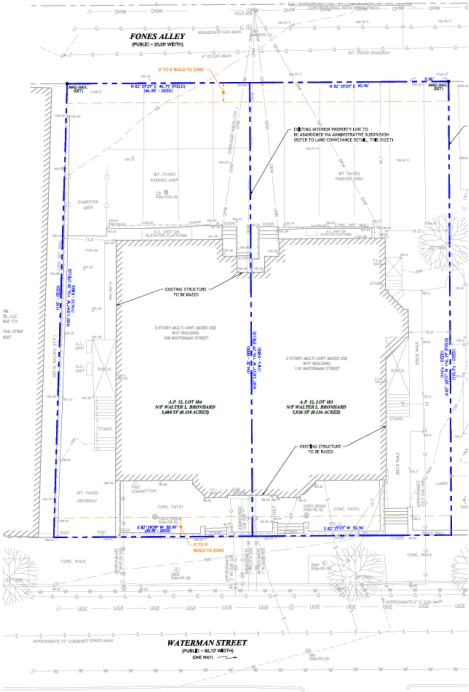


Providence City Plan Commission

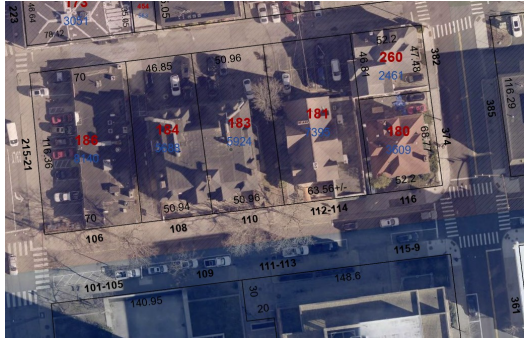
September 19, 2023



AGENDA ITEM 4 ■ 108-110 WATERMAN STREET



View of building and rendering



Site plan and aerial view of the site

OVERVIEW

OWNER/ APPLICANT:	Walter Bronhard	PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing building to construct a new mixed-use five story building with commercial use on the ground floor and 26 dwelling units through the building. The applicant is seeking a dimensional adjustment for height.
CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:	23-030 MA Master Plan		
PROJECT LOCATION:	108-110 Waterman Street C-2 zoning district, I-3E overlay AP 12 Lot 183 and 184	RECOMMENDATION:	Approval of master plan subject to the noted conditions
NEIGHBORHOOD:	College Hill	PROJECT PLANNER:	Choyon Manjrekar



Elevations and proposed floor plans

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The development is composed of two lots located between Waterman Street and Fones Alley. The site is zoned C-2 under the I-3E overlay. The lots are occupied by a building with a lot line passing through it. The applicant proposes to demolish the building, adjust lot lines, and construct a new five story mixed use building with commercial on the ground floor fronting on Waterman Street, and 26 residential units, a mix of one, two and three bedroom units. The applicant is requesting a dimensional adjustment for height where a height of 50’ and four stories is permitted by right but a height of 60’ and five stories is requested.

The applicant appeared before the CPC in July 2023, but the item was continued to allow for investigation into the historic character of the building and possible changes to the roof deck. The plans remain unchanged from July.

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETENESS

The application was certified complete on July 17, 2023. Per R.I.G.L. § 45-23-40(e), the CPC has 90 days to act on the master plan by approving, denying, or approving with conditions. 90 days from July 18 is October 15.

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES

Use

The property is zoned C-2 under the I-3E overlay. Residential and commercial development is permitted by right in the C-2 zone with no restriction on the number of dwelling units per lot. The I-3E overlay permits higher educational uses but is not relevant to this application.

Dimensions and site design

The building occupying the lots is proposed to be

demolished, and reconfigured through an administrative subdivision resulting in a lot with an area of 9,862 SF. The proposed building is set to the front lot line on Waterman Street providing direct street access to the commercial space. Entrance for residents is provided from Fones Alley.

A dimensional adjustment has been requested for a proposed height of approximately 60' and five stories—including a cellar and roof deck, which is over the 50' four-story height limit of the zone. Four units, the lobby and elevator, will be located on the ground floor in addition to the commercial space. Two units, utilities, and bike parking will be located in the cellar. Five units each will be located on each of the second through fifth stories.

Over 60% of the front façade will be located at the front lot line, meeting the build-to zone requirement. The building's exterior will employ stone veneer, wood siding and a composite panel system, which are materials permitted by right. The south elevation on Brook Street will primarily feature brick and glass on the ground floor, with the upper stories composed of a mix of glass and the masonry veneer with balconies. The transparency on the commercial area will exceed 50% and the upper stories will provide over 10% of required transparency.

A transformer serving the project will be located on lot 181 to the east of the development, which is also owned by the applicant, and accessible from Fones Alley.

Landscaping

Approximately 1,500 SF of canopy coverage is required to meet the landscaping requirement based on the proposed lot size. The applicant proposes to meet the canopy coverage requirement by preserving a honey locust tree in front of the building, which will account for 1,000 SF of canopy coverage, and by working with the City Forester to plant a medium tree on the lot, which will account for 700 SF of canopy coverage.

Parking

No parking is required or provided as the lot will measure less than 10,000 SF upon subdivision. However, one parking space on the property currently is reserved for another development owned by the applicant at 134 Waterman St. This would have to be addressed prior to approval. Five bicycle spaces are required to meet the bicycle parking requirement of one space for every five units. The applicant will meet this requirement by providing ten spaces in the basement.

Lighting

No external lighting sources are proposed.

