

MEDIUM LOTS

I have a mid-sized yard or driveway.

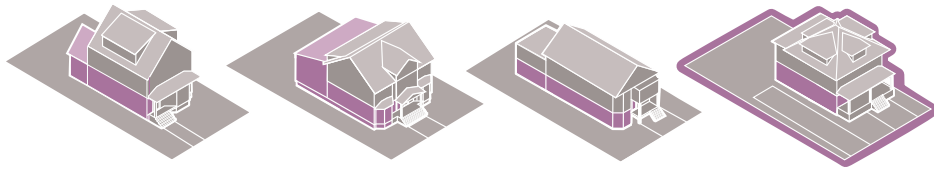




ADAPT YOUR GARAGE

79

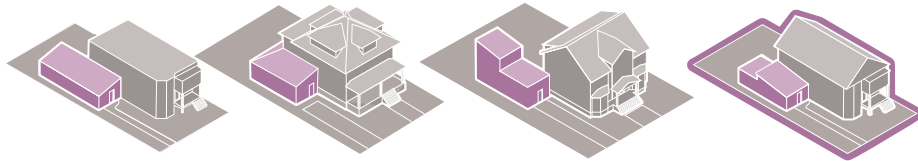
My lot has an existing building on it. I want to convert it into an ADU separate from the main unit.



EXTEND TOWARDS THE BACKYARD

87

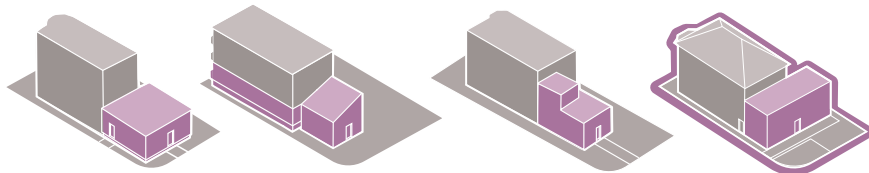
I have a lot with extra backyard space. I want to add an ADU with at least two to three bedrooms.



ATTACH AN ADU ON THE SIDE

95

My lot has enough room on the side for an ADU with at least one or two bedrooms.



ATTACH AN ADU ON A CORNER LOT

103

I have a corner lot and would like to have an ADU that is directly accessible from the street.

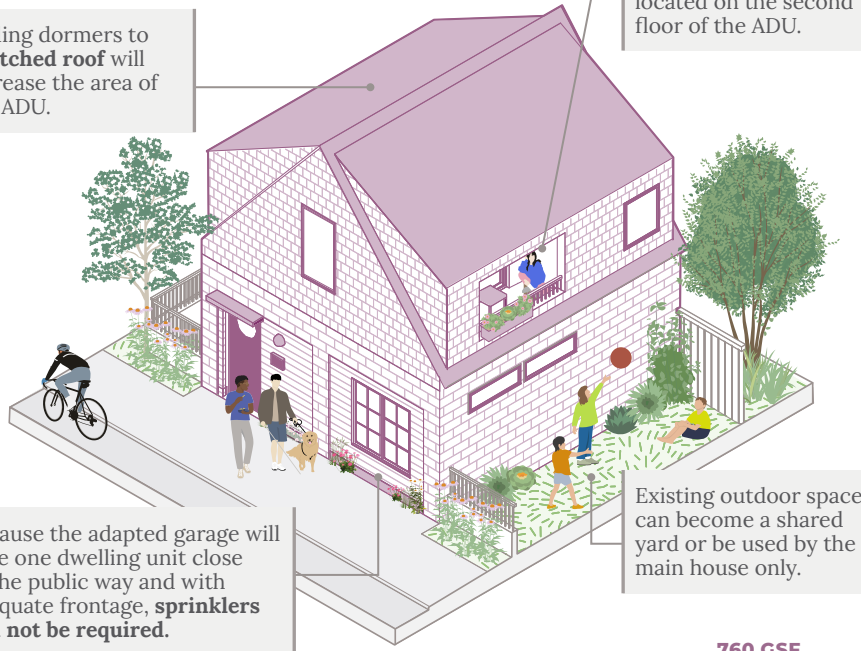
ADAPT YOUR GARAGE



Do you have a small garage building that you do not use anymore? Convert it into an ADU.

Adding dormers to a **pitched roof** will increase the area of the ADU.

A private porch can be located on the second floor of the ADU.

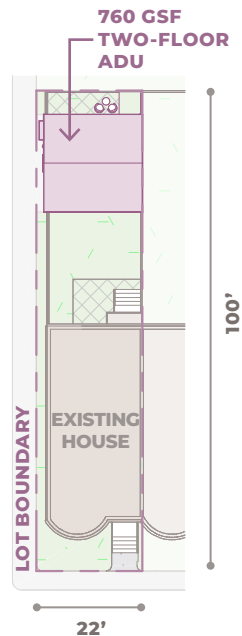


Because the adapted garage will have one dwelling unit close to the public way and with adequate frontage, **sprinklers will not be required.**

Existing outdoor space can become a shared yard or be used by the main house only.

If you have a small garage, barn, or even a tool shed or workshop on your lot, you might consider converting it into an ADU. Adapting an existing building, or rebuilding in place, can be a great way to add an ADU that is separate from the main unit and in keeping with the scale of other outbuildings in your neighborhood.

Your design team will assess which parts of the building can be reused and determine which elements, like load-bearing walls or support beams, should not be altered. They will recommend upgrades to the building envelope for thermal efficiency, to add heating and cooling systems, and to add water and sanitary connections to the building.



Existing garages and carriage houses typically need **foundation upgrades and insulation** added to walls and the roof.



When located on a **corner** lot, the adapted garage ADU is easily accessible from the street.

The owner has a historic garage on their lot that they do not use, and want to be able to rent it out for additional income.



ADU - LEVEL 2

1/8" = 1'-0"



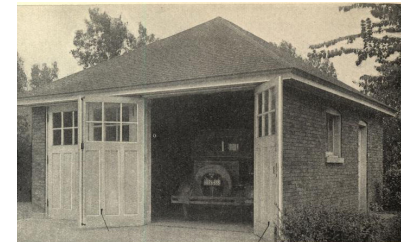
ADU — LEVEL 1

1/8" = 1'-0"

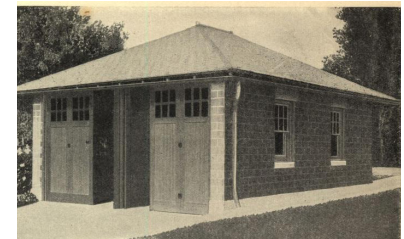
Adapting garages allows for the ADU to have its own separate entrance, and a new deck.



