



**ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU)  
&  
JUNIOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (JADU)  
REGULATIONS**



## **What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and a Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU)?**

An Accessory Dwelling Unit is a dwelling unit for rental or occupancy that is attached to or detached from a single-family dwelling (one primary dwelling per lot) or multifamily dwellings (two or more dwellings on a single lot consisting of rental units or airspace condominiums) and located on the same lot as the primary dwelling(s). An ADU must have sanitary facilities, cooking facilities, a separate entrance, and comply with specific standards, as listed below. An ADU cannot be sold separately. See the City’s adopted ADU Ordinance, [Section 20.20.010](#) of the Land Use Code, for additional information.

Another type of ADU is a Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU), which is a unit that is no more than 500 square feet in size and is contained entirely within a legally existing or proposed single-family dwelling, contains an efficiency kitchen, and includes a separate entrance. A JADU may include separate sanitation facilities, or may share sanitation facilities with the primary single-family dwelling. The owner of the single-family dwelling must live on the property, in the single-family unit or the JADU.

## **Why build an ADU/JADU?**

There are many reasons for building an ADU on your lot. ADUs can provide housing for caregivers, grown children, elderly parents, or renters. ADUs allow for an opportunity to produce additional household income through renting the ADU or primary residence. “Empty nesters” can stay in their neighborhood by moving into a smaller ADU and renting their existing home to pay the mortgage and/or to provide additional income.

## **Where can an ADU/JADU be built?**

- ADUs can be built in any zoning district that allows residential uses. An ADU can also be built on any lot that has an existing legally permitted dwelling(s). ADUs are not subject to lot size requirements, density limitations, or growth control measures.
- ADUs can either be attached to or detached from a single-family house or multifamily structure, or be created through the conversion of existing floor area.
- ADUs are typically subordinate in size to a single-family house or multifamily structure and shall be located on the same lot.

- JADUs are contained entirely within an existing or proposed single-family dwelling.

## **How many ADUs/JADUs are allowed?**

- Existing or proposed single-family dwelling—On a lot with an existing or proposed single-family dwelling, one (1) ADU is allowed. One (1) Junior ADU may also be allowed in addition to an attached or detached ADU.
- Existing multifamily structure—On a lot with an existing multifamily dwelling structure, multiple ADUs are allowed up to 25% of the number of existing units, or one (1) ADU, whichever is greater when created through the conversion of area within the residential structure not used for livable space, such as storage rooms, boiler rooms, passageways, attics, basements, or garages.
- Proposed multifamily structure—On a lot with a proposed multifamily structure, one (1) ADU is allowed.

## **What is an Exception ADU?**

An Exception ADU is generally 850 square feet or less, no taller than 16 feet, and with rear and side setbacks of at least 4 feet that may be constructed without meeting development standards specified in Tables 20 and 20a, on pages 5 and 6. Such Exception ADUs must meet state law, including the California Building Code.

## **What are the use and occupancy restrictions for an ADU/JADU and can I use my ADU/JADU as a short-term or vacation rental?**

- ADU—A property owner is not required to live on-site.
- JADU—A property owner is required to live in either the single-family dwelling or JADU.
- ADUs/JADUs must be rented for terms more than 30 days for residential purposes.
- ADUs/JADUs cannot be used as a short-term or vacation rental (30 days or less).
- A deed restriction must be recorded against the parcel identifying the limitations on use, size, and sale of the ADU/JADU. A sample deed restriction is available on the ADU webpage at: <https://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us/853/Accessory-Dwelling-Units---ADUs>

## **Can I subdivide my property and sell the ADU?**

No, ADUs must remain on the same lot as the primary dwelling(s).

## **What size can an ADU/JADU be?**

The total floor area of an ADU cannot exceed 1,200 square feet. There is no limit on the number of bedrooms in an ADU, but bedrooms must conform to standard building code requirements such as minimum size and minimum window egress requirements. A JADU cannot exceed 500 square feet. The City does not have a minimum size restriction, but generally an ADU or JADU should not be less than 150 square feet. An Exception ADU can be a maximum of 850 square feet. See more on Exception ADUs, above.

