

DSG Policy Memorandum
Administrative
Interpretation
#00-01



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND WASHINGTON
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
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MEMORANDUM

TO: DSG Staff
FROM: Richard Hart, DSG Director
DATE: April 10, 2000
RE: ADU Policy Statement & Policy Interpretation

Recently there has been some discussion and disagreement among our DSG staff concerning what constitutes an actual ADU and when a dwelling with more than one kitchen should be classified an ADU.

Some people feel that a second “kitchen” alone, regardless of whether the owners intend to rent space, would require application for an ADU permit. Others feel that an additional “kitchen” or multiple “kitchens” do not necessarily indicate that there must be a formal ADU.

I have researched this issue and had extensive discussions with George Thomas, former Building Official and Bill Price, Building Inspector, and conclude that many homes on Mercer Island have multiple “kitchens” or kitchen areas, some within detached garden or pool houses or even lower levels of multiple story homes. Many of these areas have elaborate wet bars or some form of food preparation areas for parties and gatherings. These specific areas were never intended as separate units for renting as a dwelling. I believe that a second kitchen or multiple kitchens or cooking areas do not constitute an ADU. Only if the kitchen is part of a portion of the dwelling intended to be used and rented as a separate dwelling unit should it be classified as an ADU. Bill Price indicates that nothing in the Uniform Building Code classifies multiple kitchens as constituting separate dwelling units. There is no evidence that homes should not be allowed multiple kitchen areas if the owners so desire. Having these multiple kitchens should not place restrictions upon the owner for applying for an ADU permit.

If there is a question or unclear area, DSG should then ask for a letter from the owner stating that they do not intend to rent the detached structure or major portion of the SF dwelling with the additional kitchen as a separate dwelling unit.

This code interpretation and policy statement should resolve and clarify the ADU question in the future.