Many houses in Boston were built in the early part of the 20th century and their garages and carriage houses were also built at that time. In the 1910s and 1920s, prior to the spread of gas stations, gasoline for cars was kept in a home garage. As a consequence, these structures were built with masonry and located as far to the back and side of parcels as possible.



Because these buildings were built at parcel edges, they are often not compliant with current zoning required setbacks for residential use. The non-compliant location on the parcel may be appropriate; but if the structure is demolished, it may make sense to shift its location away from the lot line.

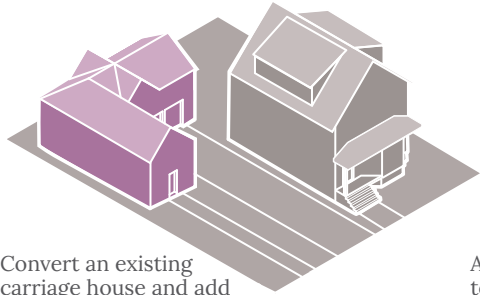


Planning for **ample storage** is an important part of making sure your ADU will work well over time.

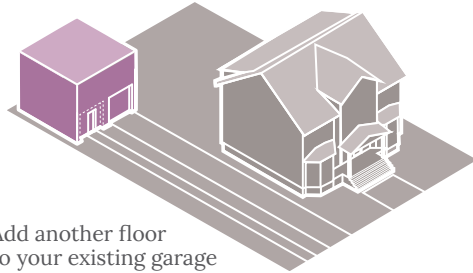


The existing back yard is shown as private to the main house, but could be **shared** by the house and ADU.

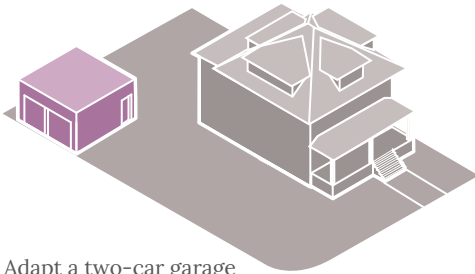
MORE WAYS TO ADAPT AN EXISTING BUILDING ON YOUR LOT



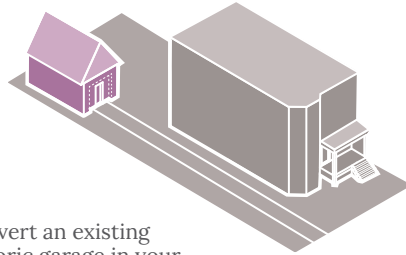
Convert an existing carriage house and add an addition to create a large ADU.



Add another floor to your existing garage for extra space.



Adapt a two-car garage on the side of your lot for an ADU with street frontage.



Convert an existing historic garage in your backyard into an ADU.

A small garage can often be repurposed into a one- or two-bedroom home. If keeping the existing garage roof in place, a loft space can typically be added above a portion of the living space. If the roof is replaced with a full or half second floor, more living space can be added – or even living space and a second floor porch.

Generally a garage or accessory building that is to the side of your building or alongside a street will be easier to adapt into an ADU. **Garages or accessory structures at the rear of the lot will require more work in terms of connecting to utilities and will require sprinklers if more than 25 feet from the street.** Carefully evaluating the structure and planning for utility connections will help ensure a smooth conversion process and create a comfortable, functional ADU.

This is an example of a West Roxbury two-unit house with a two-car garage and no driveway.



This side yard garage in Jamaica Plain has about the same frontage as the house on the lot and is roughly the footprint of a typical ADU.



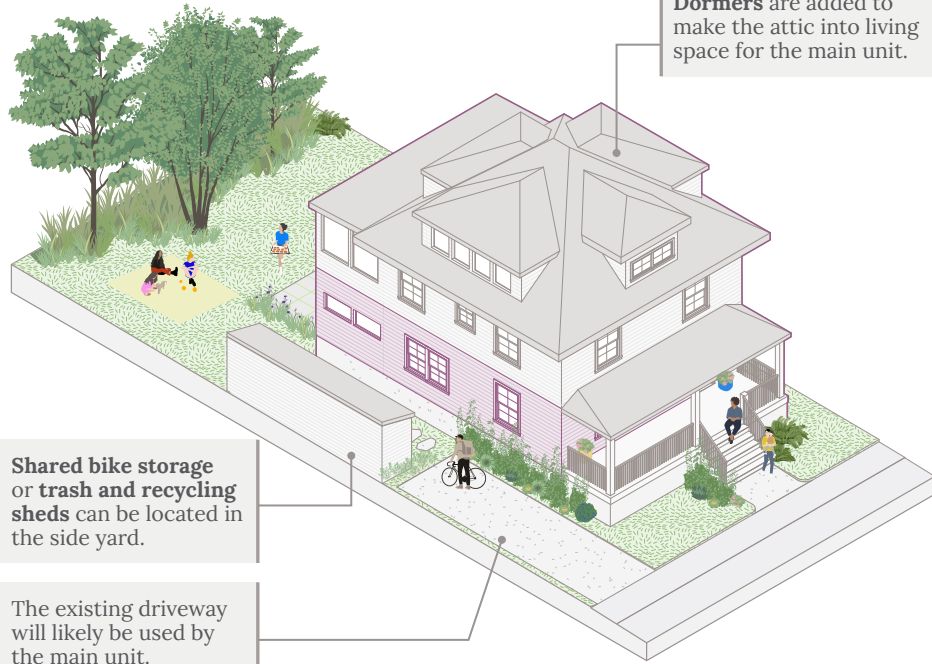
This is an example of a Mission Hill two-unit house with a typical 20' x 20' historic garage at the back of the lot. If the garage were converted to an ADU, it would require sprinklers and the driveway would need to be converted to an unobstructed emergency access path.



EXTEND TO THE REAR



Do you have a large backyard? Consider extending your building to the rear to create space for the ADU.



