



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

STAFF REPORT

Project Name:	Therriault ADU
Plan Type:	Unified Development Review (Accessory Dwelling Unit w/ associated Dimensional Variance)
Owner/Applicant:	Jason & Ann Marie Therriault
Address:	31 King Street
Plat / Lot / Zone:	AP 21 Lot 312 Zone R-20 Lot Size 0.76 acres
Existing Use:	Single-Family Dwelling
Proposed Use:	Single-Family Dwelling with an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)
Description:	The applicant proposes to construct a 1,625 SF two-bedroom Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on their 0.76-acre parcel. The applicant seeks two Dimensional Variances as the ADU will be placed in the front yard and exceed the maximum allowable floor area requirements.

I. PROJECT INFORMATION

Background and Existing Conditions

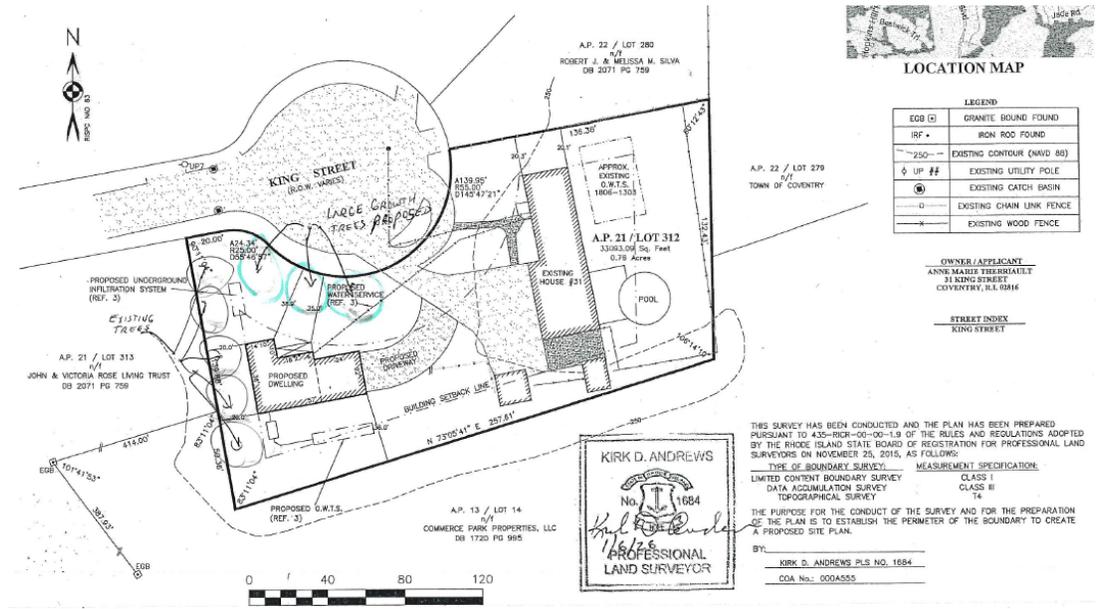
ADUs that are not allowed by-right shall utilize the Unified Development Review process and must be heard by the Planning Commission per Zoning Code § 255-920 F(2)(i). The subject lot is 0.76 acres in size and currently hosts the applicant’s 4,692 SF four-bedroom single-family dwelling unit and garage, as well as a pool and other amenities in the rear yard. The primary dwelling structure is served by an existing OWTS, also located in the rear yard.



Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to construct a 1,625 SF two-bedroom ADU, which will consist of 1,006 SF of finished living space, a 528 SF garage, and a 91 SF covered porch. The finished living space will include two bedrooms, a kitchen and dining area, a living room, and a bathroom. The applicant has proposed an extension of their existing driveway to serve the ADU. The garage will face the principal dwelling structure rather than the street. The applicant’s site plan includes a conceptual landscape plan that shows “large growth trees” are proposed to be planted in front of the proposed ADU, along the property’s frontage on the King Street cul-de-sac.

The applicant submitted a supplementary document with additional details on the proposed landscaping treatments on February 17, 2026. This document stated that the applicant intends to plant four or five Weeping Cherry Trees in front of the ADU on King Street, which typically grow 8' to 16' tall and 6' to 12' wide. These trees have green leaves for the majority of the year, except during their full bloom with large pink flowers for approximately three weeks in the spring season.



