



**County of Powhatan,
Virginia**
Accessory Dwelling Units

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What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)?

Powhatan County permits two types of *accessory dwelling units* in certain zoning districts:

Detached Accessory Dwelling Units

An *accessory dwelling unit (detached)* is a secondary dwelling unit established in conjunction with, and clearly subordinate to, the principal dwelling unit on a lot, as a detached structure on the same lot [Sec. 83-521]. Examples include detached guest houses, detached in-law suites, and apartments above detached garages.

Accessory Apartments

An *accessory apartment* as a secondary dwelling unit established in conjunction with, and clearly subordinate to, the principal dwelling unit on a lot, contained within or attached as part of the same structure as the principal dwelling unit on the same lot [Sec. 83-521]. Examples include in-law suites and guest quarters that are attached to the main house or located within a basement.

Where are Accessory Dwelling Units Permitted?

	A-C	A-20	A-10	RR	RR-5	CR	R-2	VR	R-U	CHSC
Accessory Apartment	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Detached Accessory Dwelling		P	P		C		C		C	

P—Permitted C—Permitted with a Conditional Use Permit

Obtaining a Permit

A building permit will be required for the construction of an ADU. The following items are required for submittal:

- Completed Building Permit Application
- Site Plan [Two (2) Copies]

Note: The site plan should be drawn on a recorded plat of the property, with a sketch of the proposed location with setbacks. The ADU must adhere to all setback requirements for the applicable zoning district.

- Building Plans [Two (2) Copies]
- Well and Septic Permits
- Floorplan (showing the square footage of the existing principal dwelling and proposed accessory dwelling)
- Address Request Form

Note: In most cases, ADUs are assigned separate addresses from the principal dwelling.

- Permit Application Fee

Use Standards

Accessory Apartments Sec. 83-438(b)

Accessory apartments shall comply with the following standards:

- Accessory apartments are allowed as accessory uses only to single-family detached dwellings, and are not allowed as accessory uses to two-family dwellings, townhouse dwellings, multifamily dwellings, or manufactured homes.
- Not more than one accessory apartment shall be allowed per single-family dwelling.
- An accessory apartment shall be allowed only within the principal dwelling structure (e.g., a downstairs apartment) or attached to the principal dwelling structure.
- The gross floor area devoted to an accessory apartment shall not exceed 35 percent of the total gross floor area of the principal dwelling to which it is accessory. The floor area of an accessory apartment shall not be included as part of the floor area of the principal dwelling for calculation purposes of applying limits on home occupations or similar limits imposed by this chapter.
- The principal dwelling or the accessory apartment shall be occupied by the owner of the property.
- At least one, but no more than two, off-street parking spaces shall be provided for an accessory apartment in addition to off-street parking required for the principal dwelling.
- The addition of an accessory apartment to a single-family detached dwelling shall not change the status of the dwelling as a single-family detached dwelling or the lot as the site of a single-family detached dwelling for purposes of applying intensity and dimensional standards.

Detached Accessory Dwelling Units Sec. 83-438(a)

Accessory dwelling units as detached structures shall comply with the following standards:

- Detached accessory dwelling units are allowed as accessory uses only to single-family detached dwellings, and are not allowed as accessory uses to two-family dwellings, townhouse dwellings, multifamily dwellings, or manufactured homes.
- Not more than one detached accessory dwelling unit shall be allowed per single-family dwelling.
- A detached accessory dwelling unit may not be located within required yards.
- The gross floor area devoted to a detached accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed 35 percent of the total gross floor area of the principal dwelling to which it is accessory, except that within the A-10 zoning district a detached accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed 50 percent of the total gross floor area of the principal dwelling to which it is accessory. The floor area of a detached accessory dwelling unit shall not be included as part of the floor area of the principal dwelling for calculation purposes of applying limits on home occupations or similar limits imposed by this chapter.

Examples: Accessory Apartments



Examples: Detached ADUs



Design Tips

In addition to zoning requirements, consider the following when designing an ADU:

- Use architectural features and materials that reflect the style, design, and quality of the main house.
- Limit the height of the ADU, so that it is shorter than the main house.
- Place windows and doors at locations that are sensitive to the privacy of the ADU, main house, and neighbors.