

Providence City Plan Commission



March 25, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 4 ■ 309 DEXTER STREET



View from Hanover Street

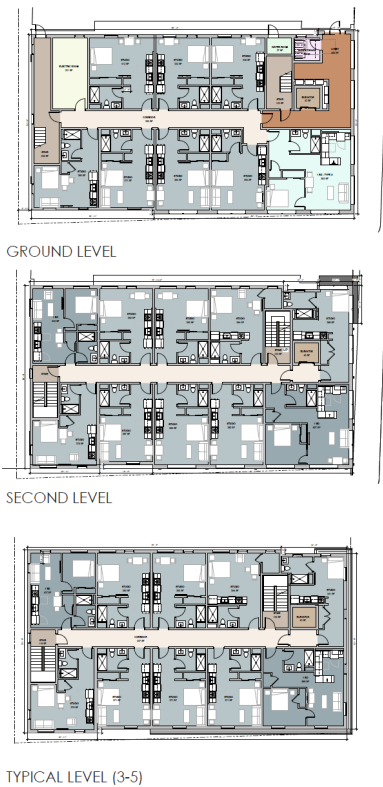


Building elevation with renderings

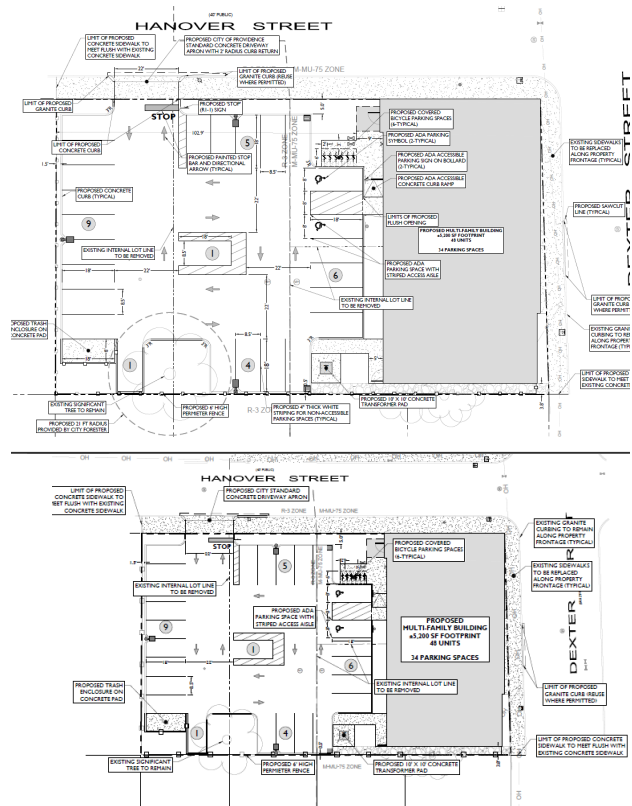
Aerial view of the site

OVERVIEW

OWNER/ APPLICANT:	297 Dexter Street Holdings LLC, Owner	PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	Construction of a 48 unit multifamily building with 34 parking spaces including an offsite parking lot for which a special use permit is requested. A dimensional adjustment for parking is requested as 48 spaces are required. Zoning relief from the total and rear yard impervious coverage requirements is requested for the parking space in the residential zone.
CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:	26-022UDR—309 Dexter Street Minor Land Development		
PROJECT LOCATION:	309 Westminster Street AP 31 Lots 125, 525 and 546 M-MU 75 ; Lots 523 and 524, R-3 zoning district	RECOMMENDATION:	Approval of the preliminary plan with requested relief and dimensional adjustments
NEIGHBORHOOD:	Federal Hill	PROJECT PLANNER:	Choyon Manjrekar



Floor plans



Site plan on Dexter and Ford Streets

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The development is composed of five lots. Lots 125 and 525 are vacant and zoned M-MU 75 where the applicant is proposing to construct a 48 unit, five story, 57'10" tall multifamily dwelling. Twenty six parking spaces will be provided at the rear on lots 523 and 524 which are zoned R-3. The spaces will be accessory to the dwelling, but a variance from the total maximum and rear yard impervious coverage requirements is requested as the impervious coverage will exceed the maximum allowed in the R-3 zone. An additional eight spaces will be provided on lot 546 at 20 Ford Street for which a special use permit (SUP) for a principal use parking lot has been requested. Relief from the parking requirement is requested as 48 spaces are required and 34 will be provided.

ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES

Use

The lots are zoned M-MU 75 and R-3 where multifamily development with accessory parking is permitted. A special use permit has been requested for a principal use parking lot on lot 546 which is also in the M-MU 75 zone.

Dimensions and Site Design

The building will be oriented to Dexter Street at the front, Hanover Street at the corner side, and extend between the side lot lines. The main entrance to the building will be provided from the parking area in the rear providing access to the lobby, elevator, internal bicycle parking and stairs. Eight units will be provided on the first floor and ten will be provided on each of the upper levels. A height of approximately 57'10" and

five stories is proposed which is within the 75' height limit of the zone.

The building will be surfaced with a variety of materials including brick on portions of the first two stories with differently shaded fiber cement and granite on the rest of the building which will meet the 25% transparency requirement. Portions of the façade project from the building face providing dimensional variety. A canopy is proposed over Hanover Street adjacent to the building entrance. The trash receptacle and transformer will be provided in the rear yard. 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 and contrast between the materials.

Parking and site access

The development requires 48 parking spaces and 34 will be provided, for which a dimensional adjustment has been requested. Vehicles will enter and exit the lot from Hanover Street. Twenty six standard spaces with 22' drive aisles will be provided at the rear of the building in the R-3 zone. The spaces have been configured so as to not affect a significant tree to the rear of the site. The applicant will meet the bicycle parking requirement of one per five dwellings providing six outdoor and eight indoor bicycle parking spaces.

Eight additional spaces will be provided in a parking lot at 20 Ford Street for a total of 34. A special use permit for a principal use parking lot has been requested.

Landscaping

Approximately 2,538 SF of plantings, calculated as 15% of the lot area will be required to meet the canopy coverage requirement. The applicant is proposing to plant four medium trees in the parking area totaling 2,800 SF to meet this requirement. In addition, a planting strip consisting of a row of shrubs will be made adjacent to Hanover Street. One large tree providing 1,000 SF of canopy coverage will be planted for the 3,668 SF parking lot at Hanover Street. There are two existing trees on the site, one of which is significant. As noted, the tree will be preserved with the parking layout oriented around it.

Lighting

The applicant has submitted a lighting plan that conforms to section 1301 of the ordinance. Outdoor lighting will be provided in the parking area using downward facing light fixtures with less than one footcandle at the lot lines with no spillover onto neighboring properties.

Drainage and erosion control

The applicant has submitted a stormwater management plan that will employ a subsurface infiltration system to treat stormwater. The erosion control plan will employ sediment traps and barriers with a designated soil stockpile area. The plans shall be subject to the City Engineer's review.

Findings—Dimensional Adjustments

The applicant is seeking an approximately 29% dimensional adjustment from the parking requirement where 48 spaces are required and 34 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.

Per the applicant 40% of the units will be restricted to households making 80% or less of the area median income (AMI). The applicant is eligible for the adjustments per section 1904.E.1.f of the ordinance through provision of housing for low and moderate income families.

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 a 50% adjustment for parking reduction per section 1904.E.2 of the ordinance and the relief requested is within this amount.

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 housing for low and moderate income households is reasonably related to the request for a parking reduction and recommends that the CPC grant the requested adjustment.

ACTION—Dimensional Adjustment

The CPC should vote to grant the dimensional adjustment, 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.

