Accessory Dwelling Units in College Towns:
An Innovative Option to Increase Housing Supply for Students and Seniors

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Executive Summary
Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are an up and coming option for cities to increase their low- to mid-income housing stock and for homeowners to make a worthwhile investment on their property. By adding a unit in an existing home’s backyard, homeowners can add value to their property as well as gain additional income. The investment also increases the housing stock, solely by private investment, at a time where most major cities in the US are facing a housing shortage. ADUs are an attractive option for cities because they allow for infill development and does not rely on large-scale developments by developers, which can create political tensions in a city.

College towns, with vibrant cultures, often have small and variable household sizes and populations. They are also becoming a popular place to retire as they offer a fun, relaxing atmosphere and often better access to healthcare. Both college students and seniors benefit from ADUs being available as a housing option because it is an affordable housing type and gives them access to neighborhoods and resources within them which might not be available through other housing options.

This research project considers ADUs through a narrow lens: ADUs as a housing option for college students and seniors, especially in “college towns”. It explores the design typologies of ADUs and how they fit into existing neighborhood design. Each design is analyzed for its compatibility with the needs of seniors and college students, and different neighborhood types within college towns. Accessibility (both physical and transportation) is also considered. Special attention is paid to
San Luis Obispo, CA, the college town containing California Polytechnic State University, which is the location of the case study.

Additionally, a series of interviews illustrate the benefits of ADUs and provide anecdotal evidence of the opinions regarding ADUs in college towns. This creates a case study of the Pismo-Buchon neighborhood of San Luis Obispo and shows how the elements work together to create a cohesive neighborhood.
Chapter 1: Introduction to ADUs
Definition of an ADU

An ADU is also sometimes called a granny unit, secondary dwelling unit, or guest house (though not all guest houses are ADUs). An ADU’s exact definition varies from city to city, but it generally has these characteristics:

- a limited size
- on the same lot as an existing house
- a separate entrance from the primary unit
- practical living conditions

Limited Size

ADUs are often limited in size because of density limits. In their zoning codes, most cities have floor-area ratio (FAR) limits on lots depending on zone designation. Other times, size is limited to ensure that the ADU will be single-person occupancy. In many cities it is also important for the ADU to fit behind the primary unit and not be visible from the street. Size is almost always limited to one-bedroom or studio units, one bathroom, and a kitchenette or full kitchen.

On the same lot as an existing house

ADUs are not tiny houses or a new way to develop. One cannot have a block of just small units and nothing else. The purpose of ADUs is infill, increasing the quantity of housing units on the existing land. ADUs can densify a neighborhood without changing its character or street feel. Sometimes the additional units are not visible from the street, and they almost always match the architectural style of the primary house. This also has the potential foster neighborly relationships between the residents of the primary unit and the secondary one. An additional benefit is that no new infrastructure from the city needs to be built.

Separate entrance from the primary unit

It is very important for ADUs to have a separate front door. This differentiates it from people renting out individual rooms of their house, or creating illegal units within their home. It also prevents people from renting out garages and calling them ADUs. An ADU is a recognized independent living unit, which means it must have a door.
Practical living conditions
As mentioned before, an ADU has many basic things it must contain. This adds up to an ADU being a livable place to reside long-term. This is important for cities because they need to endorse housing that is beneficial and provides a sense of dignity to its residents. The basics such as a bathroom, kitchen sink, and ways to prepare and store food should be assumed but it is important to define exactly what an ADU is. It’s not simply building a shed in a backyard or adding a door to the garage and renting it out. At the same time, ADUs often have a maximum size they cannot exceed. An ADU is an investment property and should be treated as such.

Legislative History in California
In the State of California, the ability to build ADU’s was passed in 2002 through AB 1866. It is a two part piece of legislature that both requires that building an ADU be a ministerial procedure, and that the capacity for building ADU’s must be identified in the City’s Housing Element. Both of these requirements streamline the development process, meaning that California is encouraging ADU development.

