
File ID: 2024-01195

6/26/2024

Discussion Item 2.

Draft Objective Standards for Accessory Dwelling Units Involving Historic Properties (M24-002)

File ID: 2024-01195

Location: Citywide

Recommendation: Review and comment.

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Attachments:

1-Description/Analysis

2-Background

3-Draft Objective Design Standards for Accessory Dwelling Units Involving Historic Properties

Description/Analysis

Issue/Detail: Staff is seeking Preservation Commission comments on a draft set of objective design standards for accessory dwelling units proposed on parcels with historic properties (**Attachment 3**). Various state laws and City Code section 17.228.105 require that accessory dwelling units comply with certain objective design standards. The City currently has a set of objective standards it utilizes when reviewing accessory dwelling units; however, it has become clear that these standards could be refined when it comes to their application to historic properties. Accordingly, staff will be drafting a set of objective standards to utilize when evaluating accessory dwelling units that are proposed in the City's historic districts or on the site of a historic landmark. These standards are intended to ensure infill development involving the City's designated historic properties meets the quality of design we expect of any infill development involving a historic property. Staff is requesting the Commission's input on any thoughts it may have as staff embarks on this process. Once drafted, staff will bring the standards to the Commission for input and refinement. An overview of the project is set forth in Attachment 2 (Background).

Policy Considerations: Below are some of the 2040 General Plan policies that support

development of the proposed objective design standards for accessory dwelling units:

LUP-6.3 Variety of Housing Types. The City shall promote the development of a greater variety of housing types and sizes in all existing and new growth communities to meet the needs of future demographics and changing household sizes, including the following:

- Single-unit homes on small lots,
- Accessory dwelling units,
- Tiny homes,
- Alley-facing units,
- Townhomes,
- Lofts,
- Live-work spaces,
- Duplexes,
- Triplexes,
- Fourplexes,
- Cottage/bungalow courts,
- Neighborhood-scale multi-unit buildings,
- and
- Senior and student housing.

LUP-6.4 Neighborhood Form. The City shall recognize the patterns in existing neighborhoods by developing defined transitions between these neighborhoods and adjoining areas, and by requiring that new development, both private and public, consider the existing physical characteristics of buildings, streetscapes, open spaces, and urban form of the neighborhood in its design. Designs may be traditional or contemporary but should contribute to the livability of the neighborhood.

LUP-8.10 Responsiveness to Context. The City shall require building and site design that respects and responds to the local context, including use of local materials and plant species where feasible, responsiveness to Sacramento's climate, and consideration of cultural and historic context of Sacramento's neighborhoods, corridors, and centers.

LUP-A.12: Design Guidelines Update. The City shall review its development design guidelines and standards for consistency with the 2040 General Plan goals, policies, and standards.

HCR-1.3 Compatibility with Historic Context. The City will continue to review new development, alterations, and rehabilitation/remodels for compatibility with the surrounding historic context and consistency with design guidelines/standards, including the Historic District Plans. The City shall pay special attention to the scale, massing, and relationship of proposed new development to complement surrounding historic environments.

Economic Impacts: Not Applicable.

Environmental Considerations:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): The request for review and comment framework for the development of objective design standards for accessory dwelling units involving historic districts or landmark properties consists of an administrative activity, such as general policy making, and is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(2).

Sustainability: Not Applicable.

Commission/Committee Action: The Preservation Commission reviewed the concept for this project on March 20, 2024.

Rationale for Recommendation: Various changes to state law have necessitated the use of objective standards when reviewing proposals for accessory dwelling units. The City of Sacramento preservation staff currently utilizes objective standards; however, it has become clear that these standards could use refinement when it comes to ADUs proposed for historic properties.

Financial Considerations: Not Applicable.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): Not applicable.

Background Information

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a versatile living space that can be added to a primary dwelling unit and is a key housing type that can help resolve the current housing crisis facing California. The three types of ADUs are attached, detached, and interior. Attached ADUs can be built as an addition on the side or rear of the primary residence or on top of an attached garage. Detached ADUs are separate from the primary residence but still within the property and can be built on top of a detached garage. Interior ADUs, or junior ADUs (JADU), are created by converting existing space in the primary residence, such as the attic, basement, or garage with no exterior changes.

