PRESS RELEASE

Elegant Kitchen and Bath Publishes Fairfax In-Law Suite Guide

Elegant Kitchen and Bath

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HERNDON, VA - Elegant Kitchen and Bath has published an article that explains how Fairfax County treats an accessory living unit, also called an in-law suite. The piece, dated October 22, 2026 and last updated that month, cautions that zoning standards change and that each lot should be checked with the county before design begins.

The full in-law suite guide reviews current standards in subsection 4102.7.B of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance, the permit path, and a proposed amendment. These standards apply in the county, not in every town inside it. Addresses in the City of Fairfax or in incorporated towns follow a different review.

According to the guide, an interior unit that meets every current standard can be approved with an administrative permit. Otherwise, or if the unit is detached, a special permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals is required. Only one unit is allowed on a single-family detached lot, and such units are not now allowed in townhouses.

An interior suite is limited to 800 square feet or 40 percent of the main dwelling's gross floor area, whichever is less. The entire basement or cellar may be used instead if headroom is at least 6 feet 6 inches. Occupancy is capped at two bedrooms and two people, and the owner must live in the main house or the unit.

The process also requires one extra parking space and a recorded permit before anyone moves in. Applications go through the county's PLUS portal, with a $285 fee and a 30-day estimate. Building permits are a separate step.

“These are Fairfax County rules. The City of Fairfax and the towns inside the county, such as Herndon, Vienna and Clifton, have their own zoning ordinances,” said Michael Reynolds, editorial contributor at Elegant Kitchen and Bath. “Do not design around the proposed rules until the Board adopts them.”

Staff materials dated October 2, 2026 describe a proposal that would lift the size cap to 1,200 square feet or 40 percent of the main house and lift occupancy to three people. Owner occupancy, extra parking, recordation and renewal would be dropped, and detached units would be allowed by right on lots of at least 36,000 square feet. A Board hearing is listed for November 17, 2026, with no effective date announced.

The guide often treats a finished basement as the most practical place for a unit inside the house, because the space and an interior connection may already exist. Bedroom egress, ceiling height, moisture, a bathroom and a kitchenette are covered in the company's basement remodeling services . A ground-floor suite with step-free access can be planned through the company's home addition services .

Zoning approval is only one step, and building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical permits may also apply. Elegant Kitchen and Bath is based at 2445 Centreville Rd suite 46, Herndon, VA 20171, and can be reached at +1 703-763-4277. Readers can locate Elegant Kitchen and Bath on Google Maps and read the full article before a design is finalized.

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