

SAVANNAH BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS



STAFF REPORT

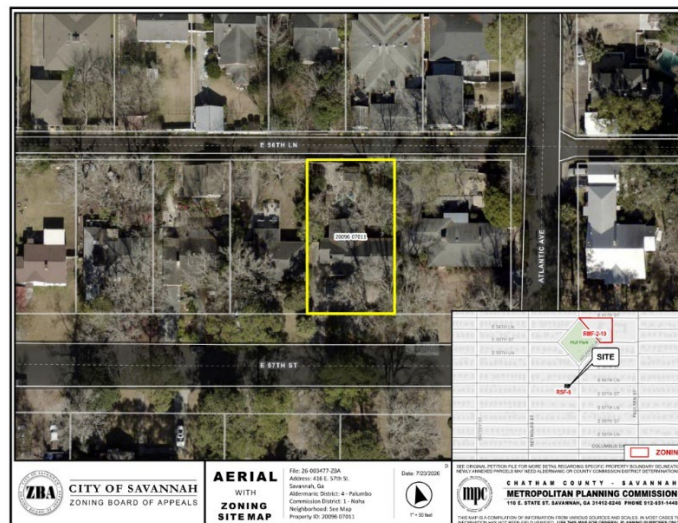
MPC FILE NO.	26-003477-ZBA
MPC STAFF	Ashley Catterton
DATE	October 22, 2026
PETITIONER	Heather DuCloux
ADDRESS	416 E 57th Street
PARCEL ID	20096 07011
ALDERMAN DISTRICT	4 – Nick Palumbo
CHATHAM COUNTY	1 – Anthony Wayne Noha
COMMISSION DISTRICT	

BACKGROUND

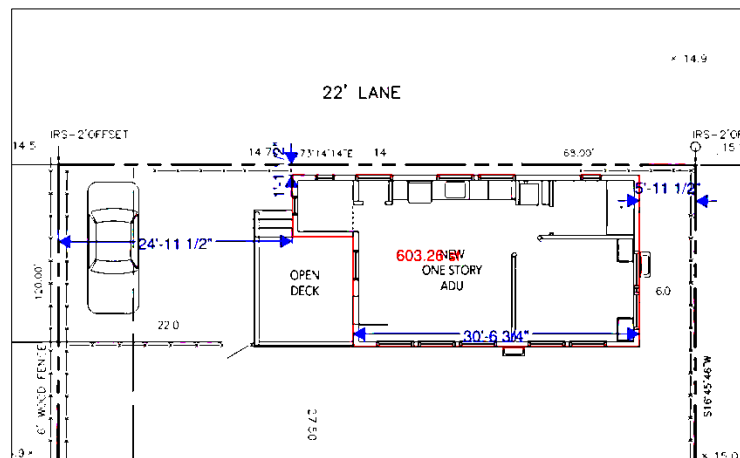
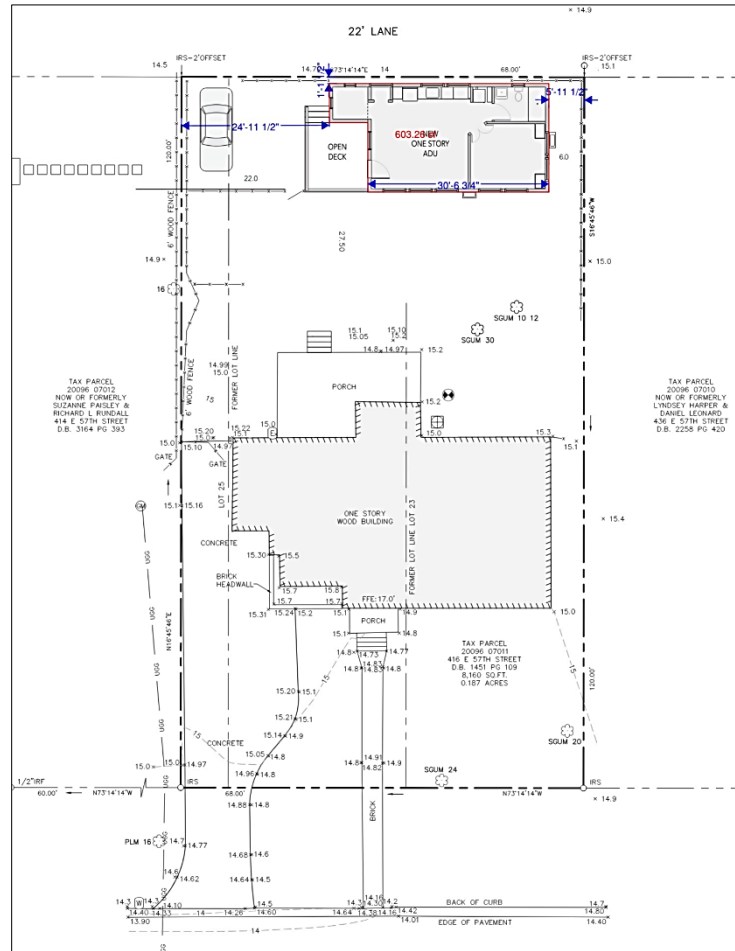
The subject property consists of approximately 0.19 acres (8,276 square feet) located at 416 E 57th Street with a lot width of approximately 68 feet and a depth of 120 feet. The property is zoned Residential Single-family-6 (RSF-6) and is located within the Ardmore/Gould Estates/Olin Heights neighborhood.