Zoning

The applicant is seeking two (2) Dimensional Variances for ADU placement and maximum floor area requirements. The proposed structure meets the required minimum front, side, and rear setbacks for detached accessory structures in the R-20 zone. Recall that per zoning code § 255-920 A(2)(d), detached accessory structures must also be “incidental and subordinate to the principal structure and maintain continuity with the architectural appearance and character of the principal structure.”

To start, the ADU will require relief because it will be placed in the front yard, where zoning code § 255-920 F(2)(a)1 dictates that detached accessory structures must be placed in the rear yard or in the side yard, if side setbacks can be maintained. The proposed ADU also requires relief because it exceeds the maximum allowable floor area. The applicant is seeking to build a 1,625 SF ADU, where the maximum unit size for a two-bedroom ADU in this case would be 1,200 SF per § 255-920 F(2)(a)2. This represents an approximate 35.4% increase above the dimensional requirement. Further, the proposed ADU will comply with maximum height requirements. The proposed structure will be 17' 8" tall, where the maximum in this case is 26' 6" - equivalent to the height of the primary structure - per zoning code § 255-920 A(1)(e).

After receipt of this application, Planning staff determined that the ADU would **not** comply with the maximum lot coverage requirements for the R-20 zone. The proposed lot coverage will be 30.9% (10,225

SF per applicant’s calculations) where the maximum allowable lot coverage is 20% (approx. 6,618.6 SF). The applicant has **not** requested a Dimensional Variance from lot coverage requirements nor was it included as part of the request in the public hearing notice. To remedy this situation, the applicant has agreed to render the proposed driveway extension and part of the existing driveway as pervious pavement at this point in time to comply with lot coverage requirements. It is anticipated the applicant may seek zoning relief for lot coverage at a future date, which would allow them to maintain the driveways as impervious.

Interdepartmental Review and Comments

Please see the attached report from the Technical Review Committee (dated January 20, 2026) for interdepartmental comments on this application.

II. DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE

Findings of Fact

The following section of this report provides the 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 answer for the front yard variance: Due to the original lot layout, the primary home is considered back of property. Lot dimensions are of odd configuration creating a “front” and “side” yard. The proposed ADU meets all setbacks required. This is a request for front or side yard use. This is a unique characteristic of the property compared to others.
- Applicant provided the following answer for the maximum unit size variance: Due to the unique characteristics of the property, applicant asking for relief for location and square footage allowance.
- Staff added the following considerations: The location and orientation of the primary dwelling structure at 31 King Street resulted in the vacant western section to effectively become the “front” yard, as opposed to a traditional side yard. The front door of the primary house faces west, as opposed to north towards the property’s frontage on King Street, and thus determines the front yard setting. The applicant also seeks unit size relief above maximum due to their unique personal needs and the uniquely large area of front yard that the property contains.

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 answer for the front yard variance: The request is not the result of anything the applicant has done to the property.
- Applicant provided the following answer for the maximum unit size variance: Not a result of any prior action.
- Staff added the following considerations on both variances: The primary dwelling structure was constructed in 1997 according to Tax Assessor records, prior to its purchase by the current owner and applicant for this variance. Thus, the applicant was not solely responsible for the hardship posed by the current location, orientation, footprint, or size of the primary dwelling structure – which dictated the placement and size of the proposed ADU.

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 for the front yard variance: The request does not alter the character of the surrounding property and does not impair the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance.
- Applicant provided the following answer for the maximum unit size variance: Will not alter the character of the surrounding area. All other setbacks and restrictions are compliant.
- Staff added the following considerations: The proposed ADU, despite its large size and location, will appear as an incidental and subordinate accessory structure as opposed to a separate single-family dwelling due to design mitigations with landscaping and driveway orientation. The applicant revised their initial site design to provide a driveway extension for the ADU, as opposed to a separate curb cut and driveway – a typical approach for detached accessory structures. In addition, the proposed tree plantings in front of the ADU will provide reasonable screening of views from the abutting neighbors and public right-of-way.

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 answer for the front yard variance: The largest portion of the property is located what the Town considers the front or side yard. This is the only area in which the proposed ADU would fit without further variances. This ADU request is being

completed by the applicant so her mother can move nearby and obtain the assistance she needs.

- Applicant provided the following answer for the maximum unit size variance: This request is for construction of an ADU for elderly mother to come home with us from Massachusetts and be able to live independently.
- Staff added the following considerations: The proposed accessory structure is minimal to a reasonable enjoyment of the permitted use as it is an allowed use in the R-20 zone. Furthermore, zoning code § 255-920 F(2)(a)2 mandates that the maximum unit size for a two-bedroom ADU “may be up to 1,200 square feet, or 60% of the floor area of the principal dwelling, whichever is less.” The principal structure is 4,692 SF, of which 60% is 2,815.2 SF. The dimensional alternative (1200 SF) is lower and therefore applies to the proposed structure. It should be noted that the accessory structure’s footprint is within the 60% SF threshold, despite being held to a lower threshold per the code.

