



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in San Diego

A Brief History of ADU's

The history of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in San Diego County and its incorporated cities, is a tapestry of evolving regulations and attitudes influenced by state mandates, local housing demands, and socio-economic factors. Here's a concise overview:

Historically, ADUs or equivalent structures like granny flats, in-law suites, or backyard cottages were part of the San Diego County housing landscape, especially in older communities, serving to house extended families, workers, or boarders.



20th Century Zoning Changes: As was the case in much of the U.S., the rise of suburban development in the mid-20th century led to zoning codes in many San Diego County cities that prioritized single-family homes and often restricted the construction or use of ADUs.

State Mandates in the 21st Century: In response to California's housing crisis, the state, from the mid-to-late 2010s onwards, passed a series of laws (e.g., SB 1069, AB 2299) aiming to ease ADU construction by reducing regulatory barriers and streamlining approval processes.

Response of San Diego County & Its Cities: San Diego County (Unincorporated Areas): The county revised its regulations to align with state directives. This included simplifying the ADU permitting process for unincorporated areas and reducing or even waiving certain fees. City of San Diego: As the largest city in the region, the City of San Diego played a significant role in the ADU conversation. The city adjusted its ordinances to better comply with state laws, offering further incentives such as fee reductions and expedited permitting. Other Cities in the County: Many of the incorporated cities within San Diego County (like Chula Vista, Oceanside, Escondido, and others) also saw updates to their ADU regulations, with most aligning closely with state mandates. Each city, based on its unique housing demands and challenges, adopted policies to either incentivize or streamline the ADU construction process.

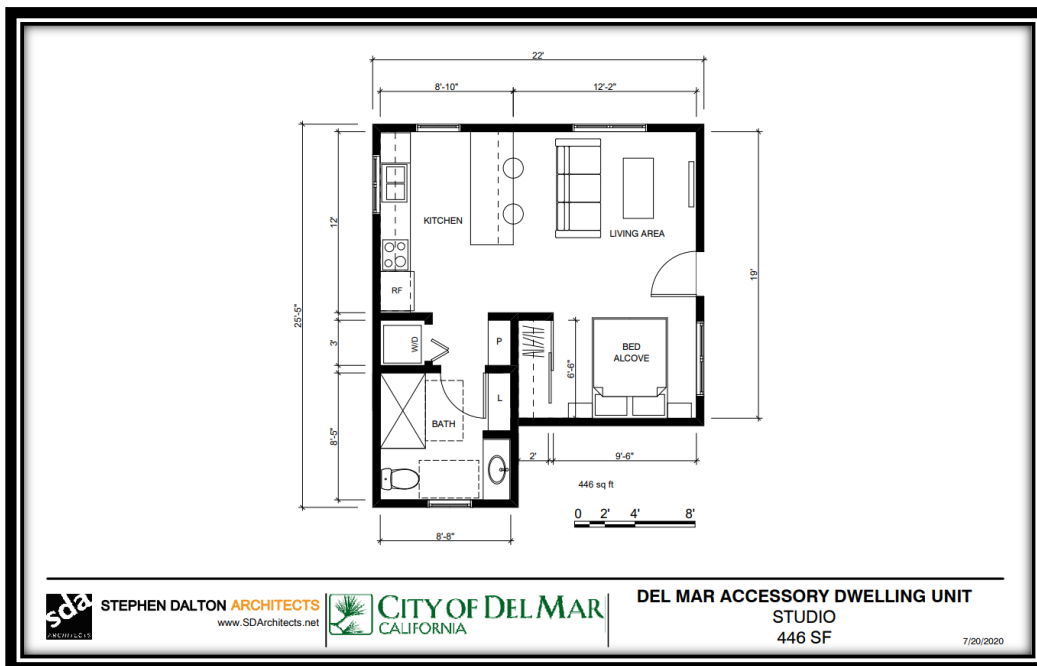
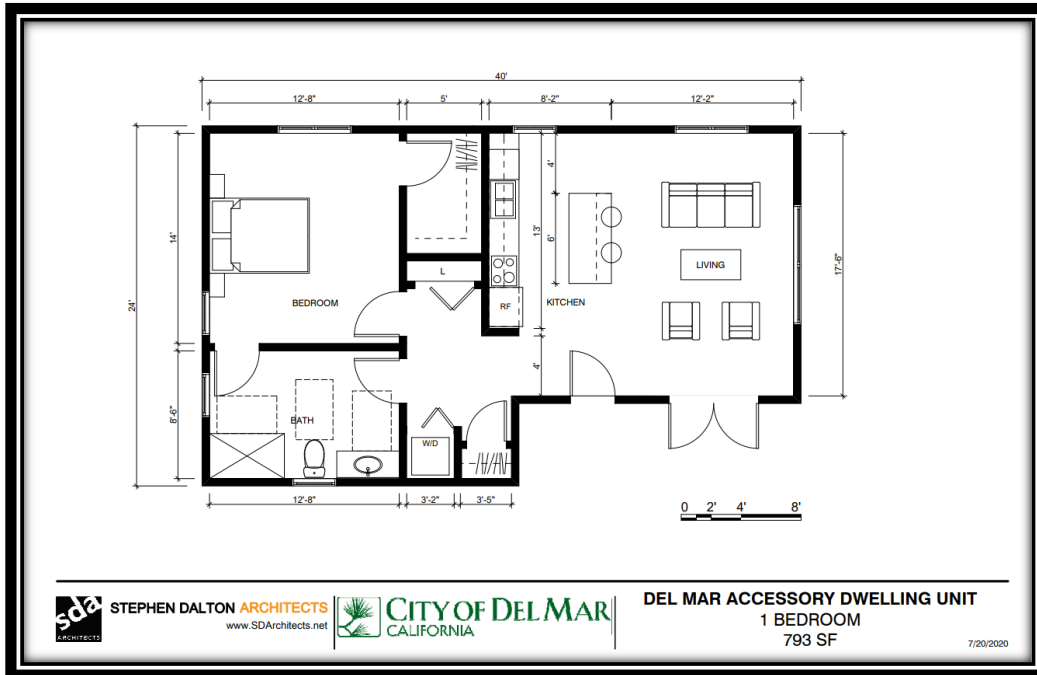
Current Landscape: With these regulatory changes and the growing need for affordable housing solutions, there's been a surge in ADU interest and development throughout San Diego County, from its urban core to its more suburban and rural areas. In addition to being seen as an effective means to address the housing shortage, ADUs in the county's cities and unincorporated areas have been recognized for their versatility: serving as rental income sources, housing for family members, or affordable rentals.