City preservation staff intends to develop a limited set of objective design standards to ensure ADUs within historic district or on the site of a landmark property are designed to complement the historic features and characteristics of the surrounding design context. If a project does not comply with the limited objective standards, the City has a subjective application process known as Site Plan and Design Review that an applicant can pursue.

The objective standards developed as part of this project will help ensure that the ADUs contribute positively to the aesthetic makeup of the historic districts and landmark properties. This project is about creating new city regulations to foster a sustainable, inclusive, and harmonious urban environment in Sacramento while accommodating increased density in the form of ADUs within existing historic environments.

As a dynamic urban center, Sacramento faces the complex challenge of balancing growth with historic preservation. The housing crisis in the city is not just a numerical challenge; it's a spatial and cultural challenge. As Sacramento expands, the pressure on housing stock intensifies, and the risk of compromising the architectural integrity of historical districts becomes more pronounced. The need for this project arises from recognizing that the existing regulatory framework must provide more nuanced guidelines for ADU construction within historical contexts.

Upon completion of the project, Sacramento will have a new framework that can adapt to California's rapidly changing regulatory environment for ADUs and historic preservation. While the current City historic preservation review process, Site Plan and Design Review, is a discretionary review process, various state laws and the City's accessory dwelling unit ordinance (City Code section 17.228.105), requires that accessory dwelling units being reviewed under objective standards. This project will directly help streamline the process of construction of new housing in Sacramento.

The rich history of Sacramento is what sets it apart from other cities, and to ensure that it remains intact, we need to have objective standards in place for historic preservation. With such standards, we can confidently protect and maintain our city's unique heritage for generations to come.

Project Overview:

The completion of this project would develop Objective Standards for ADUs within Historic Districts and on landmark parcels. The project would take a four-tiered approach, which would include the following:

- Research:
 - Review all recent changes in laws affecting construction of ADUs within historic districts.
 - Research other California Cities' preservation standards and practices. Finding common ground in connection with Sacramento's goals.
 - Detailed analyses of building plans, photographs, and historical documents will form the basis for identifying critical architectural elements, styles, and materials from different eras.
 - US Secretary of Interior Standards and Guidelines for the treatment of historic properties and districts. Sacramento Historic District Plan
 - Focused on current guidelines.
 - Background and relevant information to apply the need for preservation
 - Inventory of current ADUs built within historic districts.
 - Projects completed/permitted/expired/in review process.
 - Online survey for applicants who requested ADU preempts.
 - Field Survey of completed ADU projects.
 - Coordination with various Community Development Departments
 - Compare & contrast ADUs outside of historic districts.
 - Sacramento's ADU handbook
- Public Outreach and Feedback:
 - Multiple open meetings with local advocacy and neighborhood
 - Review by the Preservation Commission
 - Preservation Sacramento
 - Friends of Capital Mansions
 - SACMOD
 - Neighborhood Associations with historic districts within their boundaries
 - House Sacramento

- Midtown Association
 - Sacramento Downtown Partnership
 - Review by design and development community
 - Historic Consultants
 - Architects and other design professionals
 - Contractors
- Commission/Committee Review:
 - Multiple reviews by the Preservation Commission
 - Review by the Planning and Design Commission
 - Review by the Law and Legislation Committee of the City Council
 - Final adoption by City Council
- Final Approvals: Staff will ultimately ask the Preservation Commission to make a recommendation to City Council who would be asked to adopt the final set of design standards for use as part of our ministerial review of ADUs.



ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT HISTORIC STANDARDS

Draft: May 23, 2024

Accessory Dwelling Unit Standards & Criteria

The objective standards included on the following pages are intended to provide clear design guidelines for the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) within Sacramento's historic districts and on historic landmark parcels. The objective standards are drafted to support increased density while ensuring compatibility with surrounding historic resources. The following objective standards are intended to supplement existing objective design standards.



Design Principle

Maintaining and improving the design aesthetic of Sacramento's historic districts and landmarks while also allowing for new infill development. Construction of new detached ADUs shall be compatible with existing historical resources to preserve the character of historic properties while increasing density or accommodating the property owner's needs.

