



# Accessory Structure Placement

## Q1. What is an accessory structure?

A1. An “accessory structure” is a building or other structure that is smaller in size and secondary in purpose to the principal use of the property. It can be attached to the house or it can be a separate structure. Most often, an accessory structure is a garage or shed, but can also include carports, gazebos, and greenhouses.

## Q2. Why does the Zoning Ordinance regulate accessory structures?

A2. The Zoning Ordinance ensures that the accessory structure will be properly placed on the lot in relation to the house and the property lines, the structure will be compatible with the house and the neighborhood, and minimum greenspace requirements will be met.

If your property is located in an historic district, the structure must also be approved by the City’s Historic Preservation Officer. The zoning and historic preservation reviews can be done when you come in for the building permit.

## Q3. What types of permits are required before I can build (or add onto) my accessory structure?

A3. **Zoning Permit.** A zoning permit is required for accessory structures less than 200 sq ft in size.

**Building Permit.** A building permit is required for accessory structures greater than 200 sq ft in size. See the Development Center’s *Permit Guide for Residential Garages* for more information.

**Curb Cut or Driveway.** If a new curb cut or driveway is planned, the Planning Department will review the proposed location. See the City Engineer’s Sidewalk Division for more information on sidewalks and driveway approaches in the public right-of-way.

## Q4. What information must I provide for zoning review?

A4. The following information is needed:

- **Building Permit Application with Zoning Information Attachment or Accessory Structure Permit Application** as required (see A3 above).
- **Site Plan** (overhead view) showing the exact locations and dimensions of all property lines, existing buildings, driveways, streets, alleys and the proposed accessory structure and any proposed driveways or curb cuts. ***The site plan should be based on a survey of your property.***
- **Elevation** drawing (side view) of the proposed accessory structure identifying all building materials.

## Q5. How large can my accessory structure be?

A5. It depends on the Zone District, the size of the lot, and other accessory structures already on the property. See the back of this sheet.

## Q6. How high can my accessory structure be?

A6. It depends on the Zone District and the lot size. Height is measured from the finished grade to the mid-point of the roof (between the peak and the drip edge). See the back of this sheet.

## Q7. What other zoning requirements must be followed?

A7. In addition to square footage and height, the following requirements apply.

### All Accessory Structures:

- Must be architecturally compatible with the house if greater than 120 sq ft.
- Must be located at least 3 ft from rear and side lot lines.
- Must be located at least 3 ft from another accessory structure.
- Have driveway access from the alley, where an alley is present.
- One attached and one detached accessory structure is permitted.

### Detached Accessory Structures:

- If located less than 60 ft from the front lot line, it must comply with the required side yard setbacks.
- Cannot be located in the front yard.
- Must be placed at least 6 feet from the house.

### Attached Accessory Structures:

- Must meet the setback requirements for the house.
- In certain Zone Districts, an attached garage must be placed at least 5 feet behind the front of the house.

### Other

- Corner lots have special characteristics and different requirements.
- Minimum greenspace requirements may reduce the total square footage of the accessory structure.

### For More Information:

[www.grandrapidsmi.gov/planning](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/planning)

City of Grand Rapids Planning Department:  
1120 Monroe Avenue NW, 2nd Floor  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Telephone: (616) 456-3159  
FAX: (616) 456-4546

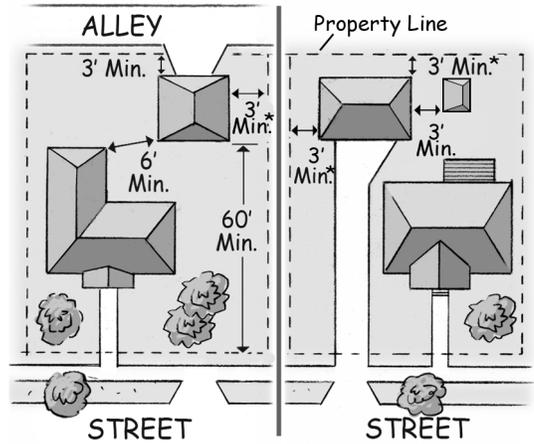


# Accessory Structure Placement

Single- and Two-Family Uses in Traditional Neighborhoods (TN) and Mid-Century Neighborhoods (MCN)		
Lot Area (in Square Feet)	Maximum Size (Gross Floor Area)	Maximum Height
Less than 5,000	624 sq ft	14 ft
5,000 – 7,499	832 sq ft	14 ft
7,500 – 10,999	936 sq ft	14 ft
11,000 – 21,999	1,000 sq ft	16 ft
More than 22,000	1,200 sq ft	16 ft

*Attached garages in TN and MCN neighborhoods must be set back at least 5' behind the front of the house.*

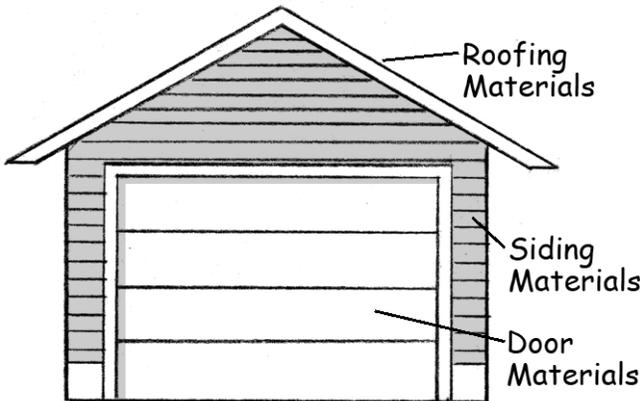
Single- and Two-Family Uses in Modern Era Neighborhoods (MON)		
Lot Area (in Square Feet)	Maximum Size (Gross Floor Area)	Maximum Height
Less than 5,000	832 sq ft	14 ft
5,000 – 7,499	936 sq ft	14 ft
7,500 – 10,999	1,000 sq ft	16 ft
11,000 – 21,999	1,200 sq ft	16 ft
More than 22,000	1,500 sq ft	16 ft



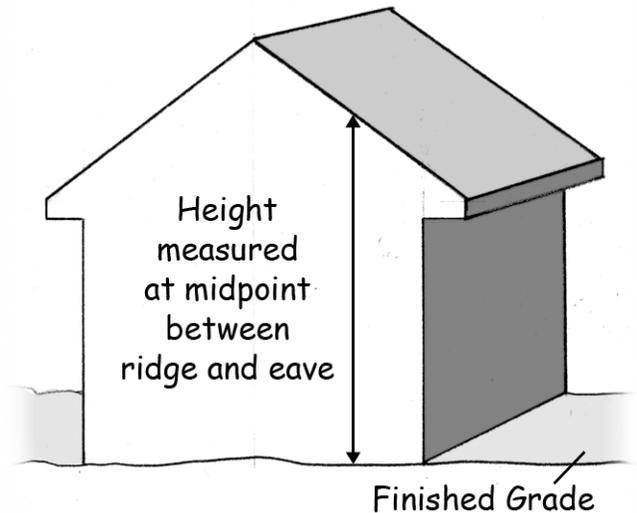
## 5.2.09.I. Accessory Structures, Detached.

\*An Administrative Departure may be approved to allow a set back of one (1) foot where certain conditions exist and where the City's building code is met.

## Detached Garage Location



**Elevation showing Building Materials**



**Height Measurement**