## **Can I convert or demolish my garage/carport to build an ADU/JADU on a lot with a single-family residence?**

Yes, an existing garage/carport may be converted or demolished to make room for a new ADU/JADU, and replacement parking is not required. However, if you choose to replace existing parking spaces, you must meet City requirements for parking space dimensions. The relocated parking spaces also cannot be located in the front yard setback, or the street side yard setback on a corner lot.

## **Can I convert or demolish a garage/carport to build an ADU on a lot with a multifamily dwelling?**

Yes, a garage/carport that is within the multi-family structure may be converted to an ADU without the need to replace the parking. If replacement parking is provided, it will need to comply with dimensional and locational standards included in the Healdsburg Land Use Code.

## **Am I required to provide a new parking space or designate an existing parking space on my property for the ADU/JADU?**

No parking is required for an ADU/JADU.

## **Is there a height limit for an ADU on a lot with a single-family dwelling?**

Yes. An attached ADU must follow height standards for the zoning district in which it is located unless the ADU is located within a required rear or side yard, in which case the unit cannot exceed 2 stories or up to 25 feet in height. Detached ADUs may be two (2) stories and up to 25 feet in height. Such an ADU may be constructed over a detached accessory building such as a garage or carport. The maximum height of an ADU created by the conversion of existing floor area not used as living space is the same as the underlying zoning district. Exception ADUs have a height limit of 16 feet. See more on Exception ADUs on page 3.

## **Is there a height limit on an ADU on a lot with a multifamily structure?**

Yes, an ADU constructed with new multifamily dwellings must follow height standards for the zoning district in which it is located. An ADU constructed on a lot with existing multifamily dwellings cannot exceed a height of 16 feet. The maximum height of an ADU created by the conversion of existing floor area not used as livable space within the existing structure would be the same as the underlying zoning district.

## **Are there property line setback requirements for detached ADUs?**

Yes, generally, the structure must maintain a minimum 4-foot setback from side and rear property lines and comply with the front setback of the underlying zoning. Depending on the specific circumstances, it may be possible to convert an existing detached accessory structure with less than 4-foot setbacks to an ADU.

## **Are there property line setback requirements for attached ADUs?**

Yes, an ADU that is attached to the primary dwelling may be constructed with a minimum 4-foot setback from the side and rear property lines. An attached ADU is not required to maintain the larger side and rear yard setbacks of the primary dwelling.

## **Are there lot coverage requirements for ADU additions?**

Yes, the maximum area that can be covered by structures is specified by the underlying zoning for the lot, and ranges from 25% to 50%. However, ADUs of 850 square feet or less are not subject to the maximum site coverage requirements of the underlying zoning.

## **What types of houses can be an ADU?**

ADUs may be of standard residential construction, manufactured housing or factory-built housing on permanent foundations. Manufactured or prefabricated homes may provide a more cost-efficient means to add an ADU to your site. There are various vendors in the Bay Area and Northern California.

## How do I find my zoning information?

**Zoning Designation.** The City’s adopted zoning map designates zoning districts throughout the City. View the map: <https://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/836/Zoning-Map-PDF?bidId=>

**Zoning District Development Standards.** General development standards are shown in Table 20, below. Information regarding setbacks, site coverage, and height are shown in Table 20a on page 6 for zoning districts that allow ADUs.

