

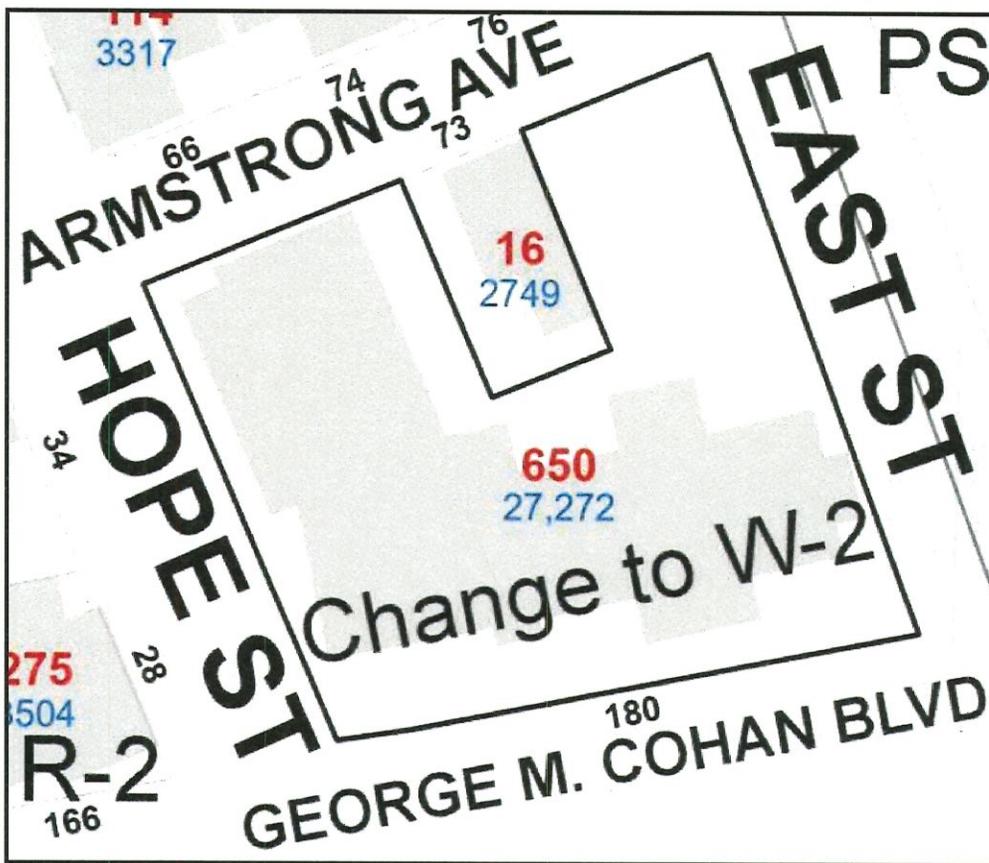
CHAPTER 2023-4

No. 188 AN ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 27 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE, ENTITLED: "THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE ZONING ORDINANCE," APPROVED NOVEMBER 24, 2014, AS AMENDED, TO CHANGE THE ZONING DISTRICT ON THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED ON ASSESSOR'S PLAT 17, LOT 650 (180 GEORGE M. COHAN BOULEVARD), FROM R-2 TO W-2

Approved May 10, 2023

Be it ordained by the City of Providence:

SECTION 1. Chapter 27 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Providence, Entitled: "The City of Providence Zoning Ordinance," Approved November 24, 2014, As Amended, is hereby further amended by changing the Zoning District on the Official Zoning Map for the Property located on Assessor's Plat 17, Lot 650 (180 George M. Cohan Boulevard), from R-2 to W-2.



SECTION 2. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage.

