

Detached residential garages and accessory buildings

Under the City of St. Louis Park's zoning ordinance, garages, storage sheds, gazebos, play structures and other detached buildings are considered "accessory uses." That means they are for storage or recreation purposes, and they may not be used as living quarters or for home offices.

To ensure that garages and other detached buildings are scaled accordingly for the neighborhood, the zoning ordinance controls their height and location. A building permit is required for all accessory buildings exceeding 120 square feet.

Through the permit process compliance with the following factors will be addressed:

- Setbacks from property lines (location)
- Height, width and size
- Design

Setbacks

A "setback" or "yard" is the minimum distance required between a property line and the proposed building. All setbacks are measured from the property line only. Landmarks, physical features and structures, such as fences, cannot be used to estimate the location of the property line. Here are several ways to determine your lot lines:

- Locate your lot's corner stakes/irons. You can use a metal detector to find them. Usually, they are 1-inch diameter metal pipes that are 12 inches long. They were set in each of the four corners of your yard, just below the sod, when the lot was subdivided. The invisible line connecting the four property irons forms your property line.
- Come to City Hall to see if there is a lot survey of your property on file. This drawing may help locate the corner irons.
- Hire a registered land surveyor.

Location requirements (setbacks and yards)

1. Accessory building must be located in the backyard. An accessory building may be located in a side yard only if it is used as a detached garage and does not border a street (i.e. a corner lot cannot have a detached garage in the side yard that borders the street).
2. Detached garages and accessory buildings must be a minimum of 2 feet from any side or rear lot line. Contact City Hall to determine the zoning district of your property.
3. If less than 6 feet from a principal building on the same lot, the accessory building is considered part of the principal building and must meet principal building setbacks.
4. Corner lots shall maintain a 15-foot minimum street side yard if the width of the property is 60 feet or more. If the width is less than 60 feet, then the minimum street side yard is reduced to 9 feet.

Size definitions and requirements height

The height of an accessory building is the distance from the first story elevation, as defined by building code, to the highest point of the structure. The height of an accessory structure, such as a play or decorative landscape structure, is the distance from the lowest exterior grade at the base of the structure to the highest point of the structure.

See Figure A below for an illustration of accessory building and accessory structure height definitions.

- Accessory structures must not exceed 15 feet in height unless the roof pitch of the accessory building matches the pitch on the house and the siding matches the house. If these conditions are met, then the additional height shall not exceed 24 feet in total.
- The height of all accessory buildings and structures must be lower than the highest point of the house.

Size

- In all R-1, R-2 and R-3 districts, the total cumulative ground floor area of all accessory buildings and structures shall not exceed 800 square feet or 25 percent of the area between the principal structure and rear lot line.
- Total cumulative ground floor area of accessory building shall be smaller than the ground floor area of the house.
- Regardless of the 25 percent maximum, a property may construct a detached garage that does not exceed 576 square feet.

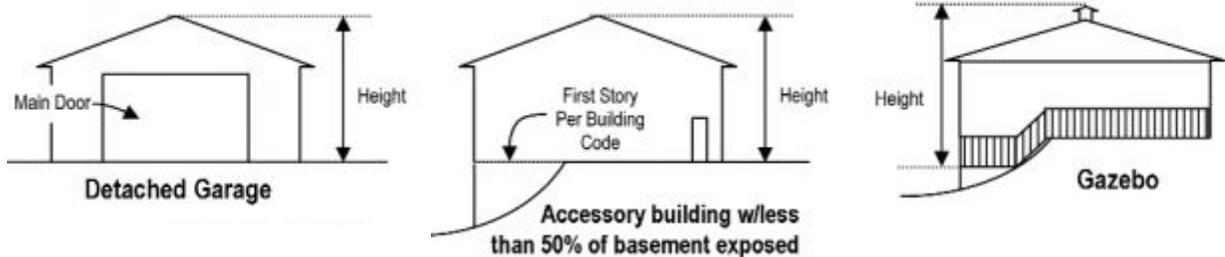
Design requirements

All accessory buildings must adhere to the following:

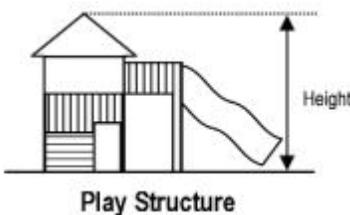
- The new building or structure must be compatible in design and material with the home.
- Garages or accessory buildings may not have kitchen or bathroom facilities. However, hose bibs and utility sinks are allowed.
- Floor drains must be connected to the sanitary sewer.
- Window, door, skylight or similar openings can be located in the second story if they face a road, alley or owner’s backyard.
- Accessory buildings may not be used for dwelling purposes or home occupation.

Height definitions (Figure A)

Accessory buildings



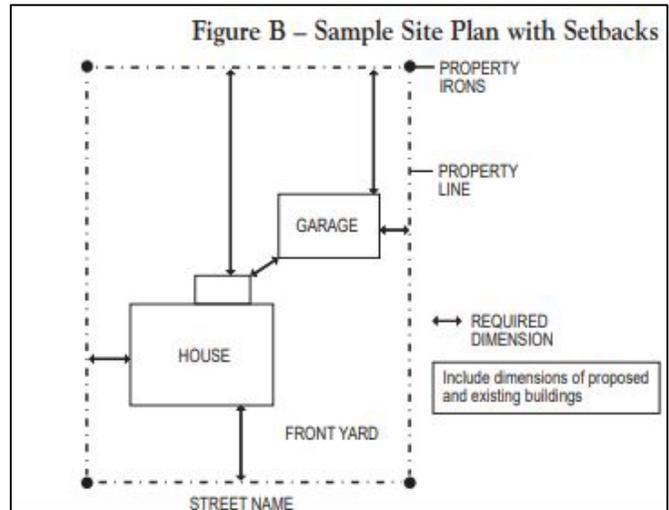
Accessory structure



A permit is required

Before any demolition or construction begins, you must obtain a building permit. To apply for a permit, complete the online application on the city's website or go to City Hall between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday to apply in person. If you have questions about what to bring, please call the community development department at 952.924.2575. The cost of the permit is based on the valuation of the construction, including materials and labor.

When you come to apply for a permit, bring in three copies of the site plan and two complete sets of legible building plans.



The site plan must clearly show

- All easements
- Lot size dimensions
- Distances to the property lines from the existing house and existing and proposed accessory buildings and structures
- Power lines

Building plans must clearly show

- Plan view of the building or structure (overhead view)
- Cross section of a wall showing size of footing, anchor bolt/strap, distance from grade to sill plate, size and height of framing members and type of roof system used (if hand framed, then size of lumber), and roof pitch.
- Elevation drawings of two sides of the building or structure.
- For accessory buildings, show one view of the gable side, including the total proposed height (to peak of the building), and the other view showing the eave side with all exterior materials labeled.

Driveways

- Driveways must be paved within one year of issuance of building permit.
- A building permit is required for any alteration of a driveway.
- If you are constructing a new curb cut onto a public road for a driveway or are planning to alter the existing driveway curb cut, a right of way permit is required.

NOTE: This handout summarizes the zoning requirements for residential garages and accessory buildings. Please contact the inspections department at 952.924.2588 for information regarding building code requirements.