

SAVANNAH BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS



STAFF REPORT

MPC FILE NO.	26-003622-ZBA
MPC STAFF	Ashley Catterton
DATE	September 24, 2026
PETITIONER	Kevin Sullivan
ADDRESS	3032 Grenoble Street
PARCEL ID	20084 03022
ALDERMAN DISTRICT	3 – Linda Wilder-Bryan
CHATHAM COUNTY	
COMMISSION DISTRICT	2 – Malinda Scott Hodge

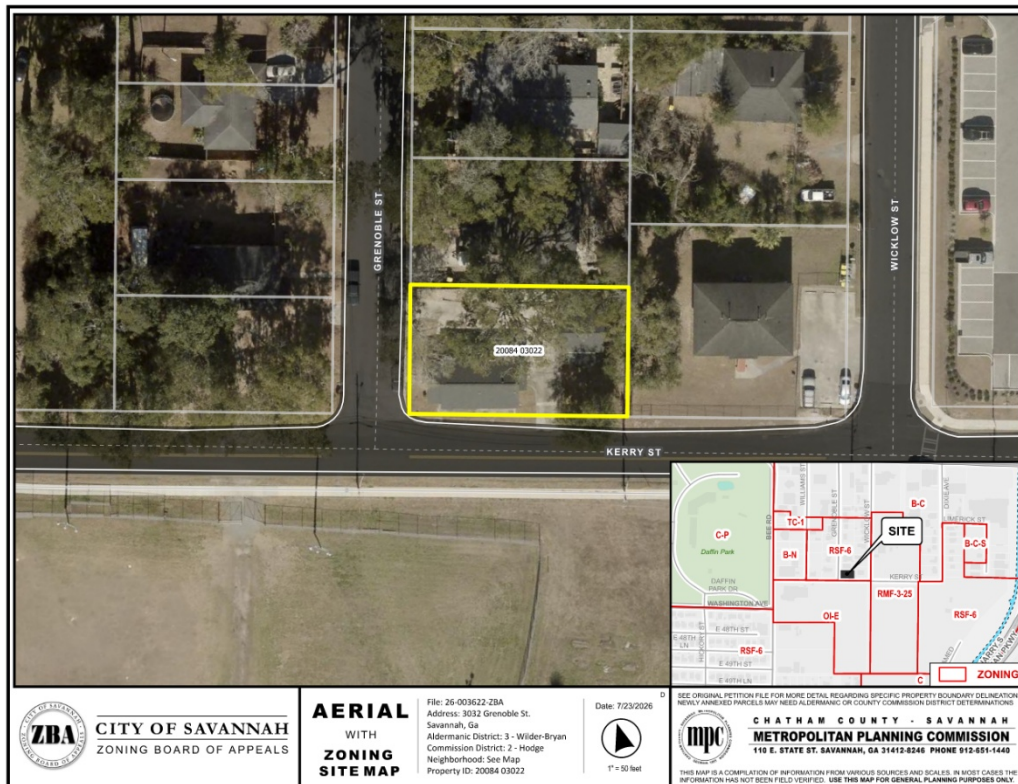
BACKGROUND

This variance request involves a 0.17-acre tract located at 3032 Grenoble Street measuring approximately 7,405 square feet, with a lot width of 67 feet and a depth of 113 feet. The property is currently zoned Residential Single-family-6 (RSF-6) and is situated within the Dale Terrace/Olympus/Victory Square neighborhoods.

The Petitioner is requesting a variance for an existing approximately 520-square-foot accessory structure being used as an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). The requested variance would allow the ADU to have a building footprint equal to approximately 57% of the principal dwelling's building footprint, or 520 square feet, rather than the currently permitted maximum of 40%, or approximately 365 square feet – a difference of approximately 155 square feet.

Following completion of the previous staff report, additional information regarding the permitting history of the structure was provided by City of Savannah staff. Based on information provided by the City Planning Manager, a renovation permit was submitted in 2021 that included the proposed creation of an ADU within the accessory structure. The renovation permit was subsequently approved; however, the approved plans included a notation indicating that the ADU component was not approved.

The current property owner later applied for a separate electrical meter for the accessory structure, at which time the City reviewed the previous permit history and determined that the ADU had not received zoning approval. The current owner has since applied for an ADU permit and the subject variance.