Recommendation on Dimensional Variances

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 Variances for front yard placement and maximum floor area requirements requested as part of this application. This approval shall **not** include any variances from the lot coverage requirements at this time.

Conditions of Approval

1. The accessory structure’s construction is conditioned upon strict adherence to the associated Dimensional Variance Application as presented and approved.
2. The certificate of occupancy for the proposed accessory structure is contingent on installation of the plantings as shown on the site plan and described in the supplementary landscape details document, or the general equivalent of said plantings, as a visual screen to abutters and the public right-of-way.
3. The certificate of occupancy for the proposed accessory structure is contingent on the structure’s compliance with R-20 maximum lot coverage requirements, unless the applicant obtains zoning relief from the Planning Commission for the same.
4. 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/or comply with the Dimensional Variance Approval, (b) approval from Hopkins Hill Fire District, (c) RIDEM OWTS permit for the additional ADU bedrooms, and (d) stormwater management practices, subject to the Town Engineer’s approval.

Recommendation on Accessory Structure

02/19/2026

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission **allow** the proposed accessory structure to proceed to building permit stage.



TOWN OF COVENTRY
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TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: January 20, 2026
PROJECT NAME: "Therriault ADU"
PROPERTIES: AP 21, Lot 312
ADDRESS: 31 King Street
ZONE: R-20 (Residential) & BP (Business Park)
OWNER/APPLICANT: Jason & Ann Marie Therriault

This matter came before the Coventry Technical Review Committee at its January 20, 2026 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).

An application and plan were submitted for review in December 2025. The applicant proposes to construct a 1,625 SF two-bedroom Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on their 0.76-acre parcel. The applicant seeks two Dimensional Variances as the ADU will be placed in the front yard and exceed the maximum allowable floor area requirements. 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 members of the Technical Review Committee reviewed the following documents related to this application when preparing the comments below:

Therriault ADU - Site Plan.pdf
Therriault ADU - Applicant Letter.pdf
Therriault ADU - Dimensional Variance Application #1 - Front Yard.pdf
Therriault ADU - Dimensional Variance Application #2 - Floor Area.pdf
Therriault ADU - OWTS Plan.pdf
Therriault ADU - Revised Floor Plans & Elevations.pdf

PRINCIPAL PLANNER DESIGNEE

- The proposed 1,625 SF one-story, two-bedroom ADU will include 1,006 SF of living area, a 528 SF garage, and a 91 SF covered porch.
- The applicant seeks two (2) Dimensional Variances for the proposed structure:
 - Dimensional Variance #1: The structure 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.

- Dimensional Variance #2: The structure will exceed the maximum allowable floor area requirements. The applicant is seeking a two-bedroom ADU at 1,625 SF where the maximum unit size for a two-bedroom ADU in this case is 1,200 SF per zoning code § 255-920. This represents an approximate 35.4% increase above the dimensional requirement.
- The applicant has proposed an extension of their existing driveway to serve the ADU, as opposed to a separate curb cut and driveway, per feedback from Planning Staff. The garage will face the principal dwelling structure rather than the street.
- The applicant has also proposed a landscaped buffer along their front yard, in front of the proposed ADU, to ensure reasonable screening of views from the abutting neighbors and public right-of-way. Planning Staff suggest that new plantings mimic the size and quality of the existing trees along the western border of the property.

TOWN ENGINEER

- A) A Town of Coventry Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Permit is required
- B) RIDEM OWTS Permit is required
- C) Stormwater management practices must be provided to treat the water quality volume of runoff from the project's proposed driveway in accordance with the State Stormwater Manual and the State of RI Stormwater Management Guidance for Individual Single-Family Residential Lot Development. Practices could consist of Qualifying Pervious Areas (QPA's), Rain Gardens or Infiltration Systems such as drywells or crushed stone trenches. Please submit stormwater management practice sizing calculations for the driveway runoff volume (prepared by a licensed engineer or surveyor)
- D) There is a Palustrine Open Water Wetland behind the subject property. Please ensure any disturbance is outside the wetland's buffer zone

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

- No comments at this time.

FIRE REPRESENTATIVE

- No issues providing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are installed in compliance with the fire code.

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.