

A UNIVERSAL DESIGN WORKSPACE & GUEST ADU



CATEGORY: UNIVERSAL DESIGN - OTHER
\$318,000

SUMMARY



Designed for a young family with two small children, this Universal Design project adds a wheelchair-accessible detached ADU to relieve a very small three-bedroom home.

With both parents working from home, the ADU provides a quiet, dedicated workspace with fully accessible kitchen and bathroom.

It functions as a comfortable, fully equipped guest suite for grandparents and friends today and is planned for future use as a live-in residence or rental.

A long, gently sloped concrete ramp threads through the client's raised-bed garden, creating a safe, seamless connection between the main house and the ADU.



CLIENT GOALS

Accessible Work ADU

Expand functional living space of the main house with a universally designed, wheelchair-accessible detached ADU that provides quiet, dedicated work areas for both parents—freeing up the main house so each child can have their own bedroom.

Guest-Ready & Future-Ready

Create a fully equipped, comfortable ADU that supports extended stays by grandparents or friends and is future-ready as a live-in residence or rental—meeting accessibility needs from day one.

Seamless, Accessible Connection Between Structures

Ensure safe, seamless movement between home and ADU via a long, gently sloped concrete ramp integrated with the raised-bed garden—making daily back-and-forth travel easy and enjoyable.

Design Challenge: Universal Access, Residential Warmth

The challenge: to design a fully accessible ADU—co-designed with our client, a wheelchair user—without drifting into a clinical feel. The brief was to meet Universal Design standards for maneuvering, reach, and safety while integrating these features so seamlessly that guests and future tenants experience a warm, cohesive, and beautiful home.

Design Challenge: Seamless Connection and Courtyard Comfort

The challenge: to ensure the ADU sits close to the main house with a short, direct, step-free route to minimize travel time, while shaping the space between them into a cozy, family-friendly patio for everyday use and entertaining—maintaining clear sight-lines so parents can work and still keep an eye on the kids.

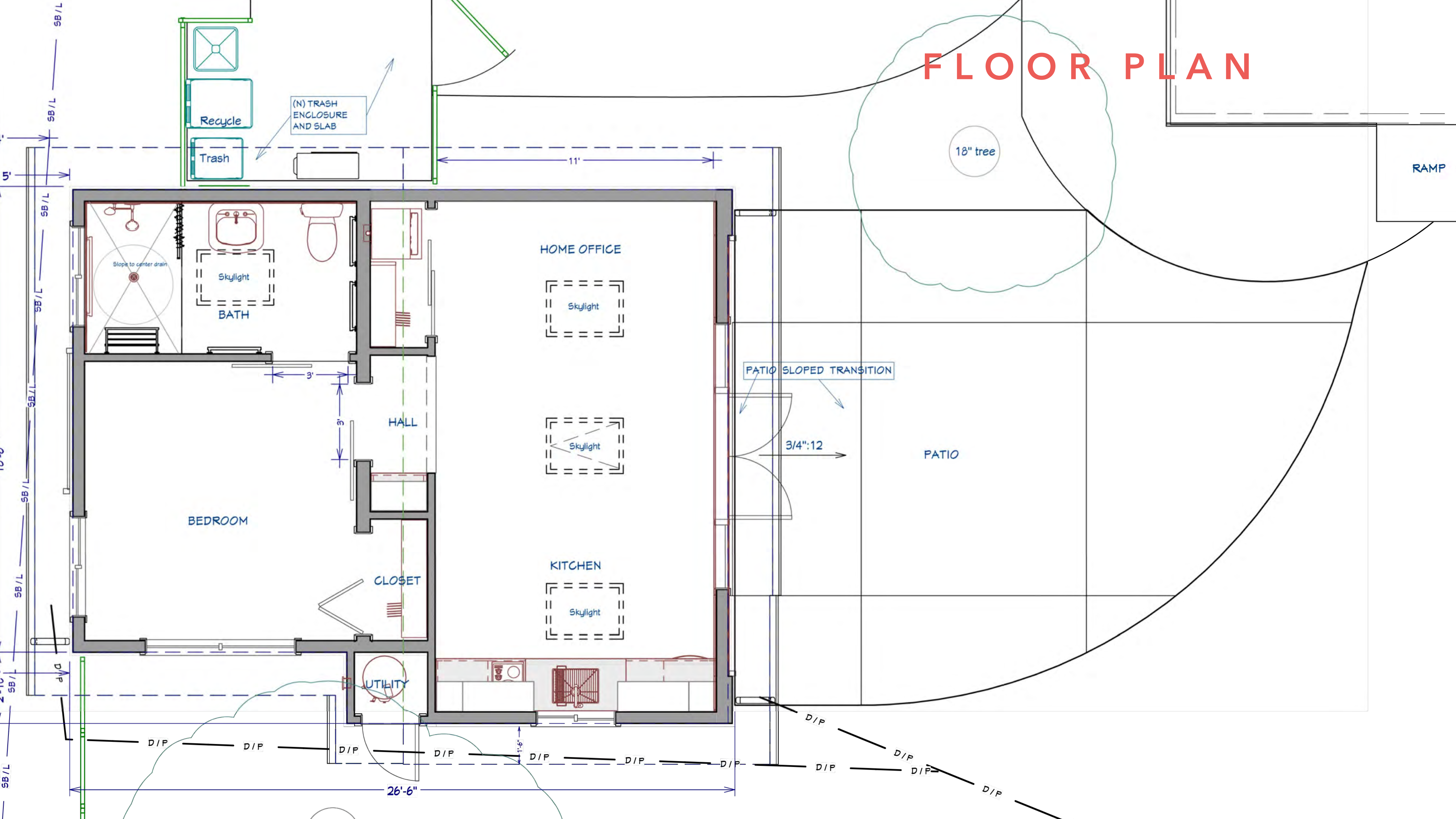
Design Challenge: Co-Design with Exacting Needs