CITY COUNCIL  
APR 20 2023  
FIRST READING  
READ AND PASSED  
*Jina L. Mastrosimone*

IN CITY COUNCIL  
MAY 04 2023  
FINAL READING  
READ AND PASSED  
*Rachel M. Miller*  
RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT  
*Jina L. Mastrosimone*  
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

*Burt P. Sin*  
Mayor

Date: 5/10/23



City Plan Commission  
Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

October 19, 2022

Councilman Nicholas Narducci  
Chair, Committee on Ordinances  
Providence City Hall  
25 Dorrance Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Attn: Tina Mastroianni, Acting City Clerk

**Re: Referral 3517 – Petition to rezone 180 George M Cohan Boulevard (AP 17 Lot 650) from R-2 to W-2**

**Petitioner: 180 GMC LLC**

Dear Chairman Narducci,

The petitioner is requesting the rezoning of 180 George M Cohan Boulevard, from R-2 to W-2. The lot is occupied by a large building relative to the R-2 zone that has housed a number of high density uses including assisted living and a student dormitory. Its current use is for multifamily housing through a variance granted by the Zoning Board of Review (ZBR). The petitioner is requesting a zone change to W-2 to allow for the multifamily use by right and render the existing building conforming.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

The lot is zoned R-2 but located adjacent to the W-2 zone to the south which includes the abutting highway. Given the neighborhood's character, which is primarily residential, the CPC found that rezoning the lot to W-2 would be appropriate as it is intended to accommodate multifamily development. In granting the use variance for a multifamily building, the ZBR found that multifamily residential would be the most appropriate use for the site. The CPC found that the change to W-2 is not expected to have a negative effect on neighborhood character or surrounding property given the presence of multifamily housing and the building's prior uses.

Per the Future Land Use Map of Providence Tomorrow—which the comprehensive plan states is not intended for parcel level analysis—this area is intended to be one where low density residential is located in proximity to waterfront/mixed use and neighborhood commercial/mixed use development. The CPC found the rezoning to be appropriate as the building's massing and design would be in character with the W-2 zoning.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
444 Westminister Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
401 680 8400 ph | 401 680 8492 fax  
[www.providenceri.com](http://www.providenceri.com)

The CPC found that rezoning the lot to W-2 would be appropriate given the character of the surroundings, the current zoning and the proposed use and is not expected to negatively affect health, safety and welfare and is consistent with the purposes of zoning in Section 101 of the Zoning Ordinance.

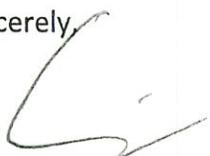
**RECOMMENDATION**

On a motion by Commissioner Verdi, seconded by Commissioner Quezada, the CPC voted to recommend that the City Council approve the proposed zone change to W-2 finding it to be in conformance with the zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan.

The CPC voted as follows:

Aye: N. Verdi, M. Quezada, M. Cordero, H. Bilodeau, N. Sanchez, M. Gazdacko

Sincerely,



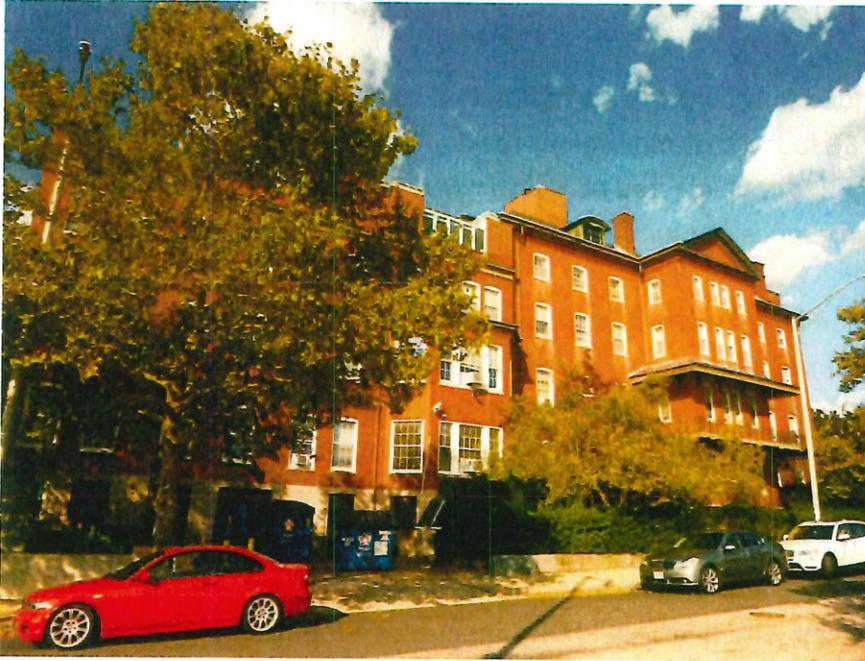
Choyon Manjrekar  
Administrative Officer

