

GEORGE CALCAGNI  
CHAIR



VINCENT A. CIANCI, JR.  
MAYOR

## PROVIDENCE CITY PLAN COMMISSION

*"Planning Providence's Future"*

November 21, 1995

Mr. Michael R. Clement, City Clerk  
City Clerk's Office  
City Hall  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Rhode School of Design - Roitman Building Element.

Dear Mr. Clement:

At a Regular Meeting of the City Plan Commission, duly noticed and held on November 20, 1995, and pursuant to section 503.4 (B) of the City of Providence Zoning Ordinance Chapter 1994-24, No. 365, as amended, the Commission voted unanimously that:

The "Roitman Building Element of the Rhode Island School of Design Master Plan", dated November 20, 1995, with findings of fact and four (4) conditions, included below, which together are considered part of the Rhode Island School of Design Master Plan, is consistent with Providence 2000: The Comprehensive Plan and all elements thereof."

### A. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. RISD is required by Section 503 of the Providence Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 1994-24, No. 365, effective June 27, 1994, as amended) to submit to the City Plan Commission a master plan for the future growth and development of its campus. RISD has been given a deadline of April 1, 1996 for submitting its master plan.
2. Before the full master plan is submitted, RISD seeks the City Plan Commission's approval of the proposed rehabilitation and reuse of the Roitman Building at 161 South Main Street, which is to become the home of the Industrial Design Department.
3. The Roitman Building, owned by RISD, is located within the C-2 zone and the I-2 overlay zone, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing property within the College Hill National Historic Landmark District.
4. RISD has submitted scaled architectural drawings (including first and second floor plans, and north, south, east and west elevations, all dated November 13, 1995) and a written narrative (dated November 20, 1995) describing proposed new uses, and short and long term exterior changes, for the Roitman Building.

5. The Roitman Building Element of the RISD Master Plan is found to be consistent with Providence 2000: The Comprehensive Plan, in the following ways:

- a) The proposal promotes the adaptive reuse of a building, and is compatible with surrounding uses, scale and density.
- b) The proposal permits the expansion and growth of an educational institution in a commercial area along a major arterial, which area is also zoned for institutional use, while limiting the institution's encroachment and impact on residential neighborhoods.
- c) The proposal promotes the preservation of a historically and architecturally significant building in Providence, and encourages growth that preserves the historic and architectural character of the College Hill neighborhood.

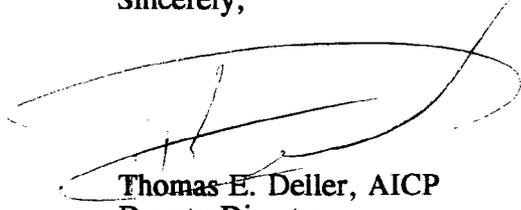
**B. THE CITY PLAN COMMISSION VOTED TO APPROVE WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:**

Staff recommends that the CPC approve the Roitman Building Element of the RISD Master Plan as submitted (drawings dated November 13, 1995 and written narrative dated November 20, 1995), as consistent with Providence 2000: The Comprehensive Plan, with the following conditions:

1. The Roitman Building Element shall be incorporated into a future Master Plan for RISD, which is expected to be filed with the Commission by April 1, 1996.
2. Design details of the new "temporary" entrance ramp off of South Main Street shall be submitted to staff for review for compliance with this approved Element, any approved Master Plan, and the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Design of any renovations at the Cash-n-Carry Building site on the southeast corner of the lot, and design of any new construction on the northeast corner of the lot, shall be submitted to staff for review for consistency with the approved RISD Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. Notice of any proposed demolition shall be given in writing at least six months in advance.
4. In the event that no new construction has occurred on either the southeast or northeast corners of the lot by the time the RISD Master Plan's five year update is due in 2001, said update shall indicate whether or not the temporary entrance ramp off of South Main Street will become a permanent feature. If it is to remain temporary, then a definition of "temporary" will be included in the master plan update.

A summary of this decision will be noticed as a Public Notice in a newspaper of general circulation in Providence. A copy of the Roitman Element with approved conditions and staff report referred to above are attached herewith and are to be on file with your Office and may be reviewed by the public. Additional copies of the Roitman Element are available for public review at the office of the City Plan Commission, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Development, 400 Westminister Street, 5th floor, Providence, R.I. during normal business hours.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Deller, AICP  
Deputy Director  
Planning and Development

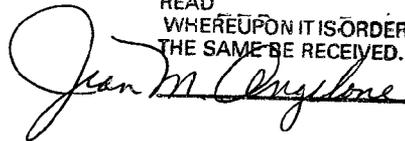
cc: Department of Inspections and Standards w/Attachment  
Fran Gast

TED:dp

cpcletter.44

IN CITY COUNCIL  
[JAN] 4 1996

READ  
WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT  
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

 CLERK

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

## RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

TWO COLLEGE STREET PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903-2784 TELEPHONE 401-454-6415 FAX 401-454-6415

**PRESENTATION TO THE CITY PLAN COMMISSION  
CITY OF PROVIDENCE  
NOVEMBER 20, 1995**

Rhode Island School of Design is grateful for this opportunity to present a single component of our campus plan for your review. Our comprehensive campus master plan is nearing completion, under the leadership of consultants Chan Krieger & Associates of Cambridge, and we will submit our full master plan to the Department of Planning and Development before our extended deadline of April 1, 1996.

