

Providence City Plan Commission

October 17, 2023



AGENDA ITEM 5 ■ 269 WICKENDEN STREET



Aerial view of the site



Building rendering from Wickenden and Brook Streets



View from Wickenden Street

OVERVIEW

OWNER/ APPLICANT:	Fox Point Capital LLC	PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	The applicant is requesting master plan approval to construct a five story mixed-use building that will provide commercial space, internal parking and 75 residential units in the C-2 zone. The applicant is seeking a dimensional adjustment for the proposed height of five stories and approximately 66'5". Design waivers for residential use on a main street, height of window sills and a dimensional adjustment from the rear setback is also requested.
CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:	23-021 MA Master Plan		
PROJECT LOCATION:	269 Wickenden Street C-2 zoning district AP 18 Lots 190 and 192	RECOMMENDATION:	Approval of the Master Plan subject to the noted findings
NEIGHBORHOOD:	Fox Point	PROJECT PLANNER:	Choyon Manjrekar



Building elevation

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The development is composed of two lots, each zoned C-2 and occupied by a building that will be demolished. An administrative subdivision will reconfigure the lots and create a lot not for development, bringing the size of the lot to 10,000 SF.

The applicant is proposing to construct a five story mixed use building with a height of 66'-5", with a cellar that will provide internal parking, and a mix of uses that includes commercial space and 75 residential units. A dimensional adjustment for height over the 50', four story limit of the zone is requested. An adjustment from the rear yard setback requirement of 20' from a residential zone, to maintain a setback of 10' is also requested. Design waivers for the height of window sills and locating residential use on a portion of a main street are also requested.

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES

Use

The property is zoned C-2 where mixed use development consisting of residential and commercial use is permitted by right.

Dimensions and site design

The building will be located on a corner lot fronting on Wickenden and Brook Streets. Wickenden Street has been designated as the front yard and Brook Street will serve as the side yard. Wickenden Street slopes upward traveling east from the intersection with Brook Street. One commercial space, and an internal parking area with 20 spaces will be accessed from Brook Street. This is considered the cellar level—which is not counted as part of the height requirement—as over half of this area will be located below the average grade calculated from the four corners of the lot. A building height of five stories and approximately 66'5", measured from

the average grade to the ridge of the roof is proposed. A dimensional adjustment has been requested for the proposed height which exceeds the 50', four story height limit of the zone.

The building's width has been broken up into three distinct segments. The western segment will feature five residential stories over the cellar with balconies for the residential units and a penthouse. Horizontal eaves on the fourth story and the location of the penthouse, set back from the wall of the upper story, reduce the visibility of the fifth story from the intersection of Wickenden and Brook Streets. This conforms to the CPC's preference that the presence of the fifth story be minimized from the street level. The center and eastern segment have shed dormers and a gabled roof respectively. Balconies will be provided on each floor facing Wickenden Street. The exterior will be composed of fiber cement siding and trim with a brick veneer on the base, which are materials permitted by right in the zone. The building's design incorporates alternating projecting and recessed sections, which is encouraged for multifamily development. The use of a common architectural theme, balconies, and incorporation of varied dimensional elements are in conformance with the design guidelines for multifamily development per Section 1202.K of the ordinance.

The building will be set to the front and side lot lines, exceeding the 60% and 40% build-to zone percentage requirements respectively. Vehicles will access the cellar parking area from Brook Street, which also contains the electrical equipment space, elevator, and the trash removal area. The transformer will be located adjacent to this level.

The southeastern portion of the building abuts the residential zone to the south. A rear yard setback of 20' is required from the abutting zone but 10' is proposed for which a dimensional adjustment is requested.

The cellar and ground floor level will mostly provide commercial space and have glazed facades. A portion of the residential space, 66', will be located within 20' of Wickenden Street, for which a design waiver has been requested. A design waiver has also been requested for the window sills on the first floor, which are higher than two feet from the adjacent grade.

Parking

Twelve internal parking spaces will be provided, however, no parking is required as the building will be located on a lot which does not exceed 10,000 SF. Fifteen bicycle spaces are required, calculated as one bicycle space for every five units. Long term parking for 18 spaces will be provided in the internal parking area.

