

Providence City Plan Commission

September 16, 2025



AGENDA ITEM 6 ■ 885 WESTMINSTER STREET



Aerial view of the site



View from Westminster Street



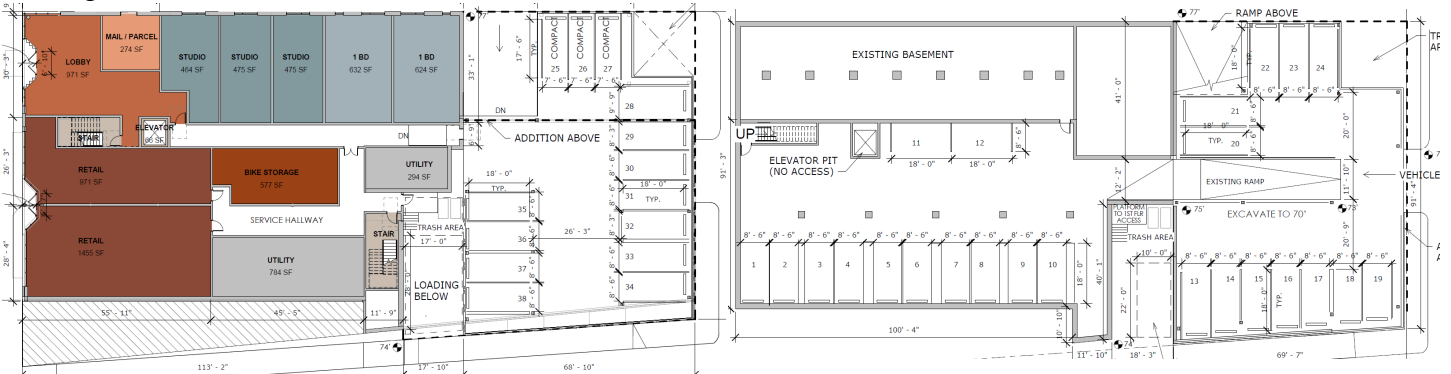
Rendering from Westminster Street

OVERVIEW

OWNER/ APPLICANT:	WW Holdings LLC, Owner	PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	The applicant is proposing to add three stories of residential development to an existing two story building, resulting in a six story mixed use building with 74 units and structured parking. A dimensional adjustment from the height limit and parking requirement is requested in addition to a waiver from submission of a signage plan at the preliminary plan stage.
CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:	25-053MIL—885 Westminster Street Minor Land Development		
PROJECT LOCATION:	885 Westminster Street AP 29 Lot 137; C-2 zoning district	RECOMMENDATION:	Approval of the preliminary plan with requested adjustments and waiver
NEIGHBORHOOD:	Federal Hill	PROJECT PLANNER:	Choyon Manjrekar



Building elevations—South and East



First floor and basement plans

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The subject lot is located at the corner of Westminster and Winter Streets with Washington Street to the rear and measures approximately 17,704 SF. It is occupied by a two story commercial building with parking in the rear. The lot slopes downward from Westminster Street to Washington Street. The applicant is proposing to add three stories over the existing building with structured parking, resulting in a 64' tall, six story mixed use building consisting of a partial basement with five upper stories. A total of 74 residential units will be provided with structured parking in the basement and on the first floor. The first floor will also include commercial space accessible from Westminster Street. The applicant is requesting a dimensional adjustment from the 50', four story height limit of the C-2 zone. An approximately 50% parking adjustment is also requested as 38 spaces will be provided with 74 required. A waiver from submission of a signage plan at the preliminary plan stage is requested.

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES

Use

The site is zoned C-2, where mixed use development consisting of commercial space and multifamily housing is permitted by right.

Dimensions and Site Design

The existing building is oriented towards Westminster Street and set to the front lot line. Three entrances, one for the residential lobby and two for the commercial spaces, will provide direct street access. In addition to the commercial space, five apartments, a mail room, bike storage area and parking will be located on the

first floor. A height of approximately 64' and five stories is proposed when calculating the height from average grade. Most of the lowest level, to the south, is below average grade, making it a cellar that does not count as a story. Roughly a third of the lowest level to the north is slightly above average grade constituting a basement level that counts as a story. A portion of the lot adjacent to Washington Street will be located below average grade but a larger portion will be located above grade, constituting a basement level. Five stories—consisting of the existing two story building and the three proposed stories—will be located above the basement, resulting in a six story, 64' tall building. An adjustment has been requested as the height exceeds the 50' four story height limit of the zone. A total of 67,747 SF of residential space and approximately 2,425 SF of commercial space will be provided.

Vehicles will enter the first floor parking area from the westerly side yard accessed from Westminster Street, which shares an access easement on adjacent lot 171, to access 14 parking spaces on the first floor. The basement parking area will provide access to 24 parking spaces from Washington Street. Apartments consisting of a mix of one and two bedroom units will be located on floors two through five with an outdoor terrace level on the fifth story. Common spaces areas are also located on floors two and five. Solar panels and mechanical equipment will be located on the roof. The transformer will be located in the northwest corner of the lot and accessible from Washington Street.

The existing masonry façade will be retained on the first two stories with metal paneling and cementitious siding used for the upper stories, which are permitted in the C-2 zone. Over 50% of transparency will be provided on the ground floor and over 25% on the upper stories. Three dimensional variety is provided with the use of balconies, provision of a terrace level and projections and recesses caused by the alignment of the building's footprint relative to the irregularly shaped perimeter. The building's design conforms to the guidelines for multifamily development in section 1202.K of the ordinance as it employs a consistent architectural theme with dimensional variety.