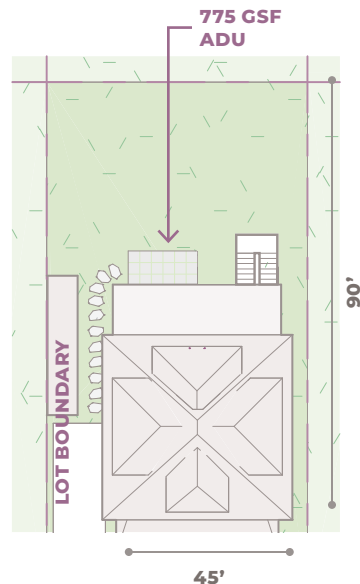
Dormers are added to make the attic into living space for the main unit.

Shared bike storage or trash and recycling sheds can be located in the side yard.

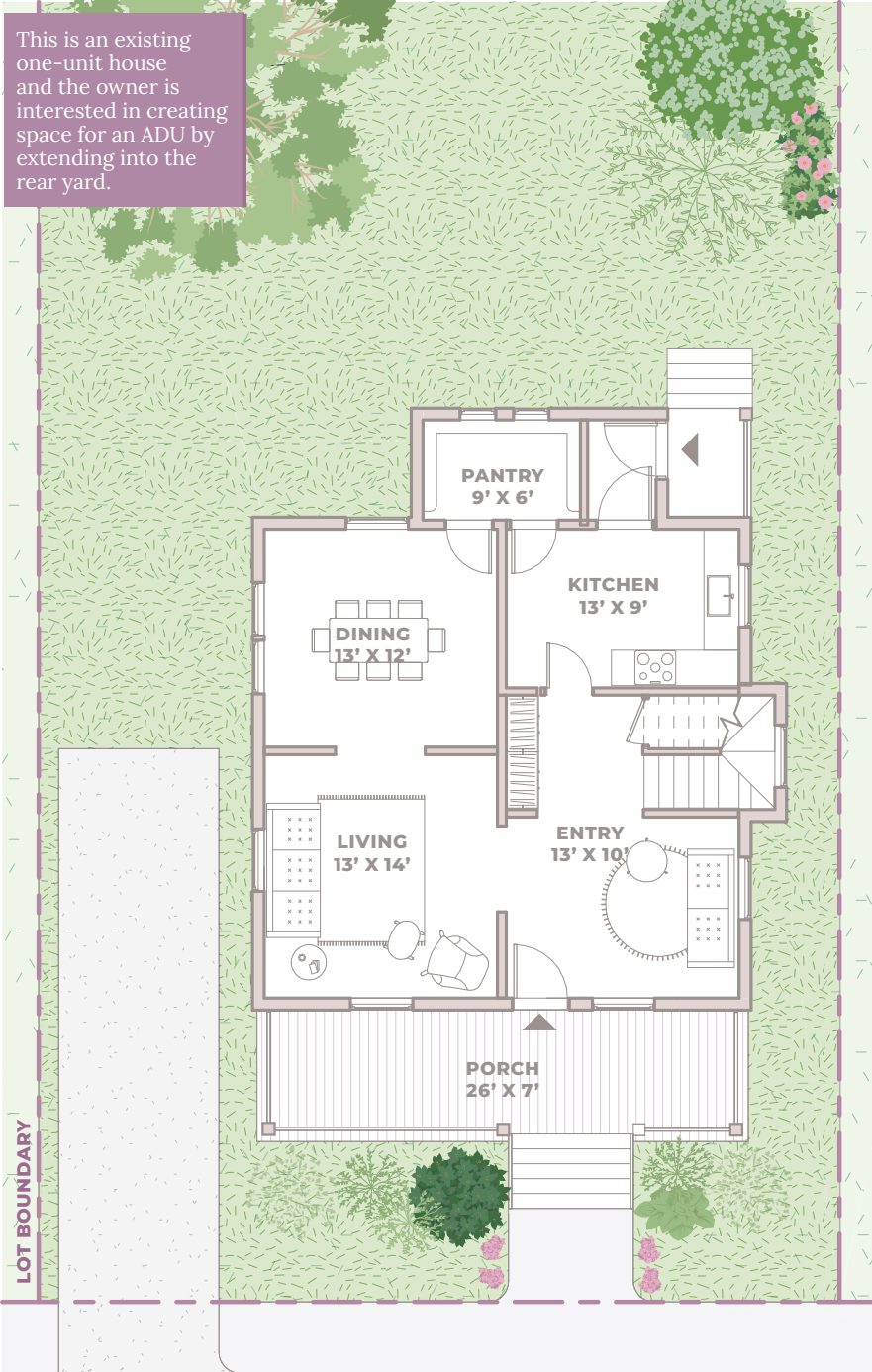
The existing driveway will likely be used by the main unit.

If you have enough backyard space, consider extending your house toward the rear to create room for a new ADU. In this example, the homeowners also added dormers to create livable space in the attic, but similar results could be achieved without dormers.

These changes convert the single-unit house into a home with a four-bedroom main unit and a one-bedroom ADU. The ADU occupies the first level, while the main unit occupies the second and third levels. Both units share a common entry. Since the building has only two units and a shared entrance close to the street, sprinklers will not be required.



This is an existing one-unit house and the owner is interested in creating space for an ADU by extending into the rear yard.