Development Standard	Table 20—Development Standards for ADUs and JADUs		
	Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit	Attached Accessory Dwelling Unit	Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit
Number of ADUs/JADUs new or existing Single-Family Dwelling <sup>1</sup>	1	1	1
Number of ADUs new Multifamily	N/A	1	1
Maximum Size	500 square feet	1,200 square feet	1,200 square feet
Site Coverage	N/A	See Table 20a Exception: ADUs 850 square feet or less are not subject to the maximum site coverage requirements of the underlying zoning.	
Height <sup>2</sup>	See Table 20a	See Table 20a Exception: ADUs located within required rear and side yard of the zoning district cannot exceed two stories or 25 feet.	Two stories or 25 feet
Setbacks <sup>3</sup>			
Front	N/A	See Table 20a	See Table 20a
Interior Side	N/A	4 feet	4 feet
Street Side	N/A	4 feet	4 feet
Rear	N/A	4 feet	4 feet
Parking Spaces: On Site			
Accessory Dwelling Unit	N/A	0	0
Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit	0	N/A	N/A
Replacement Parking for Primary Dwelling Garage or Covered Parking Conversion	0	0	0

1. One JADU and one attached or detached ADU is allowed.
2. An ADU located over a detached accessory building may exceed the maximum height stated in HMC 20.16.030 (Accessory structures), up to two stories or 25 feet, and the maximum required interior side and rear setbacks are four feet as noted in Table 20.
3. No setback shall be required for an existing living area or accessory structure or a structure constructed in the same location and to the same dimensions as an existing structure that is converted to an accessory dwelling unit or to a portion of an accessory dwelling unit.
4. If any one of the following standards set forth in Table 20: maximum size and/or lot coverage would prohibit the issuance of a building permit for an accessory dwelling unit, the applicant for said building permit will be entitled to a permit for an 850 square foot accessory dwelling unit that is 16 feet high, with four foot side and rear yard setbacks.

**Table 20a Development Standards: Front setback, site coverage, height for specific zoning districts**

Development Standard by Zone	R-1-3.5*	R-1-6	R-1-12.5	R-1-20 & 40	RM	DR	PR and CD	CS	MU	GMU
Front setback	20'	20'	25'	30'	20'	20'	None	None	None	30'
Site coverage	50%	35%	30%	25%	40%	40%	100%	60%	60%	30%
Height**	35' except 25' for small lot subdivisions				40'	35'	35' when abutting or across street or alley from R-1 zone	40' when abutting zone allowing multifamily as primary use to include RM, ORM, RMP, DR  50' in all other instances	35' abutting/across street or alley from zone allowing single family as permitted use	35'
							40' abutting/across street or alley from zone allowing multifamily as permitted use			
							50' in all other instances			
*20' setback for garage frontage. Non-garage frontage: 10' **Exceptions to this requirement are prescribed in HMC 20.16.065										

If any one of the standards set forth in Table 20a would prohibit the issuance of a building permit for an accessory dwelling unit, the applicant for said building permit will be entitled to a permit for an 850 square foot accessory dwelling unit that is 16 feet high, with four foot side and rear yard setbacks.

## How is the size of an ADU calculated?

**Detached ADUs.** Floor area is measured from the outside of the exterior walls of the ADU. Proposed habitable space located under a sloping roof where the sloping ceiling measures less than five feet from the finished floor to the finished ceiling is not counted as floor area.

**Attached ADUs.** Floor area is measured from the outside of the exterior walls of the ADU to the center line of shared interior walls that separate the accessory unit from the primary unit living space. Proposed habitable space under a sloping roof where the sloping ceiling measures less than five feet from the finished floor to the finished ceiling is not counted as floor area.

**Excluded Areas.** Carports, covered porches (open on three sides) and patios, chimneys, stairwells, and mechanical closets are not counted toward the determination of floor area of the Accessory Dwelling Unit.

## What design elements are applicable to ADUs?

The City’s municipal code includes specific design criteria that apply to ADUs regarding placement, building and landscape design, privacy, entrances, and location in a historic district overlay. Compliance with these objective design criteria will need to be documented through your building permit submittal as part of the site plan, elevations, proposed materials, and photographs. The design criteria generally include the following:

- Placement outside the front setback.
- Use of materials and colors that match the primary unit.
- Use of fire-resistant and drought-tolerant landscaping materials.
- Provision of a separate entrance.
- Location of windows and doors to maximize privacy on adjacent properties.
- No use of plastic or vinyl in exterior features for units located in the Historic District Overlay.

