



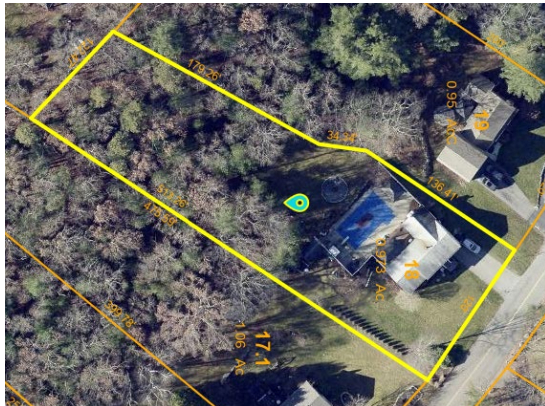
**TOWN OF COVENTRY, RI
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

STAFF REPORT

Project Name:	Torborg ADU
Plan Type:	Unified Development Review (Accessory Dwelling Unit w/ associated Dimensional Variance)
Owner/Applicant:	Vincent & Alicia Torborg
Address:	100 Reservoir Road
Plat / Lot / Zone:	AP 43 Lot 18 Zone R-20 Lot Size 0.97 acres
Existing Use:	Single-Family Dwelling
Proposed Use:	Single-Family Dwelling with an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)
Description:	The applicants propose to construct a 2,600 SF two-bedroom Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on their 0.97-acre parcel. The applicants seek one Dimensional Variance as the ADU will exceed the maximum unit size requirements.

I. PROJECT INFORMATION

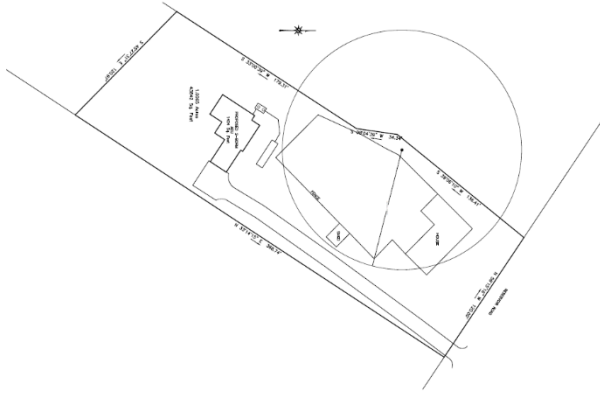
Background and Existing Conditions



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 parcel is 0.97 acres in size and currently hosts one single-family dwelling, with a swimming pool, rear deck, patio, and shed. The rear yard, where the ADU will be sited, is wooded aside from the fenced-in grass lawn surrounding the pool. An existing row of arborvitaes lines the eastern property line.

Proposed Conditions

The applicants propose to construct a 2,600 SF two-bedroom ADU, which will include 995 SF of interior living space, a 352 SF single-car garage, a 180 SF wooden exterior deck, a 78 SF covered porch, and a 995 SF unfinished basement. It will be occupied by the applicants' daughter. This ADU will be sited in the rear yard, behind the chain-link fence that surrounds the grass lawn, and will be served by a proposed driveway of 200' in length with a separate curb cut on Reservoir Road. A new on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS) will also be installed. The applicants have submitted a landscape plan that shows trees to be removed and preserved.



Zoning

The applicants seek one Dimensional Variance for the proposed ADU to exceed the maximum allowable floor area requirements. The applicant is seeking a two-bedroom ADU at 2,600 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 a 116.7% increase above the dimensional standard.

No other variances are proposed or required at this time. As detailed in the application materials, the proposed ADU will comply with the minimum lot area, maximum lot coverage, and minimum rear setback requirements set forth in zoning code § 255-920. The ADU will also meet the maximum height requirement, though this is not reflected in the application materials. The applicant confirmed via email that the ADU will be 20' 5.5" where 22' is the maximum. Finally, 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."

