

Detached residential accessory buildings

This handout summarizes the zoning requirements for residential garages and accessory buildings. Please contact the inspections department at 952.924.2588 for information regarding building code requirements.

Accessory buildings include anything with a roof that provides shelter for persons, animals or personal property, such as detached garages, accessory dwelling units, storage sheds, gazebos, and similar structures.

The zoning ordinance establishes regulations for the height, area, and placement of accessory buildings. This handout is a summary of the regulations. A more complete list of regulations can be found in Section 36-169 of the zoning ordinance and is available to view on the city website.

Yards (Setbacks)

A yard, sometimes referred to as a setback, is the minimum distance required between a property line and the proposed building. All yards are measured from the property line only. Landmarks, physical features and structures, such as fences, cannot be used to estimate the location of the property line.

There are two ways to determine your lot lines:

- Locate your lot's corner stakes/irons. You can use a metal detector to find them. Usually, they are 3/4-inch diameter metal pipes that are 12 inches long. They were set in each of the corners of your property when the lot was subdivided. The invisible line connecting the four property irons forms your property lines. The top of the stakes should be a few inches below the sod.
- If you cannot find the irons, then the only option available is to hire a registered land surveyor. By law, only a licensed surveyor can install stakes if yours are missing.

Location requirements (setbacks and yards)

- See Figure 1 for yard locations.
- Accessory buildings must be located in the backyard or side yard.
- Accessory buildings must be a minimum of two feet from any side or rear lot line, measured horizontally from the lot line to the closest part of the building (e.g. edge of the eave).
- Detached garages located in the side yard must meet the same side yard as is required for the house. Contact the zoning department to determine the required setback.
- Accessory buildings located adjacent to an alley must be at least two feet measured horizontally from the closest part of the building to the lot line adjacent to the alley unless an overhead garage door faces the alley (is within 30 degrees to the lot line facing the alley), then the building shall be at least five feet from the lot line adjacent to the alley.
- If less than six feet from a principal building on the same lot, the accessory building is considered part of the principal building and must meet principal building yards.
- Detached accessory dwelling units (ADU) must be a minimum of five feet from the side and rear lot lines when located more than six feet from the house. If the ADU is closer than six feet to the house, then it has to meet the same yards required for the house.

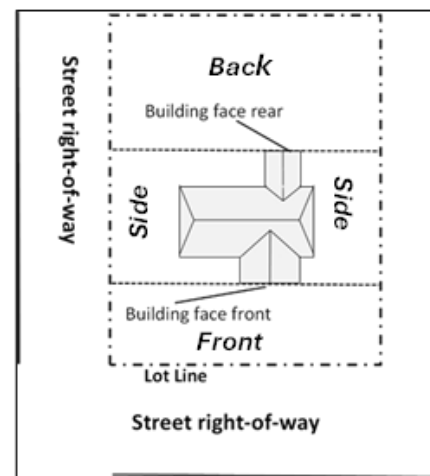


Figure 1-Yard locations

Size

In the N-1 and N-2 districts, the total cumulative ground floor area of all accessory buildings shall not exceed the lesser of 800 square feet or 25 percent of the back yard. The backyard is determined by multiplying the lot width by the distance from the rear lot line to the rear most wall of the house. Regardless of the 25 percent maximum above, a property may construct a detached garage or detached accessory dwelling unit that does not exceed 576 square feet. If this exception is used, then additional accessory buildings will not be permitted, and existing accessory buildings must be removed.

Additional factors may limit the size of the accessory building:

- Total cumulative ground floor area of all accessory buildings shall be less than the ground floor area of the house.
- Up to 60% of the property may be covered with impervious surfaces, such as buildings, driveways, sidewalks, patios, decks, and other impervious surfaces.

Height

The height of an accessory building is the distance from the first floor elevation, as defined by building code, to the highest point of the structure. Typically, this means top of the slab to the top of the peak.

See Figure 2 below for an illustration of accessory building height definitions.

The maximum height allowed for accessory buildings is summarized below:

- Accessory buildings up to 15 feet in height are permitted without having to meet the conditions required for accessory buildings over 15 feet in height.
- Accessory buildings over 15 feet in height are permitted with the following conditions:
 - Maximum allowed height is 24 feet.
 - Sidewall height cannot exceed 9 feet.
 - Exterior siding must match the house (e.g. brick house = brick accessory building).
 - The pitch of the garage roof must match a roof pitch existing on the house.
 - Windows, doors or similar openings above the ground floor are allowed with the following conditions:
 - They face the principal building on the lot, a street, or an alley.
 - They are at least 15 feet from a property line shared with a lot zoned neighborhood (e.g. N1, N2, N3 or N4) and used for a dwelling purpose.

