

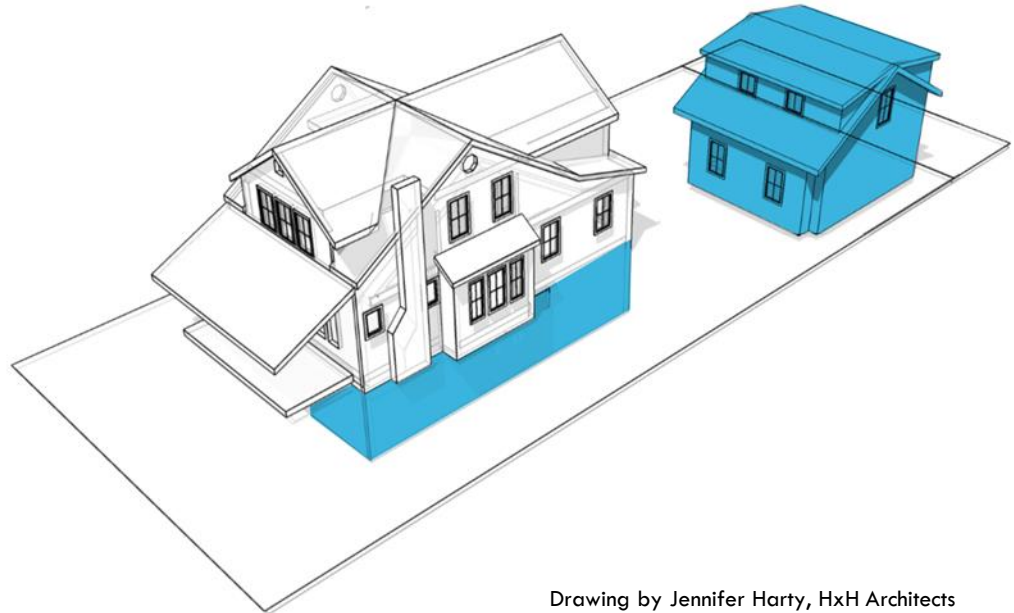
ADUs/2nd dwellings in DC: Understand zoning

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Coalition for Smarter Growth