Interdepartmental Review and Comments

Please see the attached report from the Technical Review Committee (dated August 17, 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 § 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: The finished interior floor area of the proposed ADU is 995 sq. ft. below the maximum sq. ft. floor area of 1,200 sq. ft. set by ordinance. The proposed ADU is located on a lot more than double the required 20,000 sq. ft. It is located in a neighborhood of single-family homes with designs similar to the principal structure. In order to maintain the characteristics of the neighborhood, a single-car garage, a covered front porch and a reach wooden deck, all of modest size were added. Adding the 995 sq. ft.

unfinished basement, which has no impact on the neighborhood, increases the relief requested.

- Staff added the following considerations: The Dimensional Variance sought is due to the unique characteristics of the primary dwelling structure, which in this case is the existing single-family house. “A two (2) bedroom ADU may be up to 1,200 square feet, or 60% of the floor area of the principal dwelling, whichever is less” per zoning code § 255-920. The principal dwelling at 100 Reservoir Road is 3,486 SF, 60% of which is 2,091.6 SF. Thus, the 1,200 SF maximum unit size alternative is less and applies to this structure.
 - The proposed ADU far exceeds the maximum unit size allowed. The TRC comments and draft conditions of approval below would reduce the size and minimize the relief sought.

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: The characteristics of the existing principal structure and similar neighborhood homes are not the result of any prior action of the applicant. The general slope of the land is increasing in elevation moving from the street past the existing home and a fenced in rear yard. An existing row of arborvitaes line the property line facing the existing home. The ADU driveway will be adjacent to the existing arborvitae, and the ADU will be located behind the existing residence and fenced in back yard, limiting proximity and visibility from the street.

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 answer: The requested relief is designed to maintain the general character of the surrounding area. The interior living area of the ADU is less than the maximum allowed. The exterior addition of the garage and covered porch will help the ADU blend into the neighborhood and do not impair the purpose of the zoning ordinance. Adding the 995 sq. ft. of unfinished basement to the floor area calculation will not have any impact on the Town or neighborhood.
- Staff added the following considerations: It should be noted that the “maximum unit size” takes into account the square footage of all proposed features, not just interior living space. The approval of the requested Dimensional Variance would not alter the general character of the surrounding area, provided that modest reductions to the square footage of the ADU are considered, and the applicant takes steps to strengthen the landscaped buffer as recommended in the TRC comments and stipulated in the conditions of approval below. In addition, the removal of the porch and deck will minimize any potential impairment to the intent and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance.

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: Efforts are made to provide a suitably sized ADU, but also to have the ADU fit the characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood. Removing the single-car garage, deck, and covered front porch would result in a box in the rear yard of the principal structure, more noticeable, out of character with the neighborhood.
- Staff added the following considerations: The ADU could be reduced in size closer to the maximum unit size alternative of 2,091.6 SF described in the staff findings for (d)(1) above, through the removal of the porch and deck. This alternative has no legal bearing on the compliance of the ADU with the Zoning Ordinance, but provides important context for the Planning Commission to assess whether the proposed structure fits the spirit of the “minimal to a reasonable enjoyment of the permitted use” standard.

Recommendation on Dimensional Variances

Following consideration of the proposed conditions below at the Public Hearing, Planning Staff finds this application consistent with the standards for required Dimensional Variance findings of fact set forth in RIGL § 45-24-41. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and **approve** the Dimensional Variance for maximum unit size requirements conditional upon the reductions in ADU size (noted as “*”) and landscaping considerations described in the draft conditions of approval below.

Additionally, the Planning Commission should consider another condition of approval (not presented below) to reduce the size of the unfinished basement to the minimum amount needed for utilities and storage, and consult the applicant to determine an appropriate basement footprint. It is imperative that the applicant and Planning Commission arrive at a specific number before relief is granted.

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 applicant shall reduce the size of the ADU through the removal of the proposed deck and covered porch from the site design.*
3. The applicant shall fill in the small gap in the existing row of arborvitaes along the northeastern property line that will be adjacent to the proposed driveway, to ensure adequate visual screening for abutting house.
4. The applicant shall preserve all existing trees within 75’ of the rear property line.

