

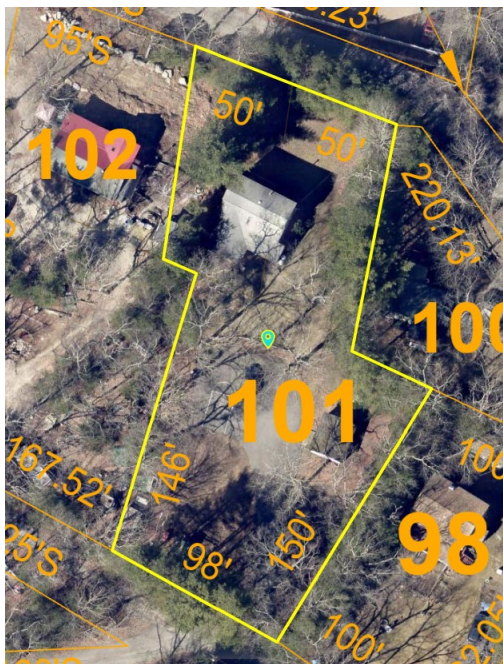


**TOWN OF COVENTRY, RI
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

STAFF REPORT

Project Name:	Marenaro ADU
Plan Type:	Unified Development Review (Accessory Dwelling Unit w/ associated Dimensional Variance)
Owner/Applicant:	Lisa Marenaro
Address:	241 Richardson Road
Plat / Lot / Zone:	AP 310 Lot 101 Zone RR-5 Lot Size 0.64 acres
Existing Use:	Single-Family Dwelling
Proposed Use:	Single-Family Dwelling with an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)
Description:	The applicant proposes to expand and convert an existing shed in the front yard into a 1,024 SF, 16' x 44', one-bedroom Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on the 26,500 SF subject parcel. The applicant seeks dimensional variances for exceeding the maximum floor area and height requirements and for locating the ADU in the front yard. ADUs that are not allowed by-right shall utilize the Unified Development Review process and must be heard by the Planning Commission per Zoning Code § 255-920 F(2)(i).

I. PROJECT INFORMATION

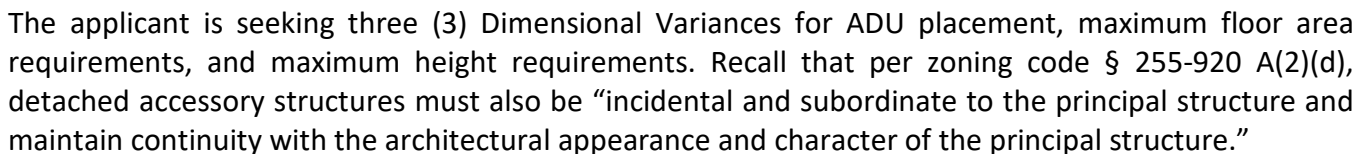


Background and Existing Conditions

This item will be reviewed as a Unified Development Review for a proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on a 0.64-acre parcel at the location listed above. The subject lot currently hosts one 1,216 SF single-family dwelling unit and an existing 16' x 20' shed, owned by the applicant. The site lies south of Quidnick Reservoir, in an area that was historically camping areas that have now become year-round residences.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to expand and convert an existing shed in the front yard into a 1,024 SF, 16' x 44' one-bedroom ADU on their 26,500 SF subject parcel. The proposed ADU will be an expansion of the existing shed.



The ADU also requires relief because it exceeds the maximum allowable floor area. The applicant is seeking to build a 1,024 SF ADU, where the maximum unit size for a one-bedroom ADU in this case would be 729.6 SF (60% of the principal dwelling's 1,216 SF) per § 255-920 A(1)(f), which states that the maximum unit size for a one-bedroom ADU "may be up to 900 square feet, or 60% of the floor area of

the principal dwelling, whichever is less.” This represents an approximate 40% increase above the maximum floor area requirement.