Aerial & Site Map for 3032 Grenoble Street



Existing ADU Photo #1 located at 3032 Grenoble Street



Existing ADU Photo #2 located at 3032 Grenoble Street

FACTS & FINDINGS

- A renovation permit was submitted in 2021 that included the proposed creation of an ADU within an existing accessory structure. According to information subsequently provided by City of Savannah Planning staff, the renovation permit was approved with a notation indicating that the ADU component was not approved.
- The structure then received a Certificate of Completion; however, based on information provided by City Planning staff, approval and completion of the underlying renovation work did not constitute approval of the accessory structure for use as an ADU.
- The current property owner later applied for a separate electrical meter for the accessory structure. During review of that request, the City reviewed the previous permit history and determined that the ADU had not received zoning approval.
- The current property owner has since applied for an ADU permit and the subject variance to address the current ADU building-footprint requirement.

Previous Meeting & Procedural History:

- The petition was previously scheduled for consideration by the Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals (SZBA) on August 27, 2026. Prior to the meeting, MPC Staff received additional information from City Planning staff regarding the permitting and approval history of the existing accessory structure and its use as an ADU.
- This information raised questions regarding whether the ADU had previously received zoning approval and differed from information available to MPC Staff during preparation of the initial staff report.

- Neither the Petitioner nor City Planning Manager John Anagnost was present at the August 27 meeting. Due to the permitting history and discrepancies identified in the available records, the Board continued the petition and requested that the City Planning Manager be present when the petition is reconsidered to provide clarification regarding the City's previous review and approval of the structure and its use as an ADU.

Current Meeting & Zoning Requirements:

- The existing accessory structure, if approved for use as an ADU, **would not conform** to the building-footprint limitation established by **Section 8.7.4(d)(i)**, which limits an ADU to 40% of the principal dwelling's building footprint.
 - In response to **Section 8.7.4(d)(i)**, the principal dwelling has a building footprint of approximately 912 square feet. Based on this footprint, the maximum permitted ADU building footprint is approximately 365 square feet. The existing accessory structure proposed for use as an ADU has a building footprint of approximately 520 square feet, or approximately 57% of the principal dwelling's building footprint, exceeding the maximum permitted ADU footprint by approximately 155 square feet.
- According to the Floodplain Management Report, the AE (High Risk) 100-year Flood Zone is located within 300 feet of the subject property.
- Adjacent zoning districts within 500 feet include RSF-6, Neighborhood Business (B-N), Office and Institutional Expanded (OI-E), and Residential Multi-family-3-25 (RMF-3-25).
- 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 maintain access to urban amenities and public transit. Many neighborhoods are also pedestrian-oriented, with sidewalks, parks, and open spaces. Redevelopment and infill development opportunities are prevalent within this character area.
- The Future Land Use designation for the subject property is *Residential-General*. Plan 2040 identifies these areas as supporting a range of residential uses, including multi-family dwellings, attached dwellings, small-lot single-family dwellings, and mixed-use development with upper-story residential at densities greater than 10 units per gross acre.

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 use is generally consistent with the Residential-General Future Land Use designation and Urban Transitional Character Area. However, the existing 520-square-foot accessory structure exceeds the maximum ADU building footprint permitted by the current Zoning Ordinance. No adverse impacts to the surrounding neighborhood or public health, safety, or welfare have been identified.*

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 property has been identified that requires the entire 520-square-foot accessory structure to be used as an ADU. The existing size of the structure alone does not establish a unique condition requiring relief from the current ADU building-footprint standard.*

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

Staff Comment: *The current property owner did not create the circumstances associated with the original permitting history. The 2021 renovation permit occurred under the previous property owner, and the lack of ADU approval was identified after the current owner applied for a separate electrical meter.*

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

Staff Comment: *The request does not appear to be purely financial in nature. The variance is being requested to allow the existing accessory structure to be approved for use as an ADU under the current Zoning Ordinance.*

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 current ADU building-footprint standard would not deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district. An ADU may be established on the property subject to compliance with the applicable development standards, and no unique condition has been identified that prevents a compliant ADU.*

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 variance has not been demonstrated to be the minimum relief necessary. No information has been provided demonstrating that the entire 520-square-foot accessory structure must be used as an ADU or that a compliant ADU configuration cannot reasonably be achieved.*

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: *The requested variance would allow an ADU footprint of approximately 57% of the principal dwelling's building footprint where the Ordinance permits a maximum of 40%. No unique property condition has been identified that would distinguish the subject property from other similarly zoned properties subject to the same standard.*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and the variance criteria outlined in Section 3.21.10, MPC Staff recommends **denial** of the requested variance to allow an approximately 520-square-foot Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) with a building footprint equal to approximately 57% of the principal dwelling's building footprint, rather than the maximum permitted 40%, or approximately 365 square feet.

The requested variance has not been demonstrated to result from a special condition unique to the property or to be the minimum relief necessary for reasonable use of the property. An ADU may be established on the property subject to compliance with the applicable development standards of the Zoning Ordinance.

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.