

3.4.3. Accessory Buildings

Accessory Building Types

An accessory building is any building other than the primary building on a property. It almost always is smaller than the primary building and located behind the primary building. Accessory buildings may be residential (commonly referred to as “Accessory Dwelling Units” or ADUs), or utilitarian – such as garages, carports, and sheds.

Understanding historic accessory building types can help inform and inspire design and construction of new accessory buildings. For definitions and descriptions of historic accessory building types in Fredericksburg, refer to *Section 2.2.6*.

Priority Rankings and Lot Coverage

If a property includes an existing historic building, lot coverage standards are affected by the property’s priority ranking. For the purposes of lot coverage standards, **previously empty lots are treated as Low Priority-properties.**

Preservation

- (a) Avoid impacting significant historic resources or site features when constructing new accessory buildings.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Required	Required

Setbacks and Lot Coverage

- (b) Follow lot coverage standards as required in *Section 3.4.1*.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Required	Required

Height and Massing

- (c) Design new buildings to be subordinate and not visually overpower the surrounding historic buildings; The maximum height for an accessory building on a historically designated parcel relates to the preservation priority assigned to the primary building on the parcel. (Note that previously empty lots are considered Low-Priority properties.)

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Required	Required

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required; maximum of one story, 18 feet in height	Required; maximum of two stories, 28 feet in height	Required; maximum of two stories, 28 feet in height

Design

- (d) Applied architectural ornament or stylistic detailing of any kind is not appropriate for new accessory buildings.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Required	Recommended

- (e) Consistent with historical lot-development patterns, new ADUs should be designed to look like a single, consistent dwelling unit – even if there are multiple units on the interior. The appearance of multiple ADUs on a single property is not consistent with historical development patterns in the district.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required if visible from the public ROW	Required if visible from the public ROW	Recommended

- (f) Exterior walls, roof features, and window or door openings must authentically communicate the structural system of the new construction. Application of false structural elements is prohibited. The size and placement of window and door openings must accurately correspond to the bays of the structural system. Lintels should reflect the structural system.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Recommended	Recommended	Recommended

- (g) Revealing structural elements—like true load-bearing posts and beams—is encouraged.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Recommended	Recommended	Recommended

Materials

- (h) If a wood-frame structural system is used, wood siding or fiber-cement siding is encouraged. Use of true load-bearing masonry walls with stone, brick, or stucco also is encouraged.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Recommended	Recommended	Recommended

- (i) The palette of exterior materials for new accessory buildings should not use more than two different primary siding materials; a third material may be added if used for trim only. At least one exterior material on the accessory building must match the primary building on the property.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Required	Recommended

- (j) Modern materials, such as fiber-cement siding and corrugated metal, may be appropriate for new accessory buildings.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate

- (k) The exterior color palette for new accessory buildings must generally be in the same range as the primary building on the property.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Required	Required	Recommended



Figure 3-66. Example of an **appropriate** new accessory building—a garage apartment—with no applied ornament and minimal stylistic detailing, taking a visually subordinate role compared to the adjacent historic buildings (not shown). Since this building meets the definition of an ADU, it may be the only ADU on the lot. Source: HHM, 2020.



Figure 3-67. Rendering of an **inappropriate** site plan with insufficient setbacks between the historic primary building and the new ADUs to the right. The design of the ADUs also is inappropriate, with one of the ADUs designed to look like multiple cottages rather than a single building, plus inappropriate false structural detailing and applied ornament. Source: City of Fredericksburg Historic Preservation Office.