Ministerial means that the permit does not need a public hearing to be approved, the potential builder simply must meet a set of minimum requirements set by the governing body (local, country, or state). This section of the code also suggests that cities develop local ADU ordinances that are compliant with the State’s standards. In the full text of the State Code, there are some important standards including: identifying zones in which ADUs are allowed, minimum unit sizes, and parking requirements.

The second half of AB 1866 says that cities
must analyze and identify the capacity for building in the City’s Housing Element. This forces cities to analyze where in the city ADUs are appropriate and how many could be built. As the Housing Element is updated every five years, the City will be able to keep track of how many ADUs are built in a period, and how many more can be built. The original analysis can also be updated as neighborhoods evolve.

**Benefits of ADUs**

ADUs increase the housing stock because it adds units. They are small and simple and that makes them “affordable by design” to build. ADUs could, in theory, double the number of units in a single-family neighborhood if every home had one, though not every lot has the right configuration or size to allow for this, nor is every homeowner interested in the upkeep and management. In the suburbs, there is less of a place for high density, small unit apartment blocks; however there is a place for ADUs. They take many roles: as granny units, subleased apartments, nanny’s or nurse’s quarters, and guest homes. They help families save money housing an elder relative, allow young adults to live with their parents but still have their own space, give college students a safe neighborhood to live in at a low cost, and help a homeowner make extra income. This point is illustrated in depth in the case study, but the important takeaway is that an ADU is an investment that pays off at all stages of life.

Additionally, some cities require residences with ADUs to be owner-occupied. This benefits a city by keeping homeowners in the city. Owner-occupied properties are typically better maintained than renter occupied properties, especially if the owner of the rental lives outside the city the rental property is in. When units are not owner-occupied, it also means that money leaves the local economy, because the rent paid will go to the city where the owner lives.

**Ideal locations for ADUs?**

ADU’s can present opportunities in a number of neighborhood typologies, however they do not fit into all of them. An obvious exception to ADU compatibility are dense urban cores. In neighborhoods without single family houses, there cannot
be ADUs. A possible exception to this is rowhouses or townhouses that may have an ADU built into the basement. However, this is usually not an ADU, and simply a multi-family unit that was built at once. ADUs are typically built as an addition to the primary unit. At the same time, the higher density of housing in urban cores means that housing density is close to maximum.

In the suburbs, there is much lower density, especially in older neighborhoods with larger lots. This creates a lot of land area for potential ADUs. However, these neighborhoods often oppose ADUs, fearing loss of property value, or having reservations about who might move into their neighborhoods. Their opposition is sometimes characterized as a “Not in My Backyard” (NIMBY) position. A mid-century, isolated suburb far from an urban core might also not have the amenities that are necessary for optimum ADU placement, such as access to public transportation. A mixed neighborhood, where there are both single-family and multi-family housing is often times most receptive to ADUs. They are the most likely to have neighbors who are accepting of increased density, seeing as they already live next to apartment complexes. Additionally, they are most likely to have amenities within walking distance because the larger, denser population can sustain business. An example of where one might find this type of neighborhood is a college town.
Chapter 2: College Towns
**Definition of a college town**

A college town, for the scope of this report, is defined as a smaller city or town that has at least one predominantly undergraduate college or university and that school is a primary (top 10) employer in the city. It is difficult to provide an exact definition of a college town. In general, it cannot be a big city. San Francisco has a number of universities, and UCSF is a top employer, but San Francisco cannot qualify as a college town. Additionally, a college town is one where the city’s culture is defined by the presence of the school, both within the city and in the opinions of others.

Examples include:

- San Luis Obispo, CA
- Santa Clara, CA
- Berkeley, CA
- Amherst, MA
- Eugene, OR
- Ithaca, NY

College towns have a large population of college students. They also have an increasingly large proportion of senior retirees, as is the national trend.
College towns face a number of unique issues other cities do not have, such as a constantly rotating population. As would be expected, a significant proportion of residents arrive when they begin college and leave when they graduate. Some students may live on campus for all four years, off campus their entire college careers, or most likely a combination of years on and off. Some cities have good relationships with their schools, but many have a contentious relationship due to the condition of the housing students live in, especially in the case of fraternity and sorority houses. This is colloquially referred to as “town-gown relations”.