The Petitioner seeks approval of two (2) variances to facilitate the construction of a one-story, 603-square-foot Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) as follows:

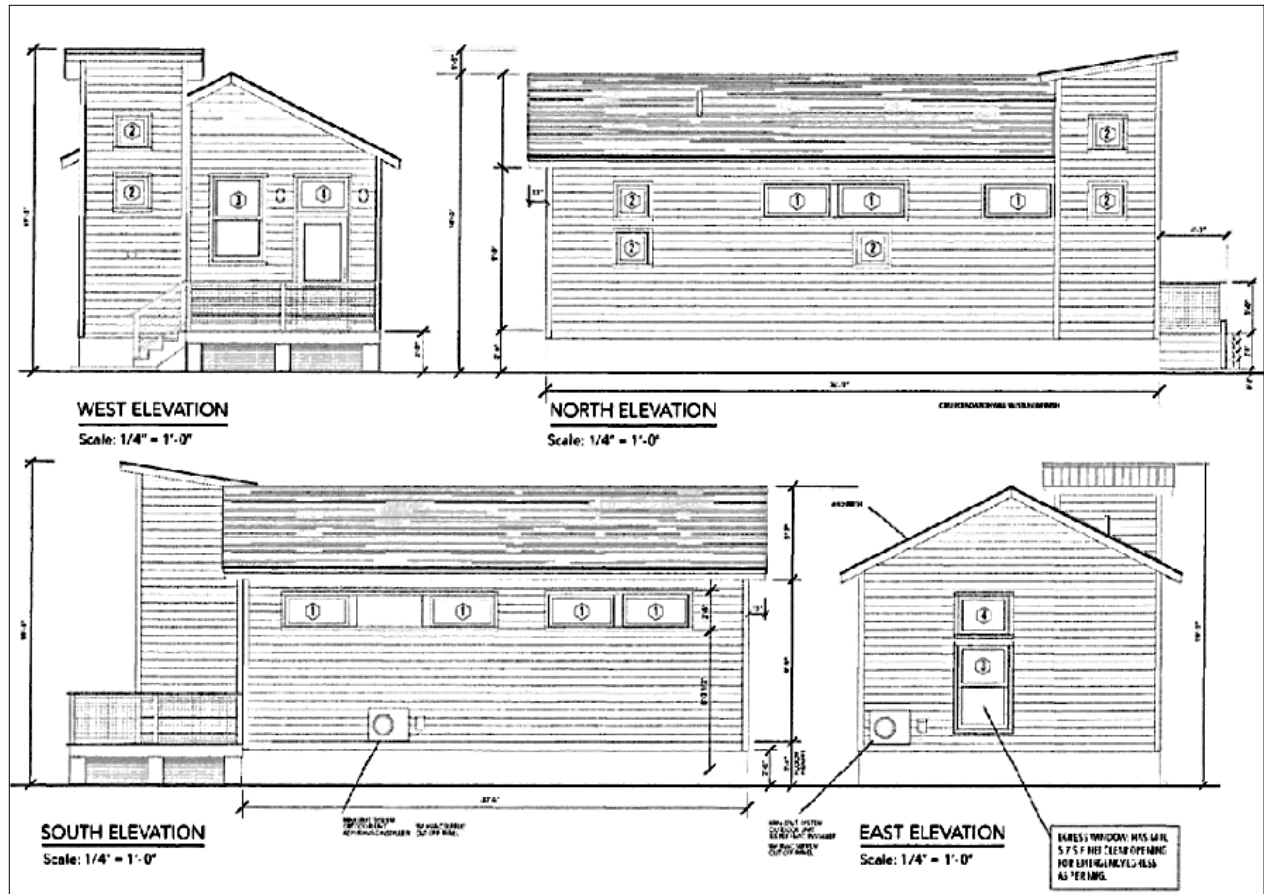
1. Reduce the required rear-yard setback for the rear roof eave from three (3) feet to zero (0) feet; and
2. Reduce the required rear-yard setback for the proposed ADU from three (3) feet to one (1) foot, one and one-half (1 ½) inches.