The challenge: partner closely with the client to translate precise, day-to-day requirements into customized Universal Design solutions—rigorous enough to meet their specific needs, yet flexible and integrated. The co-design process benefited the client directly and expanded our toolkit of approaches for future projects.

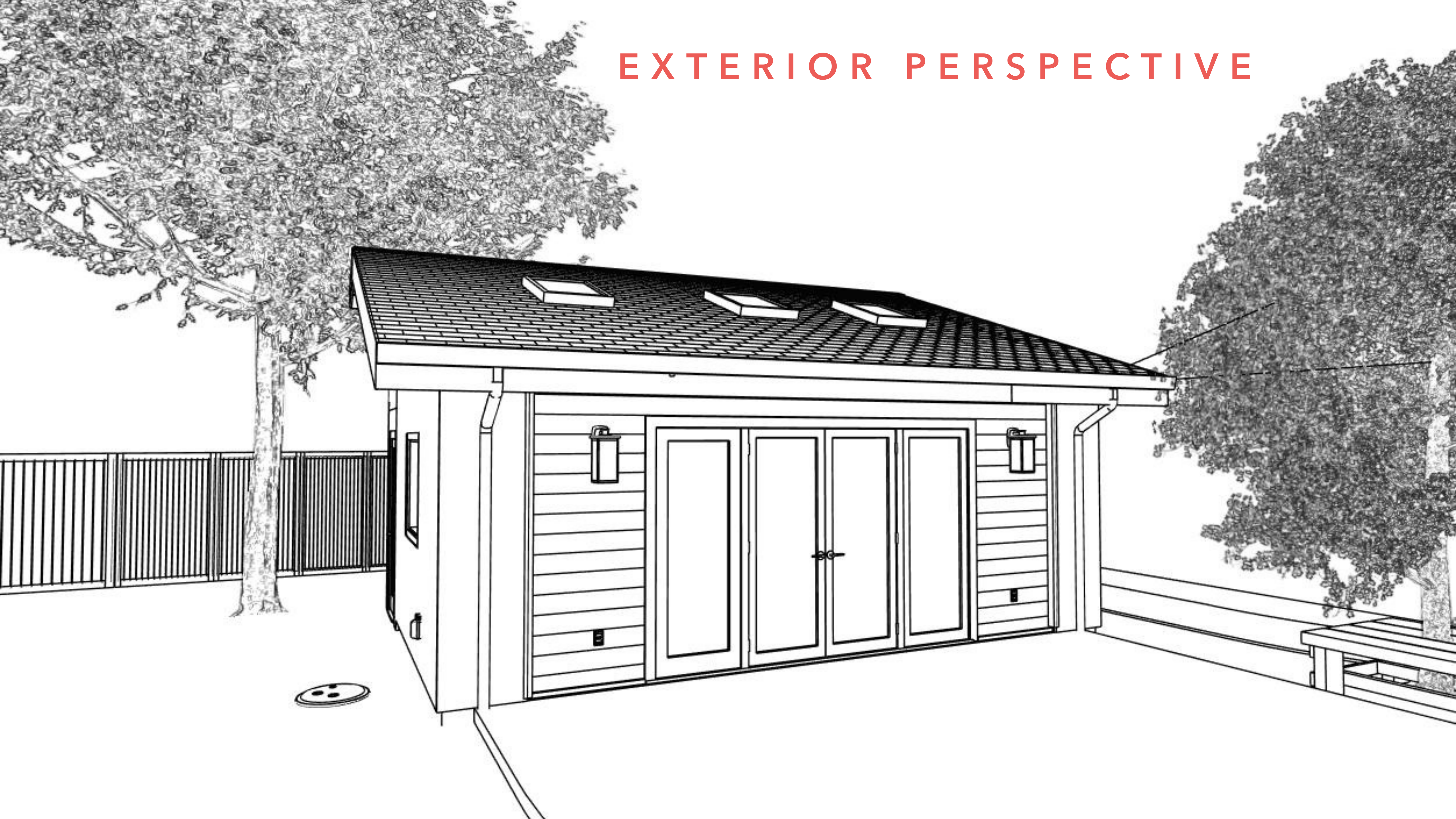
PROJECT CHALLENGES



FLOOR PLAN



EXTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



BEFORE

Choice of location on the large lot was critical for maximizing backyard / garden space and providing a more organic access between the two buildings.