## CITY OF HEALDSBURG

While your building permit application for an ADU is not subject to the Citywide Design Guidelines, they contain useful information regarding design of ADUs:

- [Citywide Design Guidelines](https://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/8565/Design-Guidelines---Final-Document---PDF): <https://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/8565/Design-Guidelines---Final-Document---PDF>

## What else should I keep in mind when designing my ADU?

**Fire Safety Requirements.** The overall size and location of an ADU and available water pressure affect applicable fire code requirements such as fire sprinklers, water supply upgrades, or fire hydrant upgrades. These factors include the following:

- **Structure Size:** The total size of the proposed structure will be factored into determining applicable fire code requirements. For example, a 600 square-foot ADU over a 700 square-foot three-car garage would be counted as a 1,300 square-foot structure. Generally, new structures over 1,200 square feet will require fire sprinklers. Also, for remodels and ADU additions, the area of the remodel and size of the ADU will be considered in determining if fire sprinklers are required. Generally, the threshold is a remodel and/or addition exceeding 50% of the existing home (this calculation is done by Fire Department Staff).
- **ADU Location and Water Pressure:** The proximity of a new ADU structure to fire hydrants, distance from the public right-of-way, and water pressure (fire flow) are also factors in determining fire-safety requirements.

The City of Healdsburg Fire Department evaluates these factors when a building permit is submitted for review. For more information, please contact the Fire Department at (707) 431-3360.

## What City permits and fees apply?

**Building Permit.** A building permit is required for all ADUs, including conversion of existing living space or garage area. Building fees are based on the valuation of the ADU construction costs. Contact the City's Planning and Building Department for more information at (707) 431-3346.

**Development Impact Fees.** Impact fees are not required for an ADU that is 850 square feet or less. Impact fees for ADUs larger than 850 square feet are based on the proportionate size of the ADU as compared to the "primary unit" and in no case will be more than 50% of the fees for a new single-family or multifamily dwelling. For information regarding Development Impact fees for an ADU that is larger than 850 square feet please contact the Planning and Building Department at (707) 431-3346.

**Fire Sprinkler Permit.** Additions and new construction requiring fire sprinklers will need separate plans to be submitted for fire sprinkler design to the Fire Department. Please contact the Fire Department at (707) 431-3360 for more information.

**School Impact Fees.** Additions or new construction over 500 square feet may be subject to school district fees. Currently, the fees are \$2.97 per square foot or \$5.25 per square foot if located in "Sub Area A" (per the Healdsburg General Plan). Please contact the Healdsburg Unified School District business office at (707) 431-3403 or visit <https://healdsburgusd-ca.schoolloop.com/BusinessServices> for more information.

## How can I get more information?

**Online.** For a complete description of the regulations and permitting requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units, please visit the City's ADU web page: <https://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us/853/Accessory-Dwelling-Units--ADUs>

**Call.** Planning and Building staff are available to answer questions at the Community Development Center at (707) 431-3346.

**One-Stop Assistance Center.** If you are considering an ADU on your property, you can receive personalized information and guidance through the City's One-Stop Assistance Center. One-Stop meetings are held on Thursday afternoons, at no cost, and are staffed by members of the Planning, Building, Public Works, and Fire Departments to answer all your questions regarding ADU development. To schedule an appointment for a One-Stop meeting, please call the Community Development Center at (707) 431-3346.

