

WBNA SCRIPT for Feb. 2, 2022 ZBR

SIOBHAN opens

Chair Greenfield and members of the Zoning Board of Review,

We are Siobhan Callahan, Interim Executive Director of WBNA, Kari Lang, former Executive Director of WBNA and consultant for this project, Noel Sanchez of Casa Buena Builders and contractor for this project, and Monika Kraemer, project Architect. We represent the West Broadway Neighborhood Association (WBNA) today. Since 1983, WBNA has been the neighborhood association for parts of Federal Hill and the West End. Our mission is to organize neighbors and businesses on the West Side of Providence to preserve and promote our diverse, historic, urban community as a safe, vibrant, and sustainable place to be SWELL (Shop, Work, Eat, Live, and Learn locally).

Background

In 2002, WBNA purchased and renovated the long vacant c.1856 Italianate house at the corner of Westminster and Bridgham Street, 1192 Westminster Street.

The ground floor is rented to the Childhood Lead Action project and the upper floor apartment is rented to a family earning 60% of median income.

The property has minimal yard space on three sides and a two bay residential garage just behind the house off Bridgham Street.

We would like to convert the garage to a micro dwelling one bedroom apartment using HOME funds awarded to WBNA from RI housing

Our project goals are:

- 1. Provide an affordable unit to someone earning less than 60% of median income**
- 2. Act as a demonstration project for "gentle density" in our city by creating an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) for a living space**
- 3. Fit the context, scale and height of our neighborhood and the guidelines of our local historic district as well as following our**

neighborhood plan and the affiliated city comp plan that came out of the neighborhood plans

- 4. Involve neighbors in the process by following WBNA strategic map and sending out a neighborhood survey for the project and its design; have a project review by WBNA's Community Development Committee, the Providence Historic District Commission and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Heritage Commission**
- 5. Convert an under-utilized building into a useful building, using what we have and needing less materials**
- 6. Offer an ADA accessible unit that is at grade**
- 7. Promote landlords offering Housing Vouchers**
- 8. Construct project through a preservation training program run by Casa Buena to give students building skills**
- 9. Have all electric heating, cooling and appliances so solar panels will power the unit**

The tenant we envision will be one person who may be disabled and use a wheelchair, has a housing voucher and earns up to 60% of median income.

Challenges

- Not enough affordable housing**
- Located in a local and National Register historic district**
- Very, tight, confined site with no options for additions to existing house**
- Respecting existing tenants and close by neighbors and disturbing as little as possible**
- Limited by what we can do with the property**
- Had been in a RP zone but in presenting the project with the above goals to the Planning Department, with their support and Councilor Miller's support, we changed the zoning to C2 so that we would be allowed to put a residence into an accessory unit/ a garage.**

Noel Sanchez will continue the presentation (yellow)

We come before you today because "Based on the fact that the garage is being converted from an accessory structure to a principal structure, this proposal will require dimensional variances from the rear and interior side setback requirements of Zoning Ordinance Table 5-1. The ordinance reads:

3. In granting a variance, the Zoning Board of Review, or the City Plan Commission, as part of unified development review, shall require that evidence to the satisfaction of the following standards be entered into the record of the proceedings:

I will read each standard and Kari will explain the evidence of satisfying each standard.

a. 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 Rhode Island General Laws §45-24-30(16).

1192 Westminster is in a C2 zone which allows principal uses in outbuildings (as mentioned in our introduction, with the support of the Planning Department and City Councilor Miller, WBNA changed the zone from RP which does not allow principal uses in an outbuilding to C2). However C2 has setback requirements of structures being ten feet from a lot line, except for a garage. This building is a garage but we seek to change it to a residential use.

The unique characteristics of the land are that there is not a lot of land around the principal structure. There is not much alternative to where to locate a unit due to the size and configuration of the lot. There is no room for an addition or new structure anywhere on the lot, no place to go 10' off of anywhere as can be seen by the site map. Also unique to the site is that there is an unused garage that could use improvement and is the appropriate size for a micro one bedroom

apartment. That the vacant building is a garage makes it more suitable to the need as it is at grade and best able to accommodate ADA regulations and be a home to a person who uses a wheelchair.

