicpreservation@oak-park.us) to ensure your project is on the right track**

**4**

**Submit a building permit application for review via the Village's online portal [www.oak-park.us/villageview](http://www.oak-park.us/villageview). The process includes a zoning analysis, building and fire code review, engineering review and, if applicable, a historic review.**

**5**

**Receive permit approval**

**6**

**Start construction — be sure to contact the Village at [permits@oak-park.us](mailto:permits@oak-park.us) for all necessary inspections**

**7**

**Move in!**

# FAQs

## **Does an ADU require a separate address?**

Yes. A new accessory dwelling unit must be issued a separate and distinct address from that of the single-family home. You will need to complete a new address form found on the Village website at [www.oak-park.us/forms](http://www.oak-park.us/forms). Any ADU also must have a separate entrance from the single-family home. The ADU address also must be displayed on or at the front of the principal structure.

## **Will my ADU need fire sprinklers?**

Maybe. An automatic fire sprinkler system may be required under certain circumstances. Consider the following guidelines:

- All new independent separate accessory structures require an automatic sprinkler system.
- An automatic residential fire sprinkler system must be installed in new construction for all residential uses of one- and two-family dwellings.
- An automatic residential fire sprinkler system is not required for additions or alterations to existing buildings that do not already have an automatic residential sprinkler system.
- Existing one- and two-family dwellings where more than 50 percent of the habitable floor area above the foundation level is demolished and rebuilt must have an automatic fire sprinkler system throughout the dwelling.

## **Can I run my home occupation out of my ADU?**

Yes. An ADU is considered a dwelling unit and has the same opportunity for a home occupation as the main residence. More information on home occupation is included in section 9.3 (O) of the local Zoning Ordinance.

# FAQs

## **Will my property taxes go up?**

Maybe — depending on the type of ADU you plan to construct. Contact the Oak Park Township Assessor to better understand when an ADU might affect your property taxes. Visit [oakparktownship.org/assessor-services](http://oakparktownship.org/assessor-services) for more information.

## **What about water and sewer service regulations?**

All water and sewer services must come from the existing water and sewer services for the main single-family home. Direct connections to the main lines in the street are not allowed. The additional plumbing fixtures or sprinkler system may require a water service upgrade. For more information, refer to the Illinois Plumbing Code or contact the Village at [permits@oak-park.us](mailto:permits@oak-park.us).

## **Can I use my ADU for an Airbnb?**

Yes. However, you must register your unit with the Village of Oak Park before you can offer it for rent via Airbnb or other rental service. Registration is processed online at [www.oak-park.us/villageview](http://www.oak-park.us/villageview) — look for the Licensing heading.







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