



Staff Report

Meeting Date: April 15, 2026

Planner: Rachel Vigil

APPLICATION SUMMARY:

Case Number: VAR26-0002

Application Type: Variance Request

Location: 5687 S. Louthan Street

Applicant: Michael Parks

Owner: Michael Parks

Zoning District: Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and Small Lot Residential (SLR)

Applicant Request: Approving a variance to property setbacks for an accessory building.

PROCESS:

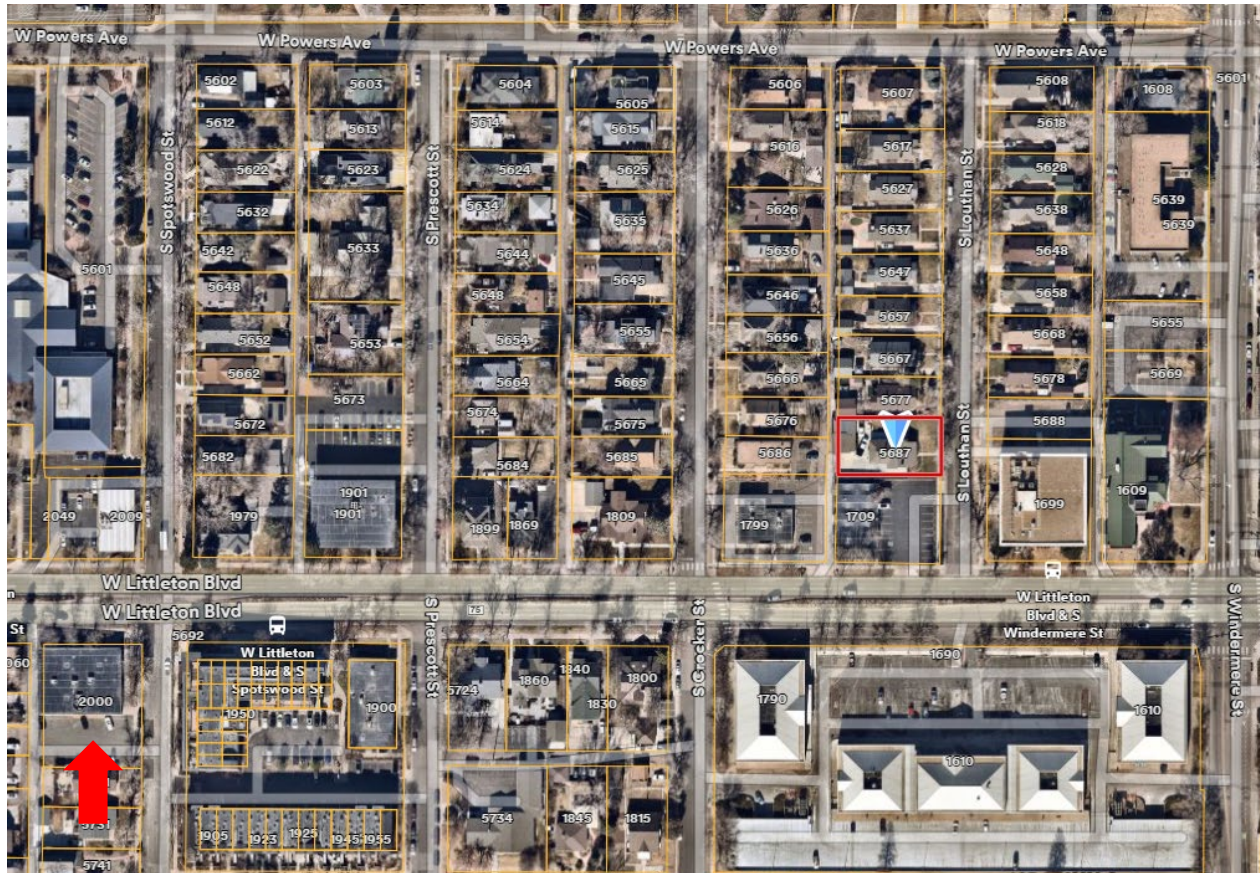
Section 10-9-9.4 of the City Code gives the Appeals and Adjustment Commission (AAC) authority to grant variances where “a deviation from a standard of this Code that is greater than that allowed by an Administrative Adjustment pursuant to Section 10-9-9.1.” No variance can be approved unless the AAC determines the criteria stated in Section 10-9-9.4.C.1 have been met.