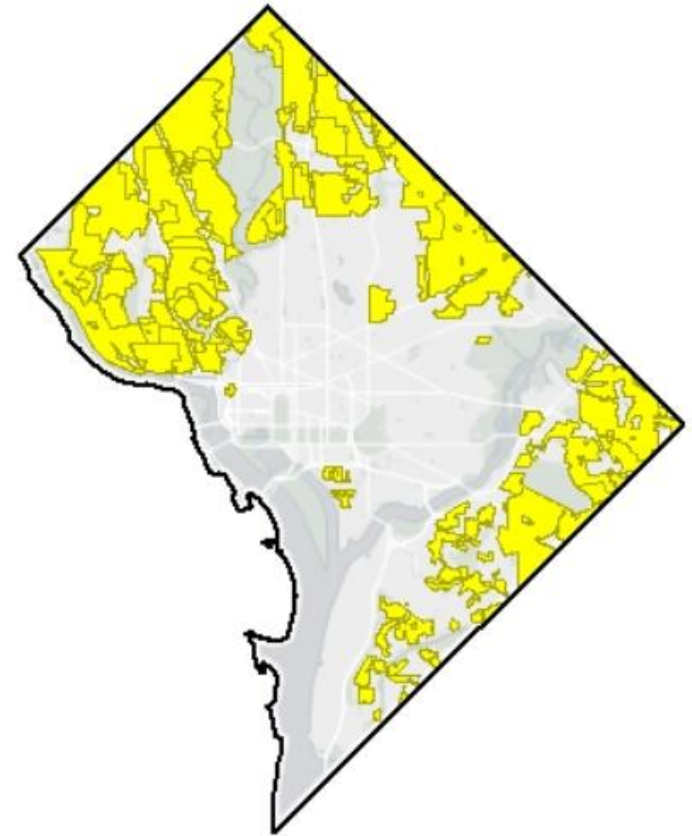
DC • MD • VA



Drawing by Jennifer Harty, HxH Architects

DC's 2016 zoning update made 3 major changes permitting small housing types

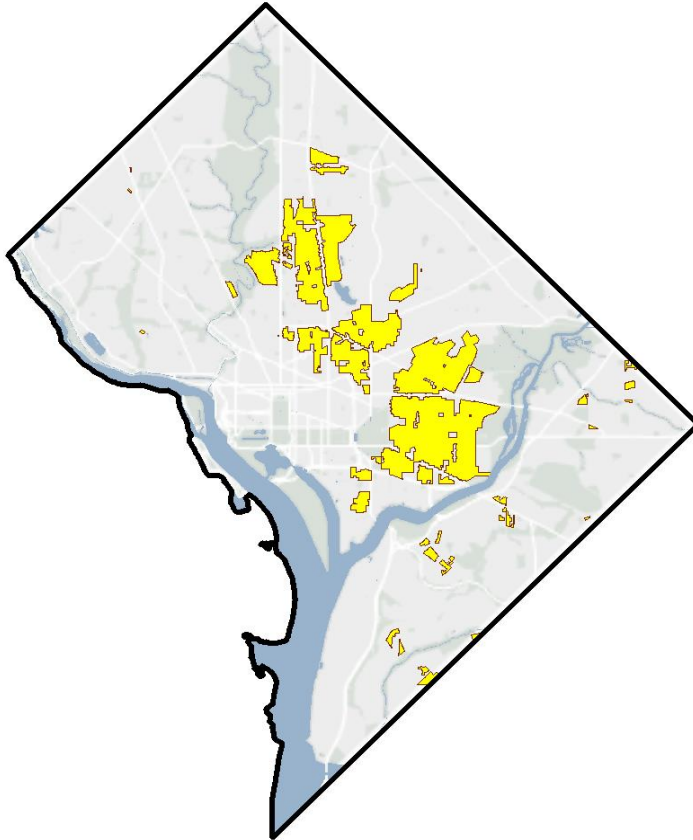
- Single family residential (R) zones permits 1 accessory apartment by-right (owner occupied)
- Rowhouse zones (RF/RA) permit 1 of dwellings in garage/carriage house
- Alley lots can be used for a house



R zones allowing ADUs

Residential Flat (RF)

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- Moderate Density Rowhouse zones (RF) permit typically 2 dwellings;
- 2nd principal dwelling allowed in garage/carriage house (Not an ADU)

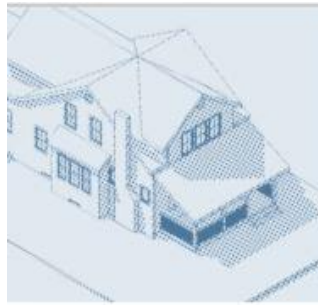
Remove barriers, educate, support

4



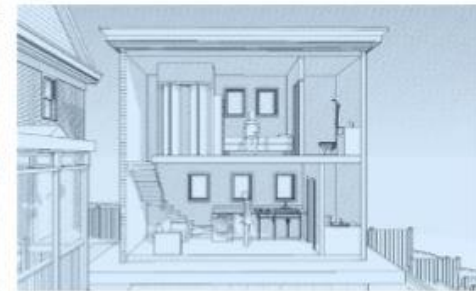
DC homeowner workshop, photo credit: C. Cort

- ❑ Removing barriers in zoning, permitting, financing
- ❑ Educating – events, workshops, 1:1s
- ❑ Online forum & resources: smartergrowth.net/ADU
- ❑ UPO pilot with LMI homeowners
- ❑ UPO DC ADU Manual



DC ADU Manual (December 2020)

Updates:
Winter 2022



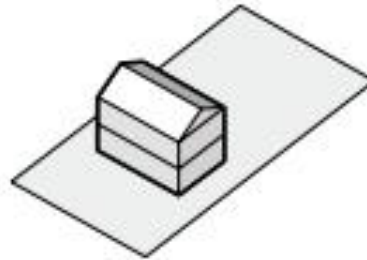
**ADU D.C.
Homeowner's
Manual** | How to Build an
Accessory Apartment or
Second Dwelling in the
District of Columbia

Understanding zoning

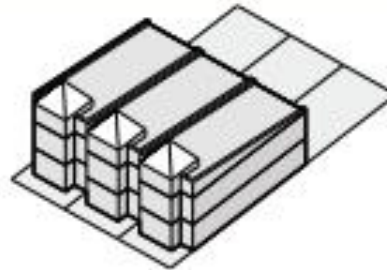
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Figure 1: Residential Zone Districts (DC Office of Zoning, 2016)

R Residential (R) allows an accessory apartment, secondary to the principal single household dwelling unit.