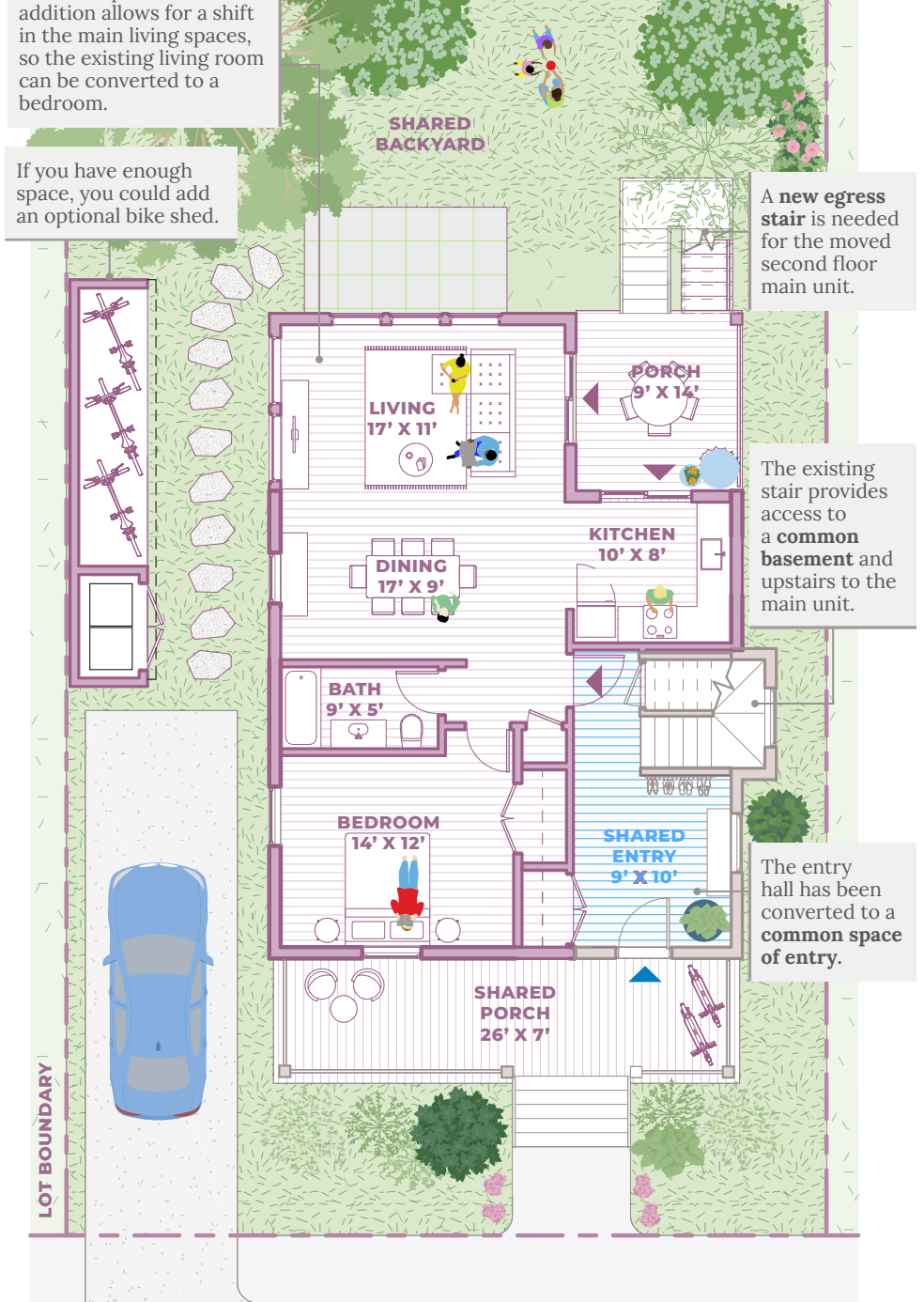


ORIGINAL FIRST FLOOR PLAN

3/32" = 1'-0"

The 130 square foot addition allows for a shift in the main living spaces, so the existing living room can be converted to a bedroom.

If you have enough space, you could add an optional bike shed.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN WITH ADU

3/32" = 1'-0"

A new egress stair is needed for the moved second floor main unit.

The existing stair provides access to a common basement and upstairs to the main unit.

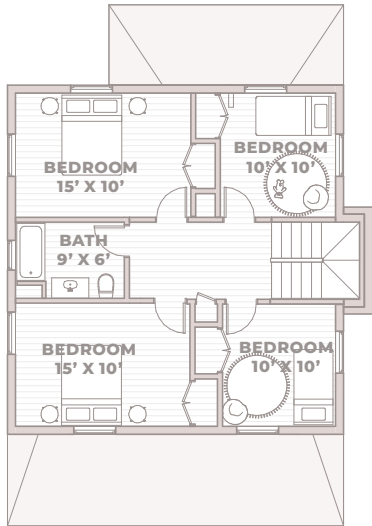
The entry hall has been converted to a common space of entry.

Currently, the owner has an unfinished attic that is underutilized and is interested in turning it into a liveable space.

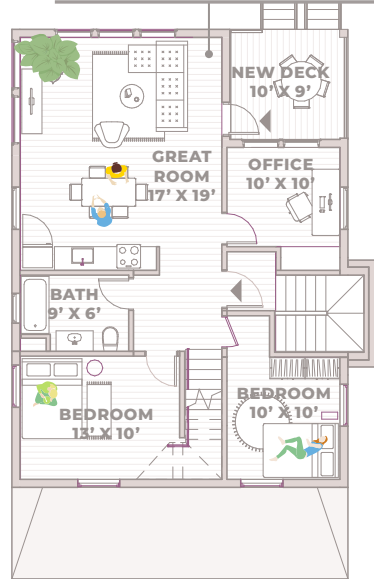
Second floor bedrooms move up to the finished attic, making space for a living area, office, and a **new deck** for the main unit.

On the third floor, **new bedrooms and a new bathroom** for the main unit would have great views and ample access to **natural light**.

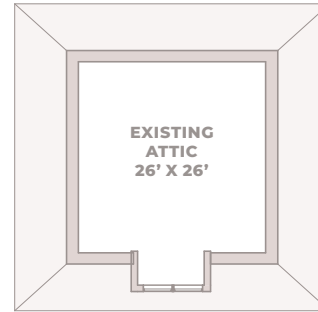
The main unit has a new stair added above the second floor stair to lead to additional bedrooms on the third floor.



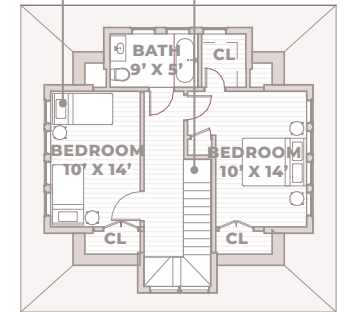
ORIGINAL SECOND FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN — MAIN UNIT ADDITION

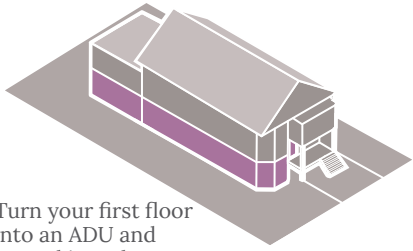


THIRD FLOOR PLAN — UNFINISHED ATTIC

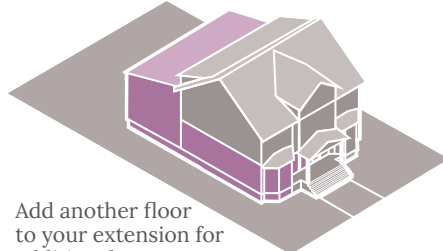


THIRD FLOOR PLAN — MAIN UNIT THIRD FLOOR

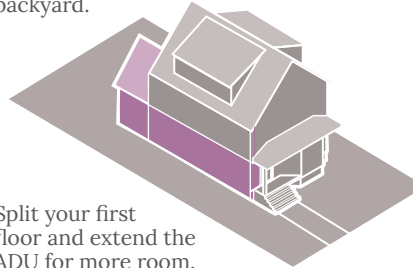
MORE WAYS TO EXTEND TOWARDS THE BACKYARD



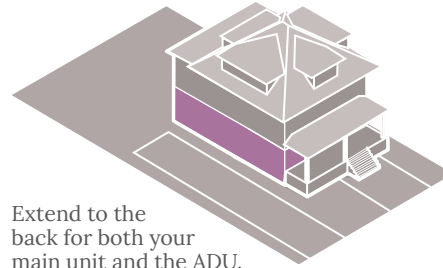
Turn your first floor into an ADU and extend into the backyard.