A public hearing by the AAC is necessary because the variance request is outside the purview of qualification as an administrative adjustment per Section 10-9-9.1.

Public noticing requirements in the form of mailings and a sign posted on the property have been complied with.

LOCATION:

The site is located at 5687 S Louthan St, on the west side of S Louthan St, north of Littleton Blvd. The following vicinity map shows the location of the property and surrounding area.



BACKGROUND:

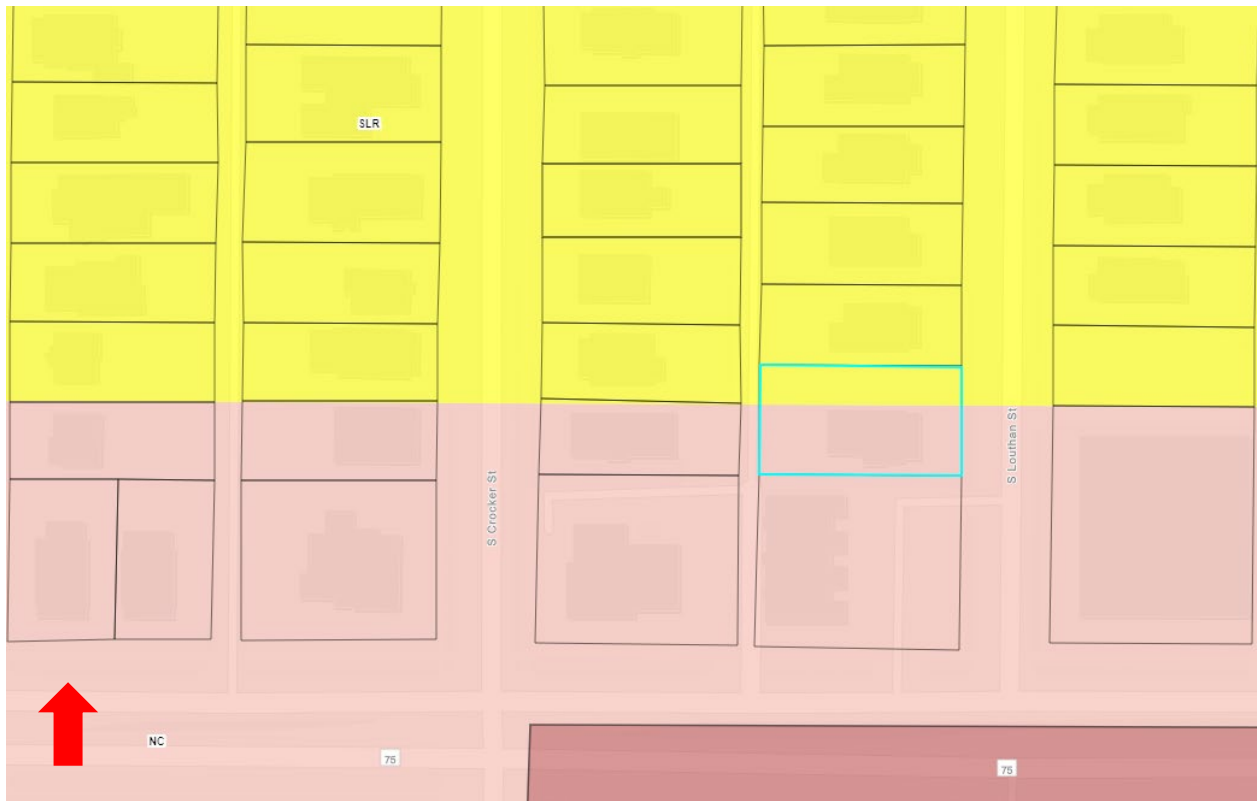
This site is part of the Littleton Heights Subdivision. According to the Arapahoe County’s Assessor’s Office, the site’s existing one-story single-family home was built in 1922. The home is a part of the Louthan Heights Historic District, which was established as a historic district in 2002. According to the Assessor’s records, the current owners of the property purchased it on January 11, 2023.



