

DIRECTOR'S INTERPRETATION: ADU ENTRANCES

REQUEST SUMMARY

Can an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) be constructed without an exterior entrance and only be accessible through the living space of the primary residence?

INTERPRETATION

Each residence in the City of Sammamish shall have sole use by its occupants and shall have its own kitchen and sleeping spaces. This sole use includes dedicated and separate access to the residence. As such, an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) shall each have separate external entrance from the primary residence.

David Pyle

David Pyle, Director of Community Development

CONTEXT, FACTS, AND FINDINGS

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) within the category of Middle Housing. As such, ADUs are intended to contribute to the diversity of housing options, both in physical form and affordability.

An ADU has all the basic facilities needed for day-to-day living independent of the main home, including a kitchen, sleeping area, and a bathroom. ADUs may be created as a separate units within an existing home (such as in an attic or basement), an addition to the home (such as a separate apartment unit with separate entrance), or in a separate structure on the lot (such as a converted garage).

The Sammamish Municipal Code ([SMC 21.04.040.B](#)) specifically defines an ADU as:

An attached, detached, or stacked dwelling unit located on the same lot as a single-family or multifamily dwelling unit.

The main residence is referred to as the primary dwelling unit. Dwelling units are defined as:

One or more rooms designed for occupancy by a person or persons for living and sleeping purposes, containing kitchen facilities and rooms with internal accessibility, for use solely by the dwelling's occupants.

In order for the residents of the primary dwelling unit to have **sole use** of their home, the ADU must have its own external entrance. However, there are no restrictions on gratuitous internal connections between units.

Related Code References

[SMC 21.05.010.C ADU standards](#)

[SMC 21.04.040.B. Definitions](#)

[RCW 36.70A.696 Definitions](#)

[RCW 36.70A.681 ADU Limitations](#)

[Redmond 21.78.100](#)

[Issaquah 18.102.050](#)

[Kirkland 5.10.017](#)

[Woodinville 21.11B.050](#)

Resources

[King County iMap](#)

[Sammamish Property Tool](#)

[ADU information webpage](#)

Questions?

[Submit Project Guidance](#)

City of Sammamish
801 228th Ave SE
Sammamish, WA 98075
www.sammamish.us

ADU ENTRANCES

SIMILAR REGULATIONS IN NEARBY JURISDICTIONS

City of Redmond [RZC 21.78.100](#)

Accessory Dwelling Unit. An accessory dwelling unit (hereinafter referred to as "ADU") is accessory to a primary single-family dwelling unit and located on the same lot. An ADU may be added to, created within, or detached from the primary single-family dwelling unit for use as a complete independent dwelling unit.

City of Issaquah [LUC 18.102.050](#)

"Accessory dwelling unit" or "ADU" means a subordinate dwelling unit added to, created within, or detached from a single-family structure with a separate entrance, that provides basic requirements for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation. A single-family structure with an accessory dwelling unit is not considered to be a duplex or a middle housing building type.

City of Kirkland [KZC 5.10.017](#)

Accessory Dwelling Unit. A subordinate residence added to, created within, or detached from a single-family structure, that provides basic requirements for living and sanitation that are independent from the primary dwelling unit.

City of Woodinville [WMC 21.11B.050](#)

"Dwelling unit, accessory" means a separate dwelling unit attached internally or by addition or detached to a single detached dwelling unit designed for independent living and satisfying the dimensional and design requirements for an accessory dwelling unit.