

# Carlisle Planning Board

## Rules and Regulations

Governing

### Site Plan Review

for a

### Protected Use Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

Date: February 9, 2026

### Summary of Application & Hearing Procedures

#### PRIOR TO APPLYING

1. Applicants are strongly advised to review the following documents:
  - a. [Carlisle Zoning Bylaw](#) Sections 5.6 (ADUs) and 7.6 (Site Plan Review)
  - b. Protected Use ADU Site Plan Review Rules & Regulations herein, including:
    - i. Appendix A: ADU Requirements per ZBL Section
    - ii. Appendix B: Gross Floor Area (GFA) Cheat Sheet for ADUs
  - c. [760 CMR 71.00](#)
2. At the beginning of the process, Applicants are strongly advised to meet with staff from the office of the Board of Health to gain an understanding of the requirements of the Board of Health's local septic and well regulations, and to request and obtain a review of the adequacy of sewage and water supply at the premises.
3. Applicants are strongly advised to have a preliminary, informal discussion of a proposal and plans with the Building Commissioner and staff from the offices of the Planning Board, Board of Health, and any other jurisdictional entities, before beginning the formal application process.
4. The construction of a Protected Use ADU shall conform with the State Building Code, Title 5 of the State Sanitary Code and local Board of Health regulations, the Wetlands Protection Act and the local wetlands bylaw, local Historic District and historic structure bylaws and regulations, and all other local bylaws and regulations.
5. If the proposed ADU is in the Historic District, Applicants shall review the [Historical Commission Rules and Regulations](#) and speak with the Assistant Town Clerk about process and scheduling.

#### APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

- **Site Plan Review Application Form** (Form 1 in this packet)
- **Site Plan** of the Principal Dwelling and the Protected Use ADU, showing lot lines, existing and proposed driveways, parking areas, walkways, building setback dimensions, locations of entrances to both the principal and accessory units, locations of all utilities on or serving the property, topography, wetlands, stormwater features, natural resources and vegetation. The Site Plan shall locate and detail any lighting and landscaping that is proposed, as well as any signage that is required for emergency access to the ADU. The Site Plan shall include a zoning table with the following parameters, required and proposed: lot area, frontage, building height and stories, setbacks, impervious coverage, and parking spaces for principal and accessory unit.

- **Exterior Elevations, with dimensions**, of each side of the Principal Dwelling and the Protected Use ADU, showing existing and proposed entrances. If the Protected Use ADU is in a detached structure, existing and proposed elevations of each side of the structure shall be submitted. (Dated photo elevations are acceptable for demonstrating existing conditions.)
- **Floor Plans, with dimensions**, of the Principal Dwelling and the Protected Use ADU, with the gross floor area of each indicated in square feet and broken down by space. Methodology for calculating the gross floor area shall comply with the definition of Gross Floor Area in Zoning Bylaw Section 5.6 Accessory Dwelling Units and follow the guidance listed in Appendix B: Gross Floor Area (GFA) Cheat Sheet for ADUs.
- **Certification of Square Footage by Registered Professional:** A signed statement from a registered architect or a licensed building contractor certifying that the proposed Protected Use ADU does not exceed 900 square feet of gross floor area, and that the proposed gross floor area of the Protected Use ADU does not exceed 50% of the gross floor area of the Principal Dwelling. (Form 2 in this packet)
- **Affidavit of Common Ownership:** A signed statement from the property owner that the Principal Dwelling and Protected Use ADU will be held in common ownership. (Form 4 in this packet)

**Additional Documentation Required (available from the offices noted):**

- **Assessor's Office:** Request an [Abutters List](#) (a.k.a. "Parties in Interest"). Please note that the date of this list must be within 90 days of the public hearing date for the Protected Use ADU. The Abutters List Request Form can be found on the Assessing Department webpage.
- **Building Commissioner:** Request and obtain a signed statement of conformance to Building Codes and square footage requirements/limitations (Form 3 in this packet).
- **Town Clerk:** Once all the above forms and supporting materials are assembled and reviewed and the Site Plan Review Application Form (Form 1 in this packet) is signed by Planning staff, submit one copy of the completed Application Form for filing and certification.
- **Planning Office:** File one electronic copy of the application package as certified by the Town Clerk by sending it via email to the Town Planner and Planning & Land Use Coordinator.
- **Application Fee:** Submit a check made payable to the Town of Carlisle for \$300 (which includes the \$250 ADU Application fee and the \$50 Abutters List fee).

