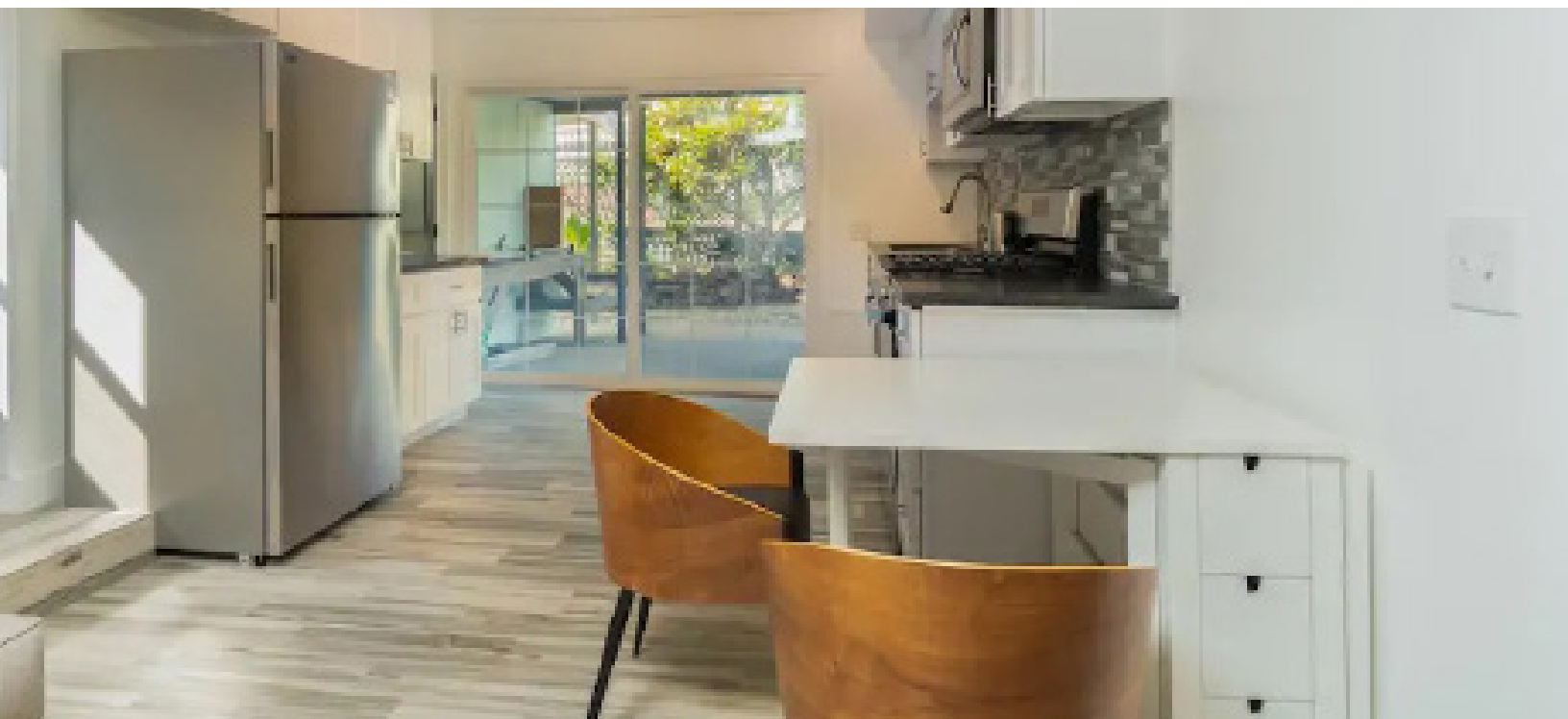


YOUR GUIDE TO

# ADUs

Answers to your  
ADU questions



# YOUR GUIDE TO ADUs

Hello and welcome!

If you're interested in learning more about having an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on your property, then you've come to the right place. All ADUs require an ADU professional to help you get the most out of your property.

We have designed more ADUs throughout San Diego than any other architecture firm. Our principal architect Audrey Ruland, continues to lead the way in innovative ADU designs that are environmentally friendly, efficient, and will be designed for your budget.

Many people have questions as they begin planning for their ADU. To help you get started, we compiled the top 10 questions we have heard over the past few years. We hope they help you understand your ADU options, the process, and what you'll need to get you started.

Thank you!

*Chris Dulnikowski*

Principal, Ruland Design Group  
*Your Vision is Our Priority*

# Your ADU Questions answered



## Can I build an ADU on my property?

As of 2017, any property that is zoned as a single family residence in California is allowed to build an ADU. Since then, many new bills have been passed that now make it permissible to build ADUs on certain multi-family zoned properties as well as properties in HOA-governed communities.



## How long does it take to build an ADU?

The overall timeline for a typical ADU project generally lasts about 8-12 months (possibly longer) from start to finish. This includes design and applying for permits, but not the construction time. Timing mostly depends on the complexity of your ADU project, the municipality you're located in, and the expertise of your design and construction teams.