**PROPOSED BUILDING PROGRAM FOR 161 SOUTH MAIN STREET**

The building at 161 South Main St. will be renovated to serve as the instructional home of the Rhode Island School of Design Industrial Design Department. Currently scattered in 8 buildings across the campus, "ID" will occupy 5 floors of the six story building. In addition to studio desk space and faculty offices, which will occupy 3 floors, the building will house a wood shop, metal shop, model shop and computer lab. The entry level floor includes a public space to be used for exhibitions and critiques. Half of the third floor will be classrooms and studio space for departments that need extra space, on an as needed basis. Having this sort of flexibility will be very helpful for us, since at this time we have no "extra" space at all.

It became clear when we began our campus master plan process last spring that RISD needed more instructional space, and that the first priority was to consolidate the ID Department. Our consultants, Chan Krieger and Associates, have advised us that our two most recently acquired buildings, 161 South Main St. and 20 Washington Place (the former Providence Washington Insurance Company), along with open land and existing buildings, can provide the additional educational space we need in the next decade. We look forward to presenting our entire plan to you in the Spring of 1996.

No work is planned immediately for the single story "Cash & Carry" building on the southeast portion of the lot, but we hope to transform the site into a small auditorium (150-200 seats), a resource which is high on RISD's list of space needs. Our master plan consultants also envision a three story building on the northeast portion of the lot, but we expect that it will be several years at least before we can consider such a project.



## **EXTERIOR RESTORATION AND CHANGES**

The exterior construction associated with the renovation of 161 S. Main Street into workshops and design studios for RISD entails replacing windows and doors, including new windows in previously bricked-in openings. This work is being coordinated by James Barnes Architects. Since the exterior brick work and cornice are in good condition, little if any repair, and no cleaning of exterior finishes will occur at this time. The existing one story building at the corner of So. Main and Planet St. will remain unchanged.

Plans call for the use of replacement metal windows of a configuration and operation similar to the original windows. The street level elevations of So. Water St. and Planet St. will also have new windows installed in the configuration found in an early 20th century drawing of the building.

The existing fire escape will be removed from the west (riverside) elevation. The east (So. Main St.) elevation is 60 feet from the sidewalk. A steel ramp running from So. Main to the 2nd floor of the building will provide major access to all users including handicapped individuals. This ramp will have a light industrial-type framing system in keeping with the nature of the building type, and to assure flexibility for possible future development of the area between the building and So. Main St.

Exterior elements of the renovations will most likely begin in early spring, with completion of all phases of the work scheduled for September, 1996.

With regard to the effects of the renovation on the architectural character of the area, the full occupation of the building will bring as many as 300 students, faculty and staff from the College Street area of RISD to this section of South Main St. This renewed facility will return the building to its original appearance, and combined with RISD's present occupation of 231 South Main St. will further enliven this part of the city. While entrance to the building will be limited to the well lighted ramp at South Main St., lighted windows and occupied spaces at the South Water St. side will make this waterfront area more attractive and safe for all pedestrians.

The restoration of the exterior of the building will be an especially attractive addition to the river front as seen from the Downtown. Since RISD studios are in use over 16 hours a day, interior light and activity will animate all the streets of the block that the building occupies through the late evening hours, and be apparent to both vehicles and pedestrians on both sides of the River.

## **CONFORMANCE TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

As mentioned above, the renovation will enliven South Main Street and animate South Water St., with views of lit windows from across the river late into the night. Indeed, the RISD department most often cited in many recent articles discussing the synergy between design and business is the Industrial Design Department of RISD.

Our expansion is occurring in an historic warehouse building, within the commercial zone and within the educational institution overlay zone. We believe that the use of the building is consistent with the letter and the spirit of the comprehensive plan. The renovation, which will be sensitive to the historic legacy of our riverfront buildings, will contribute to the beauty and life of Providence, and we're very proud and pleased to be able to propose it to you.

This project has been presented to the Planning and Architectural Review Committee of the Providence Preservation Society. In addition, neighbors and interested organizations have been invited to two public workshops on the campus master plan in progress, and a third is planned prior to the completion of the plan.

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Mark Merlino, Associate Director for Fiscal  
**FROM:** Thomas E. Deller, Deputy Director  
**RE:** The Roitman Element of the Rhode School of Design  
Master Plan  
**DATE:** November 21, 1995

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Please place this advertisement for one time only as a public notice but in the legal section of the Providence Journal. The notice should read as written below:

**CITY OF PROVIDENCE**

**CITY PLAN COMMISSION**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

In accordance with the Providence Zoning Ordinance, Section 503.4 (B), the Roitman Building Element of the Rhode Island School of Design Master Plan has been reviewed by the City Plan Commission and has been deemed to comply with PROVIDENCE 2000: THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. Copies of the Roitman Building Element Plan are available for public inspection at the Department of Planning and Development, Planning Division, 5th floor, 400 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903, 351-3400 and the City Clerk's Office, City Hall, 25 Dorrance Street, Providence, RI 02903, 421-7740 during normal business hours.

Vincent A. Cianci, Jr.  
Mayor  
City of Providence

George Calcagni  
Chairperson  
City Plan Commission