View of property looking west from S Louthan St. Source: Google Streetview.

The property is zoned Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and Small Lot Residential (SLR). The setback standards for an accessory building are the same in either district. The neighboring properties directly to the south, east, and west are also zoned NC (see zoning map below). The parcel directly to the north of 5687 S Louthan is zoned Small Lot Residential (SLR). Accessory buildings in NC and SLR must meet the following minimum setback standards:

- Front: Subordinate to the primary building
- Side: 5 feet
- Rear: 5 feet



APPLICATION DETAILS:

In 2025, the applicant built a 16’ x 24’ unpermitted addition onto an existing accessory building in the rear of their property. This addition was built within the setbacks for buildings in the NC and SLR zoning districts.

The applicant states that the addition will be used as “additional secure, weather-protected storage space for tools, small equipment, and stored personal items.” The existing accessory building on which the addition was built is a legal non-conforming building that does not conform to the setbacks for accessory buildings in the NC or SLR zoning districts.

Additionally, this building is in the Louthan Heights Historic District. Garages and other accessory buildings in this district tend to be against the back property line and do not follow the current 5’ setbacks. Of the 18 properties in the historic district, 17 have accessory buildings which appear to be nonconforming to current setbacks in the city of Littleton.



Aerial view of historic district with non-conforming accessory buildings shown in red.

The Engineering Division had no comments on this variance case.

Staff attached the following documents to the application and report:

- Applicant’s projective narrative
- Survey plat of the property

CRITERIA & STAFF ANALYSIS:

The following is staff's assessment of the application under the criteria for approval contained in Section 10-9-9.4.C.1. The variance request is evaluated under each criteria.

- 1. Strict application of the provisions of this Code would impose an undue hardship on the applicant and deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other residents of the district in which the property is located.**

Strict application of the setbacks provision of the City Code would not impose an undue hardship on the applicant, nor would it deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other residents of the district in which the property is located. Though the applicant would not be able to add an addition onto the accessory building in line with the existing building, they would have the space to add an addition onto the building, within the setbacks. In staff's opinion, this criterion is not met.

- 2. The hardship is based on or results from the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the subject property.**

The hardship is based on or results from the particular physical surroundings of the site as the original garage was built very close to the property line. In this case, the hardship results from the historic character of the site. According to the *Louthan Heights Historic District Design Guidelines*, in this district "original garages [were] set in a back corner of the lot" (52). This placement of garages does limit the placement of additions. In staff's opinion, this criterion is met.

- 3. The hardship under which the variance is sought was not created by the owner, occupant, or agent of the owner of the property in question.**

The hardship under which the variance is sought was not created by the owner, occupant, or agent of the owner of the property in question. The original accessory building was there—and the property was part of the historic district—before the property was purchased by the applicant. Additionally, there were no setbacks for accessory buildings at the time this accessory building was built. In staff's opinion, this criterion is met.

- 4. The variance requested is the minimum necessary that will make possible a permitted use of the land, building, or structure.**

Garages in the Louthan Heights Historic District are typically on the rear corner of the lot. However, there is space on this lot to build an addition that complies with the 5' setbacks and does not expand the nonconformity of the existing accessory building. In staff's opinion, this criterion is not met.

- 5. A variance will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied to other lands or structures in the same district.**

A variance will confer on the applicant a special privilege that is denied to other lands or structures in the same district. Other accessory buildings in the SLR and NC zoning district would need to comply with 5' setbacks. Additionally, expansions to existing accessory buildings in the Louthan Heights Historic District would also be required to comply with 5' setbacks. In staff's opinion, this criterion is not met.

6. A variance will not adversely affect the public health, safety, and welfare.

Approval of the request will not adversely affect the public health, safety, and welfare. In staff's opinion, this criterion is met.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Notice of a public hearing was posted on the subject property and at City locations in advance of the AAC meeting in compliance with the City's public notice requirements. Staff has not received any public comment at the time of report delivery to the commission. If any public comment is received prior to the hearing, staff will forward the comments to the commission for consideration.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff does find the proposed variance meets 3 out of the 6 the requirements of Section 10-9-9.4.C.1. Therefore, staff recommends denial of the draft AAC Resolution 02-2026.