Finally, the ADU will be 23’ in height, where the Zoning Code maximum height in this case is 20’. Section 255-920 A(1)(e) of the Zoning Code dictates that “The maximum height for a detached accessory structure is the height of the principal structure or 25 feet, whichever is lower;” the principal structure is 20’ tall). This represents an approximate 15% increase above the maximum height requirement.

Interdepartmental Review and Comments

Please see the attached report from the Technical Review Committee (dated September 15, 2025) for interdepartmental comments on this application.

II. DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE

Findings of Fact

The following section reports applicant-submitted information and corresponding Planning Staff considerations with respect to required standards set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-41 for Findings of Fact for Dimensional Variance applications:

RIGL § 45-24-41. General provisions – Variances. (d)(1) states, “That the hardship from which the applicant seeks relief is due to the unique characteristics of the subject land or structure and not to the general characteristics of the surrounding area; and is not due to a physical or economic disability of the applicant, excepting those physical disabilities addressed in § 45-24-30(a)(16)”

- Applicant provided the following answers: The hardship from which the applicant seeks relief is due to the small size (26,500 SF) of the subject property. This lot is 248’ deep by 85’ wide. There is an existing shed in the front yard that will be expanded and converted into the ADU (16’x44’). The need for a variance is not the result of any physical or economic disability of the applicant.
- Staff added the following considerations: The hardship from which the applicant seeks relief for ADU placement in the front yard is due to the unique characteristics of the subject land and structure. The subject parcel is a through-lot with two “fronts” on Richardson Road, which loops around the neighboring lots. The applicant also seeks maximum floor area and maximum height relief due to the hardship imposed by the uniquely small footprint and height of the principal structure.

RIGL § 45-24-41. General provisions – Variances. (d)(2) states, “That the hardship is not the result of any prior action of the applicant”

- Applicant provided the following answers: The need for this dimensional variance is not the result of any prior action taken by the applicant. The small size of the lot and the existing home built in 1978 have dictated the location and shape of the new ADU.
- Staff added the following considerations: The hardship is not solely the result of any prior action taken by the applicant because they did not create the unique situation on Richardson Road that resulted in their parcel having two “fronts.” Moreover, the applicant did not construct the principal structure.

RIGL § 45-24-41. General provisions – Variances. (d)(3) states, “That the granting of the requested variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance or the comprehensive plan upon which the ordinance is based”

- Applicant provided the following answers: Granting this variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance or the comprehensive plan. The proposed ADU will remain consistent with the residential nature of the area and similar in placement and character to nearby homes.
- Staff added the following considerations: The proposed ADU will be visible from the street, but the subject parcel has a landscape buffer along its abutting properties. The ADU will appear incidental and subordinate to the principal structure as the front entrance will not face the street and the shorter (16’) side will be oriented toward street. As a result, the ADU will appear narrower in width than the house.

RIGL § 45-24-41. General provisions – Variances. (d)(4) states, “In granting a dimensional variance, that the hardship suffered by the owner of the subject property if the dimensional variance is not granted amounts to more than a mere inconvenience, meaning that relief sought is minimal to a reasonable enjoyment of the permitted use to which the property is proposed to be devoted. The fact that a use may be more profitable or that a structure may be more valuable after the relief is granted is not grounds for relief. The zoning board of review, or, [planning board] in unified development review, has the power to grant dimensional variances where the use is permitted by special-use permit.”

- Applicant provided the following answers: The requested relief is the minimum necessary to allow for reasonable use of the property. Existing site constraints prevent the ADU from being pushed farther back on the lot. Without this variance, construction of a functional residence would not be feasible, and the hardship would amount to more than a mere inconvenience.
- Staff added the following considerations: The proposed ADU is minimal to a reasonable enjoyment of the permitted use as it is an allowed use in the RR-5 zone and will have a relatively modest footprint at 1,024 SF, dimensional requirements notwithstanding.