**Lot Size.** To find your lot size, you may contact the Planning Division at the Community Development Center or you may try the Sonoma County Assessor Office website at the following link: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Services/Parcel-Report/>

**Site Zoning.** To find your site zoning, you may contact the Planning Division at the Community Development Center or you may view the City of Healdsburg's zoning map at the following link: <https://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/836/Zoning-Map-PDF?bidId=>

**Site Zoning Development Standards.** To find the maximum site coverage and setback requirements (for additions to existing homes), you may view the City of Healdsburg's zoning district information here at <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Healdsburg/#!/Healdsburg20/Healdsburg2008.html#20.08>

## How do I get started?

**Understand Your Zoning Requirements.** First, figure out your lot size, site zoning, and development standards including your maximum allowed site coverage. Remember, an ADU less than 850 square feet in size does not count toward site coverage.

**Determine Your Allowed and Available Site Coverage.** Second, figure out your remaining site coverage by calculating the existing floor area for the first floor of all structures on the site. Next, multiply your maximum site coverage percentage by the lot size in square feet. This calculation is the maximum site coverage in square feet for your site. Last, subtract the existing site coverage from the allowed maximum site coverage.

**Determine Your ADU Type and Size.** Once you have determined the remaining site coverage on your site, determine the type and size of the unit that you want to add to the site.

**Sketch it Out.** A sample site plan has been provided for reference in addition to blank graph paper for you to sketch out your project. When sketching your project, determine the size of each square based on your lot size. Indicate adjacent streets, existing building footprints with dimensions and north arrow. Next, draw in the location and dimensions of the proposed ADU addition or new structure. For more questions, follow up with Planning Division Staff at the Community Development Center.

## What is the application process?

- Request a “One-Stop” at the Planning and Building Department to receive preliminary feedback from City departments.
- Prepare plans.
- Apply for a Building Permit from the Planning and Building Department.
- Record a Declaration of Restrictions with the Sonoma County Recorder’s Office.
- Begin construction once a permit is issued.
- Call for building inspections.
- Receive Certificate of Occupancy.

## What happens during review of an ADU Building Permit Application?

The Planning Division will review the design of the ADU to ensure it complies with all requirements, such as: size, height, location, setbacks, and design criteria. The Building Division will review the plans for conformance with the California Building Code. The Fire Department will review to determine if the ADU requires fire sprinklers. Applicants will be notified in writing if additional information or corrections to plans are necessary. There is no neighborhood notification as part of an application for an ADU, and under state law, the ADU building permit process is limited to ministerial review.

## Sample ADU/JADU Scenarios

### Scenario 1—Constructing an ADU Above an Existing Accessory Structure

Sue’s single-family home is located on a typical 6,000 square foot lot. She has an older 400 square foot two-car garage located in the back corner of the lot and she wants to construct an ADU above it. The existing garage was constructed with a 1-foot setback from the rear and side property lines. She can add an ADU above the existing garage provided the ADU addition complies with the 4-foot minimum setback from the side and rear property lines and does not exceed 25 feet in height. The existing garage can maintain the existing 1-foot setback.

### Scenario 2—Replacing or Converting an Existing Non-conforming Accessory Structure to an ADU

Dan’s single-family home is located on a typical 6,000 square foot lot. He wants to convert or replace an older 400 square foot two-car garage located in the back corner of the lot to an ADU and is also considering adding 100 square feet to the structure to create a 500 square foot ADU. The existing garage was constructed with a six-inch setbacks from the side and rear property lines. He would be able to convert the existing garage to an ADU provided requirements of the Building Code are met and setbacks shall be sufficient for fire safety. The 100 square foot addition would need to have a 4-foot setback from the side and/or rear property lines. The two parking spaces would not need to be replaced.

### Scenario 3—Converting a Single-Family Dwelling Attached Garage to an ADU

Vicki wishes to convert her attached two-car garage to an ADU for a family member and she would like to provide direct access between the ADU and the primary residence by simply installing a door. She can convert the garage to an ADU and not replace the parking. The Building Code would not allow a direct connection between the two units as the California Building Code requires that residential units be divided by a one-hour-rated fire separation.