Discussion—Dimensional Relief

The applicant is seeking a dimensional variance from the maximum total and maximum rear yard impervious coverage requirement for lots 523 and 524 where the parking area will be located. Approximately 88.6% of the lot area, which will be the rear yard of the building, will be paved and 50% maximum rear yard impervious coverage, and 65% total maximum impervious coverage is permitted.

Findings—Dimensional Variance

Section 1902 of the zoning ordinance requires that the CPC find evidence of the following standards in order to grant a variance:

1. 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).

The subject property composed of the four subject lots is unique as lots 125 and 525 are zoned M-MU 75 and lots 523 and 524 are zoned R-3. Though under common ownership, the difference in permissible dimensional and use regulations in both zones makes it difficult to develop the parcel as the residentially zoned lots are required to support development in the M-MU 75 zone. The hardship appears to be related to the site's zoning configuration and is not related to a disability of the applicant.

2. 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.

This area is one where mixed use development is adjacent to residential development with parking in the rear yard. The building will not encroach into the residential zone and will exhibit a similar character to the development around the site. The relief is not expected to alter the general character of the surrounding area.

3. In addition, the City Plan Commission, as part of unified development review, requires that evidence be entered into the record of the proceedings showing that 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.

Denial of the requested relief would prevent development of the parcel, which amounts to more than a mere inconvenience.

RECOMMENDATION—Dimensional Variance

Based on the foregoing discussion, the DPD recommends that the CPC approve the requested dimensional relief as described.

Discussion—Special Use Permit

The applicant is requesting a special use permit for an eight space principal use parking lot on lot 546 at 20 Ford Street that will provide parking for the development. Section 1901 of the zoning ordinance requires that the CPC find evidence of the following standards in order to grant a special use permit:

- *The proposed special use permit is set forth specifically in this Ordinance, and complies with any conditions set forth therein for the authorization of such special use permit, including those listed in Article 12.*
- *Granting the proposed special use permit will not substantially injure the use and enjoyment of nor significantly devalue neighboring property.*
- *Granting the proposed special use permit will not be detrimental or injurious to the general health or welfare of the community.*

Principal use parking lots are permitted through special use permit in the M-MU 75 zone per table 12-1 of the ordinance. The plan indicates that the lot will meet the development requirements outlined in 1202.V.2 of the ordinance by providing a landscaping strip with a planting strip and screening the lot from neighboring property. As discussed, accessory lots for development in the M-MU 75 zone can be observed in the neighborhood. The lot is already used as a loading zone for the building at 297 Dexter Street, therefore

parking is not expected to affect the enjoyment of neighboring property or have a negative effect on the general health and welfare of the community.

RECOMMENDATION—Special Use Permit

Based on the foregoing discussion, the DPD recommends that the CPC approve the requested special use permit.

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 development is located in an area that the future land use map has designated for business/mixed use development adjacent to medium density residential development. This is an area where multifamily development is appropriate in accordance with objective H-2 , 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: Multifamily development is permitted by right in the M-MU 75 zone.

Dimension: The development will conform to the ordinance subject to the CPC granting the requested relief from the paving requirement.

Parking: The applicant will meet the parking requirement subject to the CPC granting the requested dimensional adjustment for a reduction in parking and a special use permit for the principal use parking lot. The applicant will meet the bicycle parking requirement.

Landscaping: The applicant will meet the canopy coverage requirement based on the provided plans.

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 is required to submit any state approvals at the final plan stage. Drainage and erosion control plans were 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.*

The applicant is required to merge the subject lots of the development prior to final plan submission. Subject to the merger, there are no physical constraints that impact development of this property, as the lot complies with the dimensional requirements of the M-MU 75 zone. The applicant is required to obtain any encroachment permits by 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 Dexter and Hanover Streets and Ford Street.

ACTION—Preliminary Plan

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

1. The drainage plan is subject to the City Engineer's approval prior to final plan submission.
2. The applicant shall submit any required state permits at the final plan stage.
3. The applicant shall merge the subject lots
4. Any required encroachment permits shall be submitted at the permitting stage.