AFTER



The location, tucked under the tree and perpendicular to the house creates a 'cozy corner' patio space for family gatherings.

AFTER



Long, gently sloping ramp makes wheelchair entry a smooth and easy transition into the space.

AFTER



Wheelchair-accessible sink, low-profile refrigerator and easy-pull, deep drawers for storage make maneuverability easy in the kitchen.

AFTER



Pull-down, bar-handled shelves make it easy to reach upper cabinet items.

AFTER



Pull-down, handled shelves make it easy to reach upper cabinet items.

AFTER



Wide hallway and room entries with easy-slide barn doors to bedroom and bathroom accommodate wheelchair access.

AFTER



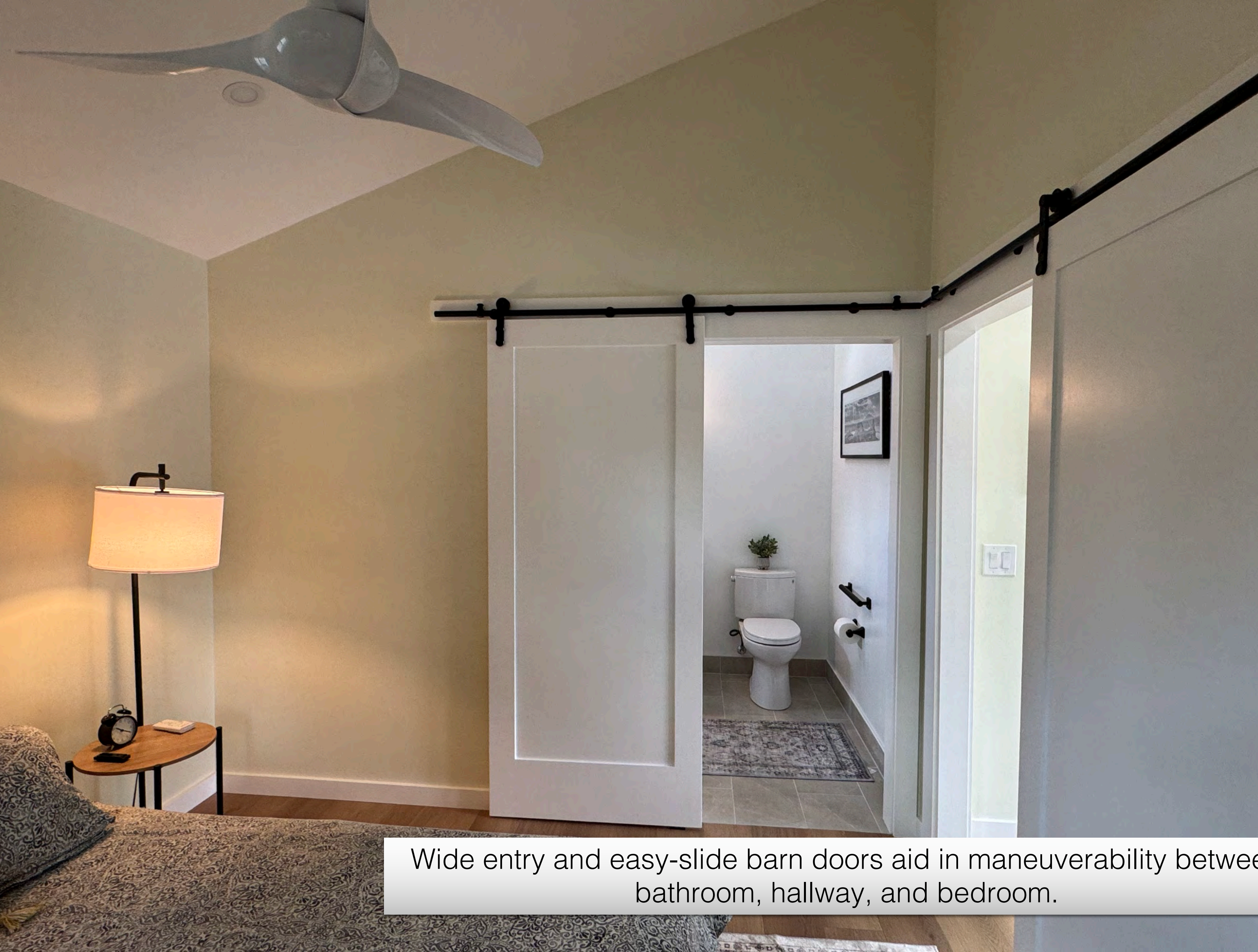
Accessible roll-under sink; comfort-height ADA toilet with grab bar to assist transfers and mobility.

AFTER



Curbless shower with single-lever controls; grab bars and a slip-resistant, high-traction floor for safety in wet areas.

AFTER



Wide entry and easy-slide barn doors aid in maneuverability between bathroom, hallway, and bedroom.



AFTER

AFTER