New ADU construction shall be carefully and thoughtfully designed to demonstrate an understanding of the property's historic context, architectural styles and features, and pattern of spatial arrangements. Inspiration shall be drawn from the defining features of the primary dwelling and/or closest contributing resource whenever possible.



Rationale for Objective Design Standards for ADUs within Historic Districts and Landmarks:

Sacramento's historic districts and landmarks serve as instrumental features of Sacramento's architectural heritage, capturing design aesthetics across different periods. As these properties face the pressing demand for housing solutions, it becomes imperative to balance preserving their unique character and accommodating contemporary needs. The objective design standards for ADUs for historic properties aim to achieve this delicate balance. By preserving the historic nature, these standards ensure that new constructions blend in with the existing architecture, safeguarding the historical character of Sacramento.



Standards for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) Development Involving Historic Properties

1.0 Location. Adequate spacing facilitates adaptive reuse of existing structures while minimizing adverse impacts on historic resources. Following these standards allows ADUs to complement the neighborhood context and contribute to the historic district's overall cohesion. Here are the details for ADU placement.

- 1.1: When the ADU does not front an alley there must be a minimum of 15 feet between the detached ADU and the nearest contributing resource on the same parcel.
- 1.2: When the ADU fronts an alley there must be a minimum of 30 feet between the detached ADU and the nearest contributing resources on the same parcel detached.

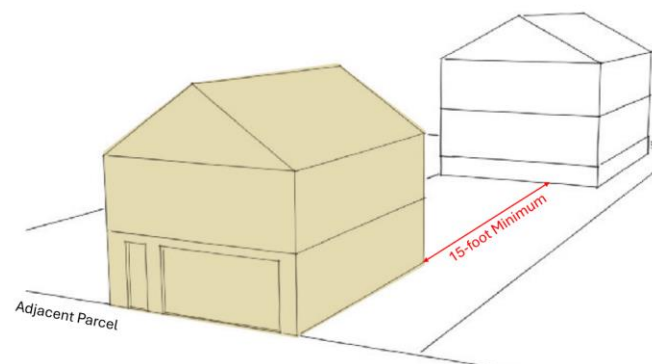


FIGURE 1: MINIMUM OF 15 FEET BETWEEN THE ADU AND CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE ON THE SAME PARCEL IF THE ADU ABUTS AN ADJACENT PARCEL

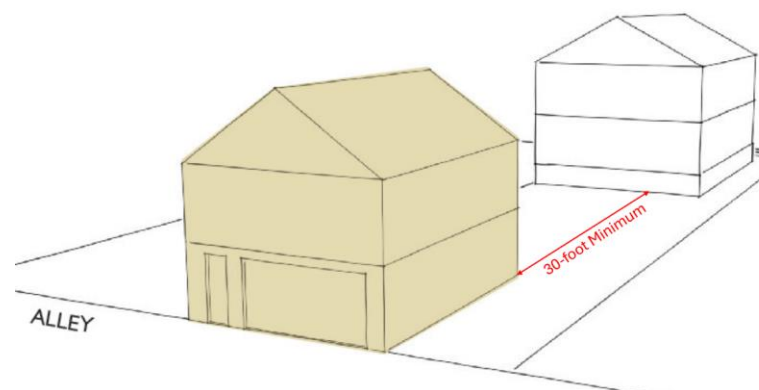


FIGURE 2: MINIMUM OF 30 FEET BETWEEN THE ADU AND CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE ON THE SAME PARCEL IF ADU FRONTS AN ALLEY

2.0 Size and Height Limits. These standards aim to facilitate the responsible integration of ADUs while safeguarding the integrity and character of historic properties by prioritizing compatibility, proportionality, and contextual sensitivity. ADUs shall comply with the size and height standards set forth and the following to avoid an adverse impact on the historic property.

2.1 ADUs are to be no taller than 150% of any adjacent contributing resource or landmark on the same parcel or any adjacent parcel within a historic district, measured from the lowest plate height of the contributing resource or landmark.