5. 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 Central Coventry Fire District, (c) RIDEM OWTS permit for the additional ADU bedrooms, and (d) stormwater management practices, subject to the Town Engineer's approval.
6. The applicant shall describe how the ADU will have potable water service and meet the minimum height requirements for fire apparatus prior to building permit approval.
7. The applicant shall submit a Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Permit application prior to any ground disturbing activities.
8. The applicant shall post the address of the rear unit (100A Reservoir Rd.) at the driveway to help emergency responders locate the ADU if needed.

Recommendation on Accessory Structure

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



TOWN OF COVENTRY

Department of Planning & Development

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TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: August 17, 2026
PROJECT NAME: "Torborg ADU"
PROPERTIES: AP 43, Lot 18
ADDRESS: 100 Reservoir Road
ZONE: R-20 (Residential)
OWNER/APPLICANT: Vincent & Alicia Torborg

This matter came before the Coventry Technical Review Committee at its August 17, 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 initial application and plan set were submitted for review on July 20, 2026. A revised site plan and landscape plan set were submitted for review on August 6, 2026. The applicants propose to construct a 2,600 SF two-bedroom ADU on their 0.97-acre parcel. The applicants seek one Dimensional Variance as the ADU will exceed the maximum unit size requirements.

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

Torborg ADU - Project Narrative.pdf
Torborg ADU - Dimensional Variance Application.pdf
Torborg ADU - Rev Elevation & Site Plan.pdf
Torborg ADU - Rev Landscape Plan.pdf

PRINCIPAL PLANNER DESIGNER

1. The proposed 2,600 SF two-bedroom ADU will include 995 SF of interior living space, a 352 SF garage, a 180 SF deck, a 78 SF covered porch, and a 995 SF unfinished basement.
2. The applicant seeks one Dimensional Variance for the proposed ADU to exceed the maximum allowable floor area requirements. The applicant is seeking a two-bedroom ADU at 2,600 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 a 116.7% increase above the dimensional standard.
3. Recall that "A two (2) bedroom ADU may be up to 1,200 square feet, or 60% of the floor area of the principal dwelling, whichever is less" per zoning code § 255-920. The principal dwelling at 100 Reservoir Road is 3,486 SF, 60% of which is 2,091.6 SF. Thus, the 1,200 SF maximum unit size alternative is less and applies to this structure.

4. Planning staff recommends that the applicant reduce the size of the ADU, specifically through the removal of the proposed deck and covered porch from the site design. With these removed, the total floor area of the ADU would decrease to 2,342 SF.
5. Planning staff also suggests that the applicant reduce the footprint of the unfinished basement to the minimum amount needed to accommodate storage and utilities.
6. The applicant shall fill in the small gap in the existing row of arborvitaes along the northeastern property line that will be adjacent to the proposed driveway to ensure adequate visual screening for the abutting house.
7. Planning staff recommends that the applicant adjust the proposed driveway to retain the existing oak tree and rhododendron in the front yard and ensure visual screening.
8. The applicant shall preserve all existing trees within 75' of the rear property line.
9. Planning staff notes that the orientation of the garage entrance shown on the site plan appears to disagree with the orientation of the garage entrance on the floor plan.

TOWN ENGINEER

1. A town Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Permit will be required from the Town Engineering Office prior to any ground disturbing activities.
2. Stormwater management practices must be provided to treat the water quality volume of runoff from the project's proposed roof top and 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. Sizing calculations for the roof top and driveway runoff volume shall be prepared by a licensed engineer or licensed surveyor).
3. Please describe how the applicant proposes to provide potable water to the ADU.

FIRE REPRESENTATIVE

1. The minimum height along the proposed driveway for fire apparatus shall be made.
2. Recommend the address of the rear unit be posted at the driveway for emergency apparatus to assist with location if needed.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

1. No Comments

POLICE CHIEF

1. No Comments

PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR

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