# Providence City Plan Commission

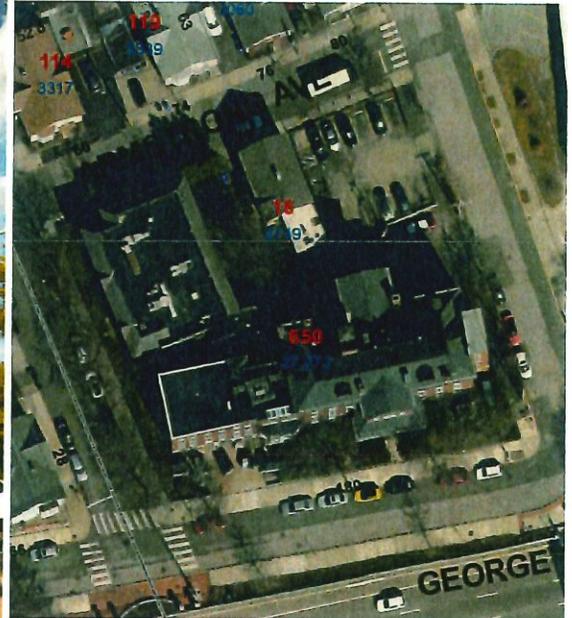
October 11, 2022



## AGENDA ITEM 5 ■ 180 GEORGE M COHAN BOULEVARD



View of the site from building



Aerial view of the site

### OVERVIEW

<b>OWNER/ APPLICANT:</b>	180 GMC LLC	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION:</b>	The petitioner is requesting a rezoning of the subject lots from R-2 to W-2
<b>CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:</b>	CPC Referral 3517 Rezoning from R-2 to W-2		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION:</b>	180 George M Cohan Boulevard AP 17 Lot 650 R-3 zone	<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Recommend approval of zone change to W-2
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD:</b>	Fox Point	<b>PROJECT PLANNER:</b>	Choyon Manjrekar

**Discussion**

The applicant is requesting a rezoning of 180 George M Cohan Boulevard from R-2 to W-2. The lot is occupied by a large building relative to the R-2 zone that has housed a number of high density uses including assisted living and a student dormitory. Its current use is for multifamily housing through a variance granted by the Zoning Board of Review (ZBR). Despite the variance, the applicant is requesting a zone change to W-2 to allow for the multifamily use by right and render the existing building conforming.

The lot is zoned R-2 but located adjacent to the W-2 zone to the south which includes the abutting highway. Given the neighborhood's character, which is primarily residential, it is the DPD's opinion that rezoning the lot to W-2 would be appropriate as it is intended to accommodate multifamily development. In granting the use variance for a multifamily building, the ZBR found that multifamily residential would be the most appropriate use for the site. The change to W-2 is not expected to have a negative effect on neighborhood character or surrounding property given the presence of multifamily housing and the building's prior uses.

Per the Future Land Use Map of Providence Tomorrow—which the comprehensive plan states is not intended for parcel level analysis—this area is intended to be one where low density residential is located in proximity to waterfront/mixed use and neighborhood commercial/mixed use development. The rezoning would be appropriate as the building's massing and design would be in character with the W-2 zoning.

Based on the foregoing discussion, rezoning the lot to W-2 would be appropriate given the character of the surroundings, the current zoning and the proposed use. The rezoning would negate the need for the use variance as the multifamily could operate by right. The CPC should recommend that the rezoning be approved subject to the applicant abandoning the use variance. It is the DPD's opinion that the rezoning is not expected to negatively affect health, safety and welfare and is consistent with the purposes of zoning in Section 101 of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Recommendation**

Based on the foregoing discussion, the DPD recommends that the CPC should recommend that the City Council rezone the subject lot to W-2 subject to the following condition:

The applicant shall abandon the use variance upon approval of the zone change.



# PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

President  
Warren Jagger

Vice President  
Heather Evans  
Rita Danielle Steele

Treasurer  
Laurel Bowerman

Secretary  
Patricia Raub

Trustees  
Kathryn J. Cavanaugh  
Joanna Doherty  
Barry Fain  
Antonietta Falconi  
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Jonathan Pitts-Wiley  
Edmund A. Restivo Jr.  
Shideh Shafie  
Barbara Sokoloff  
Jared Sugerman  
Carrie Zaslow

Architectural History Consultant  
Wm McKenzie Woodward

Advisors  
Oliver H.L. Bennett  
Arria C. Bilodeau  
Vincent J. Buonanno  
Malcolm G. Chace Jr.  
Sean O. Coffey  
J P Couture  
Maia Farish  
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Vance Freymann  
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Karen L. Jessup  
Kari N. Lang  
Sally E. Lapidés  
James W. Litsey  
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William J. Penn  
H. LeBaron Preston  
Clifford M. Renshaw  
Carla Ricci  
Lucie Searle  
Deming E. Sherman  
Melissa Trapp  
Mark Van Noppen

Executive Director  
Brent Runyon

February 14, 2022

Mr. Dustin Dezube  
*Via email*

RE: 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard

Dear Dustin:

Apologies for the delay in this response letter. I write to thank you for coming to the Providence Preservation Society's Planning and Architectural Review Committee (PAR) on January 5 with your attorney Dylan Conley and your architect Kevin Diamond to present the project proposal at 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard. We appreciate that you reached out to us early in your design development phase to request a review by PAR. This letter contains a summary of our comments.

We are pleased to see your light-touch proposal for the restoration of the former Home for Aged Women, later known as the Tockwotton Home, designed by Charles Hartshorn and located in Fox Point. We believe your intention to adapt the building from short-term student housing to residential use is a good one, and we are glad that you are pursuing historic tax credits and working with Kim Smith Barnett at MacRostie Historic Advisors, the RIHPHC, and the National Park Service.

We believe that you and Kevin are pursuing a conservative and appropriate course to conserve as much fabric, interior walls, and window details as possible while preserving the facade and footprint of the 1863-64 building. Reopening the original front door on the south facade is a welcome approach.

We understand that you are addressing egress, accessibility, and positioning of rooftop HVAC (perhaps sunken roof of existing addition?) and considering affordable housing units. As for the zoning change, PPS is in a position to support this effort—which we believe the city will look at favorably—to achieve multi-family housing at this legacy site. We will continue to follow your project as it goes through the public review process.

We commend your team on a great project and approach to bring new life into a historic building in Fox Point. We believe the financing of the project is ambitious, but wish you all the best.

We recommend that you reach out to the Fox Point Neighborhood Association, if you haven't already, as they may have further comments on parking and landscaping, among other issues. We also invite you to return to PPS and PAR as this project and others you are commencing proceed.

Sincerely,

Rachel Robinson  
Director of Preservation



JONATHAN BRACKENS

432 466 255

JONBRACKENS@CIVIL.COM

To: Councilman John Goncalves  
Ward 1

Re: Tenant Support Letter

Dear Councilman Goncalves,

I write you today as a current tenant of Providence Living—residing at 150 Chestnut St., Suite 5I, Unit D04—and a staunch supporter of the Providence Living team.

For five years and seven months I proudly call 150 Chestnut St. my home, thanks largely to Providence Living that managed my unit during this time. Please allow me to tell you a little about my experience and story. I am an autistic, gay, African American, first-generation college and graduate student, and IT-Legal professional who moved to Providence, RI from Brooklyn, NY eight years ago. My first RI apartment was in Councilwoman Rachel Miller's Ward, Federal Hill. While the scene was nice, my landlord at the time was out-of-state, his maintenance staff was "part-time", and—unbeknownst to me—the tenants were, let us say, rambunctious. Between the tenants' incessant loud parties and smoking, maintenance's slow response, a well-meaning out-of-state landlord, and two mice with a penchant to frolic in the storage room, my first two years in Providence were fraught and marked by autistic meltdowns, which never occurred in Brooklyn. Desperately, I sought a place conducive for the neuroatypical, inclusive of African Americans, responsive to tenants, contemporary enough to bespeak of Providence's creativity, and ensured a respectful community for professionals to study and thrive. This—I thought—was a "tall order."

