

December 17, 2021

**ADMINISTRATIVE INTERPRETATION  
DECISION AND FINDINGS  
PLNZAD2021-01200**



**REQUEST:**

This is a request from Michael Lawlor of Brach Design (the applicant), representing the property owner, for an Administrative Interpretation regarding the definition of “Building Connection” for a proposed accessory dwelling unit (ADU) at approximately 1043 East North Bonneville Drive. The proposed ADU would be attached to the existing primary residence by a structural roof between the two buildings. The area underneath the proposed roof connection would be open, like a porch or a breezeway. There would be no interior circulation space between the two structures.

Specifically, the applicant has asked for clarity regarding the definition of a “Building Connection” (found in section [21A.62.040](#) of the Salt Lake City Zoning Ordinance) to know what would be required to consider the two buildings as a single structure.

**DECISION:**

The Zoning Administrator finds that the two connected buildings are considered a single structure because they are connected “*in a substantial manner,*” and the structural roof connection between the two buildings covers at least 50% of the connecting façades’ widths. “*Internal pedestrian circulation*” is not required in this case. The proposed project would still need to conform with all applicable standards in the Salt Lake City Zoning Regulations.

**FINDINGS:**

The zoning regulations define a “Building Connection” as the following (see section [21A.62.040](#)):

*Two (2) or more buildings which are connected in a substantial manner or by common interior space including internal pedestrian circulation. Where two (2) buildings are attached in this manner, they shall be considered a single building and shall be subject to all yard requirements of a single building. Determination of building connection shall be through the site plan review process.*

The applicant would like the proposed ADU and the existing primary residence to be considered a single building, as described in the above definition. To be considered a single building, the two structures must meet the qualifying statement in the definition’s first sentence. This statement separates two distinct qualifiers by the word “or.” This means that two buildings are considered to be one structure when they are connected:

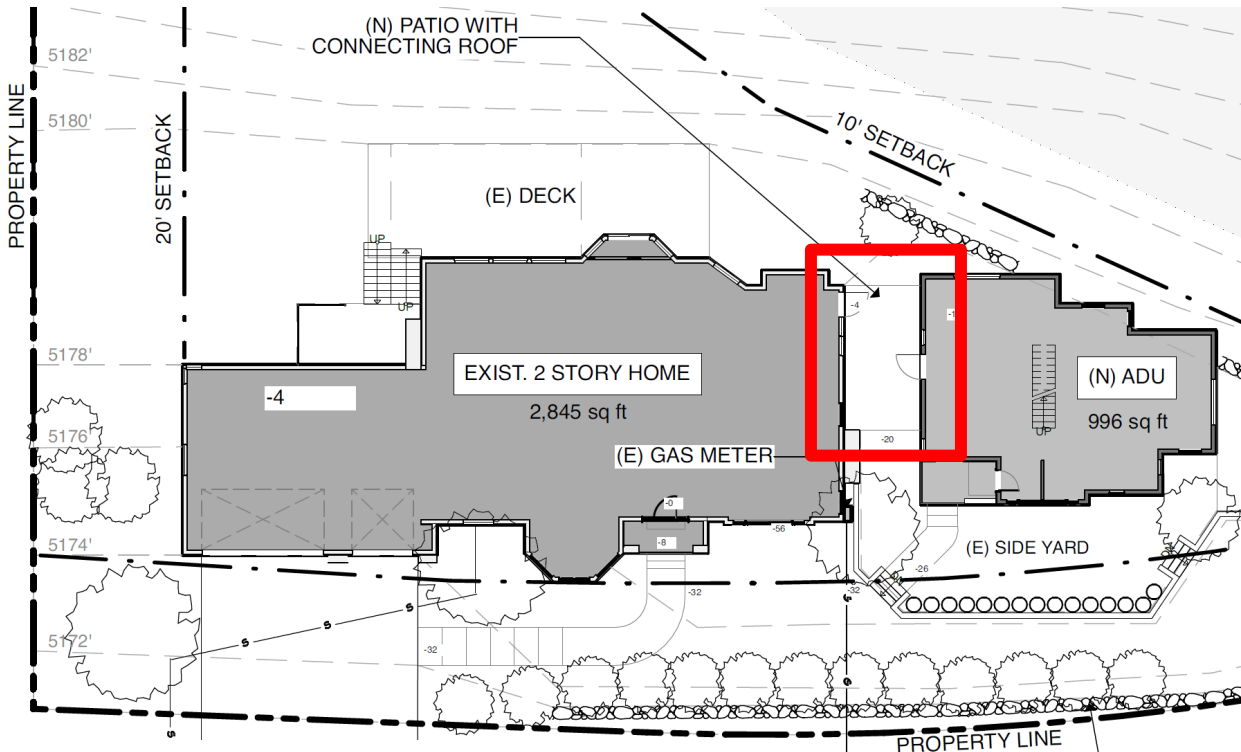
- In a substantial manner; OR
- By common interior space including internal pedestrian circulation.

