

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) DESIGN GUIDELINES

Statement:

With increasing emphasis on providing additional housing units across the Bay Area, Oakland and other cities face increased pressure to accommodate more residential options. Our neighborhood, “Lakeshore Highlands” has a unique atmosphere and rich architectural and aesthetic history that is greatly loved by its residents and visitors.

In 1917, The Lakeshore Homes Association (LHA) was established “to preserve and increase the beauty of the property within Lakeshore Highlands.” To that end, restrictions were developed “to promote and safeguard the quality and character of our residential neighborhood by providing specific guidance and regulatory covenants...”

LHA’s Declaration of Restrictions (DOR), Section 4.2 states that no permanent structure shall be erected unless first approved in writing by the association. Further,

The Association will not approve the plans for any improvement which is not in compliance with the applicable provisions of this Declaration and which is not of an architectural type compatible with existing improvements within the Property. A complete set of preliminary plans and specifications for each structure to be erected, placed or altered shall be delivered by the Owner of a Lot to the Association for approval prior to the Owner making application for any required governmental permits.

Section 4.3 states that “Exterior surfaces shall consist of materials and texture having a visual impact compatible with existing improvements within the property.”

California Civil Code Section 4751, which deals with the regulation of ADUs, allows “reasonable restrictions” by planned developments such as LHA.

As owners are requesting to build ADUs, adding twenty-first century structures in a 100-year-old historic neighborhood, LHA has established these guidelines for the construction of ADUs that comply with both the restrictions set out in the DOR and the requirements of Civil Code Section 4751. It is LHA’s intent to apply fair and consistent judgment and enforcement to all requests for ADU construction.

These guidelines are intended to apply to those ADUs involving either new or converted buildings separate from the main house. Those ADUs that involve changes or renovations to the main house, Such as junior ADUs, will have their applications reviewed to the extent they have changes to doors, windows, roof lines, and other exterior portions of the house.

Required Submissions:

Those wishing to construct an ADU are to submit the following:

- 1) A site planning showing the location of the property outline, existing main home, other physical improvements, locations of neighboring structures within 10’ of the property line and the proposed size and location of the ADU labeled with dimensions locating all existing and proposed improvements, the location address, and the address of all adjacent properties.

- 2) Written indication of notification of adjacent property owners and an indication of their support or opposition to the ADU. If there is opposition, indicate the reason (e.g., location, size, view obstruction, aesthetic character, etc.)
- 3) Floor plans, roof plan, exterior elevations, and drawings of any design features that contribute to how that the design “consists of materials and textures” that have a visual impact compatible with existing improvements.
- 4) A narrative or drawing notes of aesthetic design features that work to make this ADU design complementary, compatible, and consistent with the character of the main home.

Design Goals:

Each new freestanding ADU should be of unique character and site-specific. It should be designed in the spirit of a “guest house.” Design should seek high design standards reflecting, in some regards, the qualities of the main home and not rely on the lowest available precedent. The ADU should speak to and reflect the uniqueness of the main home. If an ADU could aesthetically belong “anywhere,” then its design is not site-specific.

This goal does not require, nor does it seek for the ADU to replicate or be a scaled-down version of the main home. Indeed, the solution could be more modern in nature, but these guidelines require that the ADU allude to the aesthetic character of the main home.

Design Requirements:

It is important to understand the unique and special design characteristics of the main home. The design of the ADU must reflect some design aesthetic and have an architectural relationship with the main home.

Design features that should be considered are:

- 1) Overall shape — mass, form, and rhythm
- 2) Windows — patterns, shapes, and types
- 3) Roof — roofline, roof textures, shapes, and details
- 4) Exterior — finish materials, textures, lines, and colors
- 5) Details — style, unique and special details
- 6) Entry Expression — door, shape, materials, and details
- 7) Other — as determined by the ADU designer

The ADU need not incorporate all of these design features, but each ADU must complement and reflect the features of the main home enough that the design is unique to the site. The owner or project designer should be prepared to address how the proposed ADUs design features work to make this ADU complementary, compatible, and consistent with the character on the main home.