

Accessory Dwelling Units In Montgomery County

Eric Saul, Owner

SAUL  ARCHITECTS

About Me

- Residential Architect in Takoma Park, MD
- Designed many ADUs in DC
- Tried to build an ADU for myself, but Montgomery County laws prevented it
- Advised MoCo officials to help change our ADU laws
- Designed the first detached ADU in Montgomery County after the bill passed
- Designed the first “Tiny Home” in MoCo (footprint under 400 sf)

SAUL  ARCHITECTS

What is an ADU?

- “Accessory Dwelling Unit”
- A secondary, and smaller housing unit on the same lot as a single-family home
- Must have a kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping space

Types of ADUs:

1. Attached

(Basement Apartment, Addition)

Legal for decades in MoCo, but many restrictions

1. Detached

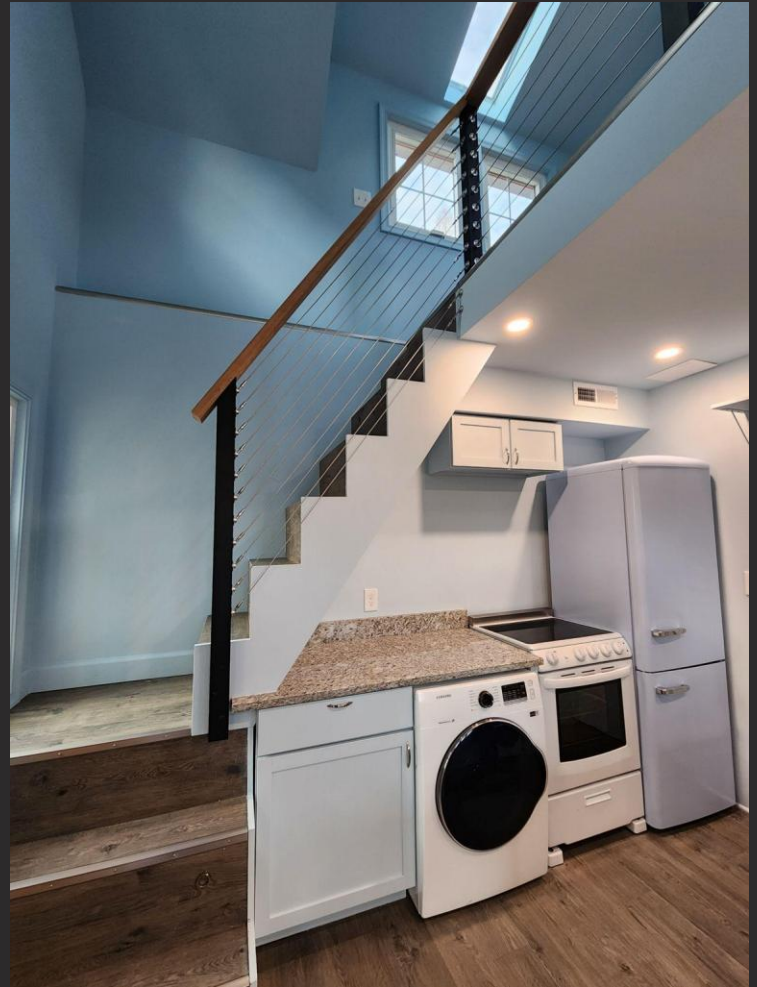
(Backyard Unit, Garage Conversion)

Legal in MoCo since January 1st, 2020













Why Build an ADU?

- Rental Income
- Housing for Family Members
- Multigenerational Living/Aging in Place
- More Affordable Options in High-cost Areas
- Provide More Housing w/o Drastic Change to Neighborhoods

Who Can Build an ADU?

- Intended for Single-Family Detached Lots
- Owner Occupancy Requirement
(Homeowner can live in either the main house or ADU - prevents absentee investor properties)

Permitting Process

- Zoning Review
- Building Permit
- DHCA License (even if not used as rental)
- Construction Inspection
- Fire Sprinkler Inspection

What Does an ADU Cost to Build?

- Basement Apartments = \$75-150k
- Detached ADUs = \$200-300k
- Sitework = \$5-25k
- Design/Engineering Fees = \$10-20k
- Permit Fees = \$2-3k
- Rental Licensing Fees = \$150/yr

Montgomery County ADU Regulations

Detached ADUs must be the smaller of:

1. 50% of the Main House Footprint
2. Max. 10% of Lot Size
3. Max. 1,200 square feet

Montgomery County ADU Regulations

1. Must be located in the rear yard only
2. Height limit of 20 ft. (15' midpoint of roof)
3. Rear setback of 12'
4. Side setback of main house (typically 8 feet)
5. Increased setbacks for ADUs longer than 24' in length, or taller than 15' to roof midpoint

Montgomery County ADU Regulations

Attached ADUs

1. Max 1,200 square feet
2. Unlimited size if converting existing basement
3. Separate entrance from outside
4. Fire rated wall where connected to main house
5. Separate HVAC

Issues with MoCo ADU Regulations

1. ADU setbacks differ from accessory structures (garages, sheds, guest houses, etc.)

Accessory Structure = 5' from rear or side setback

ADUs = 12' rear setback, side setback to match main house (typically 8')

Issues with MoCo ADU Regulations

2. Parking requirements

Accessory Structure = 1 additional parking space

Main House = 2 parking spaces

Must build a driveway with capacity for 3 cars!!

(Requirement waived within 1 mile of Metro station)

Issues with MoCo ADU Regulations

3. High Construction Costs

- Fire Sprinklers - required for detached but not attached ADUs, even if main house doesn't require sprinklers
- Energy Code
- Can't be a mobile home

Issues with MoCo ADU Regulations

4. Drainage/Stormwater Management

- ADUs always require drainage even though equivalently-sized accessory structure does not

Questions?

Eric Saul, Owner
Saul Architects

eric@saularchitects.com
www.saularchitects.com

