

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Fact Sheet for Honey Brook Twp



What is an ADU?

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is one or more rooms with a private bath and kitchen facilities (including a cooktop and/or oven) comprising an independent, self-contained dwelling unit within or attached to a single-family dwelling or in a detached building on the same lot as the primary dwelling unit. An ADU is distinguishable from a twin dwelling in that, unlike a twin, it is clearly subordinate to the primary dwelling unit, both in use and appearance.

ADUs may be “attached” or “freestanding”. An attached ADU is attached to or part of an existing dwelling unit and / or attached to or part of an accessory structure. A freestanding ADU is an ADU that is not attached to an existing dwelling unit and/or occupies the entire accessory structure.

An ADU is legal only with an established building permit.

What applications are needed when I submit for an ADU?

A residential building permit is required for construction of a new building for the ADU or for an addition/remodel of an existing structure. An Accessory Dwelling Unit Permit Application must be submitted.

Where can I build an ADU?

ADUs are allowed as permitted uses in only the A-Agricultural and RC – Resource Conservation Zoning Districts on lots over 2 acres that contain an existing permitted residential use if in compliance with all of the development standards contained in the Honey Brook Township Zoning Ordinance Section 27-1002.

What are the required setback and lot coverage requirements for an ADU?

An ADU addition to an existing house or accessory structure or the construction of a new ADU shall not exceed the allowable lot coverage or encroach into required setbacks as prescribed in the underlying zoning district for the primary structure. Any existing non-conforming setbacks shall not be further violated. Except for on permanently preserved properties, freestanding ADUs must be situated such that the existing principal dwelling and the ADU could be subdivided in the future into two lots conforming to all Zoning Ordinance requirements for lot area, setbacks, and impervious coverage for single-family detached dwellings.

What are the size limitations for an ADU?

All ADUs must have a minimum habitable floor area of 400 SF. The habitable floor area of Attached ADUs may not exceed 50% of the total habitable floor area of the principal dwelling.

Freestanding ADUs shall not have a habitable floor area greater than that of the principal dwelling.

Can I convert my existing accessory structure into an ADU?

An existing garage structure or other outbuilding may be converted to an ADU provided all Zoning Ordinance and building code requirements are met. A partial building conversion would be an attached ADU and a complete conversion would result in a freestanding ADU. The structure must comply with lot area and setback standards based upon the type of ADU.

NOTE: This tip sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations. The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether described in this document or not.

How many ADUs can I build on a single lot?

Only one ADU may be created in conjunction with each single family residence. However, for permanently preserved lots, a second freestanding accessory dwelling unit may be permitted by special exception on tracts of 20 acres or more.

Is off-street parking required for an ADU?

Two parking spaces must be provided for the ADU in addition to required spaces for other use(s) on-site.

What are the egress requirements?

All ADUs must meet egress requirements under the building code and contain their own entrance either directly to the outside or to a hallway/breezeway from which there is direct access to the outside. Entrances to attached ADUs shall be to the rear or side of building. Fire escapes/outside stairways, if required, shall be to the side or rear of the ADU.

Can I expand the principal dwelling or accessory structure to add an ADU?

Beyond the ADU area itself, expansions of no more than 20% of the gross floor area of the existing dwelling or accessory structure shall be permitted as part of the ADU establishment as needed for design/layout considerations or modifications to meet building code safety / egress requirements.

Does an ADU need to be visually subordinate to the main dwelling?

When converting or expanding a principal single-family dwelling for an ADU, the ADU shall be attached to the principal dwelling by a common wall(s) which encloses habitable space and gives the appearance of a single dwelling unit from the exterior view.

What are the water supply and sewage disposal requirements?

Approval of the Chester County Health Department shall be required for all on-site water and sewer systems. Approval of the Northwestern Chester County Sewer Authority is required for all properties served by public sewer and the applicable water authority must approval all additional public water connections. Sewage planning approval from PADEP is also required.

Are owners required to live on the property?

No.

How is an ADU different from an ECHO?

An ADU is a permanent additional dwelling unit on a property. An ECHO (elder cottage housing opportunity) is a temporary dwelling unit placed on a property, and accessory to an existing single-family residential dwelling, for temporary occupancy by an elderly, handicapped, or disabled individual (or caregiver to same) related to the occupants of the principal dwelling by blood, marriage, or adoption. ECHOs require a special exception approval from the Township in the NR/MUR zoning districts and are permitted by right in the A/RC zoning districts and an agreement / security for its removal upon cessation of need.

Should I hire a professional to design my ADU?

Although not required, we recommend that you hire a professional to assist in the design process.

How can I obtain additional information on ADUs?

For the complete listing of requirements for accessory dwelling units please refer to the Honey Brook Township Zoning Ordinance, including the definitions (Section 27-202) and Accessory Dwelling Units Section 27-1002. If you have additional questions, please contact Honey Brook Township at 610-273-3970.

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