



## Code Interpretation

### Subject of Interpretation

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Accessory Dwelling Units (Attached and Detached), Guest Houses

### Zoning Ordinance Section Number

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Kitsap County Code (KCC)

**17.110.017 Accessory dwelling unit, attached.**

**17.110.020 Accessory dwelling unit, detached.**

**17.110.125 Breezeway.**

**17.110.255 Dwelling unit.**

**17.110.317 Guest house.**

**17.415.260 Guest house.**

### Cause for Interpretation

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Kitsap County Code (KCC) defines Accessory Dwelling Units-Attached (ADU-A), Accessory Dwelling Unit-Detached (ADU-D), and Guest Houses (GH) as separate categorical uses. The difference between an ADU and GH relates to the definition of a dwelling unit and KCC Section 17.415.260 'Allowed Use Standards; Guest House'. The difference between ADU-A and ADU-D relates to a direct connection of habitable space. KCC Title 17 'Zoning', International Residential Code (IRC), and International Building Code (IBC) definitions include the following:

**17.110.017 Accessory dwelling unit, attached.** "Accessory dwelling unit, attached" means a separate dwelling unit contained within, or directly connected by a minimum of four feet to the habitable space of, the primary residence. Alternate configurations shall not be allowed as an accessory dwelling unit, attached.

**17.110.020 Accessory dwelling unit, detached.** "Accessory dwelling unit, detached" means a separate dwelling unit that does not meet the definition of Section 17.110.017, Accessory dwelling unit, attached. No mobile home or recreational vehicle shall be considered an accessory dwelling unit. This definition excludes guest houses.

**17.110.125 Breezeway.** "Breezeway" means a structure for the principal purpose of connecting the main building or buildings on a property with other main buildings or accessory buildings.

**17.110.255 Dwelling unit.** "Dwelling unit" means a single unit providing complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for



living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation. A recreational vehicle is not considered a dwelling unit outside of an approved RV park.

**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.

**17.415.260B Allowed Use Standards; Guest House.** Guest houses shall not include any kitchen plumbing, appliances or provisions for cooking.

**IRC Section R202: Habitable Space.** A space in a building for living, sleeping, eating or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage, or utility spaces and similar areas are not considered habitable spaces.

**IBC Section 202: Sleeping Unit.** A single unit that provides rooms or spaces for one or more persons, includes permanent provisions for sleeping and can include provisions for living, eating, and either sanitation or kitchen facilities but not both. Such rooms and spaces that are also part of a dwelling unit are not sleeping units.

**IRC Section R202: Kitchen.** An area used, or designated to be used, for the preparation of food.

**IRC Section R306.2 Kitchen.** Each dwelling unit shall be provided with a kitchen area and every kitchen area shall be provided with a sink.

For the purpose of this interpretation the following terms are defined:

**Kitchen (food preparation area).** A kitchen (food preparation area) shall contain permanent cooking or food preparation appliances, and a sink connected to an approved potable water supply and sanitary waste disposal system.

Permanent cooking and food preparation appliances are those appliances designed for permanent (non-portable) installation including ranges, ovens, stoves, broilers, grills, fryers, griddles, barbecues, microwaves, dishwashers, refrigerators in excess of 3.5 cubic feet or similar appliances or equipment. Such appliances may be gas (natural or liquified petroleum), electric or solid fueled, typically requiring permanent plumbing. electric or fuel connections and support equipment including hoods, exhaust fans, combustion or makeup air, or fire suppression.

Non-permanent cooking and food preparation appliances are those appliances designed for portable use including mixers, blenders, refrigerators not exceeding 3.5 cubic feet capacity, toaster ovens, countertop microwaves, electric skillets, air fryers, or similar appliances that are not attached to a structure’s plumbing system and powered by a plug in



and socket type of connection to household fifteen- or twenty-amp circuit (110-120 V) and does not require support equipment for its operation.

**Sink.** A sink is a cabinet, bowl, basin, trough or other item capable of holding water that is fixed to the structure and connected to the structure's potable water and sanitary waste disposable system.

**Bathroom.** A bathroom is a room that contains a toilet, wash basin (or combination basin set), and either a bathtub or shower where fixtures are attached to the structure and connected to the structure's hot and cold potable water and sanitary waste disposal system.

## Interpretation

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### **ADU:**

An ADU has both a kitchen and a bathroom within the structure.

### **Guest House:**

A guest house may have a kitchen or a bathroom, but not both. This means a structure with a bathroom shall not include a sink anywhere other than a bathroom, nor electrical or gas wiring or connections that support or could support permanent cooking appliances.

A structure with a kitchen shall not include 1) a bathtub or shower, or 2) a toilet and wash basin or combination basin set. This interpretation aligns with IBC 202 Sleeping Unit.

Applicants who intends to use or construct all or a portion of a structure that contains the necessary elements of a Dwelling Unit or a Guest House as defined in Kitsap County Code or as modified by this interpretation shall be determined to be using or constructing such structure as a Dwelling Unit or Guest House regardless of the use identified on the application, plans, or materials submitted with an application.

### **ADU-A vs ADU-D:**

Attached ADUs are intended to be closely associated with and attached to the habitable spaces of primary dwelling units on the same parcel. To this end enclosed breezeways or hallways may be used to connect a primary and a secondary dwelling unit on a parcel. Such hallways or breezeways shall be a minimum of 4 ft wide.

### **Garages/Shops:**

Where an ADU or guest house is built adjacent to or above a garage or shop, the ADU/guest house and garage/shop is considered the same structure, and the structure is subject to the ADU/guest house interpretation regarding bathrooms and kitchens.



**Director Authority Proposed for Code:**

The Director has the authority to make determinations about type and use of structures, including but not limited to, when it is unclear what the space will be used for.

6/27/2025

Author of the Interpretation, Darren Gurnee,  
Current Planning Supervisor, DCD

Date

6/30/2025

Rafe Wysham, Director, DCD

Date

Notice, Appeal and Record of Interpretation

*In accordance with KCC 21.04.040(C)(3) and (4), this decision is subject to notice to the public and is appealable, and the decision shall be retained by DCD and considered at the next reasonable opportunity for changes to Kitsap County Code. The decision shall be maintained on the DCD website at DCD Code Interpretations and Determinations.*