## How big can my ADU be?

The state of California allows detached ADUs up to a maximum of 1,200 sq ft. The maximum size for attached ADUs is 50% of the square footage of the main dwelling, up to 1,200 sq ft. ADU laws and local city ordinances continue to evolve. Due diligence is required to determine the zoning rules for your property.



## How much does an ADU cost?

There are three areas to consider when determining the cost of an ADU: design, permits and construction. Depending on the complexity of your ADU project, design fees can run anywhere between \$12,000 to \$15,000 or more. Permit fees are highly dependable on a variety of factors regarding your specific property and project type, but can generally run between \$4,000 to \$8,000 in most cases. Finally, construction costs can run between \$300-\$350 per sq ft.

# Your ADU Questions answered



## What are the pros and cons of a stick build and a prefab unit?

A stick build refers to a dwelling that is constructed from the ground up. A stick-built ADU gives you the flexibility to create a dwelling that is entirely customized to your needs. The design, functionality, look and feel of your ADU will depend entirely on what your goals are for the unit.

For example, an ADU designed for an elderly parent will look very different from a rental unit for local college students.

Another thing to consider is the amount of space you have in your lot. If space is an issue, a prefab unit cannot be custom-designed to conform to any existing dwellings or structures in your yard. Additionally, one common misconception about prefab units is that they cost much less than a stick-built unit.

Often the costs between a prefab and a stick build end up close to the same amount. Wouldn't you want a fully customizable ADU for the same price?



## I have an unpermitted ADU, what are the steps involved in legalizing my unit?

Due to our lack of affordable housing in San Diego, the building departments are being more supportive of permitting already converted illegal units. We've helped many homeowners legalize their ADUs.

First, we'll need to assess the current condition of the unpermitted unit. From there, we'll create a design plan that includes everything needed to submit to the building department and start processing your permit.



# Your ADU Questions answered



What are the new ADU laws I should know about?

**2020 was an exciting year for ADUs due to new laws that were passed that make it easier for homeowners to build.**

- **No owner occupancy:** As of 2020, the owner occupancy requirement for properties with an ADU is waived until 2025. This means that homeowners are not required to live on the property if they have an ADU, allowing them to rent out both the ADU and their main home. Furthermore, homeowners who build their ADU by 2025 will be grandfathered into this clause.
- **Multifamily zones:** Certain multifamily zoned properties may be allowed to add an ADU or convert any pre-existing, unused spaces into an ADU such as garages.
- **Parking requirements:** Parking spaces do not need to be replaced for garages converted into ADUs. Additionally, parking spaces are not required for ADUs located within a ½ mile walking distance from a bus stop, as well as ADUs that are less than 500 sq feet.
- **Junior ADUs:** Homeowners are now allowed to have both an ADU and a Junior ADU on their property. Junior ADUs can be up to 500 square feet in size, and must be contained entirely within the primary dwelling on the property.



# Your ADU Questions answered



I heard that San Diego has waived a bunch of fees for ADUs, what are they?

State law has waived development impact fees for any ADU that is under 750 sq ft. However, the City of San Diego has gone above and beyond and waived Development Impact Fees (DIF) for any sized ADU. Note that not all municipalities follow suit, so you'll want to check on your municipality if your property isn't located in the City of San Diego. Standard building permit fees still apply.

For example, the County of San Diego still assesses DIF fees for ADUs on multifamily properties. It is important to know what the local requirements are for your municipality which we can help you determine if you have to pay DIF fees, and what they are.



When should I secure financing? How do I know how much money I need to borrow?

There are a variety of ways to finance your ADU project.

We recommend starting the process by speaking with your lender to see what types of loans you qualify for. At the same time, we'll get started on the initial design for your ADU to help you obtain a contractor bid that will ultimately determine how much money you'll need from your lender. We can design an ADU for you that fits your budget.



After the design phase is complete, do you have contractors you can refer?

Yes! We work with general contractors who have extensive experience building ADUs in San Diego and would be more than happy to provide the best recommendation for your project.

*Since ADU laws and local city ordinances continue to evolve, we recommend you do your own research and due diligence to ensure compliance with your local municipality and to determine the overall feasibility of your project.*

# Do You Have More questions?

If you're ready to get started, or have questions that are specific to your future ADU, we're happy to answer them for you.

Ruland Design Group can guide you every step of the way to help you:

- Realize the opportunity for income
- Evaluate options to build an ADU
- Navigate specific city and county zoning codes
- Design and Permit your ADU
- Identify the best financing options
- Provide you with our guide so you can pick the best contractor for your project

## **Free Consultation**

In addition, we offer free consultations to help you get started, get your questions answered, and guide you through the planning and design process.

## **Contact us today!**

Email: [info@RulandDesignGroup.com](mailto:info@RulandDesignGroup.com)

Website: [RulandDesignGroup.com/Contact](https://RulandDesignGroup.com/Contact)