RF Residential Flat (RF) allows two principal dwelling units, one of which can be located within an accessory building.



RA Residential Apartment (RA) allows multiple dwelling units.



How to look up your zoning

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Figure 2: How to Look Up a Property Address on the DC Official Zoning Map

<http://maps.dcoz.dc.gov/zr16>

The screenshot shows the DC Official Zoning Map interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "1234 J St NE" and a search icon. Below the search bar, there are navigation buttons: "BUFFER", "FULL REPORT", and "SET AS HOME". The "FULL REPORT" button is highlighted with a callout box that says "Click here to download zoning report for property".

On the left side, there is a sidebar with the following information:

- Location**
- Suffix, Square, Lot: 5138 0803
- [Tax Record](#)
- Premises Address: 1234 J St NE
- Owner Name: Parker P. Public
- Owner Address: 1234 J St NE
- Washington D.C. 0000000

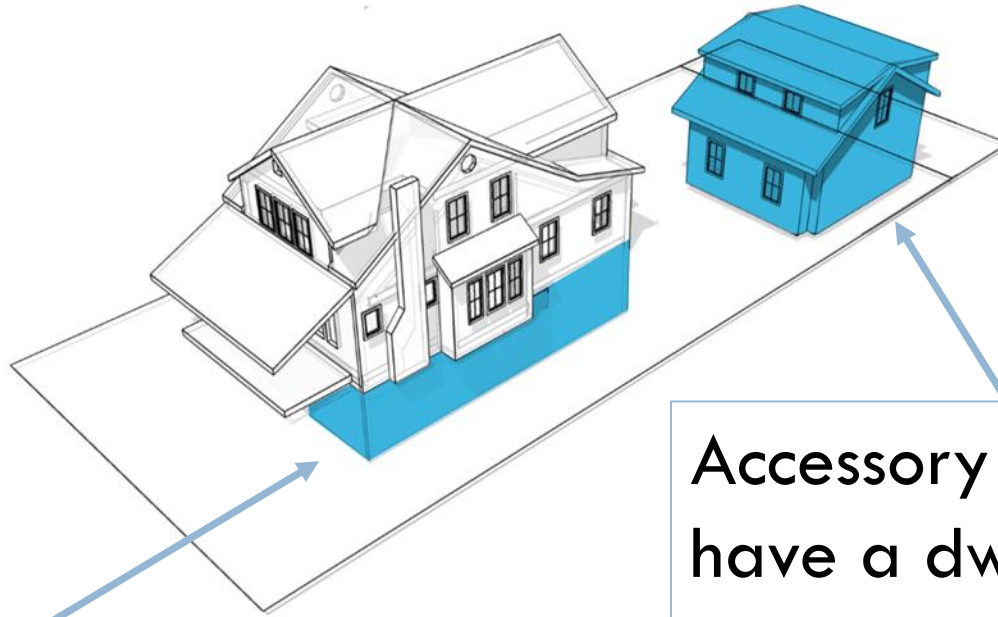
Below this, there is a section for "Zoning / Land Use":

- Zone District: **R-2** (highlighted with a callout box that says "Click on 'R-2' under zone district to see rules for this zone")
- Planned Unit Development: **None**
- Campus Plan: **None**
- Historic Landmark: **None**

On the right side, there is a map showing a street grid. A red location pin is placed on a green-shaded area, which is highlighted with a callout box that says "Look up property using address". The street name "46th Pl" is visible on the right side of the map.