It is also important to mention that the property is in a local and National Register Historic district which also has guidelines to adhere to and that we have complied with and letters attesting that support. We submit the letter from the Providence Historic District Commission dated 9/3/21 and the letter from the RI Historical Preservation and heritage Commission dated 9/23/21.

b. That the hardship is not the result of any prior action of the applicant and does not result primarily from the desire of the applicant to realize greater financial gain.

WBNA is not not looking to make money but to provide affordable housing which is sorely needed in this neighborhood.

The zoning allows for providing additional housing

As mentioned in the introduction which stated our project goals as well as in **WBNA's** strategic plan, we seek to provide affordable housing. Neighbors sat at our table to shape that strategic plan through a door to door campaign.

WBNA seeks to use what we already have: an underutilized, empty garage that has been on the site nearly as long as the main building on the site.

c. That the granting of the requested variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of this Ordinance or the Comprehensive Plan.

WBNA's primary reason for this approach is because we want to enhance the general character of the surrounding area and do not want to impair the purpose of this Ordinance or the Comprehensive Plan. We are striving to set an example of how to follow the West End, Federal Hill and Reservoir Neighborhood Plan adopted by the city in 2010, the Comprehensive Plan that came from that neighborhood

plan, and the historic district guidelines. The neighborhood and comprehensive plan specifically supports affordable housing, historic preservation and gentle density that fits into the neighborhood character and its context, scale, height, and massing. We reference the following specific strategies in the Comp Plan: SE4 Sustainability and the Built Environment; BE2 New Development to Complement Traditional Character; BE5 Preservation Planning; BE7 Neighborhood Character and Design; BE8 Public Awareness; H2 Create New Housing; H4 Special Needs Housing; H5 Housing Design; H6 Housing and Transit.

This project will enhance the character of the property and surrounding neighborhood in a compatible way.

d. That the relief to be granted is the least relief necessary.

WBNA seeks to add just one unit that is affordable and accessible using the existing building. We seek to use what we have and no more.

4. In addition, the Zoning Board of Review, or the City Plan Commission, as part of unified development review, requires that evidence be entered into the record of the proceedings showing that:

a. In granting a use variance, the subject land or structure cannot yield any beneficial use if it is required to conform to the provisions of this Ordinance. Nonconforming use of neighboring land or structures in the same district and permitted use of lands or structures in an adjacent district are not considered in granting a use variance.