Aerial & Site Map for 416 E 57th Street



Proposed Conceptual ADU Layout for 416 E 57th Street



Proposed ADU Elevations for 416 E 57th Street

FACTS & FINDINGS

- The Petitioner has submitted a conceptual site layout and architectural elevations for the proposed 603-square-foot ADU as part of the variance application.
- The proposed ADU complies with the required 10-foot building separation established by **Section 8.7.4(a)(iii)** of the *City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance*.

Section 8.7.4(a)(iii). *Detached accessory dwelling units shall meet the same side-yard setback requirement as the principal structure. Such units shall be separated from the principal structure by at least 10 feet. Detached accessory dwelling units shall have a rear-yard setback requirement of at least five (5) feet, provided that if the accessory dwelling is located on a lot that abuts a lane the rear-yard setback requirement shall be at least three (3) feet. Within zoning districts that have no rear-yard setback requirement for the principal structure there shall be no rear-yard setback requirement for an accessory dwelling unit.*

- The proposed ADU is located on a lot abutting a lane and is therefore subject to a minimum three-foot rear-yard setback pursuant to **Section 8.7.4(a)(iii)** of the *City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance*. As proposed, the ADU would provide a rear-yard setback of one foot, one and one-half inches, which does not comply with the

minimum setback required by **Section 8.7.4(a)(iii)**.

- Additionally, the rear roof eave would extend to the rear property line, resulting in a zero-foot setback. These two encroachments are the subject of the requested variances.

Section 4.3.3(i)(2). *Eave or roof overhangs and awnings may project up to two (2) feet from the property line, its lower edge is at least eight (8) feet above the ground elevation and is located at least five (5) feet from any other building, eave or awning.*

- Properties within 500 feet of the subject property are zoned RSF-6.
- The Future Land Use for the subject property is “Residential-Suburban Single Family”.
- According to Chatham County-Savannah Comprehensive Plan (Plan 2040), the subject property is located within the Urban Transitional Character Area. This area includes the Cuyler-Brownville Historic District, established neighborhoods such as Ardsley Park and Victory Heights, and commercial corridors on Abercorn Street and Victory Drive. Urban Transitional areas are identifiable by more automobile-oriented, suburban-style residential areas that still provide access to urban amenities and public transit. Most neighborhoods are also pedestrian-oriented with well-used sidewalks, parks, and open spaces. Redevelopment and infill development opportunities are prevalent in this character area.