A loading space, which is required when residential development exceeds 40,000 SF measuring 20' x 10' will be located in the parking area.

Landscaping

A total of 1,500 SF of canopy coverage is required based on the size of the development. The applicant is proposing to meet this requirement by maintaining five small trees (300 SF each) on Wickenden Street adjacent to the development. The City Forester required that the applicant replace existing trees or make a payment in lieu of plantings should any existing street trees not survive during building construction. The landscaping plan shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.

Environmental management

The development does not trigger conformance with the stormwater ordinance as the site is less than 20,000 SF and already developed. However, the applicant is required to demonstrate that existing runoff will not be exacerbated. The drainage plan shall be subject to the City Engineer's review.

An erosion control plan is also required with the preliminary plan submission.

Signage

Plans indicate the use of wall, awning, and a projecting signs for the commercial spaces. The preliminary plan

submission shall include detailed plans that include the sign dimensions and locations.

Design Waivers

The applicant is seeking a design waiver from section 503.A.8 of the ordinance which requires that no residential use be located within 20' of a main street, which is the designation for Wickenden Street. According to plans provided, 66' of residential space will be provided within 20' of Wickenden Street, which is considered a main street. Based on elevations, the space will be located behind a glazed area, which appears to be a continuation of the commercial area facing the street. The DPD is not opposed to granting the waiver as the building's design will not affect the commercial nature of the street.

The CPC had granted a design waiver for the height of windowsills from grade with a different version of the master plan. The CPC granted the waiver finding that the location of the sills was influenced by the slope of the lot and location of the adjacent grade, which accommodates a portion of the cellar. As the CPC has made a positive finding, the DPD recommends that the CPC reaffirm the previously granted design waiver.

Dimensional Adjustments

The applicant is requesting dimensional adjustments for the building's height and from the rear yard setback requirement. The southeastern portion of the building abuts a residential zone from which a 20' setback is required, but a setback of 10' is proposed. This portion of the building's rear is not expected to generate much activity as there is no access point at this location. Therefore, a negative effect on neighborhood character is not expected.

The applicant is also requesting a dimensional height adjustment of approximately 16'5" and one story. The applicant is eligible for the adjustments due to the provision of internal parking and mixed use development with over 50% assigned to residential use.

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 plan stage:

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 Wickenden Street, a main street defined by mixed use development, 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 with housing and commercial is permitted by right in the C-2 zone.

Dimension: The development conforms to the dimensional and design requirements of the C-2 zone subject to the CPC granting the requested dimensional adjustments and design waivers.

Parking: No parking is required as the lot size does not exceed 10,000 SF. Twelve spaces will be provided in the cellar in addition to the required amount of bicycle parking. A loading space will be provided in the cellar as required by the ordinance.

Landscaping: The applicant will meet the landscaping requirement by retaining existing trees and making plantings

on Wickenden Street. The final landscaping plan shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.

Signage: A signage plan is required at the preliminary plan stage.

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.*

No negative environmental impacts are expected as the applicant is expected to come into conformance with applicable environmental regulations.

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.*

There are no physical constraints that impact development of this property, as the lot complies 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 and vehicular access will be provided from Wickenden and Brook Streets.

RECOMMENDATION—Dimensional Adjustment

The CPC should grant the dimensional adjustment for 16'5" and one story finding that the applicant is eligible due to provision of internal parking and mixed use development with over 50% dedicated to residential use.

The CPC should grant the dimensional adjustment for the 10' rear yard setback finding that the applicant is eligible due to provision of internal parking and mixed use development with over 50% dedicated to residential use.

RECOMMENDATION—Design waiver

The CPC should vote to grant the design waiver for location of sills over two feet from the adjacent grade, reaffirming their previous grant of the waiver, and finding that it is required due to the grade of the lot.

The CPC should vote to grant the design waiver for location of a residential use within 20' of a main street, finding that the building's design will maintain a commercial appearance as required by the ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION—Master Plan

Based on the foregoing discussion and conditioned on the CPC approving the items above, the master plan should be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. The landscaping plan shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.
2. A drainage management plan shall be submitted at the preliminary plan stage.
3. A signage plan shall be submitted with the preliminary plan.