### Scenario 4—Creating a JADU within an Existing Single-Family Dwelling and Constructing a Detached ADU

Sarah owns a single-family, four bedroom home. The lot is located within a single-family neighborhood and is zoned R-1-6,000. Sarah would like to add as many dwellings as possible to help provide additional housing for the community, as well as to provide additional income. She can convert existing space within the home to a JADU with a maximum floor area of 500 square feet, and she can also construct an ADU with a maximum floor area of 1,200 square feet. The ADU would need to meet the minimum 4-foot rear and side yard setbacks. Sarah is required to live in either the JADU or the single-family dwelling.

### Scenario 5—Constructing an ADU within an Historic Neighborhood

Lisa's 100-year old single-family dwelling is located in the Johnson Street Historic District. Mark would like to construct a new 900 square foot, two-story, detached ADU fully behind his one-story, 1,500 square foot home. He can construct the ADU provided the maximum height does not exceed 25 feet and the minimum side and rear yard setbacks are not less than 4 feet. The ADU would count as lot coverage and the maximum lot coverage of 35% could not be exceeded. The ADU would not require the approval of the Historic Committee (Planning Commission).

### Scenario 6—Constructing a New ADU Addition Attached to the Rear of a Single-Family Dwelling on a Relatively Small Lot.

Rhonda owns an existing 1,500 square foot single-family dwelling in the R-1-6,000 Zoning District and she would like to construct an attached, two-story, 900 square foot (450 square feet per floor) ADU to the rear of the house. The existing house was constructed 25 feet from the rear property line and the R-1-6,000 Zoning District requires a minimum 20-foot rear yard setback for the primary dwelling. The existing lot coverage is already at the maximum of 35%. She can construct an attached ADU provided the ADU is reduced to 850 square feet, the ADU maintains minimum 4-foot side and rear yard setbacks, and the ADU does not exceed 25 feet in height.

### Scenario 7—Adding ADU(s) to an Existing Multifamily Dwelling (Exception ADU)

Ronald owns an 8-unit multifamily parcel that is developed to the maximum density allowed by the High Density General Plan Designation. The building includes a large storage room/garage, and the property includes 8 parking spaces, 4 of which are located within a detached garage. He would like to add as many new dwellings as possible. He can convert the storage room/garage to add a maximum of 25% of the total number of multifamily units ( $25\% \times 8 = 2$  units) or one (1) ADU, whichever is greater. He can add two (2) ADUs up to 850 square feet in size without replacing the parking. Alternatively, he could construct two (2) ADUs up to 850 square feet detached from the existing multifamily units that do not exceed 16 feet in height and comply with the minimum 4-foot side/rear yard setbacks. He can build a maximum total of two (2) ADUs on this site, and they are not required to meet City development or design standards because they meet the standards for an Exception ADU.