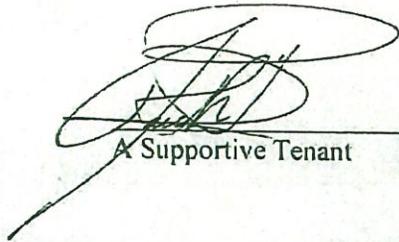
I thanked God for Google, then I thanked God for Providence Living. Using Google, I found Providence Living, and their leasing staff connected with me. They did more than attempt to shove me in a dwelling—I already had one of those—they asked me questions about my job, personality, and goals. After our meeting, the staff said, "You are exactly who we are looking for, in our Chestnut units." At the time, the units were under construction; however, unlike ANY OTHER LANDLORD, Providence Living reached out to my landlord to broker a deal for me to stay there until the Chestnut unit was ready. Unlike ANY OTHER LANDLORD, Providence Living took my neuroatypical conditions into account and modified Unit D04 to suit my medical needs (i.e., picking the wall colors, thoroughly insulating the walls, ceiling, and floor to soundproof and dampen noise; selecting lighting, and choosing a unit away from the

greatest level of ambient noise—all free of charge). The love, compassion, and creativity Providence Living put into designing my unit and the fifth floor is emblematic of the creativity and values you foster and encourage in Ward 1. I am surrounded by seasoned professionals who chair executive art boards, the Jewelry District Association, the Historical Society, etc. I volunteer, alongside my neighbors, for tree planting and lot clean-ups within the district. And while I remain the only African American in the Doran building—a residential opportunity only offered to me by renting with Providence Living—I have been treated with nothing but respect here. Unlike my first experience, the owner (Dustin Dezube) and property manager (Eli Adams) are just a text—and literally 0.8 miles on Wickenden—away. I could not ask for more.

I have seen their company grow immensely from when I first moved into my apartment. Their communication and attention to detail has been exceptional—not just since the first day I moved in but—since our first interaction in June 2016. Ward 1 needs more opportunities and housing like Providence Living provides. Ward 1 needs more housing that suits its diverse and complex needs in empathic and inclusive ways. Ward 1 needs more developments that foster and mirror the ideologies that you, Councilman Goncalves, exude. Providence Living provides that!

I thank you in advance for your time and I hope you take my experience into consideration when reviewing Providence Living's application for future development projects. A "yes" for Providence Living, is a "yes" for better living in Providence.

Sincerely,

  
A Supportive Tenant      03/30/22  
Date

Name:  
(print)

Jonathan Brackens

Address:  
Providence, RI, 02903

150 Chestnut Street, Suite 5I, Unit DD4

To: Council President Iglizzi  
Honorable Members of the Providence City Council  
Ward 1 Councilor Goncalves  
Ordinance Committee Chair Narducci  
Honorable Members of the Ordinance Committee

Re: Zone Change Petition  
180 George M. Cohan Boulevard

Honorable Members of the Providence City Council,

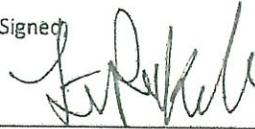
After having the opportunity to review the proposal for the historic adaptive reuse of the old Tockwotton Home at 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard, I am reaching out to you in full support of the proposal to change the zone from R-2 to W-2.

The proposal to restore the building by turning it into multi-family housing fits the character of the neighborhood, supports the goal of the City's comprehensive plan to build more housing, and it is an opportunity to ensure that such a beautiful building has a sustainable use that can maintain the property for years to come.

Facilitating appropriate infill housing developments in older buildings is an essential way to support local businesses by creating more opportunities for our customers to live by us here in Fox Point.

Accordingly, I am personally joining my fellow local business stakeholders and together we are urging you to approve this zone change petition.

