

ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS (ARUs) IN RURAL SETTLEMENT AREAS



BLANDFORD-BLENHEIM | EAST ZORRA-TAVISTOCK | NORWICH | SOUTH-WEST OXFORD | ZORRA

Oxford County and local area municipalities are making it easier for property owners to add additional residential units to lots in rural settlement areas. This is intended to help provide additional housing options and increase the overall housing supply.

WHAT ARE ARUs?

Additional Residential Units (ARUs) are smaller, self-contained residential units (i.e., with their own kitchen, bathroom and sleeping areas) that are inside, attached to, or in a detached accessory building on the same property as a single-detached house, semi-detached house or street fronting townhouse.

ARUs can take many forms, such as basement apartments, attached suites, tiny homes or coach houses, but they must be smaller than the primary residential unit and located within a permanent building (i.e., not in a mobile home or recreational vehicle). They must also be connected to municipal water and sewage services where these are available.

ARUs IN RURAL SETTLEMENT AREAS

Rural settlement areas include Serviced Villages, Villages and Rural Clusters as they are defined in the “Interpretation” section of your Township’s zoning by-law.

For Serviced Villages with both a municipal water system and municipal sewage system:

- Up to two ARUs per lot, including a maximum of one ARU in a detached building, are permitted provided there is available municipal water and sewage servicing capacity, and zoning requirements can be met.
- ARUs are not permitted, or may be limited to one ARU per lot, in certain Serviced Villages where servicing capacity is limited and these limits are specified in the Township zoning by-law.

For Villages and Rural Clusters that do not have a municipal sewage system:

- One ARU per lot is permitted, subject to meeting zoning requirements, such as minimum lot area.
- Villages and Rural Clusters that are served by a municipal water system may have capacity constraints. The zoning provisions for those areas may not permit an ARU.

Please note: a building permit is required to add a residential unit and proposals must meet the requirements of the Township’s zoning by-law. **The requirements of each Township’s zoning by-law vary.** Before you begin the process of planning for an additional residential unit, check your township’s website for information about their zoning by-law and process. If you have questions, your local building department and/or planning office can confirm requirements (contacts provided on reverse). You may also consider retaining the services of a qualified professional.

When submitting a building permit application to create or recognize an existing unit as an ARU in a settlement with Municipal water and/or sewage system, you must submit confirmation that there is adequate system capacity. Use Form **F060 – ARU Sewage and Water System Capacity Confirmation Form.**

Requirements for all ARUs

- The total gross floor area of all ARUs on the lot cannot exceed 50% of the gross floor area of the primary residential unit, to a maximum of 100 m² (1076 ft²). This floor area may be further limited by Township zoning provisions.
- ARUs are not permitted on a lot that contains a boarding/lodging house, group home, garden suite, converted dwelling, duplex, mobile home, bed and breakfast, or a home daycare as defined in the applicable zoning by-law.
- ARUs may not be permitted, or are subject to approval by the applicable conservation authority, on a lot that contains natural hazards (e.g., floodplain, wetland, unstable slopes) or that does not have adequate access during a flood event.

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Requirements (Continued)

- The lot must be large enough to accommodate the house and ARU, and provide adequate space for any private services (such as septic system and/or well), parking, landscaping, and separation (setbacks) from other buildings and property lines.
- All ARUs must use the same driveway and parking area as the primary house.
- There must be adequate access to each ARU for both occupant use and emergency response.

In addition to the requirements above, an ARU in a detached building must meet the following requirements:

- For a lot with private septic system, a minimum lot area of 0.6 ha (1.48 ac) is required.
- The detached building must be located in the rear or interior side yard.
- There may be detailed zoning requirements regarding the location and design of the detached building, parking area and outdoor amenity areas (e.g., maximum building height, minimum fencing, building setbacks, limitations on the location of windows and decks/balconies).
- An ARU cannot be severed from the lot containing the primary house.

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICING

Oxford County is not responsible for the condition, capacity or performance of water and wastewater infrastructure once within the lot boundaries. It is the property owner's responsibility, through retaining a qualified person/designer, to confirm water and wastewater demands for the property, and the size/capacity of municipal services required. Any repairs or upgrades to municipal or private services would be at the cost of the owner.

Reduced water pressure could result from an increase in units on the lot and/or distance from the street. Gravity outlets for wastewater connections are not guaranteed and depend on lot grading and distance from the service connection at the property line. The use of private wastewater grinder pumps may be required and all costs associated with the purchase, operation, and maintenance would be the responsibility of the owner. Only one water service, one wastewater service, and one meter (for billing) are permitted per lot, and any sub-metering of water usage by additional units would be at the discretion and cost of the property owner.

MORE INFORMATION

Early consultation with Township building services and/or the Community Planning Office is recommended.

A building permit is required to add a residential unit; see the [Citizen's Guide to Land Use Planning - Building Permits](#).

ARUs may change the assessed value of a property; see [Municipal Property Assessment Corporation \(MPAC\)](#).

Funding for your project may be available through Oxford County's Human Services department; see [Housing Funding Programs](#).

AREA MUNICIPAL CONTACTS

Township of Blandford-Blenheim
[Building Services](#)
[Zoning By-law No. 1360-2002](#)

Township of East Zorra-Tavistock
[Building Department](#)
[Zoning By-law No. 2003-18](#)

Township of Norwich
[Building Services](#)
[Zoning By-law No. 07-2003-Z](#)

Township of South-West Oxford
[Building Department](#)
[Zoning By-law No. 25-98](#)

Township of Zorra
[Building and Drainage](#)
[Zoning By-law No. 35-99](#)

OXFORD COUNTY CONTACTS

Community Planning
519-539-9800 ext. 3912
planning@oxfordcounty.ca

Public Works
Development Review
519-539-9800 ext. 3900
publicworksdevelopment@oxfordcounty.ca

Human Services
Housing Programs Coordinator
519-539-9800 ext. 3390
humanservices@oxfordcounty.ca