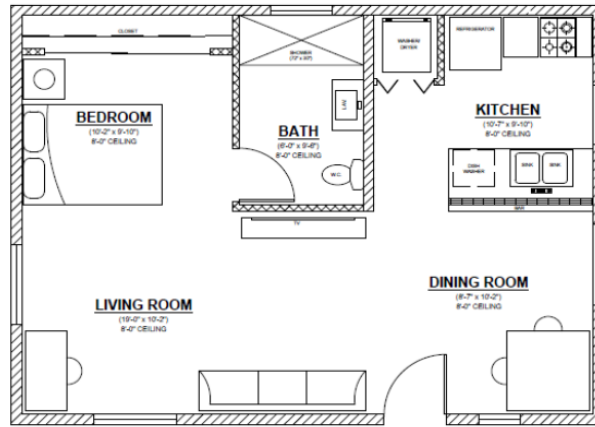
ADUs in San Diego County and its cities have traversed a journey from being integral housing elements to being sidelined by mid-20th century zoning preferences, only to now reemerge as a crucial component in the region's strategy to address its contemporary housing needs.



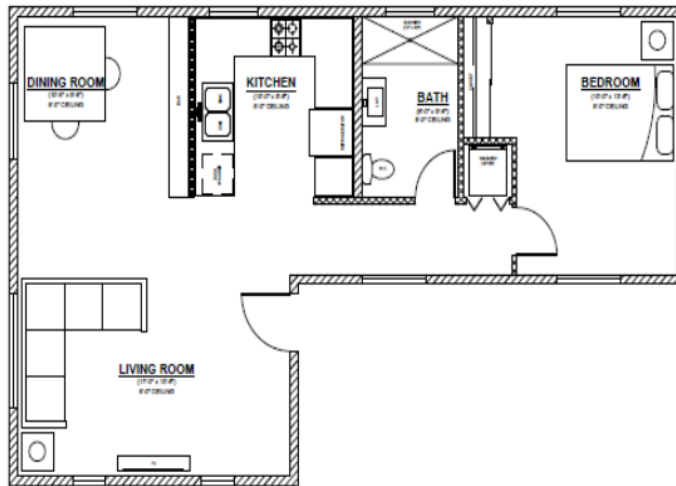
Example Floor Plans

The floor plans below are examples of ADU layouts and account for aging in place. Layouts can be customized based on location, purpose, size, aesthetic preferences, and other considerations, so do not feel bound to using a pre-designed floor plan. However, your community may have pre-approved plans that will help streamline the permitting of your ADU and the overall development process.

