

Dear Committee,

My name is Jen Vanderherberg, I am a BCIN residential designer. I prepare construction drawings for permits primarily in Hamilton. In the past 2 years, I have had an increasing demand to design detached ADU's.

One of the first ADU's in Hamilton that I designed (located at [REDACTED]) received so much positive feedback, that I have since designed 3 more like it, and am currently working on 2 more. The design is a 2-story detached ADU. I incorporated cantilevered bump-outs on the front and back to add to the curb appeal, utilized a mix of siding material and focused on front-facing windows to lessen the impact on neighbouring properties. I also like to encourage the use of narrow, higher windows where the spaces overlook a neighbouring property to protect the neighbour's privacy. I work hard to design economical yet beautiful buildings that fit in well with the existing neighbourhood. The builders have shared that so many neighbours have stopped and commented on how fun and gorgeous these units are. Neighbours have asked if their family members could move in. These units are the most desirable in the rental community - it is so healthy for renters to be able to have their own outdoor space, detached from other units, above grade and within a demographically diverse neighbourhood. These suites are making a positive impact for affordable rental units for families, inlaws, newcomers, and vulnerable members of our community. I don't think I need to emphasize how desperate we are for more affordable housing in Hamilton.

Garden suites are also a wonderful way to create multi-generational housing. As our family looks to the future, conversations of building a detached ADU for our parents have begun. Families that I've designed in-law suites for do desire two stories - to allow room for an extra bedroom when out of town family comes to visit, or for an artists studio / extra space.

If I'm honest, I've only designed two 1-story ADU's, and am not a huge fan of them, for the following reasons.

1. They take up too much yard space. They are bulky and impact the backyard amenity areas. This limits the space where children can play, family can congregate for BBQ's, and areas for growing gardens.
2. The city's new lot grading plan requirement raises the cost significantly and extends the timeline in which these can be built. If we're only designing 1 story units, most of them will be subject to this requirement.
3. Most lots in Hamilton (especially in the downtown core) would hardly be able to fit a 1-story unit. It really would take up much of the back yard, especially with the setbacks from the side and rear lot lines. You need a large lot to accommodate a 1-story garden suite, which would concentrate them to certain neighbourhoods with larger lots, rather than having them sprinkled all over the city and feasible to build in any neighbourhood.

We really hope that we can keep our 2-story ADU's. The projects that I have designed are mostly people in our community, and we have seen first-hand how quickly these units are occupied and how delightful life in a 2-story ADU can be. Yes, there will always be NIMBY's and people who are afraid of change. Let's not let the nay-sayers be the voice of Hamilton. Here us when we say – the majority of Hamiltonians are thrilled and in support of these ADU's. We all deeply feel the need for more affordable housing units. My hope is that Hamilton will continue to encourage adding these units to our cityscape.

Sincerely,

Jen Vanderherberg



Project North Architectural Design Studio

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