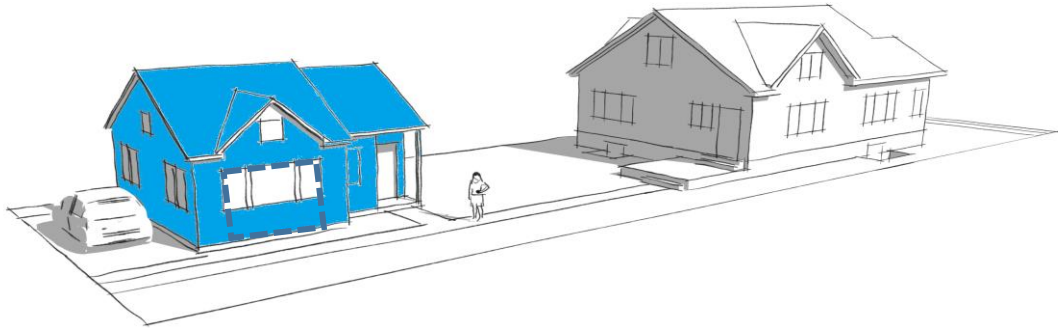




LEGALIZING A DETACHED GARAGE, BARN OR STORAGE STRUCTURE CONVERTED INTO AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT.



This category of ADUs includes converted detached garages, barns, storage sheds or other structures not attached to the primary residence. Legalizing such an ADU often presents challenges and may involve substantial work, depending on the quality of the existing construction. If codes were followed during construction, legalization can be achieved more easily. However, most accessory structures, such as barns or sheds, were not originally intended as living units, and were not built to the standards required for habitable space. In such cases, making the changes for a legal ADU could be more complex and costly. The building code allows for meeting the intent rather than the letter of the law. In order to minimize alterations required to existing construction, County staff will consider reasonable alternatives that meet the intent of code requirements.

The property owner will be required to provide accurate plans. Often, these may be drawn by an unlicensed designer. Sometimes, however, plans from an engineer or architect are required. Planning staff will use the site plan to verify the ADU's location in relation to property lines. Unpermitted detached structures may violate zoning setback requirements, and if so will require a variance permit to be legalized. Building staff will review plans to verify that code requirements for safe, sanitary housing are met, and will identify if any improvements are necessary.

After a building permit is issued, a County inspector will inspect the unit to verify proper construction. Some of the items to be inspected include the framing and foundation, the plumbing, mechanical, and electrical systems, moisture control, heating, sanitation, and cooking facilities. Staff will also need to verify safety measures in case of fire, including an appropriate exit door and path, windows, and smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Inspecting completed construction work is typically more difficult than inspection while construction is underway, and may require opening up finished areas to confirm code compliance. Staff will attempt to minimize such disruptions during the inspection process.