In college towns, housing stock is often outdated and in disrepair. Building ADUs will increase new housing stock at a lower cost than rebuilding larger units, albeit much slower and on a smaller scale. It allows the building cost to be divided over the many homeowners who may choose to add one unit to their property, as opposed to a developer building 12 or more units at once.

Figure 2.2 Apartment buildings within .25 miles of University of Oregon, Cal Poly SLO, and Santa Clara University (top to bottom, GoogleMaps)
Reasoning for ADUs in college towns

College towns are an ideal location for ADUs, and their city governments should encourage them. Suburban areas in college towns can handle a higher density than they are currently built at. ADU's increase the density without changing the streetscape because they fit into the present architecture and are often not visible from the street. Most college students are only in town for the school year, leaving the backyard to the homeowner for the summer and holiday seasons.

Currently in San Luis Obispo, most students sign and pay for 12 month leases, while only occupying the unit for 10 months. ADU owners could be competitive to student renters by only leasing for 10 months, September to June, while preserving their backyard for private summer activities. Potentially, there would also be the option to “rent” out the ADU on Airbnb or similar short-term vacation rental sites. Options to allow vacation rentals easily on Airbnb could be a draw for homeowners who wish to make some income on their ADU without a permanent or semi-permanent student neighbor.

Neighborhoods will benefit from additional activity, “eyes on the street”, and the sense of community that forms from getting to know your neighbors. At the very least, residents will know who is living in their own backyard.
Target populations for ADUs in college towns

Seniors and college students are both good populations to target to live in ADUs. One is because they are the most likely demographic to live alone, and ADUs are single occupancy. Seniors and college students often have fewer possessions, whether they are downsizing or because they have not yet amassed as much, and therefore need less space. They are also less likely than the general population to own a car, and may not even be able to drive. While this does not inherently make ADUs a good option, people who cannot drive need to live in denser areas with access to functional public transportation.

Seniors and College Students have a surprising number of things in common that lead to similar living restriction. In general, college students and seniors: live on low and/or fixed incomes, have small household sizes/live alone, use a higher rate of public resources, tend to be seen as “bubbles” socially isolated from other groups. Also, a significant portion of seniors and students live in group housing: assisted living and dorms, respectively.

While the groups may not seem compatible, seniors and college students get along very well together. A wonderful example of this is in the Netherlands. In Deventer, Netherlands there is a nursing home that offers free housing to college students in exchange for 30 hours a month of community service (Reed, 2015). It provides social interaction many seniors lack access to in a nursing home setting, and provides an affordable option for students as well. This report does not consider seniors and students living together, however this example illustrates that seniors and students are compatible within college towns.

At the same time, college students and seniors have very different needs as well. College students are very active and typically louder. They typically can adjust to living in less luxurious apartments, and don’t have special needs. Seniors have mobility limitations, and design will need to take this into account as the number of seniors increases. They may be more
selective about their homes and the neighborhoods, and have higher standards of living.

**Housing needs of students in college towns**

Students live in college towns out of necessity and choice. Students may have chosen a school for the college town environment, others do not consider location at all focusing primarily on the academic programs, or on campus life. Regardless of the reasoning, they all need a place to live, and on campus is often not the primary place. Currently, around 60% of college students nationwide live off-campus (U.S. News and World Report, 2015). While some students live with their parents or other relatives, the majority rent in the city’s housing market. This causes inflation of housing prices and an incredibly competitive environment to try to procure housing in. This, combined with the fact that college students simply need a place to live, can lead to some very unsuitable units being available for rent. ADUs can add new stock, taking pressure off the system, and creating competition to improve older units.
Housing needs of seniors in college towns

Seniors are often attracted to college towns as locations to retire. College towns often have a vibrant nightlife and entertainment, a local art scene, and usually have access to high-quality medical care. This allows seniors to go out and enjoy their retirement, taking advantage of the free and affordable entertainment options which cater to students who have less disposable income. Museums in other cities that would charge admission are free or considerably reduced in college towns, especially for students and seniors. There are also many opportunities both around town and through the school’s extended education for seniors to continue to learn, experience, and enrich their lives through art, cooking classes, dance classes, and more. College towns with medical schools have access to the types of cutting edge research centers associated with the schools, and that allows seniors to get the best care possible at the end of their lives. College towns also generally have better access to public transportation, which is crucial when seniors can no longer drive, but still need to get around. Most retirees downsize, and an ADU may provide just enough space for a single senior.