Please Note: You may apply to the Assessor's Office and Building Commissioner in any order or simultaneously. After the application is complete and reviewed by the Planning staff, you must then file the Application Form (Form 1 in this packet) with the Town Clerk for certification. Then deliver, in electronic format only, the completed certified Application Form and all supporting documentation to the Planning staff with the application fee.

Please check in with Planning staff if you have questions throughout the application process.

**HEARING NOTICE**

The Carlisle Planning Board follows most of the noticing requirements of M.G.L. Ch. 40A s. 11 when advertising a public hearing for a Site Plan Review for a Protected Use ADU.

Planning Board staff will prepare the hearing notice, post it with the Town Clerk at least fourteen (14) days prior to the hearing date, and submit it for publishing in a newspaper of general circulation in Carlisle once in each of two consecutive weeks, with the first publication occurring no fewer than fourteen (14) days before the date of the hearing.

Applicants are required to cover the cost of publishing the hearing notice. The newspaper will contact the Applicant directly for payment.

Planning Board staff will mail the hearing notice to the petitioner, abutters, owners of land directly opposite on any public or private street or way, and abutters to the abutters within 300' of the property line of the petitioner as they appear on the most recent applicable tax list, no fewer than fourteen (14) days before the date of the hearing.

### **HEARING AND DECISION SCHEDULE**

Within sixty-five (65) days after the filing of a complete application, the Planning Board shall hold a public hearing. On the date of the scheduled hearing, the Planning Board shall open the public hearing and the Applicant shall present an overview of the proposal. If needed, the Planning Board may continue the public hearing to a future meeting date or dates to allow time for the Applicant to provide additional information. During the public hearing, and when drafting its Site Plan Decision, the Planning Board shall take into consideration feedback from Town boards and committees, staff, and abutters. The Planning Board may reasonably regulate and restrict a Protected Use ADU, but in no case shall a Protected Use ADU be subject to Use and Occupancy Restrictions, Prohibited Regulations, or Unreasonable Regulations pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 40A, s. 3 para. 11 and 760 CMR 71.00.

The Planning Board will file its Site Plan Decision on the application with the Town Clerk within fifteen (15) days of the date of the **close** of the public hearing. (A hearing is not always finished on the first night and can be continued to one or more later dates.)

Appeal of the Planning Board's decision may be made in accordance with Carlisle Zoning Bylaw Section 7.6.10 pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 40A s. 17.

Note: Before applying for a building permit to construct the Accessory Dwelling Unit, an Applicant must record the Site Plan Decision at the Middlesex North Registry of Deeds and submit a copy of the recorded Site Plan Decision with the recording information with the application for a building permit.

**IF SUBSTANTIAL USE OF THE SITE PLAN APPROVAL HAS NOT COMMENCED WITHIN TWO (2) YEARS OF THE DATE OF APPROVAL, THE PERMIT SHALL LAPSE.** The Planning Board may grant an extension for good cause.

Please note that this brief description of the process is intended only to assist you as a guide. You should refer to the following documents for complete information:

- a. [Carlisle Zoning Bylaw](#) Sections 5.6 (ADUs) and 7.6 (Site Plan Review)
- b. Protected Use ADU Site Plan Review Rules & Regulations herein, including:
  - i. Appendix A: ADU Requirements per ZBL Section
  - ii. Appendix B: Gross Floor Area (GFA) Cheat Sheet for ADUs
- c. [760 CMR 71.00](#)

## APPENDIX A

### Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Requirements (Per Carlisle Zoning Bylaw Section 5.6)

The Planning Board shall notify the Board of Health of an application for a Site Plan Review hereunder. Notwithstanding Board of Health approval, the Planning Board may grant a Site Plan Approval upon finding that the request is compatible with the purpose of this Section and meets the minimum requirements hereunder.

All Site Plan Approval Decisions for Protected Use ADUs shall include the following condition:  
 Prior to Issuance of a Building Permit, the Applicant shall have obtained all necessary permits and approvals, including a Letter of Approval from the Board of Health along with any required BOH Permits or Certifications.