Add another floor to your extension for additional space.



Split your first floor and extend the ADU for more room.



Extend to the back for both your main unit and the ADU.

The design on the previous pages illustrates a one bedroom ADU occupying part of the first floor and the conversion of an existing entry room into a common entry space for both units. If a homeowner has the space and budget for it, an additional bedroom or office could also be added in the new addition.

As shown in the scheme on the previous pages, the addition of hipped dormers at the roof adds more living space at the third floor, while maintaining the existing ridge lines and architectural style of the original building. Alternatively, the homeowner could choose to proceed only with the backyard extension while keeping the unfinished attic or converting it to one finished space with skylights and the existing dormer window.

Some homeowners may prefer using the second or third floor for the ADU and to use the addition added in the back to add more space to the main unit or to convert it to a living space better suited to aging in place or for people with mobility concerns. While the ADU will always be smaller than the main unit, there are no rules dictating which unit should occupy the top or bottom levels.

This Jamaica Plain project included a two-story rear addition adding two new units to an existing home (that was simultaneously renovated). The addition also extended beyond the side of the original home, so the new units on this lot are larger than most ADUs.



This Jamaica Plain rear addition created new garage and outdoor living area. A similar approach could be taken to build an ADU.



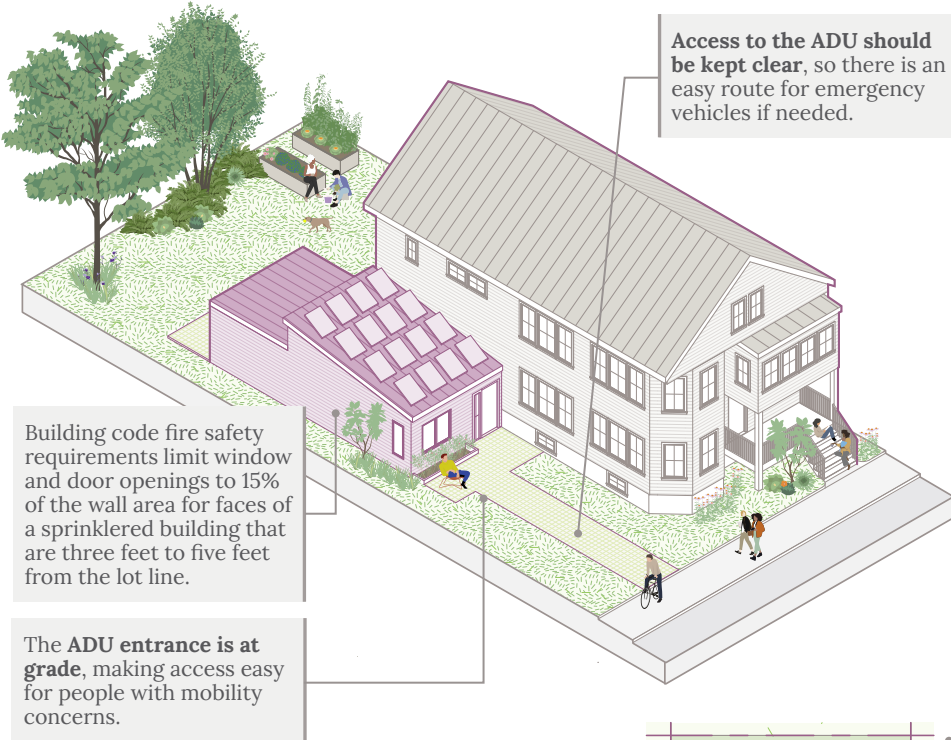
In this example of a multi-unit house in Cambridge with an addition in the back, the stair to the basement could be used as one of the egress doors from a potential ADU.



ATTACH AN ADU ON THE SIDE

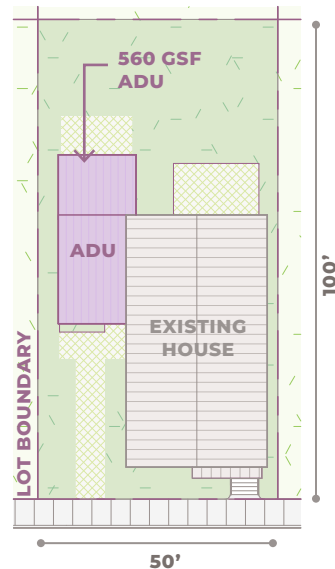


Do you have at least one generous side yard? Consider building an ADU that attaches to the side of your building.