It is also good to consider the idea of seniors who are aging in place in college towns. They may be “retiring to” a college town because they are one of the 80% of people aged 65 or older who believe they will continue to live in the house they currently live in for the rest of their lives. In this case, having an ADU allows them to
age in place at their home, but have the option to bring in help and/or additional income if necessary.

**ADU Regulation in College Towns**

In San Luis Obispo, as required by the state, ADU’s are ministerial, meaning if the unit design conforms to regulation, it can be built without a public hearing. This makes it an affordable and simple process for both the builder and the city. San Luis Obispo has a Secondary Dwelling Unit Ordinance that was approved in 1984, many years before AB 1866 made ADU ordinances required, though it was amended in 2003 with the passing of AB 1866.

An interesting note is San Luis Obispo does not specify a minimum lot size – this is uncommon. The main requirement is that the ADU must be smaller than 450 square feet and have 250 square feet of private open space. The second requirement is that the site is owner-occupied, meaning the owner lives in either the house or the ADU as their primary residence. Other than that, the requirements are standard: ADUs can be attached, detached, or over a garage. A single parking space is required, and setbacks are 10ft for ground floor units and 6ft for elevated units.

It is somewhat unique that San Luis Obispo requires that ADU’s are built on owner-occupied lots. A major challenge for college towns is the renter-owner balance, and San Luis Obispo is encouraging homeowners to live in San Luis Obispo by having an income property on their property instead of buying a separate property. Unfortunately, that may not be an incentive to build an ADU. If the major goal is to increase housing stock, a City could allow any property to build one regardless of owner occupancy. San Luis Obispo also requires ADU builders to go through the process of Architectural Review. This is a public hearing, and while design is important, the citizens who wish to speak out against a potential ADU are much more likely to want to debate the land use rather than the design. Unfortunately, this is an inefficiency in the government system because the land use cannot be contested.
Chapter 3: Design Typologies
**Introduction**

The City of Santa Cruz Accessory Dwelling Unit Manual (2003) was the first plan adopted by a city after AB 1866. The manual identifies three main types of ADU. These are detached, alley, and attached, representing the diversity of contexts in which ADU’s might be built.

A variety of specific typology choices allow for better “fit” with architectural style in a neighborhood to both merge seamlessly and reduce the perception of “too much density” thus defusing neighborhood resistance. At the same time, being too prescriptive in style runs the risk of eliminating creativity in architectural design. Each style presented by the City of Santa Cruz is a little different and fits into different neighborhoods and personal preferences, which will be analyzed throughout this chapter.

**Detached**

A detached ADU is in the backyard and not attached to the primary house. It can be one story in height or two stories with the ADU above the detached garage. Access to the unit is through a gate in the front or side yard. The garage also offers flexibility, as either the owner or the ADU resident can use it. Some properties may have a double garage, divided in two. This allows both parties to have covered parking, which may be a requirement in some cities.

The detached style is the best option for creating a sense of separation and privacy for both those residing in the home and the ADU, which may make it more appealing to potential homeowners. This can also make it easier to rent to college students, who may wish to have guests over and may make some noise. Most homeowners do not want to share a wall with their neighbors, and in college towns, they may not want to share a wall with a college student and their friends.

Detached ADUs are also good for seniors who are set on maintaining a sense of independence. Having their own front door and the ability to have alone time may be very important to them. However, elevated ADUs are not an option for seniors with mobility issues and taking stairs every day
is likely not a long-term solution. Seniors should stay in ADUs on the ground level, which may take more incentives to build since they take more land area.

