

Accessory Dwelling Unit and Carriage House

What is the difference between an accessory dwelling unit with habitable space and a carriage house?

The Land Use Code defines an *Accessory building or structure* as “a building or structure detached from a principal building and customarily used with, and clearly incidental and subordinate to, the principal building or use, and ordinarily located on the same lot with such principal building. An accessory building is not a dwelling unit.”

A *Dwelling unit* is defined as “one (1) or more rooms and a single kitchen and at least one (1) bathroom, designed, occupied or intended for occupancy as separate quarters for the exclusive use of a single family for living, cooking and sanitary purposes, located in a single-family, two-family or multi-family dwelling or mixed-use building.” The key distinction here is having cooking appliances and bathroom.

Habitable floor space is defined as “the space in a building approved for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, bathing and personal hygiene, with water and sewer service.

A *Carriage house* is defined as “a single-family detached dwelling unit, typically without street frontage, that is located behind a separate, principal dwelling on the same lot, which fronts on the street. A carriage house is accessed from an alley, side street or the existing driveway.”

An accessory building with water and/or sewer service is considered as containing habitable space. "Habitable space" does not necessarily mean a dwelling unit, but is space that is intended to eventually serve as indoor, habitable space for human occupancy. Accessory building applications must include the applicant's declaration as to if the space is habitable. The space is considered “habitable” if connected to water/and or sewer services.

The Land Use Code does not specifically define accessory dwelling units.

What zone districts allow carriage houses?

The Neighborhood Conservation Low Density (NCL), Neighborhood Conservation Medium Density (NCM) and Neighborhood Conservation Buffer (NCB) zone districts all allow carriage houses.

A proposed carriage house must meet additional requirements including minimum lot size, setbacks, access and parking. The minimum lot size in NCL is 12,000 SF, and 10,000 SF in NCM.

Can I build a carriage house if my alley is unpaved?

No, alleys in the NCL, NCM and NCB zone districts providing access for carriage houses and accessory buildings with habitable space do not need to be paved.

What other requirements apply?

- The site plan must provide a yard area at least 120 square feet in size that is 10 feet across in its smallest dimension.
- Major entry access stairs, decks, entry doors, and major windows shall face the existing principal building or the alley to the maximum extent feasible.
- You must maintain natural resources including existing significant trees and shrubs when feasible during construction.
- Water and sewer lines may be extended from the principal building on the lot to the carriage house.

What is the maximum size allowed for a carriage house?

Zoning plays a role in determining size. Zoning districts allow different maximum sizes and other criteria. See the table below.

Can a duplex, triplex, other multi-family unit or a second carriage house be built at the back of a lot?

A duplex, triplex or other multi-family building cannot be built at the back of a lot. More than one carriage house can be built at the back of the lot if required lot and access dimensions are met.

How much of the lot can a carriage house cover?

In addition to the minimum lot area requirements, the rear half of the lot is subject to floor area ratio (FAR) restrictions. The table below shows FAR allowance by zone district.