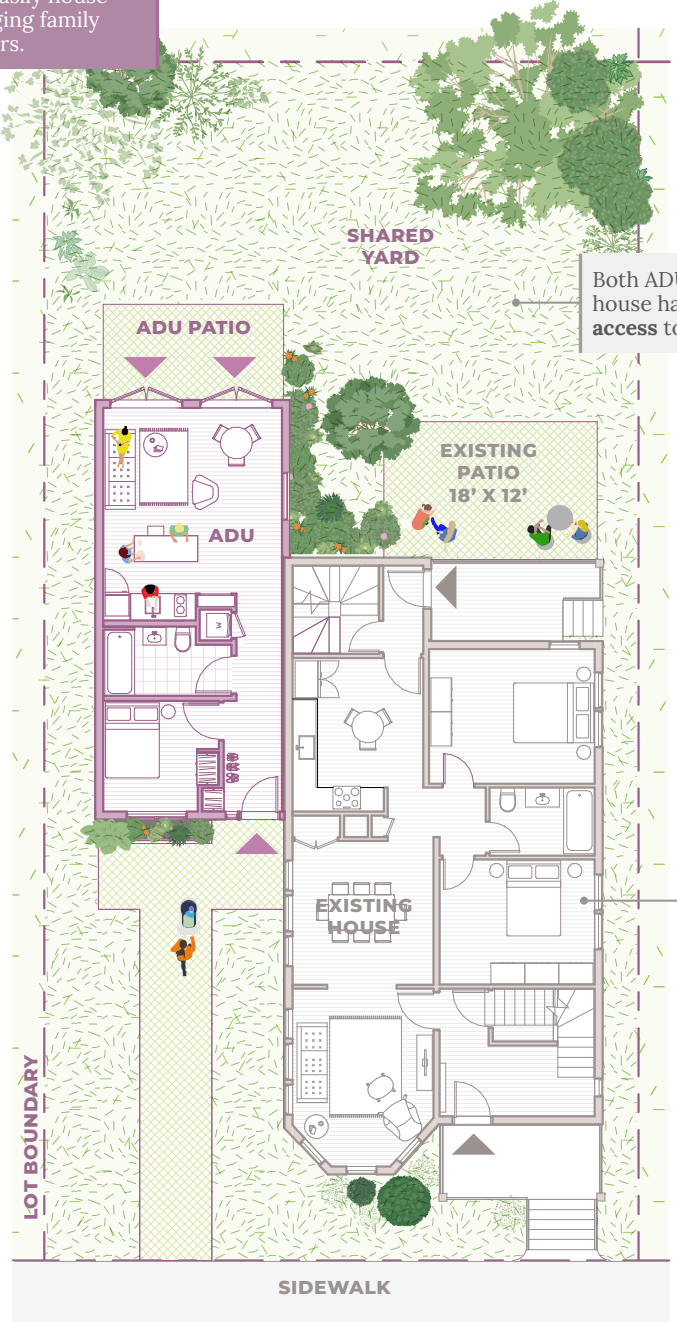


If you have twenty feet or more in one of your house's side yards, an ADU can be added next to your home. This side attached ADU is designed to have a very low impact on the existing building and is situated so that it will be easy to tie into the existing building's water and sanitary lines. The ADU entrance can be at grade, meaning there is no need to climb steps to get in the ADU.

The roof of your ADU can be shaped to let in daylight in cases where window placement may be restricted by code or privacy requirements. Additionally, you could pitch the roof to maximize southern exposure for photovoltaic panels.



The owner would like to add an ADU to their side yard that could easily house their aging family members.

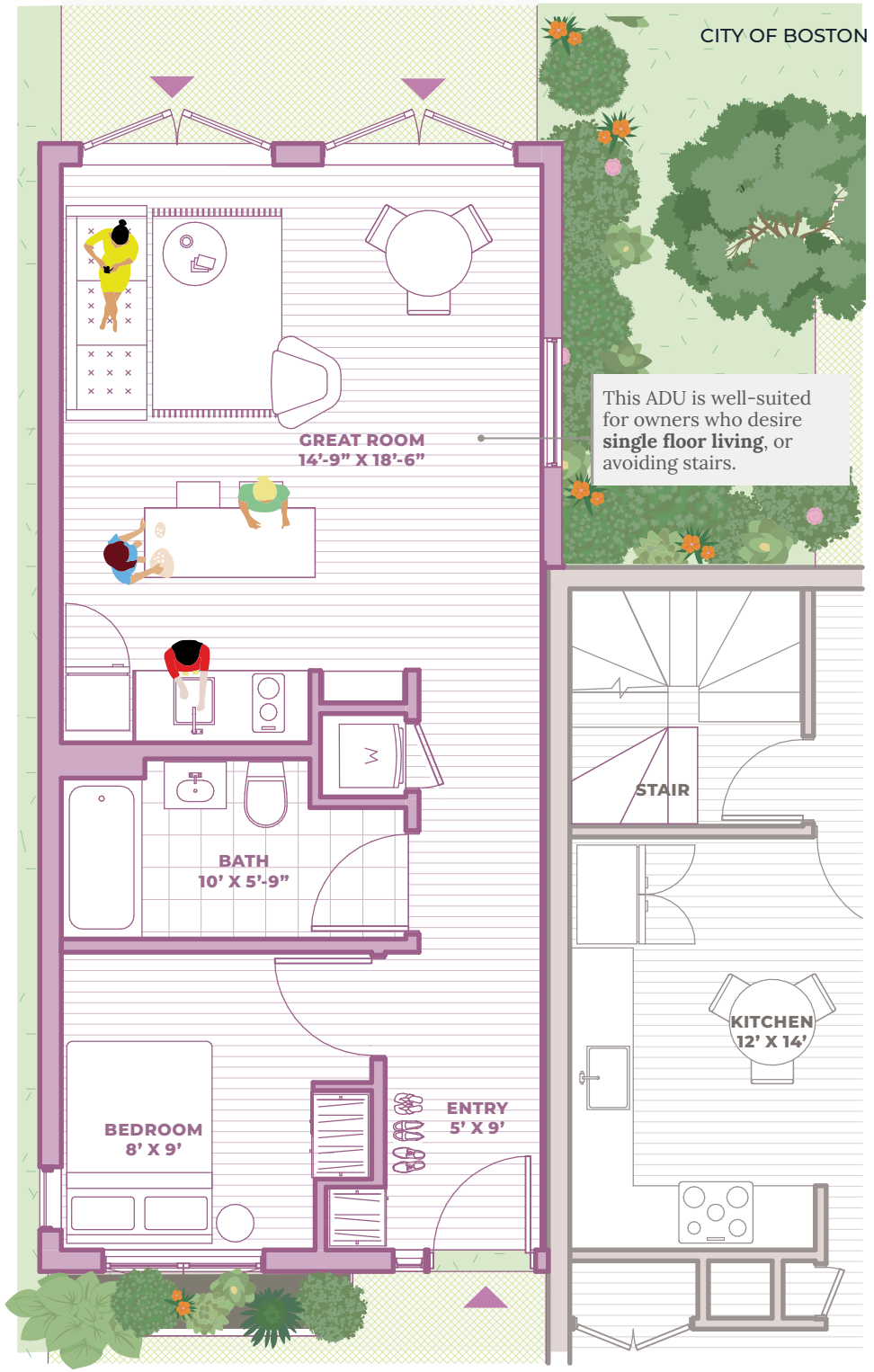


Both ADU and existing house have **direct access** to backyard.

Layout of existing house is unchanged by the addition of the ADU.

OVERALL GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1/16" = 1'-0"



This ADU is well-suited for owners who desire **single floor living**, or avoiding stairs.