The applicant’s question essentially boils down to whether the phrase “*including internal pedestrian circulation*” applies to only connections “*by common interior space*” or also to buildings “*connected in a substantial manner.*” Because there is not a comma separating “*by common interior space*” and “*including internal pedestrian circulation,*” they should be considered together as a single phrase that does not refer to anything listed before the conjunction “or.” Buildings connected “*in a substantial manner*” (like the proposed structural roof) do not require internal pedestrian circulation to be considered a single structure.

As stated in the request, the proposed ADU would be connected by a roof with no internal circulation. The two buildings could be considered connected if it is determined that they are connected in a “*substantial manner,*” as required by the definition for “Building Connection.” The zoning regulations do not define “Substantial,” but, as required by section [21A.62.010](#), the [Merriam-Webster Dictionary has the following relevant definitions:](#)

- Firmly constructed; sturdy
- Significantly great
- Being largely, but not wholly that which is specified

Based on the above definition, a connection *substantial in manner* must be a) firmly constructed, b) significant, and c) largely (but not necessarily wholly) connected. In this case, the Zoning Administrator has interpreted it to mean that a connecting roof must cover the width of at least 50% of each structure’s walls that are to be connected. In the applicant’s proposal below, the roof connecting the two buildings covers more than half the width of each buildings’ façades. If the proposed connection covered less than half of either wall, it would not meet the definition of “Substantial” and would not be considered a “Building Connection.”



Another relevant definition to consider is “Accessory Building or Structure,” the zoning regulation’s definition is below:

*A subordinate building or structure, located on the same lot with the main building, occupied by or devoted to an accessory use. When an accessory building or structure is attached to the main building in a substantial manner, as by a wall or roof, such accessory building shall be considered part of the main building.*

Accessory buildings “attached to the main building in a substantial manner, as by wall or roof” are considered part of the main building. Because a roof will connect the two structures “in a substantial manner” (as discussed earlier in this section), the ADU and the primary residence would also be considered a single structure by the definition of “Accessory Building or Structure.”

If you have any questions regarding this interpretation, contact Aaron Barlow at 801-535-6182 or email at [aaron.barlow@slcgov.com](mailto:aaron.barlow@slcgov.com).

**APPEAL PROCESS:**

An applicant or any other person or entity adversely affected by a decision administering or interpreting this Title may appeal to the Appeals Hearing Officer. Notice of appeal shall be filed within ten (10) days of the administrative decision. The appeal shall be filed with the Planning Division and specify the decision appealed and why the appellant claims the decision to be in error. Applications for appeals are located on the Planning Division website at <https://www.slcc.gov/planning/applications/> along with information about the applicable fee. Appeals may be filed in person or by mail at:

<b>In-Person:</b> Salt Lake City Corp Planning Counter 451 S State Street, Room 215 Salt Lake City, UT	<b>US Mail:</b> Salt Lake City Corp Planning Counter PO Box 145471 Salt Lake City, UT 84114-5417
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**NOTICE:**

Please be advised that a determination finding a particular use to be a permitted or conditional use shall not authorize the establishment of such use nor the development, construction, reconstruction, alteration, or moving of any building or structure. It shall merely authorize the preparation, filing, and processing of applications for any approvals and permits that may be required by the codes and ordinances of the City including, but not limited to, a zoning certificate, a building permit, and a certificate of occupancy, subdivision approval, and a site plan approval.

  
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Aaron Barlow, AICP  
Principal Planner

cc: Nick Norris, Planning Director  
Joel Paterson, Zoning Administrator  
Casey Stewart, Development Review Supervisor  
Posted to Web  
Applicable Recognized Organizations