

Focus!

Shed your dreams: Extra space or a special place

What is the purpose?

Do you dream of adding on to your house for a home office or a playroom? Does clutter prevent you from doing yoga or watercolor? What if you could easily get away to a place of your own making for all those things without the expense, noise and inconvenience of a remodel? Hmm. You should know:

In unincorporated King County, you may build a detached residential storage shed with a floor area of 200 square feet or less without a permit.

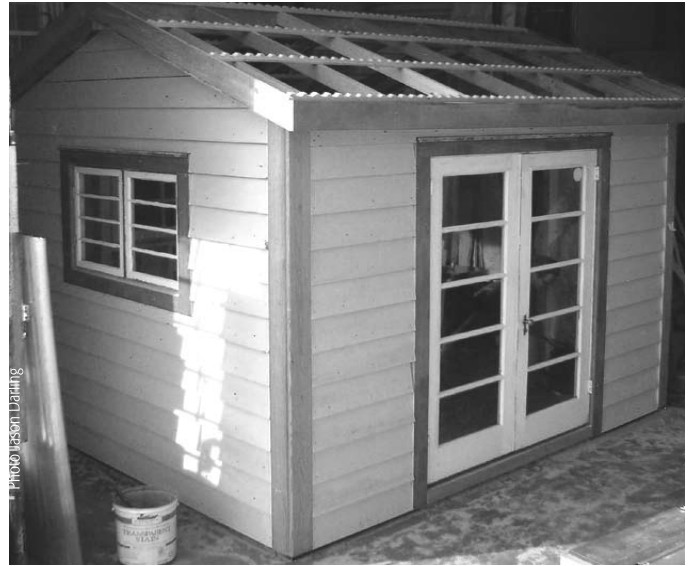
In the City of Seattle, you can build one-story detached accessory buildings as long as:

1. The projected roof area does not exceed 120 square feet.
2. The building is not placed on a concrete foundation other than a slab on grade.
3. The roof height does not exceed 12'.
4. Total building area (all structures) covers less than 35% of lot or 1750 sq/ft.

What is the catch?

You are still responsible for zoning code requirements including setbacks, clearing limits, and lot coverage. Check applicable codes and development standards in your area by contacting the Department of Planning and Development Applicant Services Center to speak with a permit specialist.

www.seattle.gov/dpd/Permits/Process_Overview/Location_Hours/default.asp.



*The RE Shack
a shed built entirely from
used building materials.*

How useful is a shed?

Does a shed make you think cobwebs and rusty garden tools? Instead, imagine a cozy finished space with all the accoutrements of your home, minus running water. There are no laws that prohibit wiring, insulating and making it beautiful. Within certain legal limits, you can use it for anything short of being an accessory dwelling unit.

Design It

Be your own architect. Research ideas for shed plans and applicable codes: Talk to friends, go the library and use the internet. Be flexible. Take the opportunity to incorporate salvage from the RE Store. Trick out your modest building with a warm fir floor, cedar siding, bleacher trim, glass door knobs and a metal roof.

Start collecting your favorite windows and doors early and design around them. Once you have a concept (modern, craftsman, eclectic...) draw it to scale on graph paper. Stake out the site in your yard and visualize access, views and how you will get power there.

A note on roofs

A gable roof with overhangs looks cutest and is most practical, shedding water and adding headroom. Draw different roof pitches to find the one you like. Avoid shed roofs as they make it look like a shed. Flat roofs work for the modern aesthetic but can leak. Green roofs are a great option but require certain detailing, adequate structure, and a low slope. A polycarbonate roof is simple, bright and great for a greenhouse. A metal roof will last the longest and is recyclable.

Build it

Build it yourself or hire a carpenter. Common building practices apply to your shed. Pay special attention to your foundation and roof. Slope your site and backfill with a few inches of gravel or crushed glass for proper drainage. It is a good idea to lift the structure off the ground on pier blocks, protecting it from moisture. Remember to frame your openings with at least an inch gap all the way around. Complete it with low toxic paints and finishes and throw a party.

Backyard commute

Imagine your own private office with a garden view or a sanctuary, bathed in light, where you can read in your favorite chair. 120 square feet of possibility awaits in your backyard.

Resources

www.metroshed.com/
www.gardensheds.com/
Lot Coverage, Height and Yard Standards for Homes in Single Family Zones, CAM 220
www.seattle.gov/dclu/publications/cam/cam220.pdf

Businesses in Your Home: Home Occupations Allowed in Residential Zones, CAM 236
www.ci.seattle.wa.us/dclu/Publications/cam/cam236.pdf

King County's Department of Development and Environmental Services (Frequently Asked Questions)
www.metrokc.gov/DDES/faq/faq_permreq.htm



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