Accessory buildings & accessory apartments

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Basement apartment

R zone = ADU

RF zone = 2nd principal dwelling

Accessory building can have a dwelling

R zone = accessory apartment/ADU

RF zone = 2nd principal dwelling

Table of R Zone Requirements

Table 1: Residential Zone Requirements

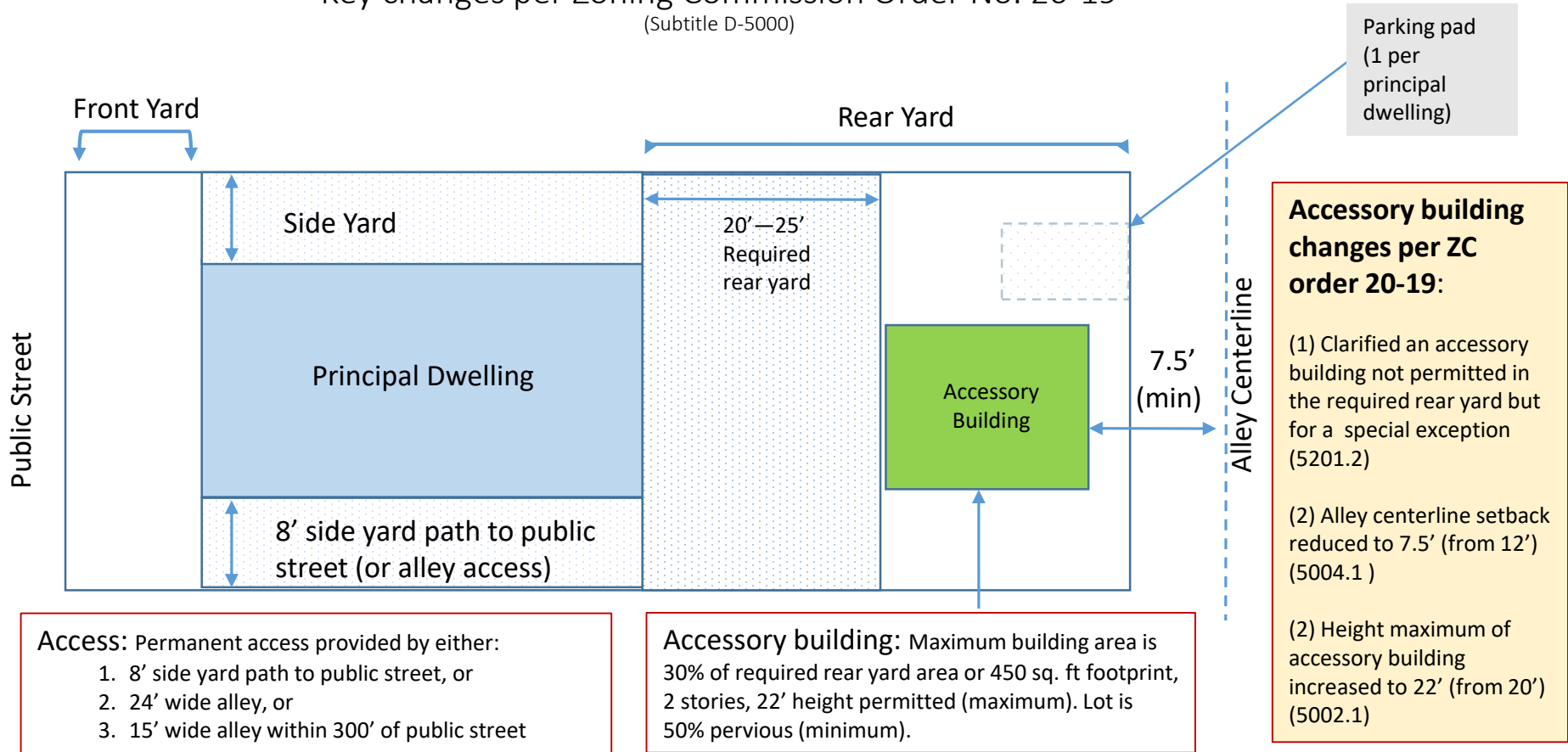
Development Standard	R-1-A	R-1-B	R-2	R-3
Lot Occupancy (max) (D-304)	40%	40%	40%	Detached: 40% Row: 60%
Rear Yard (min) (D-306)	25'	25'	20'	20'
Side Yard (min) (D-206)	8'	8'	8' (1 side of semi-detached)	5' (1 side of semi-detached)
Pervious Surface (min) (D-308)	50%	50%	30%	20%
Number of dwelling units (max) (D-200,U-253)	1 principal dwelling; 1 accessory apartment permitted in principal dwelling or accessory building (one of which must be owner-occupied)			
Height of principal dwelling (max) (D-303)	40' and 3 stories			
Parking (C-701.5)	1 per principal dwelling			
House size for internal accessory apartment (min) (U-253.7(a))	2,000 SF	2,000 SF	1,200 SF	1,200 SF
Accessory apartment size in house (max) (U-253.7(b))	35% of Gross Floor Area (GFA)			
Accessory Building (D-5000)				
Setback in rear yard (min)	12' setback from alley centerline			
Height (max)	2 stories and 20'			
Maximum building area	Greater of 30% of required rear yard or 450 SF			

