



TOWN OF COVENTRY

Department of Planning & Development
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DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE DECISION

DATE: February 26, 2026
SITE NAME: "Therriault ADU"
PROPERTIES: AP 21, Lot 312
ADDRESS: 31 King Street
ZONE: R-20 (Residential)
OWNER/APPLICANT: Jason & AnnMarie Therriault

This matter came before the Planning Commission as a Public Hearing on February 25, 2026 for a Unified Development Review of an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and an associated Dimensional Variance Application entitled "Therriault ADU". The applicant is seeking two (2) Dimensional Variances for ADU placement and maximum floor area requirements at the property located at 31 King Street (AP 21, Lot 312). The ADU 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 structure also requires relief because it exceeds the maximum allowable floor area. The applicant proposes 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.

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).

It is hereby DECREED:

Upon a motion made by Member Kenney, and seconded by Member Preiss, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to **GRANT** conditional approval for the "Therriault ADU" Dimensional Variance Application as presented (including all stipulations and provisions contained therein), with the following Findings of Fact and Conditions of Approval:

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The Planning Commission conducted an orderly, thorough, and expeditious technical review of this Dimensional Variance Application for conformance with required standards set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-41 and found the following:

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)“

1. The applicant states that the variance for front yard placement is necessary because, “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.” The applicant added that the ADU requires relief from the maximum floor area requirements due “to the unique characteristics of the property.”
2. 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 the 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”

3. The applicant contended that the variance request was “not the result of anything the applicant has done to the property” or “any prior action.”
4. 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”

5. The applicant opined that “The request does not alter the character of the surrounding property and does not impair the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance” and “All other setbacks and restrictions are compliant.”
6. 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

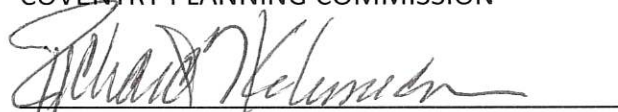
is minimal to a reasonable enjoyment of the permitted use to which the property is proposed to be devoted. The fact that a use may be more profitable or that a structure may be more valuable after the relief is granted is not grounds for relief. The zoning board of review, or, [planning board] in unified development review, has the power to grant dimensional variances where the use is permitted by special-use permit."

7. The applicant stated that the front yard "is the only area in which the proposed ADU would fit without further variances." The proposed ADU is intended for use by the applicant's elderly mother so she can "obtain the assistance she needs" and "be able to live independently."
8. 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.

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.

COVENTRY PLANNING COMMISSION



Richard Kalunian, Chairman

Dated: March 3, 2026

This decision of the Planning Commission may be appealed in writing by any party aggrieved. Any such appeal must be made within 20 days of the date of the decision is recorded in accordance with applicable state and local procedures.