ENLARGED ADU FLOOR PLAN

3/16" = 1'-0"



Clerestory windows above kitchen let in light while preserving privacy.

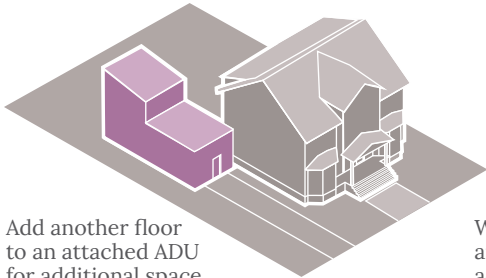
Sliding glass doors can be used to provide access to sunlight and for natural ventilation.

Kitchen island can double as an eating area. An efficient kitchen will leave more space available for living area.

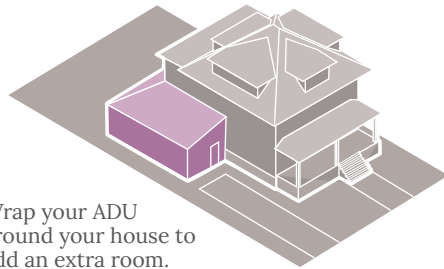
Full bathroom and **washer/dryer** are located next to entry hall.

Bedroom is positioned to allow for windows looking towards front yard. Large windows will make a small room feel larger.

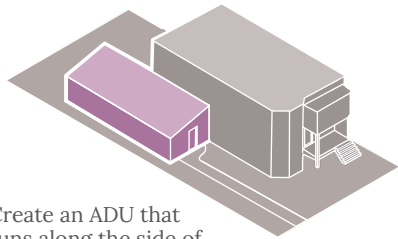
MORE WAYS TO ATTACH AN ADU ON THE SIDE OF YOUR BUILDING



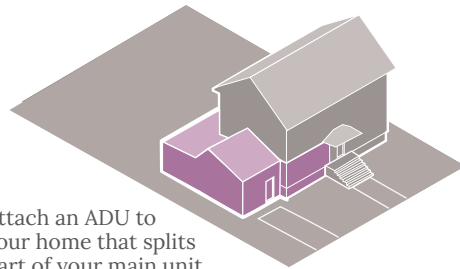
Add another floor to an attached ADU for additional space.



Wrap your ADU around your house to add an extra room.



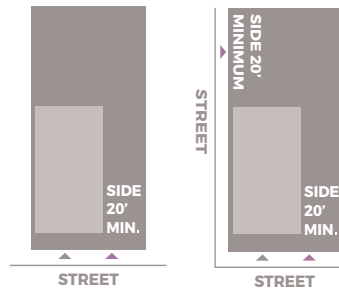
Create an ADU that runs along the side of your lot if you have space.



Attach an ADU to your home that splits part of your main unit.

If your side yard is larger than what is shown in the design shown on previous pages, you might be able to apply a similar design logic to create a more spacious ADU, such as a one- or two-bedroom unit added to the side of your home. For instance, a wider side yard could accommodate a larger ADU footprint, providing additional living space without reducing the size of the main unit.

Elements like porches or decks at the front or rear of your ADU are optional. Whether they are feasible depends on the size of your yard. For example, a deep backyard might allow for a spacious deck, while a smaller yard might limit these options. When planning for decks, it is also important to consider any existing trees. **Preservation of good sized trees should be a priority.** Their placement could influence the size and location of the deck, ensuring that the natural landscape is maintained alongside your new ADU.



This diagram illustrates the twenty foot minimum requirement for building a side yard ADU on both an infill lot (left) and a corner lot (right).

An existing screened porch like the one at this West Roxbury home could be the starting point for a new ADU in your side yard.



With large existing homes on large parcels like this Roslindale home, the ADU may be created by using part of the existing home in addition to new construction in the side yard.



Even small attachments on the side of a principal building, like this one in Jamaica Plain, can aid in the creation of an ADU.

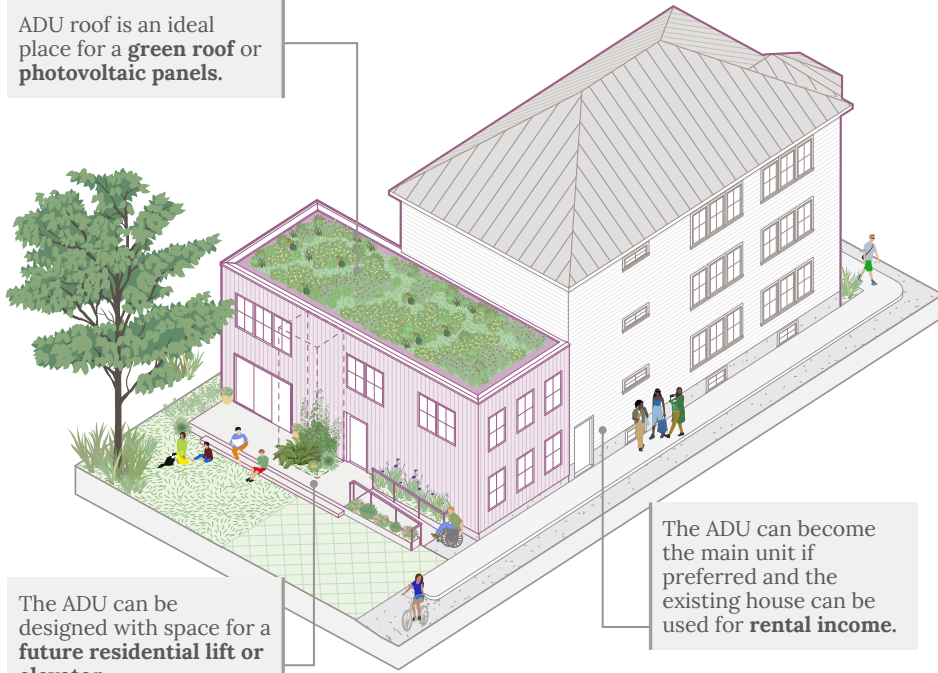


ATTACH AN ADU ON A CORNER LOT



Is your building on a corner lot? Consider attaching an ADU that can be easily accessed from one side of the lot.

ADU roof is an ideal place for a **green roof** or **photovoltaic panels**.