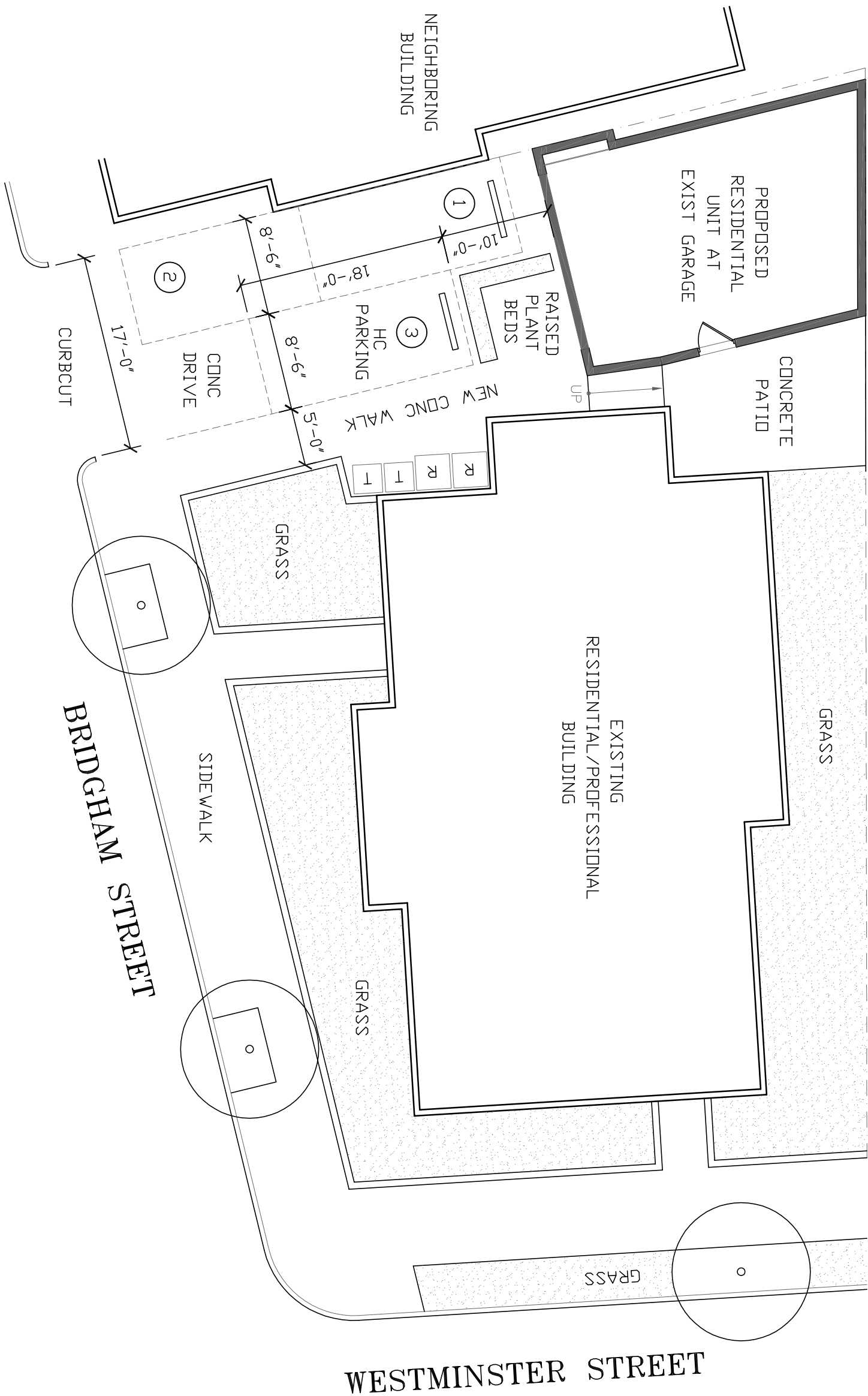
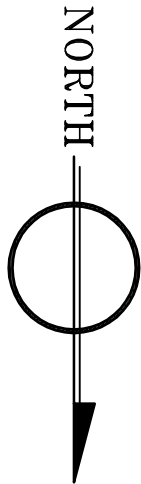
WBNA is seeking a dimensional variance not a use variance.

b. In granting a dimensional variance, the hardship that will be suffered by the owner of the subject property if the dimensional variance is not granted will amount to more than a mere inconvenience. 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.

Should this dimensional variance not be granted then we will not be able to add an affordable, accessible dwelling unit. It is our belief that this is the best, lowest impact and most appropriate place to add the unit.

5. In addition to the above, the Zoning Board of Review, or the City Plan Commission, as part of unified development review, will consider the written opinion of the Department of Planning and Development prior to making a decision on a variance petition.

The Department of Planning and Development recommends that the relief be granted.



FOR: RENOVATION

PROJECT:
1192 HC GARAGE UNIT
1192 WESTMINSTER
PROVIDENCE, RI 02909



Monika P. Kraemer
Architect
401.241.5576
12 Almy Street
Providence, RI 02909

DRAWING TITLE:
SITE PLAN

REV:

DATE:
11/5/2021

SCALE:
1:10

SP



Providence Historic District Commission

Jorge O. Elorza
Mayor

September 3, 2021

APPLICANT/OWNER
West Broadway Neighborhood Association
1560 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02909

RESOLUTION 21-21 Application 21.043

WHEREAS, the applicant, West Broadway Neighborhood Association, applied to the Providence Historic District Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Alterations at 1192 Westminster Street, Plat 32, Lot 314, and,

