MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING TYPOLOGIES:

THE HIVE
AIA Austin Homes Tour 2020
Nicole Blair, Studio 512
East Austin
2015

The Hive’s design draws inspiration from Dutch and Japanese precedents that find creative solutions when faced with spatial constraints. Walls tilt from the slab, hugging building setback planes and an angled utility easement, to add volume where needed. The City of Austin’s impervious cover requirements limited the footprint to 320sf given the size of the site and existing bungalow. The architect carefully tailored the small space in three dimensions by cutting into or expanding it to suit the various programs of the home.

Living Area/Unit:
- 550 SF (ADU conditioned)
- 1,124 SF (House conditioned)

Site/Area/Unit:
- 6,500 SF

Building Height:
- 2 Stories

Floor-Area-Ratio:
- 0.29

Density:
- 6.7 Units/Acre

Open Space:
- Shared yard

Parking:
- Tandem front-access driveway

Walk Score:
- 78

FLOW-TO-AREA RATIO (FAR)

Living areas, second floor covered balconies, and porches of carpeted/hard-planked spaces are considered floor area and are counted towards the FAR. Terraces and porches over 15 feet tall must be counted twice. Porch spaces are linked to the main house and not conditioned.

CRITICAL ROOT ZONE (CRZ)

Any tree larger than 19” in diameter is protected by the City of Austin and requires special protection to their critical root zones. These zones extend from the tree’s trunk in inches equals the size of its critical root zone in feet. Existing trees are also well protected in Austin; the city has established setbacks around trees to protect the critical root zone. Existing structures must be evaluated against these limits before adding an ADU.

IMPERVIOUS COVER

Impervious cover refers to surfaces that do not allow infiltration of water into the ground. A patio or deck, although uncovered, may sound an impervious cover in certain instances. Landscaping, the space within the impervious cover allowance, and any trees, are a whole.

PARKING

Parking requirements for ADUs add cost and can limit or prevent ADU construction on a site due to impervious cover calculations. One parking space must be provided for the ADU. However, an individual driveway is not necessary; the space can be uncovered, tandem, and/or within setbacks. Austin has seen an increase in ADUs in areas with alleys because this access mitigates several of these concerns. The parking requirement is waived if the ADU is within a quarter mile of public transit.

PROPERTY CONSTRAINTS THAT IMPACT ADU DESIGN

ADU Design Constraints

SETBACKS

The most obvious setbacks to be aware of are property line setbacks, which are defined by property deceds and the Land Development Code. Certain easements, such as a utility easement, may also occur on a site. Usually, because of the separation from the main house and any other structure on site, ADU setbacks are not a concern.

EXISTING STRUCTURES

The City of Austin’s Land Development Code specifies maximum building coverage, FAR, and impervious cover for each zoning profile. For most single-family residential properties these are: 40% buildable area, 45% impervious cover, and 0.4:1 FAR. Existing trees on a site are also well protected in Austin. The city has established setbacks around trees to protect the critical root zone. Existing structures must be evaluated against these limits before adding an ADU.
ALLEY OPPORTUNITIES

ADU Potential

“The proliferation of single family residential districts in Austin is a dominant feature of the City’s landscape. On one hand, this is part of the Texas culture; a piece of land to call your own. On the other hand, this ubiquitous landscape has contributed greatly to many of the issues that Austin now faces in terms of affordability, traffic, and access to amenities such as transportation and jobs.”

“Alleys provide prime opportunities to create distinctive micro-communities that speak to Austin’s unique culture and architectural style.”

“In areas with networks of alleys, micro-neighborhoods of ADUs would create dense, context-appropriate communities that integrate green infrastructure and public space.”

“With increased density comes greater livability, better transit services, decreased traffic congestion, more commercial options, stronger civic amenities, accessible parks, reduced infrastructure costs, and more timely maintenance.”


City of Austin Land Development Code regulatory requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units:

- Minimum Lot Area: 5,750 SF
- Maximum F.A.R.: 0.15
- Minimum Base Zoning: SF-2
- Maximum Dwelling Units/Lot: 2

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING TYPOLOGIES:

ALLEY-ACCESS GARAGE APARTMENT

COMMON AREA

AIA Austin Homes Tour 2020

Jobe Corral Architects

Clarksville

2020

The Solarium is a modern addition to a historic Craftsman house. The light-filled space transforms the existing bungalow while complementing its vernacular. Included in the addition is a small under stair restroom beneath the existing garage apartment. Glowing frosted glass, steel, and walnut details provide a conversation between these structures.

As an engineer, the homeowner has a passion for detailing and functionality, and how materials can work together to create something artful. Now the house shows this philosophy as expressed in two different centuries.

Living Area:
1,500 SF (House conditioned)
420 SF (Garage Apartment)

Site Area:
6,662 SF Total

Building Height:
1 Story (House)
2 Stories (Apartment)

Floor-Area-Ratio:
0.29

Density:
6.8 Units/Acre

Open Space:
Shared yard

Parking:
Alley-access garage
Front driveway

Walk Score:
88

Site Plan

Drawings provided by Jobe Corral Architects. Photograph by Casey Woods Photography.