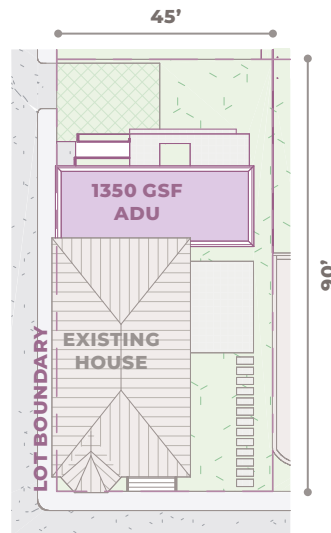


The ADU can be designed with space for a **future residential lift or elevator**.

The ADU can become the main unit if preferred and the existing house can be used for **rental income**.

If you have a large backyard on a corner lot, an ADU can be attached to the back of your existing house. A corner lot makes it easier to provide direct access to the ADU from the sidewalk.

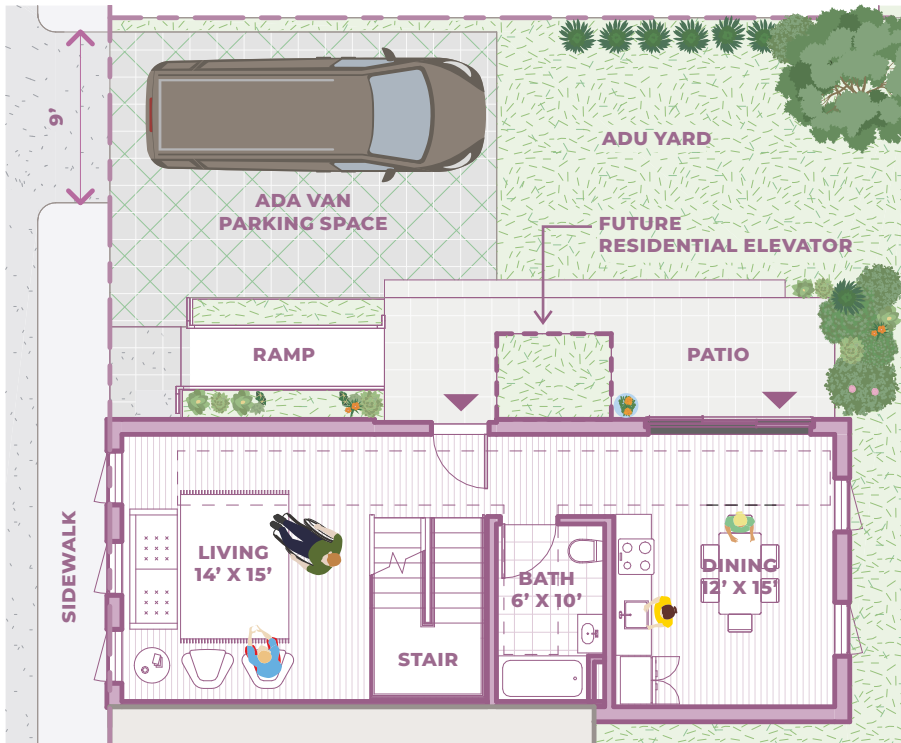
This version shows a two-story ADU that is designed so that it could easily convert to a fully accessible home. If you are planning to age in place in your ADU, planning bathrooms, kitchens and entrances that are sized for accessibility will make it much easier to convert your home. You may also want to plan for a future residential elevator and accessible circulation from existing driveways or from the sidewalk to your front door.



This owner would like to have an ADU that is easily accessible from the street, and is ADA compliant.



ENLARGED ADU SECOND FLOOR PLAN



ENLARGED ADU GROUND FLOOR PLAN

3/32" = 1'-0"

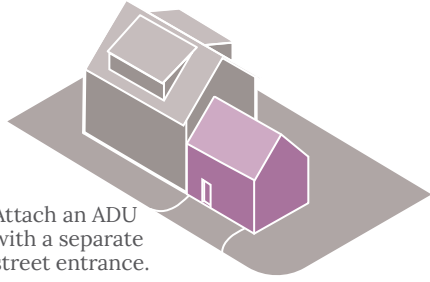


SECTION PERSPECTIVE

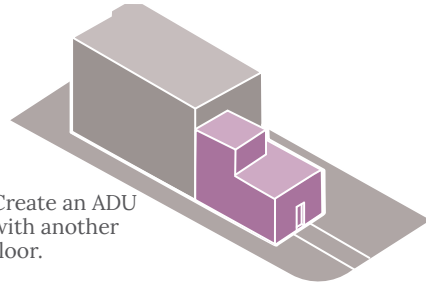
Space for a future residential elevator if needed.



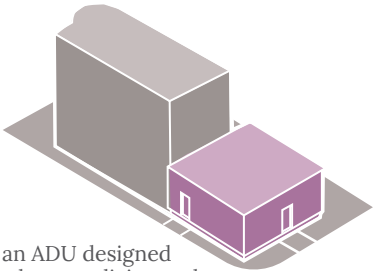
MORE WAYS TO ATTACH AN ADU ON A CORNER LOT



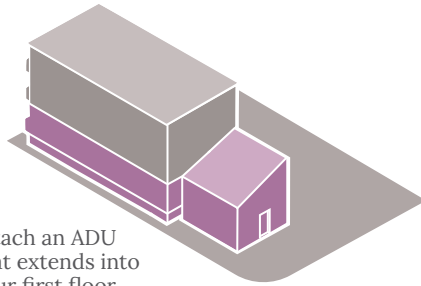
Attach an ADU with a separate street entrance.



Create an ADU with another floor.



Make an ADU designed for single-story living and easy street access.



Attach an ADU that extends into your first floor.

A corner lot generally offers more flexibility in terms of access to the ADU, including the placement of the door, driveway options, and even multiple entry points. For example, the door could be positioned on the side street for more privacy, or facing the main street for easier visibility and access. Additionally, a corner lot could allow for separate entrances for the main unit and the ADU, providing greater independence for occupants.

The design on the previous spreads illustrates how a residential elevator could be added to the two-story ADU to make it fully accessible. As an alternative, if space permits, the ADU could be designed as a single-story unit to eliminate stairs. The flexibility of a corner lot also allows for creative landscaping around the ADU, further enhancing the outdoor living space while maintaining accessibility.

An attached ADU was added to this Allston home on a corner lot to facilitate multigenerational living for a family, specifically independent living for an adult family member with a disability.



A home on a corner lot in Roslindale where a potential ADU could have a separate entrance on the cross street.



Example of a single-unit house in Cambridge with an attached ADU in the corner side yard.