Recommendation

Staff finds this proposal consistent with the standards for required Dimensional Variance findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-41. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and **approve** the Dimensional Variance application.

Conditions of Approval

1. ADU approval is conditioned upon strict adherence to the associated Dimensional Variance Application as presented and approved.
2. The applicant shall orient the shorter (16') side of the proposed ADU toward the street and position the front entrance away from the street to ensure that it remains "incidental and subordinate to the principal structure."
3. The following items will be required upon submittal of a building permit application: (a) site plan showing the proposed structures comply with zoning code and (b) approval from Western Coventry Fire District.

Pursuant to Article XII. Appeals, Subsection A. Procedure for Appeals to the Board of Appeal of the Coventry Subdivision Regulations, the decision of the Planning Commission herein may be appealed in writing by any party aggrieved by said decision to the Coventry Board of Appeal. Any such appeal shall be made within 20 days of the day of the decision is recorded and posted in the Town Clerk's Office.



TOWN OF COVENTRY

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TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: September 15, 2025
PROJECT NAME: "Marenaro ADU"
PROPERTIES: AP 310, Lot 101
ADDRESS: 241 Richardson Road
ZONE: RR-5 (Rural Residential)
OWNER/APPLICANT: Lisa Marenaro

This matter came before the Coventry Technical Review Committee at its September 15, 2025 meeting as a Unified Development Review Application for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) with an associated Dimensional Variance. ADUs that are not allowed by-right shall utilize the Unified Development Review process and must be heard by the Planning Commission per Zoning Code § 255-920 F(2)(i).

The site plans and application materials were submitted for review on September 3, 2025. The applicant proposes to expand and convert an existing shed in the front yard into a 1,024 SF, 16' x 44' one-bedroom Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on their 26,500 SF subject parcel. The applicant seeks a dimensional variance as the ADU will be placed in the front yard. The ADU will also exceed the maximum allowable floor area and height requirements.

The members of the Technical Review Committee reviewed the following documents related to this application when preparing the comments below:

Marenaro ADU - Site Plan.pdf
Marenaro ADU - Dimensional Variance.pdf
Marenaro ADU - Project Narrative.pdf

TOWN ENGINEER

Plans

- 1) A Submission of a Town of Coventry Soil Erosion and Sediment Control (SESC) Application will be required for the project.

PRINCIPAL PLANNER DESIGNEE

- The applicant seeks three (3) Dimensional Variances for the proposed ADU:
- Dimensional Variance #1: The ADU will be placed in the front yard, where zoning code § 255-920 dictates that detached accessory structures must be placed in the rear yard or in the side yard, if side setbacks can be maintained.

- Planning staff notes that the subject parcel has a unique situation in which it has two “fronts” as both the front and rear have frontage along Richardson Road, which loops around the neighboring lots. The proposed ADU will be visible from the street, but the subject parcel has a landscape buffer along its abutting properties.
- Planning staff notes that the R-20 (Residential) side setback requirement for the principal single-family dwelling applies to the proposed structure. The ADU will be placed 25.9’ from the property line, where 20’ is required.
- Planning staff also notes that the proposed structure will satisfy the R-20 front setback requirements for single-family dwellings. According to rough GIS measurements, the existing shed is situated approximately 210’ from the front, well above the 35’ requirement.
- Dimensional Variance #2: The ADU exceeds the maximum allowable floor area. The applicant is seeking an ADU at 1,024 SF, where the maximum unit size for a one-bedroom ADU in this case is 729.6 SF per zoning code § 255-920. This represents an approximate 40% increase above the maximum floor area requirement.
- Dimensional Variance #3: The ADU will also be 23’ in height, where the maximum height in this case is 20’ per zoning code § 255-920. This represents an approximate 15% increase above the maximum height requirement.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

- No comments at this time.

FIRE REPRESENTATIVE

- No comments at this time.

POLICE CHIEF

- No comments at this time.

PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR

The Planning Commission Chair recused as this item will be heard before the Planning Commission.