Figure 3.1 (above) ADUs can be one story or 2 (Photos accessorydwellings.org)  

Figure 3.2 (below) An example detached ADU site plan
Attached

An attached ADU is attached to the house so it appears as a single structure or extension to the house. The ADU may be connected to the house via a “lock-off” type of door, a normal door, or it may not be internally connected at all. This is a good option for homeowners who may wish to use the ADU as guestroom or living space as oppose to always renting it out. It also provides the most cohesive architectural look and decreases visibility or changes to the streetscape.

The City of San Luis Obispo supports attached ADUs because they provide multifamily units but the appearance of a large single-family house.

Another type of ADU that is emerging is a “junior” ADU. A junior ADU is almost always attached and very small. A separate door is required but a full kitchen is not. A junior ADU can be as small as a bathroom, bedroom, and area for a sink and microwave. This is becoming popular because it allows smaller houses to have ADUs or larger houses to partition off part of their house as an ADU. A separate entrance is required because otherwise it would be equivalent to subleasing a room within a home.

On the East Coast, attached ADUs are a common typology, often taking the form of a basement unit. While basements are uncommon in the West Coast, attached ADUs may still occur above attached garages, or in the back or second story of a house.

In general, this is best for when the

![An attached ADU under construction](image-url)
ADU dweller is a member of the family. Attached ADUs may be just what a family needs to keep elderly parents close and supported or give their college student a much needed sense of independence while still technically living at home. In a college town, this can be an option if a homeowner’s child chooses to go to the local school. The family can save money on housing, but the student can still be given increased independence.

That being said, there is no reason why ADUs would not work for other groups as well. In college towns, housing markets are extremely competitive and that makes it possible to hold interviews and find ideal candidates who are compatible with living in close proximity to a family. If the homeowner is just a couple or single person rather than a family, it can be easier to find suitable renters. Additionally, the renter and homeowner can help each other with neighborly matters such as taking care of pets, packages, or plants while people are travelling.

Figure 3.4 An example attached ADU site plan.
**Alley Facing**

An Alley ADU only occurs in neighborhoods that have been designed with this street layout, referred to as a “traditional” layout. In alley ADU’s, many or all of the houses on a block have ADUs, and the ADU’s entrances are on a shared alleyway, similar to a separate street but often privately owned. This creates a sense of further separation for the ADU residents and homeowners, and is good for neighborhoods where going though a side gate into the backyard is not desired on aesthetic grounds. The resident in the ADU will likely also appreciate this separation.

The alley also makes it easier to have a parking space for the ADU, which may or may not be a requirement depending on the city.

This option is good for anyone who wants to feel a little more independent and owns a car. Like the detached ADU, there is a possibility that the unit is two story which is inadvisable for seniors. A downside to this is the block needs to have an existing alleyway, which is rare. There is an example of this on Pismo St. in San Luis Obispo,
CA. An alleyway of ADUs is something for new developers to consider if they want to increase their density and diversify their unit type, though the benefit would go primarily to the homeowner not the developer.

Additionally, a different kind of architectural design can be introduced along the alley. This might allow for architectural innovation regarding the streetscape of the alley. Ideas include creating a “front yard” strip on the alley, making architecturally significant entrances, and innovative parking strategies.
Chapter 4: Case Study
The Pismo-Buchon Neighborhood

The 1100 block of Pismo Street and Buchon Street in San Luis Obispo provides an interesting case study for ADUs in college towns. It is home to a variety of college students, families, and retirees and has ADU's and single family homes. Architectural styles in the neighborhood include a variety of craftman, bungalow, and mission-style homes. The secondary units vary from matching the house, to a blocky midcentury apartment style. The block studied is located between Santa Rosa and Toro Streets and is approximately 3 miles from Cal Poly and a couple blocks from downtown San Luis Obispo. The neighborhood’s location makes it a good choice for college students and other residents without cars. There is a bus stop one block away, and a Smart and Final Extra and Rite Aid two blocks away.