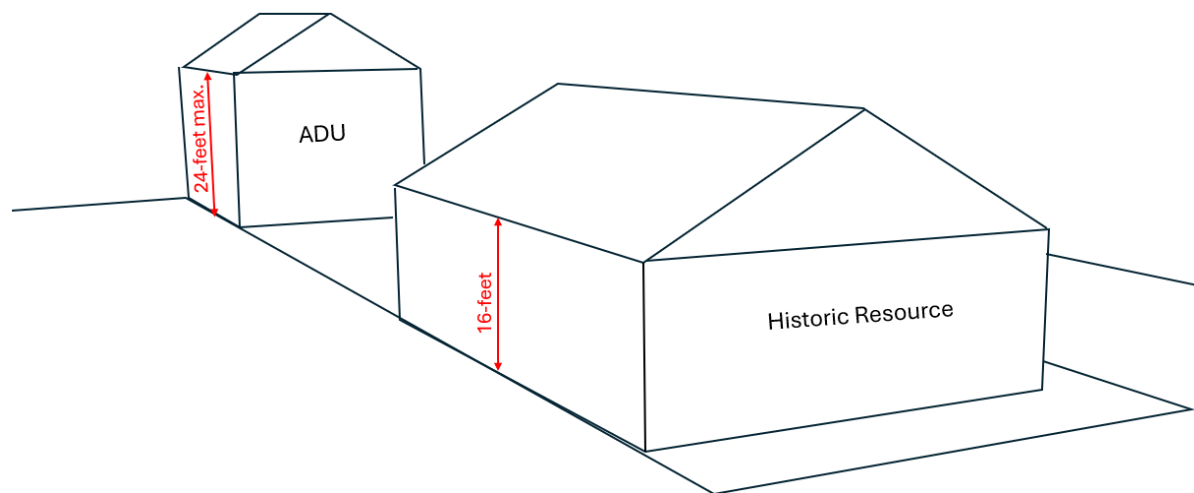


FIGURE 1: ADU MAY BE A MAXIMUM OF 150% OF THE HEIGHT OF THE HISTORIC BUILDING ON THE SAME PARCEL

3.0 Required Design Elements for New ADU Construction.

- 3.1 A minimum 1:12 slope requirement for pitched roofs.
- 3.2 Flat roofs of any kind are prohibited.
- 3.3 Wall cladding must be horizontal lap, board-and-batten, or shingle cladding.
- 3.4 New trim must have a smooth finish with no raised grain greater than 1/16 of an inch.
- 3.5 Stucco cladding is prohibited.
- 3.6 Doors must have a raised panel. Flat panel doors are prohibited.
- 3.7 Windows must be single or double-hung, hopper, or awning style.
- 3.8 Windows must not have any exposed vinyl material.
- 3.9 Windows must not have internal grids.
- 3.10 Windowsills and trim are required on all windows.

- 4.0 Other Design Elements:** Avoid introducing new architectural elements or details where they did not exist historically. It is discouraged to add new features or stylistic elements based on conjecture or that represent a different time period or architectural style than the existing property.
- 4.1 **Mechanical Equipment Placement:** All mechanical equipment must be located at ground level, or to the rear or side of the property, and must be screened from public view by landscaping or solid fencing to maintain the visual integrity of the property and surrounding area.
- 4.2 **Solar Panel Configuration:** In cases where solar panels must be installed on the roof, panels must be configured parallel to the roof plane with no overhang of the roof eave, and no alteration of the existing roof lines to ensure seamless integration with the building's design.
- 4.3 Heating and cooling air handlers shall be installed within the building envelope.
- 4.4 Ground-mounted condensers and heat pumps shall be ground-mounted.
- 4.5 Wall- or roof-mounted condensers shall be considered as a last resort and must be located so as not to be visible from the street or neighboring properties.
- 4.6 **Visibility of HVAC Equipment:** Window and roof-mounted HVAC equipment visible from the public right-of-way are prohibited.
- 4.7 Ogee Gutters are required if the ADU is located within the Central City.
- 4.8 There must not be exposed piping or conduit.
- 4.9 There must not be tuck-under parking.
- 4.10 No part of the ADU may overhang to create covered parking.
- 4.11 No new uncovered parking along an alley is allowed.
- 4.12 All exterior doors are required to have light fixtures above or adjacent to the door that does not spill light on to adjacent private properties.