

ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS (ARUs) IN AGRICULTURAL 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 agricultural 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).

ARUs IN AGRICULTURAL AREAS

Agricultural areas encompass all lands outside of urban centres and rural settlements, including residential uses on rural residential lots and agricultural lots (farms). Up to two ARUs per lot, including a maximum of one ARU in a detached building, may be permitted in agricultural areas.

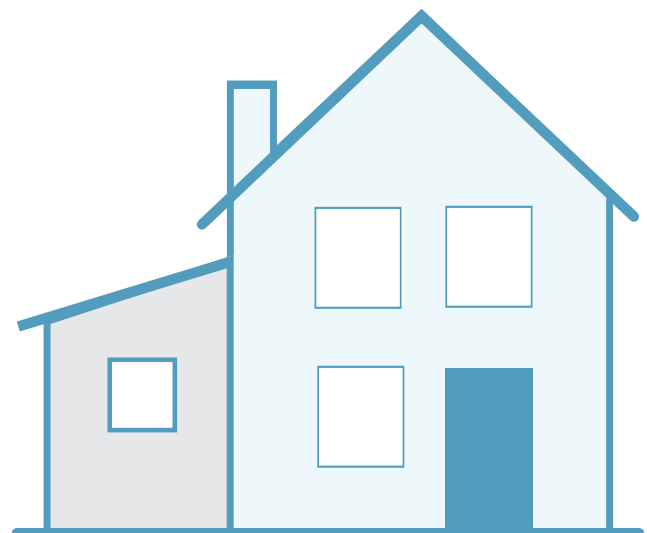
Requirements for all ARUs in agricultural areas:

- 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 140 m² (1506 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, or a mobile home, 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.
- The house and lot must be large enough to accommodate the ARU and provide adequate parking, landscaping, and separation (setbacks) from other buildings and property lines.

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.

- All ARUs must use the same driveway and parking area as the primary residential unit.
- There must be adequate access to each ARU for both occupant use and emergency response.

Continued on the next page.



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ARUs IN DETACHED BUILDINGS

In addition to the requirements on page one, an ARU in a detached building (either a new building or a building converted from another use such as a shop or garage) must meet the following requirements:

- 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, except on a farm.
- The location must satisfy Minimum Distance Separation Formulae (MDS I). MDS calculations and measurements are the responsibility of the applicant and may require assistance from a qualified professional to prepare.
- On a farm, the ARU must be within 30 m (98 ft) of the primary house.
- An ARU cannot be severed from the lot containing the primary house.

ARUs in a detached building on an agricultural-zoned lot (typically zoned A1 and A2 in the Township zoning by-laws) must also obtain approval of a minor variance, granted by the Township Committee of Adjustment, to confirm that the location of the ARU building and associated private services and parking will not impact agricultural operations either on the lot or on surrounding properties, or remove agricultural lands from production.

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
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