The study area is unique because the block has an alleyway, called the Pismo-Buchon Alley. The area also differs from some neighborhoods with ADUs because it is Figure 4.1 the Pismo Buchon neighborhood, with the case study block highlighted.
R-2 zoning. While some lots have ADUs, some lots simply have multiple units on them. In some cases this is to avoid the owner-occupied requirement, in others the housing units predate the idea of ADUs. It makes a good case study because it has a mix of residents and new ADUs have recently been built there. This block contains 25 houses and approximately 20 alley units. Not all properties have an ADU, and a number of the properties have 2-4 units as opposed to a single ADU.

**Interview Summary**

Three interviews were conducted. The first was with Community Development Assistant Planner, Kyle Bell. He provided an overview of ADUs in San Luis Obispo and some details about the Pismo-Buchon neighborhood in particular. Second was a discussion over the phone with Lee, a retired Cal Poly chef living in a secondary unit. Last was an in-person conversation with Judy, a homeowner who lived in the primary unit but has since moved across the street. This neighborhood is desired because people take advantage of its location. It is within walking distance to a grocery store and drug store, downtown, and a variety of places of worship. The neighbors are friendly, and while they do not always embrace living next to college students, they appreciate it when college students make an effort to be good neighbors.

ADU’s are a great asset in San Luis Obispo as a lower cost option for seniors and students, and they are a good fit in this neighborhood. However, the city has
Figure 4.3 Cars often park illegally on the Pismo-Buchon Alley

Figure 4.4 Judy’s Primary and Secondary units

Concerns about the alley. Alleys are difficult to maintain and typically are not up to street standards, and the City plans to clean them up. The City would also like to see more of the single family houses be owner-occupied, because the renter-owner balance is tipped too far on the renter side, as is common in college towns.

The neighbors interviewed believe that having a neighborhood of ADUs makes it easier to see and know your neighbors. When there are more neighbors, you are
more likely to see them around. Lee thinks that living in a denser neighborhood gives students a chance to learn how to be good neighbors. Judy on the other hand has a more traditional view of students and thinks they can sometimes be a nuisance. She rents only to non-students, primarily because she would prefer not to see the entire neighborhood turn over every year. She has friends and family who are also owners in the neighborhood, and they rent to students. She feels they are less invested in the neighborhood's appearance and maintenance, which is unfortunate because many homes are historic. Additionally, Lee appreciates the proximity to the bus stop and downtown, especially since she can no longer drive.

Unfortunately, none of the interviews conducted captured the owner-renter relationship being researched because none of the interviewees lived in or rented out ADUs on owner-occupied properties. This does support the theory that owner-occupation is a limitation on building new ADUs in San Luis Obispo.
Chapter 5: Conclusions
Conclusion

There are many economic benefits to ADUs. Most importantly, the benefits are shared by the homeowner, renter, and the city. The city gets more housing units for low and middle income individuals, especially seniors, without having to build additional infrastructure. It is infill development, which allows ADUs to fit in to the existing urban layout without major redevelopment. There are no subsidies involved, making the process simple, costing little city revenue or time. Homeowners get the benefits of an investment property. Renters get affordable rents with the benefits of living in a single family neighborhood. Students have a safe, quieter alternative to apartment-block or dorm life. Seniors have an affordable option to downsize without leaving their neighborhood.

The social benefits are mixed, and the evidence collected in the case study did not strongly support ADUs. In general, there seemed to be more benefits for renters than for homeowners. This was because of the complexities of college towns, especially the high renter turnover.

On the other hand, the literature supports ADUs and their social benefits. Knowing ones neighbors and therefore a heightened sense of community is just a part of the benefits ADUs can provide. Diversity is also achieved by allowing a mix of incomes to live together at a time where neighborhoods are becoming increasingly stratified by class and income.

Cities play an important role in how they shape ADU development in their jurisdictions. ADUs benefit a city by increasing the stock of market-affordable housing, as well as infill development, and economic investment. Cities can and should incentivize ADUs by having a streamlined, ministerial ADU permitting system. They can also give concessions regarding setbacks, minimum lot size, and minimum unit size. Cities can also educate their citizens on the benefits of ADUs to help curb NIMBY interference. Cities can also please neighbors by requiring that the architecture of ADUs to match primary units and that the ADU is minimally visible from the street. Cities, especially those with large suburban neighborhoods will need to
provide for future population growth and affordable housing needs and ADUs are the ideal option.
Appendix
Notes from Interviews

*Interview with Kyle Bell*
Community Development Assistant Planner

**How does the City currently handle ADUs?**
ADU’s are currently a ministerial application, meaning if the applicant meets all of the requirements, it gets approved.