Dimensional adjustment

The applicant is requesting a dimensional adjustment for one story and 10' of additional height. The applicant is eligible for the adjustment as mixed use development consisting of residential and retail will be provided.

Public Outreach

The applicant conducted a public meeting on July 10 to discuss the project with neighbors.

Environmental impact

The site is exempt from conforming to the stormwater ordinance and does not require any state approvals. However, the applicant intends to tie into a dedicated storm drain in Brook Street. Trash will be collected from Fones Alley.

The applicant intends to maintain a roof deck that will be accessible to residents, providing seating and a gathering space. The DPD is concerned that the space could have a negative effect on the surroundings as the applicant intends to develop a proximate building with a rooftop gathering space at 116 Waterman Street. The cumulative impact of these gathering spaces could have a negative effect on the surroundings through generation of noise and the potential of residents to disturb other properties. It is the DPD's opinion that a roof deck should not be permitted.

The current building on the property is a distinctive looking structure. It is not in a local historic district. But it is in the College Hill National Register Historic District. It is described as a Queen Anne/Late Victorian structure, constructed in 1877. The DPD recommended at its meeting on July 18, 2023 that the item be continued to allow for more study into the building's historical significance.

A memo on the building's significance, which is posted on the DPD's website, was prepared by Historic Preservation Planner Jason Martin. The memo provides a history of the building which was constructed in 1877 by Rufus Waterman, a descendant of Richard Waterman, who was presented with land by state founder Roger Williams. It is a contributing structure of the College Hill National Historic Landmarks District (CHNHLD) but it is not located within a City of Providence Local Historic District, which means that there is no regulation that prevents demolition of the structure.

The memo finds that the building has been modified with aluminum siding and vinyl windows, and although the form is handsome, the building is not singular in nature. The memo recommends that an archival package consisting of a history of the property, elevation drawings, floorplans, exterior and interior photos be assembled and submitted to the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) as part of the Rhode Island Historical Resources Archive and also to the City of Providence's Archives. This would serve as a remediation to demolition. This package of information is what the Providence HDC typically requests when it approves demolition proposals. The memo recommends that the CPC require that this be submitted by the applicant with the final plan.

FINDINGS

Section 806 of the Commission's *Development Review Regulations* requires that the City Plan Commission make the following findings as part of their approval of all land development project applications. Based on the analysis contained herein and subject to the conditions contained in this report, staff has prepared the following findings regarding the request for approval of the master and preliminary plan stages:

1. *Consistency—The proposed development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies.*

The subject property is located in an area that the future land use map of Providence Tomorrow: The Comprehensive Plan intends for Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use development. The plan describes these areas as ones intended to foster pedestrian oriented needs like retail and housing in buildings oriented toward the street. The development conforms to this land use designation. As the building will be located on a main street in proximity to a commercial corridor, it conforms to objective BE-2 of the plan which encourages new development to complement traditional character. Creation of housing will conform to objective H-2 of the plan which encourages creation of new housing.

2. *Compliance with Zoning Ordinance—The proposed development is in compliance with the standards and provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.*

Use: Mixed use development consisting of retail and residential use is permitted by right in the C-2 zone.

Dimension: The development will conform to the dimensional and design requirements of the C-2 zone subject to the CPC granting a dimensional adjustment for height, for which the applicant is eligible. No residential or parking use is proposed within 20' of Waterman St., in compliance with Section 503.A.8 of the ordinance.

Parking: No parking is required as the lot will measure less than 10,000 SF upon subdivision, but the applicant will meet the bicycle parking requirement. One parking space on the property currently is reserved for another development by the applicant at 134 Waterman St. This will have to be addressed prior to approval.

Landscaping: The applicant will meet the landscaping requirement under the supervision of the City Forester.

3. *Environmental Impact—There will be no significant environmental impacts from the proposed development as shown on the final plan, with all required conditions for approval.*

As discussed, the DPD is not in favor of the roof deck. Based on the memo produced by the HDC, the building's demolition will not have a negative environmental impact the built environment as it is not a singularly

contributing structure. A significant negative environmental impact is not expected.

4. *Buildable Lot—The subdivision or development project, as proposed, will not result in the creation of individual lots with such physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations and building standards would be impracticable.*

The applicant is proposing an administrative subdivision to configure the lot as depicted on plans. Subject to the subdivision being approved, there are no physical constraints that impact development of this property, as the lot as proposed will comply with the dimensional requirements of the C-2 zone with no impediments to development.

5. *Street Access—All proposed development projects and all subdivision lots shall have adequate and permanent physical access to a public street. Lot frontage on a public street without physical access shall not be considered compliance with this requirement.*

Adequate pedestrian access is provided from Waterman Street and Fones Alley.

RECOMMENDATION—Dimensional Adjustment

Based on the foregoing discussion, the DPD recommends that the CPC grant the requested dimensional adjustment for height and an additional story, finding that the applicant is eligible for the adjustment as they will be providing mixed use development.

RECOMMENDATION—Master Plan

Based on the foregoing discussion, the CPC should vote to approve the master plan subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall document the building's interior and exterior as described in the DPD's memo, and present an archival package to the RIHPHC and the DPD.
2. The roof deck shall be eliminated from the preliminary plan.
3. The applicant shall find an alternate parking space for the space reserved for the property at 134 Waterman Street.
4. The applicant shall apply for an administrative subdivision to configure the lots as depicted on the plan.
5. The applicant shall work with the City Forester to determine appropriate planting locations.