The height of all accessory buildings must be lower than the principal building height as defined in city code 36-4.

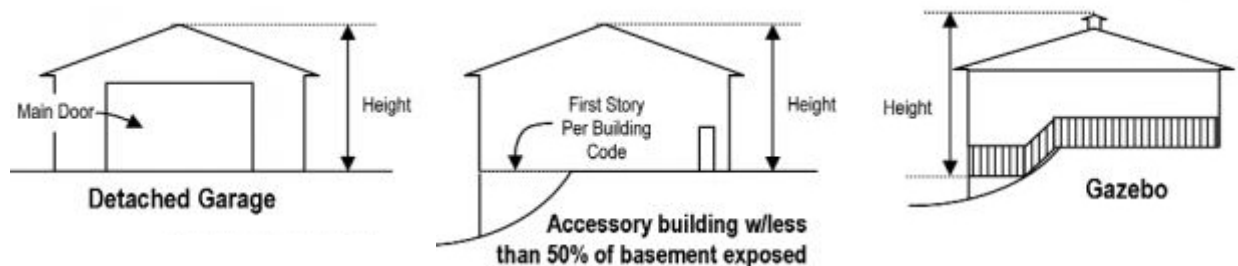


Figure 2-Building height

Design requirements

All accessory buildings must adhere to the following:

- The new building must be compatible in design and materials with the home.
- Accessory buildings may not have kitchen or bathroom facilities unless it is constructed as an accessory dwelling unit. However, hose bibs and utility sinks are allowed.
- All drains, including floor drains, must be connected to the municipal sanitary sewer.
- Window, door, skylight or similar openings can be located in the second story if they meet the requirements stated above under the “Height” section.
- Accessory buildings may not be used for home occupations.
- The combined width of dormers cannot exceed 50% of the side of the building they are located on.

A permit is required

Before any demolition or construction begins, you must obtain a building permit. To apply for a permit, complete the online application on the city’s website. If you have questions about what to submit, please call the community development department at 952.924.2575.

Accessory buildings less than 200 square feet in area do not require a building permit. Instead, the city requires a zoning permit. The zoning permit is available for download on the city website as a “shed permit”, or you can stop at city hall to fill it out.

The site plan must clearly show

Permits require a site plan that show the following (see Figure 3):

- All easements
- Lot size dimensions
- Distances to the property lines from the existing house and existing and proposed accessory buildings and structures
- Power lines

Building plans must clearly show

- Plan view of the building or structure (overhead view)
- Cross section of a wall showing size of footing, anchor bolt/strap, distance from grade to sill plate, size and height of framing members and type of roof system used (if hand framed, then size of lumber), and roof pitch.
- Elevation drawings of two sides of the building or structure.
- For accessory buildings, show one view of the gable side, including the total proposed height (to peak of the building), and the other view showing the eave side with all exterior materials labeled.

Driveways

- Driveways must be paved with asphalt, concrete or driveway quality pavers.
- A separate driveway permit is required for new driveways.
- If you are constructing a new curb cut onto a public road for a driveway or are planning to alter the existing driveway curb cut, a right of way permit is required from the city Engineering Department.

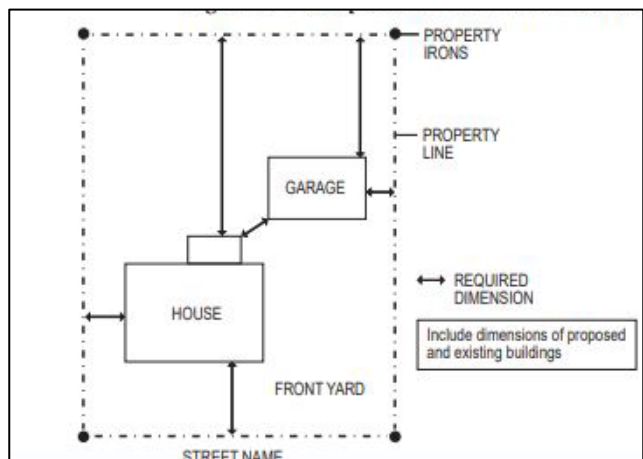


Figure 3-Sample site plan