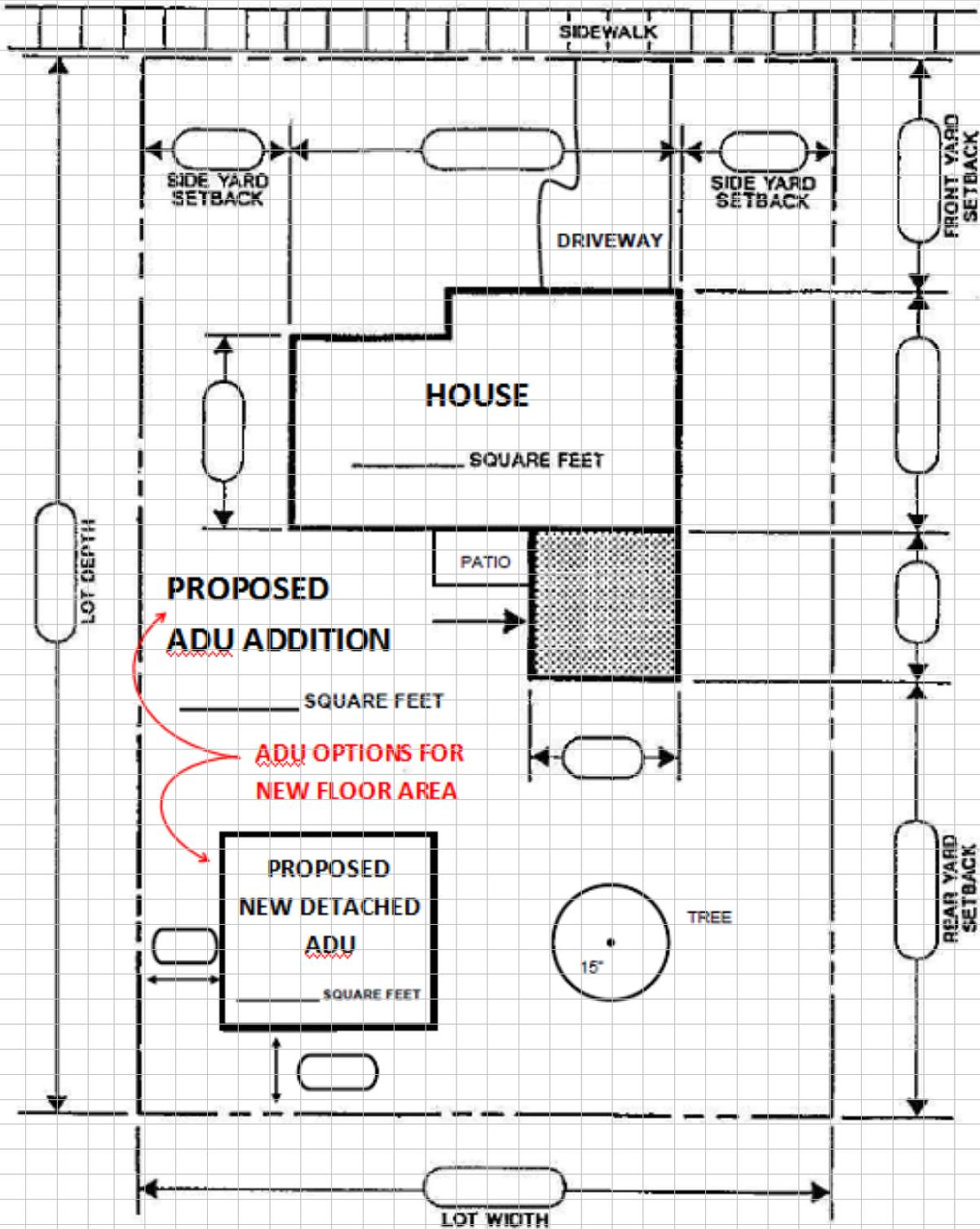
## Scenario 8—Constructing an ADU with a Proposed Airspace Condominium

Karen is proposing to develop a residential airspace condominium project within the CD District. She is proposing to construct 5 dwellings on one lot which is the maximum density allowed by the General Plan. Each of the 5 dwellings could be sold separately as an airspace unit. She would like to construct additional dwellings without the need for a density increase. She can construct one (1) ADU for the project up to 1,200 square feet in size. The ADU can be located on a part of the common area owned and maintained by the HOA for the development, or the ADU can be a part of one of the five airspace units. The ADU could not be sold as a separate airspace unit.

## Scenario 9—Constructing an ADU with a single-family dwelling (Exception ADU)

Joel owns a single-family dwelling and wants to build a detached, 850 square foot ADU that is 13 feet in height. He proposes to locate the unit in back of his house, with 4-foot setbacks from side and rear property lines. He can construct this ADU, and it is not required to meet City development or design standards because it meets the standards for an Exception ADU.

Sample Site Plan  
Lincoln Street



Scale: 1"=30'

**Sketch Your Site Plan**

A large grid of graph paper, consisting of 30 columns and 30 rows of small squares, intended for sketching a site plan. The grid is empty and occupies the majority of the page.