After notice and public hearing, the Planning Board may grant a Site Plan Approval for a Protected Use Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) provided that:

Planning Board Findings	Carlisle Zoning Bylaw section	Documentation
The lot is in a Single-Family Residential Zoning District and does not already have a Protected Use ADU.	5.6.3	Zoning Map and Building/Planning Dept records
The Protected Use ADU may be attached to or detached from the Principal Dwelling. The Principal Dwelling may be altered to include a Protected Use ADU. The Protected Use ADU may be located within the Principal Dwelling or within an accessory structure on the Lot.	5.6.5.1	Site Plan, Floor Plans
The Protected Use ADU shall consist of a complete, independent living facility for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.	5.6.5.2	Floor Plans
The Protected Use ADU must maintain a separate entrance, either directly from the outside or through an entry hall or corridor shared with the Principal Dwelling, sufficient to meet the requirements of the Building Code for safe egress.	5.6.5.3	Floor Plans, Elevation Plans, Building Commissioner Statement
The Protected Use ADU shall not be larger in Gross Floor Area than ½ the Gross Floor Area of the Principal Dwelling or 900 square feet, whichever is smaller.	5.6.5.4	Floor Plans with dimensions, Certification of Square Footage
The Protected Use ADU shall comply with the dimensional setbacks, lot coverage, open space, standards for bulk and height, and number of stories required for the Principal Dwelling, or a Single-family Residential Dwelling or accessory structure in the Zoning District in which the Protected Use ADU is located, whichever is more permissive.	5.6.5.5	Site Plan, Elevation Plans with dimensions, Zoning Bylaw

<p>A Protected Use ADU shall be permitted within, or on a Lot with, a Pre-Existing Nonconforming Lot or Structure so long as the Protected Use ADU can be developed in conformance with the Building Code, 760 CMR 71.00, and state law</p>	<p>5.6.5.6</p>	<p>Site Plan, Building Commissioner Statement, Building/Planning Dept records</p>
<p>Neither the Principal Dwelling nor the Protected Use ADU is required to be owner-occupied; however, the Principal Dwelling and Protected Use ADU must be held in common ownership.</p>	<p>5.6.5.7</p>	<p>Certification of Common Ownership</p>
<p>If the Principal Dwelling is owner-occupied, then the Protected Use ADU may be used as a Short-term Rental, as defined in M.G.L. c. 64G, s. 1. Otherwise, a Protected Use ADU shall not be used as a Short-term Rental.</p>	<p>5.6.5.8</p>	<p>Town Clerk’s Office residency records</p>
<p>The Protected Use ADU shall not be subject to Use and Occupancy Restrictions, Prohibited Regulations, or Unreasonable Regulations pursuant to M.G.L. c. 40A, s. 3, para. 11 and 760 CMR 71.00</p>	<p>5.6.5.9</p>	<p>Site Plan Decision &amp; Conditions of Approval</p>
<p>A Protected Use ADU in a new accessory structure or addition is architecturally sympathetic to the Principal Dwelling in design characteristics, including but not limited to: roof pitch, trim, windows, eaves, exterior finish materials, and siting on the lot.</p>	<p>5.6.6.1</p>	<p>Site Plan, Elevation Plans</p>
<p>Any new separate entrance serving a Protected Use ADU shall be designed and located in a manner that indicates the Protected Use ADU is clearly subordinate and accessory to the Principal Dwelling.</p>	<p>5.6.6.2</p>	<p>Elevation Plans</p>
<p>A Modular Dwelling Unit is allowed to be used as a Protected Use ADU with the condition that it complies with Section 5.6.7.1.</p>	<p>5.6.6.3</p>	<p>Elevation Plans, Building Commissioner Statement</p>
<p>The parking spaces for the Protected Use ADU shall be constructed of a material consistent with the existing driveway and shall have vehicular access to the driveway. A separate driveway opening for the Protected Use ADU shall not be allowed.</p>	<p>5.6.6.4</p>	<p>Site Plan</p>
<p>If the Protected Use ADU is in a new accessory structure, the new accessory structure is located on an area of the site that has already been disturbed to limit the environmental impact and reduce the amount of additional impervious surface added to the site.</p>	<p>5.6.6.5</p>	<p>Site Plan</p>

## APPENDIX B

### Gross Floor Area (GFA) Cheat Sheet Protected Use Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

#### Gross Floor Area (GFA) Cheat Sheet – Protected Use ADU

- **Measure from the interior face of the exterior walls.**
- If converting existing space (e.g., basement or garage), **only finished, code-compliant areas count** toward GFA, unless otherwise noted.