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL

The Zoning Board of Appeals may grant variances to certain development standards per Section 3.21.10 based on the following criteria:

a. General Consistency

The variance shall be consistent with the intent of this Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan and shall not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare.

Staff Comment: *The proposed ADU is generally consistent with Plan 2040’s support for compatible residential infill and additional housing options within established neighborhoods. However, the requested reductions are not consistent with the dimensional standards established for detached ADUs on lots abutting a lane. Although the proposed residential use is appropriate, the current design places the ADU and its roof eaves closer to the rear property line than permitted. Therefore, the requested variances are not fully consistent with the intent of the Zoning Ordinance.*

b. Special Conditions

- i. Special conditions and/or circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, buildings or structures involved and which are not applicable to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.

Staff Comment: No special condition or circumstance peculiar to the subject property has been identified that necessitates the requested variances. The property is a conventionally shaped 0.19-acre lot, measuring approximately 68 feet in width and 120 feet in depth, and its adjacency to a lane is a condition shared by other properties within the zoning district. The applicable three-foot rear-yard setback is specifically intended to apply to detached ADUs located on lots abutting a lane.

- ii. The special conditions and/or circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant.

Staff Comment: The circumstances giving rise to the requested variances result from the proposed size, design, and placement of the ADU rather than from an existing condition peculiar to the property. The applicant's decision to position the structure approximately one foot, one and one-half inches from the rear property line, with the roof eave extending to the property line, creates the need for the requested relief.

- iii. The special conditions and/or circumstances are not purely financial in nature so as to allow the applicant to use the land, buildings or structures involved more profitably or to save money.

Staff Comment: The requested variances do not appear to be based solely on financial considerations. However, the absence of purely financial hardship does not establish that a special land-related condition exists or that the remaining variance criteria have been satisfied.

c. Literal Interpretation

Literal interpretation of the provisions of the regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the Ordinance and would result in unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant.

Staff Comment: Literal application of the three-foot rear-yard setback would not deprive the applicant of a right commonly enjoyed by other properties within the RSF-6 zoning district. The property may still be developed with an ADU, provided that the structure is appropriately designed and located in compliance with the applicable dimensional standards. Requiring modification or relocation of the proposed ADU would not constitute unnecessary or undue hardship.

d. Minimum Variance

The variance, if granted, is the minimum variance necessary to make possible the reasonable use of land, buildings, or structures.

Staff Comment: The requested variances have not been demonstrated to be the minimum relief necessary to permit reasonable use of the property. The proposed ADU may be reduced in size, relocated, or otherwise redesigned to provide the required rear-yard setback and prevent the roof eave from extending to the rear property line. Reasonable residential use of the property remains available without

granting the requested variances.

e. Special Privilege Not Granted

The variance would not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this Ordinance to other lands, buildings, or structures in the same zoning district.

Staff Comment: *Granting the requested variances without a demonstrated condition peculiar to the property would permit the applicant to construct an ADU closer to the rear property line than is otherwise allowed for similarly situated properties within the RSF-6 zoning district. Accordingly, approval would confer a special privilege not generally available to other properties subject to the same dimensional requirements.*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

MPC Staff recommends **DENIAL** of the requested variances to reduce the required three-foot rear-yard setback to zero (0) for the rear roof eave and to one (1) foot, one and one-half (1 ½) inches for the proposed ADU.

The requested variances do not satisfy the criteria established by Section 3.21.10 of the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance. No special condition peculiar to the property has been demonstrated, the need for the requested relief results from the proposed design and placement of the ADU, and reasonable use of the property remains available through a compliant alternative design or location.

Note: This recommendation could change subject to new information provided at the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. Final decisions will be made by the Zoning Board of Appeals at the public hearing based on information provided at the meeting, as well as information submitted for the staff report.