Signed



Another Supportive Business Stakeholder

Date:

Name: Faride Pakdel (owner of Caspian)  
(print)

Address: 239 Wickenden St Providence, RI 02906

To: Ward 1 Councilor John Goncalves

Re: 180 George M Cohan BLVD

Councilor Goncalves,

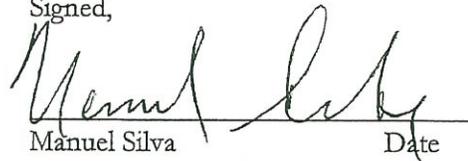
My name is Manuel Silva and I am a long-time resident of the Fox Point neighborhood. After having the opportunity to review the proposal for the historic adaptive reuse of the old Tockwotton Home at 180 George M. Cohan Blvd, I am reaching out to you in full support of the proposal to change the building from its current use as a boarding school to 71 residential apartments.

The proposal to restore the building by turning it into multi-family housing fits the character of the neighborhood, supports the goal of the City's plan to build more housing, and is an opportunity to ensure that such a beautiful building has a sustainable use that can maintain the property for years to come.

I am personally invested in this proposal because of my family history here in the neighborhood. My parents and I immigrated from Portugal to Providence when I was a young child and we purchased the house at 156-158 George M. Cohan Boulevard where we have maintained a permanent residence for over 40 years. I have very fond memories from growing up in the Fox Point neighborhood, and of the Tockwotton Home in particular. In its former use as a nursing home, my mother was a champion in supporting approval for the new wing that would later serve as her home. Preserving the architectural integrity of the building was incredibly important to my mother back then and is still an important consideration for me and my fellow neighbors now. I am aware of other large renovations and other development projects spearheaded by the Providence Group, and have been impressed with their ability to meet the needs and desires of the communities they develop in.

As a result, I am joining my fellow neighbors in supporting this project proposal and together we are urging you to approve this petition.

Signed,



Manuel Silva

Date

156-158 George M. Cohan  
Providence, RI

To: Ward 1 Councilor John Goncalves

Re: Adaptive reuse of 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard into multi-family

Dear Councilman Goncalves,

After having the opportunity to review the proposal for the historic adaptive reuse of the old Tockwotton Home at 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard, I am reaching out to you in full support of the proposal to change the building from its current use as a boarding school into 71 residential apartments.

The proposal to restore the building by turning it into multi-family housing fits the character of the neighborhood, supports the goal of the City's comprehensive plan to build more housing, and it is an opportunity to ensure that such a beautiful building has a sustainable use that can maintain the property for years to come.

As a current Fox Point tenant living in a multi-family building owned by the same management and development company, I am joining my fellow neighbors in urging you to support this change. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration!

Signed,

 4/8/2022  
Another Supportive Neighbor Date

Name: Molly Hannon

Address: 34 East Transit Street

Providence, RI 02906

To: Ward 1 Councilor John Goncalves

Re: Adaptive reuse of 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard into multi-family

Dear Councilman Goncalves,

After having the opportunity to review the proposal for the historic adaptive reuse of the old Tockwotton Home at 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard, I am reaching out to you in full support of the proposal to change the building from its current use as a boarding school into 71 residential apartments.

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As a current Fox Point tenant living in a multi-family building owned by the same management and development company, I am joining my fellow neighbors in urging you to support this change. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration!

Signed,

Sarah Christensen 4/8/22  
Another Supportive Neighbor Date

Name: Sarah Christensen

Address: 34 East Transit St Apt 3

Providence RI 02906

To: Ward 1 Councilor John Goncalves

Re: Adaptive reuse of 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard into multi-family

Dear Councilman Goncalves,

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As a current Fox Point tenant living in a multi-family building owned by the same management and development company, I am joining my fellow neighbors in urging you to support this change. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration!

Signed,

Joanna Morris, 8-4-2022  
Another Supportive Neighbor    Date

Name: Joanna Morris

Address: 27 E Transit St.,  
Apt 2, Providence RI 02906

To: Ward 1 Councilor John Goncalves

Re: Adaptive reuse of 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard into multi-family

Dear Councilman Goncalves,

After having the opportunity to review the proposal for the historic adaptive reuse of the old Tockwotton Home at 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard, I am reaching out to you in full support of the proposal to change the building from its current use as a boarding school into 71 residential apartments.