**Do you think that ADUs are compatible with San Luis Obispo?**
Yes, they provide an affordable-by-design housing alternative for low to moderate income individuals including students and seniors.

Currently, there are a number of incentives the City offers for building senior housing projects in San Luis Obispo. While this is not directly related to ADUs, ADUs are a part of the solution to fill the need for affordable senior housing.

**How does the City encourage ADU development?**
Because it is ministerial, it is a straightforward process. The counter does everything they can to help guide people who wish to build an ADU. Additionally, the City is sometimes able to be flexible on parking requirements.

**What do you think the future of ADU’s will be?**
The ARC requirement will likely get removed because the people who come to the ARC meeting want to argue the land use rather than the architecture. Since the use is permitted, it’s really not the place to do that, so we might make it not a public meeting.

Currently, the state is encouraging ADU development. As long as it is a priority for CA, it will most likely be a priority for San Luis Obispo. San Luis Obispo also wants a better balance between owner and renter occupied properties. Because properties ADUs must be owner-occupied, that creates a deterrent for some property owners to want to build one.

**Are you familiar with the Pismo-Buchon area? Would you want more of this style of development?**
There is a beautiful new ADU built on the corner of Santa Rosa and Pismo. It has more than the required amount of parking, and is architecturally cohesive with the main unit. I got to do the final inspections on it, and it’s great.
Interview with Lee
Retired Cal Poly chef, originally from New Jersey

How long have you lived in the ADU?
18 years.

Why did you choose to live there?
She has had the same landlord for 25 years, a retired Cal Poly physics teacher. All of his tenants are seniors or students. This location is very good because of her health, she cannot drive and it is close to downtown.

What are some advantages of living in an ADU?
Convenience, good neighborhood, communication are all advantages. Alleyway parking is good. Proximity to downtown is extremely useful. It is also nice to have the option to ride a bike.

Does the density add to the community?
Yes, there are more people walking around and you can say hello to them. It’s good for students to have a sense of community and neighborhood. There’s also a sense of respect for your neighbors because you see them regularly.

Do you think it’s a good case study neighborhood?
Yes! There is a decent sense of community, students can learn how to be a good neighbor. Also the students get to see what they could have in the future: being good neighbors, having kids, dogs, etc.

Did affordability impact your decision to live here?
This landlord doesn’t charge as much as some do. He gets that its students and seniors who cant pay huge amounts.

What are some disadvantages?
Parking on Pismo St. especially on Thursdays because of Farmer’s Market.

What is your relationship with the Homeowner?
There is a group of girls renting the primary unit. They are wonderful and Lee gets along great with them.
Interview with Judy
Owner 1160 Pismo

How long have you lived in the Neighborhood?
8 years in the primary unit, several years across the street in parents’ house after their passing.

Why did you choose to live there?
Moved into parent’s house and rented from them to help them in their later years. It had apartments but she didn’t live there.

What are some advantages of owning an ADU?
Owned and managed since parents died 4 years ago. It’s been fairly easy because she only rents to people she knows and trusts.

Disadvantages?
No, however it’s not something she would choose to build.

What is your relationship with the Renters?
Front house is a couple back is retired lady and another couple.

Does the density add to the community?
Tentative yes, as long as the units are well maintained.

Do you think it’s a good case study neighborhood?
Yes because it’s interesting. Alleys make it easy to get out of the garage. It can get a bit junky in the alley.

What do you think of the new development being added?
Very attractive adds a nice dimension.

Renter/Owner Balance
This street in particular was a very old neighborhood and as children have inherited no one wants to live in it. They don’t care about the property just want the money. Neighborhoods turning over is always bad, but people have to live somewhere. She believes gouging of renters is a problem. She charges a reasonable price which prevents turnover.
Bibliography