#### **Included in GFA**

The following areas are **included** in Gross Floor Area:

- **All habitable spaces**, including:
  - Bedrooms
  - Living rooms
  - Kitchens
  - Bathrooms
  - Finished or unfinished basements (if ceiling height meets State Building Code R305)
  - Attics (if ceiling height meets State Building Code R305)
- **Interior walls and hallways**
- **Stairwells and elevator shafts** (counted once per floor they serve)
- **Closets and storage areas** (within the habitable envelope)
- **Enclosed porches** (if heated and/or completely enclosed and finished as living space)
- **Mechanical rooms** (if within the living envelope and finished)

#### **Not Included in GFA**

The following areas are typically **excluded** from GFA:

- **Attics with insufficient ceiling height** (State Building Code R305)
- **Open decks, patios, or balconies**
- **Garage spaces** (attached or detached, unless converted to living space)
- **Unenclosed unheated porches**
- **Crawl spaces** (ceiling height < 7 feet)

**FORM 1**  
**Protected Use ADU**  
**Site Plan Review Application**

Applicant's name, address and telephone number:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant is: Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Owner's Representative \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_

If applicant is not the owner, the owner's name, address and telephone number:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Location of property \_\_\_\_\_

Zoning District \_\_\_\_\_ Lot Acreage \_\_\_\_\_ Lot Frontage \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor's Map: Sheet(s) # \_\_\_\_\_ Lot(s) # \_\_\_\_\_

Recorded at North Middlesex Registry of Deeds in Book # \_\_\_\_\_ and Page # \_\_\_\_\_

**Board/Commission Review:**

[Fill out this section by writing YES, NO, or NA on the lines provided]

**Board of Health**

\_\_\_\_\_ An application has been submitted to the Board of Health for review.

**Conservation Commission**

\_\_\_\_\_ The project proposes work within wetland/riverfront jurisdictional areas.

\_\_\_\_\_ The project proposes work within the FEMA 100-year floodplain.

\_\_\_\_\_ The project proposes work within a Priority or Estimated Habitat for rare and endangered species.

\_\_\_\_\_ A notification has been submitted to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

\_\_\_\_\_ An application has been submitted to the Conservation Commission for review.

**Historical Commission**

\_\_\_\_\_ The property is in the Historic District and/or is listed on Carlisle's most recent Historic Properties Survey.

\_\_\_\_\_ An application has been submitted to the Historical Commission for review.

**Board of Appeals**

List any special permits/variances issued by the Board of Appeals for the structure:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signatures:**

Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant (if not owner) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Planning Staff \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Town Clerk \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**FORM 2**  
**Protected Use ADU**  
**Certification of Square Footage by Registered Professional**

To the Carlisle Planning Board:

I am a (check one):

Registered Architect                       Licensed Building Contractor

I have prepared / reviewed plans dated \_\_\_\_\_

for a Protected Use ADU at

(address) \_\_\_\_\_

submitted by (applicant) \_\_\_\_\_

and have determined the plans meet the requirements of the Carlisle Zoning Bylaw as follows:

Principal Dwelling Gross Floor Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Accessory Dwelling Unit Gross Floor Area: \_\_\_\_\_

**5.6.5.4: The Protected Use ADU shall not be larger in Gross Floor Area than ½ the Gross Floor Area of the Principal Dwelling or 900 square feet, whichever is smaller.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

License #: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated

**FORM 3**  
**Protected Use ADU**  
**Carlisle Building Commissioner Statement**

To the Carlisle Planning Board:

I/We have reviewed plans dated \_\_\_\_\_

for a Protected Use ADU at

(address) \_\_\_\_\_

submitted by (applicant) \_\_\_\_\_

and have determined the plans meet the requirements of the Carlisle Zoning Bylaw as follows:

5.6.4.3: The construction of the Protected Use ADU shall conform with the State Building Code.

5.6.5.4: The Protected Use ADU shall not be larger in Gross Floor Area than ½ the Gross Floor Area of the Principal Dwelling or 900 square feet, whichever is smaller.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Carlisle Building Commissioner

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**FORM 4**  
**Protected Use ADU**  
**Affidavit of Common Ownership**

To the Carlisle Planning Board:

The undersigned, owner(s) of the lot designated

Map \_\_\_\_\_ Parcel \_\_\_\_\_

on the Town of Carlisle Property maps located at

(address) \_\_\_\_\_

And Applicant(s) for an Accessory Dwelling Unit under Section 5.6 of the Carlisle Zoning Bylaw hereby certify that **pursuant to Subsection 5.6.5.8, the Principal Dwelling and Protected Use ADU will be held in common ownership.**

I/We understand that any Site Plan Approval granted for our application will be valid only as long as the property remains compliant with the requirements of Carlisle Zoning Bylaw Section 5.6 and specifically subsection 5.6.5.8.

Pursuant to Carlisle Zoning Bylaw Subsection 5.6.5.8, I understand that if it is discovered that the Principal Dwelling and Protected Use ADU on the property have been sold separately, zoning enforcement may be taken, which could result in rescission of the occupancy permit for the Protected Use ADU.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Owner

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name:

\_\_\_\_\_