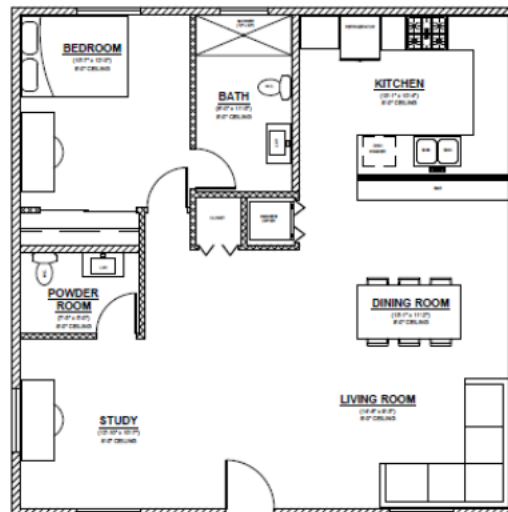




600 SQFT - 1 BEDROOM, 1 BATH



800 SQFT - 1 BEDROOM, 1 BATH



1000 SQFT - 1 BEDROOM, 1.5 BATH

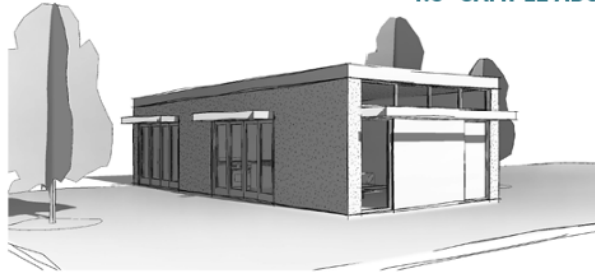
Note: These are pre-approved plans from the County of San Diego



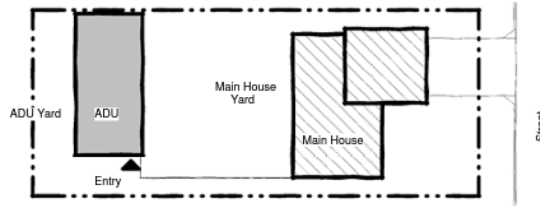
4.5 SAMPLE ADU FLOOR PLANS



Floor Plan
684 SF



3D View



Site Plan

Sample Floor Plan A	
ADU Type:	Detached ADU
# of Stories:	One Story
Unit Size:	684 SF
Bedrooms:	1 Bedroom
Bathrooms:	1 Bathroom

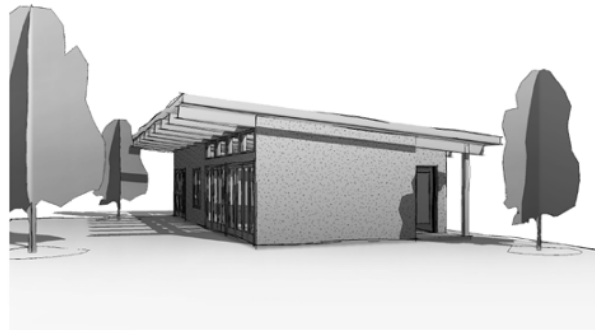
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4.5.1 SAMPLE ONE STORY DETACHED ADU (1 BD / 1 BA)

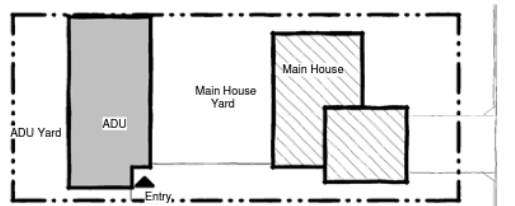


Sample Floor Plan C

ADU Type:	Detached ADU
# of Stories:	One Story
Unit Size:	1,012 SF
Bedrooms:	2 Bedrooms
Bathrooms:	1.75 Bathrooms



3D View



Site Plan

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4.5.3 SAMPLE ONE STORY DETACHED ADU (2 BD / 1.75 BA)

Note: These are example floor plans from La Mesa's ADU Guidebook



Types of ADUs



DETACHED



ATTACHED



INTERIOR (UPPER LEVEL)



INTERIOR (LOWER LEVEL)



ABOVE GARAGE



GARAGE CONVERSION

▲ Accessory dwelling units (or ADUs) come in many shapes and styles.



Detached ADU



Junior ADU (JADU)

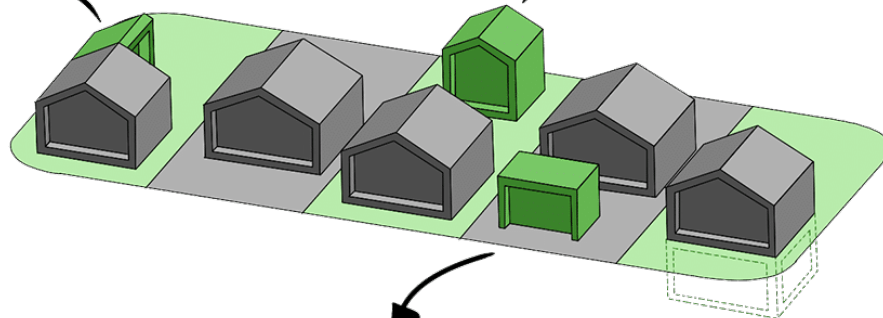


Attached ADU



ATTACHED
ADU

DETACHED
ADU



CONVERTED
GARAGE

BASEMENT
CONVERSION



Inspirational ADU Images



What features do you like?

What would you change?

What aspects of an ADU are most important to you?

How will this space be used?

What will the interior and exterior look like?