

Title 17 Amendments

Updates for Guest Houses/ADUs

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KitsapCounty
Community Development

Background

- Title 17 currently distinguishes among accessory structures, guest houses, and accessory dwelling units as separate uses
- ICC building codes do not define guest house
- In June 2025, a Director's Interpretation(D.I.) was issued to clarify the difference between an ADU and a guest house
- Implementation of the D.I. . has demonstrated that maintaining a separate guest house classification creates unnecessary complexity
- Similar accessory structures may be classified differently depending on whether an applicant identifies the space as an art studio, home office, guest house, or other accessory use, despite having substantially similar physical characteristics.
- Proposed amendments would eliminate guest house as a separate categorical use to simplify administration and better align with KPHD regulations

GUEST HOUSES IN CURRENT CODE

17.110.317 Guest house. "Guest house" means living quarters in an accessory building for the use of the occupant, persons employed on the premises, or for temporary use by guests of the occupant. Such quarters have no kitchen facilities and are not otherwise used as a separate dwelling unit.



GUEST HOUSES IN CURRENT CODE

- Not to exceed 900 square feet.
- Shall not include any kitchen plumbing, appliances or provisions for cooking;
- Shall not include more than 1 bathroom or 2 habitable rooms;
- Shall not be rented separately from the primary residence;
- Only 1 guest house is allowed per parcel;
- No guest house is allowed on a parcel with an existing detached ADU;
- Guest houses must be within 150 feet of the primary residence;
- Guest houses must use the same street entrance as the primary structure;
- Guest houses must meet all applicable health district standards for water provision and sewage disposal; and
- The property owner must record a notice to title outlining these conditions.



PROPOSED CODE

- Remove guest house definition and use standards
- Guest houses would be reviewed as an accessory structure
- Update definitions for ADU
- Clarify under Accessory Use standards that an accessory structure that meets the definition of an ADU shall be reviewed as such



Proposed T17 Amendments

Updated ADU definitions

Accessory dwelling unit

“Accessory dwelling unit” means a dwelling unit located on the same lot as a single-family housing unit, duplex, triplex, townhome or other housing unit.

Accessory dwelling unit, attached.

“Accessory dwelling unit, attached” means an accessory dwelling unit located within or structurally attached to the principal unit.

Accessory dwelling unit, detached.

“Accessory dwelling unit, detached” means an accessory dwelling unit located in a separate, detached structure from the principal unit.

Proposed T17 Amendments

Updated Accessory Use/Structure Standards

An accessory structure that provides complete independent living facilities, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation, constitutes a dwelling unit and shall be classified and permitted as an accessory dwelling unit in accordance with this title.

When a residential accessory structure contains habitable space and provisions that could facilitate future conversion to a dwelling unit, the Director may require the property owner to record a notice to title identifying the structure as a non-dwelling accessory structure. The notice shall state that the structure has not been approved as a dwelling unit and that conversion to a dwelling unit requires applicable permits and approvals.

Proposed T17 Amendments

Eliminating the separate guest house classification will:

- Establish a clearer and more objective distinction between accessory structures and dwelling units
- Reduce reliance on applicant terminology when determining the appropriate land use classification
- Eliminate unnecessary distinctions among accessory structures
- Reduce uncertainty regarding permissible combinations of plumbing, sanitation, electrical, and other features in accessory structures
- Allow property owners flexibility in the use of legitimate residential accessory space while maintaining clear limitations on independent dwelling units
- Align County terminology more closely with the dwelling unit and ADU framework established by state law
- Align DCD review procedures with KPHD regulations for parcels served by septic

Questions?



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