Parking and site access

Thirty eight internal parking spaces will be provided for 74 units with the basement spaces accessible from Washington Street and the first floor spaces accessible from the westerly side yard. A 50% dimensional adjustment has been requested as 74 spaces are required. Three spaces on the first floor, less than 10% of the required amount, will be compact. The basement parking area consisting of 22, 90° angled spaces and two 0° angled spaces will be accessed from Washington Street. Drive aisles of 22' are required for 90° angled spaces but drive aisles of 20' and 21' are provided for the spaces adjacent to the ramp. The applicant has applied for an administrative modification for the drive aisle width.

A loading area accessible from Winter Street will be provided as the amount of residential space exceeds 40,000 SF. Fifteen bicycle parking spaces are required and will be provided on the first floor.

Landscaping

Approximately 2,655 SF of plantings, calculated as 15% of the lot area will be required to meet the canopy coverage requirement. The applicant is proposing to use street trees on Westminster, Winter and Washington Street to meet the requirement. The street tree planting plan shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.

Lighting

The applicant has submitted a lighting plan that conforms to section 1301 of the ordinance. The illumination provided is internal to the building and parking area and will not spillover onto neighboring properties.

Drainage and erosion control

It does not appear that the development will trigger review by the City's stormwater ordinance as it involves redevelopment of less than 20,000 SF in a commercial zone. Per the applicant, a sewer intensification permit is required from the Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC). Any state approvals are required to be submitted at the final plan stage. The erosion control plan will employ sediment traps and barriers with a soil maintenance schedule and a designated soil stockpile area.

Findings—Dimensional Adjustments

The applicant is seeking a dimensional adjustment for a height of 60' and five stories where 50' and four stories are permitted by right in the C-2 zone. A 50% adjustment from the parking requirement is also requested where 74 spaces are required and 38 will be provided. The DPD makes the following findings in conformance with section 1005.B of the Development Review Regulations (DRR).

1. The application is eligible for a dimensional adjustment because it meets one or more of the eligibility criteria of Section 1904.E.1 of the Zoning Ordinance.

The applicant is eligible for the adjustments per section 1904.E.1.h and i of the ordinance through provision of mixed use development with over 50% dedicated to housing and structured parking.

2. The requested or approved dimensional adjustment is within the allowable adjustments listed in Section 1904.E.2 of the Zoning Ordinance.

The CPC may grant adjustments for parking reduction and additional numerical height and stories per section 1904.E.2 of the ordinance.

3. The extent of the dimensional adjustment is reasonably related to the condition that makes the project eligible for the dimensional adjustment.

The DPD finds that provision of mixed use development and structured parking is reasonably related to the request for additional height and a parking reduction and recommends that the CPC grant the requested adjustments.

ACTION—Dimensional Adjustment

The CPC should vote to grant the dimensional adjustments, finding that the applicant meets the criteria for dimensional adjustments in 1904.E of the ordinance and having made positive findings in conformance with section 1005.B of the DRR.

Signage and waiver

The applicant has requested a waiver from submission of a signage plan at the preliminary plan stage. The

applicant has not produced a signage plan as the commercial tenants have not been determined. It is the DPD's opinion that the granting of the waiver would be in the interest of good planning practice as it would allow the applicant to proceed with the development process and create a signage plan in alignment with the selected tenants.

ACTION—Waiver

The CPC should vote to grant the waiver from submission of a signage plan, finding that it would be in the interest of good planning practice and subject to the condition that the applicant submit a conforming plan at the final plan stage.

Findings—Preliminary Plan

Section 1005 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 Preliminary 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.*

Per the future land use map of the Providence Comprehensive Plan, the lot is located under the neighborhood commercial land use designation, where mixed use development is encouraged. The development conforms to objective H-2 of the comprehensive plan, which encourages construction 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 multifamily residential, commercial and structured parking is permitted by right in the C-2 zone.

Dimension: The development will conform to the ordinance subject to the CPC granting the requested height adjustment and waiver from submission of a signage plan.

Parking: The applicant will meet the vehicle parking requirement subject to the CPC granting the requested dimensional adjustment for reduction in parking. The applicant will meet the bicycle parking requirement.

Landscaping: The applicant will meet the canopy coverage requirement based on the provided plan. The planting of the street trees shall be subject to the City Forester's approval.

Lighting: The applicant will conform to the ordinance's regulations for lighting.

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.*

The applicant shall submit any state approvals at the final plan stage. An erosion control plan was included with the submission. No significant 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. The survey shows a second thin lot, AP 29 Lot 135, running along the eastern portion of the site measuring approximately 101 SF. The applicant shall merge the lots prior to final approval. The applicant is required to obtain any encroachment permits at the permitting stage.

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 street access is provided from Westminster, Washington and Winter Streets.

ACTION—Preliminary Plan

Based on the foregoing discussion, the CPC should vote to grant preliminary plan approval subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall submit any required state permits at the final plan stage.
2. The planting of the street trees to meet the canopy coverage requirement shall be subject to the City Forester's approval. The applicant shall be responsible for maintenance of all proposed street trees.
3. Final plan approval is subject to the approval of the administrative modification for drive aisle width.
4. Any required encroachment permits shall be submitted at the permitting stage.
5. The applicant shall merge the lot with lot 135.