Source: DC Office of Zoning (2016), Subtitles [D, C and U](#).

R zones - Accessory building regulations

Key changes per Zoning Commission Order No. 20-19

(Subtitle D-5000)



Accessory building changes per ZC order 20-19:

- (1) Clarified an accessory building not permitted in the required rear yard but for a special exception (5201.2)
- (2) Alley centerline setback reduced to 7.5' (from 12') (5004.1)
- (2) Height maximum of accessory building increased to 22' (from 20') (5002.1)

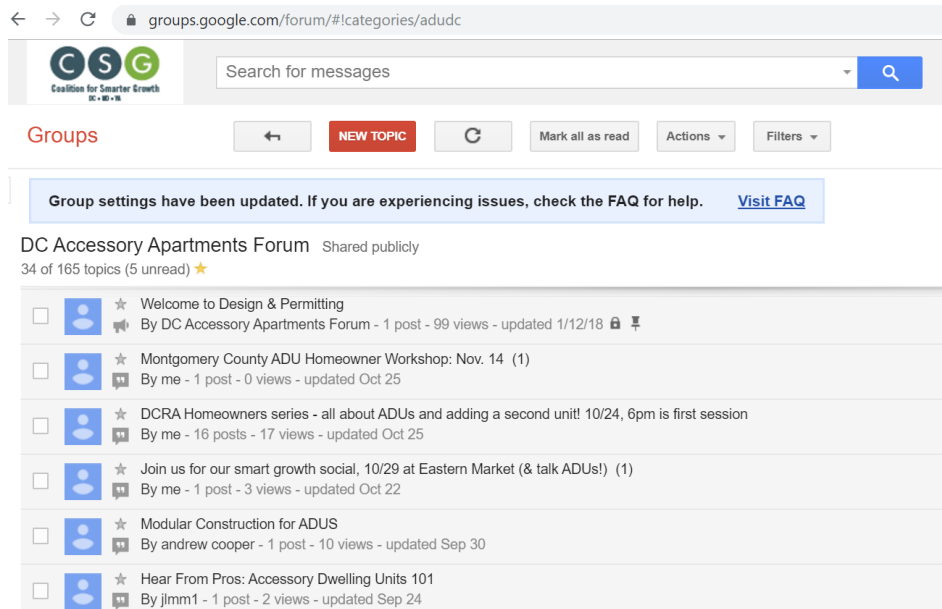
Access: Permanent access provided by either:

1. 8' side yard path to public street, or
2. 24' wide alley, or
3. 15' wide alley within 300' of public street

Accessory building: Maximum building area is 30% of required rear yard area or 450 sq. ft footprint, 2 stories, 22' height permitted (maximum). Lot is 50% pervious (minimum).

Join our online discussion forum

www.smartergrowth.net/ADU



The screenshot shows a Google Groups forum page. The browser address bar displays "groups.google.com/forum/#!categories/adudc". The forum title is "DC Accessory Apartments Forum" and it is marked as "Shared publicly". There are 34 of 165 topics, with 5 unread. The forum contains several topics, including "Welcome to Design & Permitting", "Montgomery County ADU Homeowner Workshop: Nov. 14 (1)", "DCRA Homeowners series - all about ADUs and adding a second unit!", "Join us for our smart growth social, 10/29 at Eastern Market (& talk ADUs!)", "Modular Construction for ADUS", and "Hear From Pros: Accessory Dwelling Units 101".

- Homeowners & professionals share experiences
- Homeowners ask questions
- Professionals answer
- Interviews with professionals & homeowners
- Zoning questions specific to 1 jurisdiction
- Builds off online resource folder (www.smartergrowth.net/ADU)