

Accessory Dwelling Guidelines

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These guidelines are intended to inform applicants of the issues that the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) considers when reviewing an application for an accessory dwelling. The ZBA does not apply a rigid formula. Instead, it evaluates each application to ensure that it strikes an appropriate balance between the needs of the applicant and the potential impact on the neighborhood.

Factors that the ZBA will consider include:

- Exterior appearance of the house: minimizing changes to the exterior of the existing residence mitigates the impact of an accessory unit on the neighborhood. One design approach that accomplishes this goal is to locate the accessory unit fully within the footprint of the existing house. Likewise, the secondary entrance for the accessory unit should be clearly subordinate to the main entrance of the house, in keeping with the requirement of Section 5527 of the Zoning Bylaw that the structure maintain the appearance of a single-family house.
- Size of accessory dwelling units: the ZBA is concerned that renters not disturb the quiet enjoyment of neighbors. In the past, successful applications for rental accessory units have adhered to the 850 square foot limit of Section 5522 of the Zoning Bylaw, especially if the accessory unit is contained in a separate structure from the main dwelling. When the accessory unit is intended for use by a family member or is fully contained within the primary dwelling, the ZBA has historically been more likely to waive the 850 square foot limit.
- Parking: in the past, successful applications have given careful consideration to minimizing the visual impact of the parking area for the accessory unit, in addition to adhering to the requirements of Section 5528 of the Zoning Bylaw.
- Neighborly cooperation: the ZBA encourages all applicants to meet with abutters prior to the public hearing to review the proposed project and reach agreement on issues such as parking location and screening.