

CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

MPC STAFF REPORT

February 17, 2026

Subdivision/Final Plat
Hornstein Ward Lot 10, Gould Estates
PIN 20096 05001
1 Lot to 2 Lots, 0.32 acres
RSF-6 (Residential Single-family-6)
MPC File No. 26-000494-SUBP
J. Craig Brewer, Brewer Land Surveying, Agent

Edward Morrow, MPC Project Planner

Report Status: Final Report

Nature of Request

The Petitioner requests MPC approval of a Minor Subdivision Final Plat for the subdivision of a 0.32 acre parcel zoned RSF-6 in the Ardmore Conservation District (CD-2, Sec. 7.15.3.a.ii).

Findings

1. The purpose of the proposed subdivision is to create an additional single-family home parcel. The subject parcel is 13,807 square feet in area in a zoning district requiring a minimum 6,000 square feet in lot area. It contains a single-family dwelling of historic character built in or about 1950, per the Chatham County Board of Assessors.
2. The proposed subdivision would result in **Lot 10-A** having an area of 6,000 sf (0.137 ac), primary frontage of just over 150 feet on Atlantic Street, and secondary frontage on East 55th Lane. The existing 2,012 sf home would be situated on **Lot 10-B**, which would have 7,807 square feet, retaining both primary frontage on East 55th Street and lane frontage on East 55th Lane.
3. The subject property is located in the *Ardmore Conservation District*. The regulatory intent is to provide protection for historic resources in areas that lack the comprehensive design controls of a full local historic district overlay. The District specifically focuses on maintaining the neighborhood's historic fabric by establishing a public process and strict standards to evaluate the demolition of contributing buildings. This ensures that the physical integrity and visual continuity of the neighborhood are preserved against the loss of significant structures.
4. Demolition of the existing dwelling of historic character is *not proposed*, only the further subdivision of the parcel on which it is located.
5. Traffic Engineering has given the proposed subdivision a conditional approval. As lane access is available, the new home will be required to take access from the lane with no new curb cuts on Atlantic or East 55th to be approved.

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6. Both parcels will be served by City of Savannah water, sewer and stormwater utilities.
7. An Environmental Site Assessment is not required for a minor subdivision.
8. Per **Section 8-2021.c** of the City of Savannah Subdivision Regulations, "*lots within a recorded subdivision for single-family detached units designed to be developed as a unified whole shall not be further subdivided if such resubdivision would create lots of such size or shape which would alter or change the character of the recorded single-family subdivision in terms of adversely impacting the visual quality or consistency of the established development pattern.*"
9. Per **Section 8-2045(a)** of the Subdivision Regulations, MPC Staff may request the review of a minor subdivision application by the Planning Commission at its discretion.

Discussion

The proposal fails to meet the intent of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations in three critical ways: 1) It would permit a subdivision that disrupts the established development pattern of the original platted subdivision, 2) it is averse to the intent of the Ardmore Conservation District, and 3) the approval of subdivision with such irregular geometry is likely to result in a self-created hardship requiring future variance relief.

The City of Savannah Subdivision Regulations explicitly grant the Planning Commission the authority to deny subdivisions that technically meet base zoning standards but fail contextually, stating that "*lots shall not be further subdivided if such action would alter the character of the recorded subdivision or adversely impact the visual quality of the established development pattern.*" The Ardmore neighborhood is defined by a specific rhythm of spacing, lot orientation, and a historic relationship to public amenities. Although some lots in the vicinity may have been subdivided over the years to accommodate additional homes, the historic cadence of the streetscape, particularly concerning the spacious lots surrounding the park, remains a defining feature of the district.

Additionally, the proposal fails to meet the intent of the *Ardmore Conservation District (CD-2)*. While this specific district does not contain the explicit prohibition on subdivision/recombination found in other districts, its overarching regulatory purpose is to preserve the character of Savannah's older neighborhoods. This "character" is derived fundamentally from the ratio of building mass to open space. By subdividing this parcel, the density is artificially increased beyond the established pattern of the immediate block face with the added issue of the future home's angled orientation. The regulations require that, to the greatest extent possible, side lot lines be at right angles to straight street lines (*Section 8-2023(a)(2)*). This ensures regularity in configuration.

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Finally, the approval of this subdivision would likely create a self-imposed hardship necessitating future variances. While the Applicant has submitted a conforming concept, it cannot be assumed that they will be the builder of the proposed dwelling. A subdivision should not be approved if it creates lots that cannot be developed desirably without relief from zoning standards.

To grant a variance, a Board must find that *special conditions* exist which are peculiar to the land and not the result of the applicant's actions. If this subdivision is approved, any subsequent need for setbacks or coverage variances would arise solely from the applicant's voluntary act of subdividing the land. This constitutes a self-imposed hardship that is grounds for denial under *Section 3.21.10* of the Zoning Ordinance.

Recommendation

MPC Staff recommends **denial** of the proposed subdivision.