WHEREAS, the Commission held a properly noticed Regular Meeting on the matter on July 26, 2021, with the following members present: Marino, Sanderson, de Boer, Lund, Kaplan, Fontecchio, Wilson-Barnes and Encizo; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Kari Lang, applicant/owner, and, Ms. Monika Kraemer, architect, representing the applicant, appeared before the Commission for the scheduled item; and

WHEREAS, the Commission members individually viewed the site which is the subject of the application; and,

WHEREAS, based upon the evidence presented, the Commission made the following findings of fact:

1. 1192 Westminster Street is a structure of historical and architectural significance that contributes to the significance of the Armory local historic district, having been identified as a structure that contributes to the Broadway/Armory National Historic Register District. The garage at 1192 Westminster Street was constructed pre-1920, is a secondary structure, and may be considered non-contributing in significance.
2. The application for Major Alterations is considered complete.
3. The work as proposed consists of Major Alterations and includes the modification of the brick garage into a fully accessible residential unit, modifications to include

modifications/addition of fenestration at garage-door opening (east elevation); enlargement of existing door to accommodate 36" accessible door with a concrete ramp and walk/stoop and installation of new window (north elevation); and the installation of two skylights to the flat (slightly sloped) roof.

4. The alterations are congruous with the structure, its appurtenances, and the surrounding historic district.
5. The work as proposed is in accord with PHDC Standard 8 as follows: the proposed construction is architecturally and historically compatible with the property and district having an appropriate size, scale and form that will not have an adverse effect on the property or district.
6. The Commission accepts and agrees with the findings in the Staff Report.

WHEREAS, based upon the above findings of fact, the Commission determined that the Major Alterations as submitted by the Applicant is appropriate. Upon motion made by Dr. Lund, seconded by Mr. Fontecchio, the Commission voted unanimously (8 to 0) to grant Final Approval of the proposal as submitted as the proposed construction is architecturally and historically compatible with the property and district having an appropriate size, scale and form that will not have an adverse effect on the property or district, citing Standard 8, citing and agreeing to the recommendations in the staff report, with staff to review any additional required details.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the application for Major Alterations as described in the above findings of fact **IS APPROVED**. Parties wishing to appeal a decision made by the PHDC have 20 days from the date of the resolution to file an appeal with the Zoning Board of Review.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Marino". To the right of the signature, there is a handwritten note in parentheses: "(TDH for)".

Michael S. Marino
Chair



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

Old State House 150 Benefit Street Providence, RI 02903

Telephone 401-222-2678
TTY 401-222-3700

Fax 401-222-2968
www.preservation.ri.gov

23 September 2021

Via email: kari@wbna.org

Kari N. Lang
Consultant
West Broadway Neighborhood Association
1560 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02909

Re: RIHPHC Project No. 15693
Garage Conversion
1192 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Ms. Lang:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) staff has reviewed the information that you provided for the above-referenced project. On June 16, 2021, the RIHPHC requested additional information regarding the project to convert the existing garage at 1192 Westminster Street in Providence, Rhode Island.

The garage is a noncontributing resource in the Broadway-Armory Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The conversion of the garage into an apartment will involve a complete renovation of the interior and exterior of the building. On the exterior, the brick will be repointed, new doors and windows will be installed, and the chimney will be removed. The new doors and windows are designed to be compatible with the historic district. Based on our review of available information, it is the conclusion of the RIHPHC that the project will have no adverse effect on historic properties.

These comments are provided in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. If you have any questions, please contact RIHPHC Project Review Coordinator Elizabeth Totten at 401-222-2671 or elizabeth.totten@preservation.ri.gov.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Emidy
Interim Executive Director
Interim State Historic Preservation Officer



Kari Lang <kari@wbna.org>

Approval letter

1 message

rmedeiros@tpm-usa.net <rmedeiros@tpm-usa.net>
To: kari@wbna.org

Thu, Jan 27, 2022 at 2:47 PM

To Whom this may concern. My name is Ronald J. Medeiros. I own property that is adjacent

To the proposed Project. My properties are located at [1193 Westminster Street](#) and [1205 Westminster Street](#).

I believe that the proposed project of renovating the existing two car garage into an affordable one apartment is

A wonderful use for the this area.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Medeiros

Toro Properties I, LLC