The proposal to restore the building by turning it into multi-family housing fits the character of the neighborhood, supports the goal of the City's comprehensive plan to build more housing, and it is an opportunity to ensure that such a beautiful building has a sustainable use that can maintain the property for years to come.

Accordingly, I am joining my fellow neighbors and together we are urging you to support this change.

Signed,

  
Another Supportive Neighbor Date 4/5/22

Name: James E. Lewis Jr.

Address: 23 Winsted Street Providence RI 02906

To: Ward 1 Councilor John Goncalves

Re: Adaptive reuse of 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard into multi-family

Dear Councilman Goncalves,

After having the opportunity to review the proposal for the historic adaptive reuse of the old Tockwotton Home at 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard, I am reaching out to you in full support of the proposal to change the building from its current use as a boarding school into 71 residential apartments.

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Accordingly, I am joining my fellow neighbors and together we are urging you to support this change.

Signed,

C. Mail 4/5/22  
Another Supportive Neighbor Date

Name:

Cody McIlmail

Address:

248 Federal St  
Pvd 02909

To: Ward 1 Councilor John Goncalves

Re: Adaptive reuse of 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard into multi-family

Dear Councilman Goncalves,

After having the opportunity to review the proposal for the historic adaptive reuse of the old Tockwotton Home at 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard, I am reaching out to you in full support of the proposal to change the building from its current use as a boarding school into 71 residential apartments.

The proposal to restore the building by turning it into multi-family housing fits the character of the neighborhood, supports the goal of the City's comprehensive plan to build more housing, and it is an opportunity to ensure that such a beautiful building has a sustainable use that can maintain the property for years to come.

Accordingly, I am joining my fellow neighbors and together we are urging you to support this change.

Signed,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Another Supportive Neighbor Date

Name: Wendy Canniff

Address: 51 Dyle Ave Prov. RI 02906

To: Council President Iglizzi  
Honorable Members of the Providence City Council  
Ward 1 Councilor Goncalves  
Ordinance Committee Chair Narducci  
Honorable Members of the Ordinance Committee

Re: Zone Change Petition  
180 George M. Cohan Boulevard

Honorable Members of the Providence City Council,

After having the opportunity to review the proposal for the historic adaptive reuse of the old Tockwotton Home at 180 George M. Cohan Boulevard, I am reaching out to you in full support of the proposal to change the zone from R-2 to W-2.

The proposal to restore the building by turning it into multi-family housing fits the character of the neighborhood, supports the goal of the City's comprehensive plan to build more housing, and it is an opportunity to ensure that such a beautiful building has a sustainable use that can maintain the property for years to come.

Facilitating appropriate infill housing developments in older buildings is an essential way to support local businesses by creating more opportunities for our customers to live by us here in Fox Point.

Accordingly, I am personally joining my fellow local business stakeholders and together we are urging you to approve this zone change petition.

Signed,



Another Supportive Business Stakeholder

Date:

Name:  
(print)

KUNGKEA SAM (Z NAILS)

Address:

265 WICKENDEN ST. Providence, RI

Jorge Elorza  
Mayor

Marc Greenfield  
Chair



2022 MAY 26 P 2:50

PROVIDENCE, RI

## Zoning Board of Review

### RESOLUTION NO. 2022-11

May 23, 2022

IN RE: Application for Use Variance: (Table 12-1 – Multi-family use in R-2 Zoning District)  
Application for Dimensional Variance: (Table 14-1 – Parking)

PROPERTY: Tax Assessor's Plat 17, Lot 650  
180 George M. Cohan Boulevard

APPLICANT: 180 GMC, LLC  
269 Wickenden Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Providence, RI 02906

OWNER: 75 EAST ST, LLC  
11828 La Grange Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

COUNSEL: On behalf of Applicant:  
Dylan Conley, Esq.  
Law Office of William J. Conley, Jr.  
123 Dyer Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Providence, RI 02903

The within matter came before the Zoning Board of Review (the "Board") on the application of the owner and applicant (together the "Applicants") to re-develop the above designated property (the "Property") as a multi-family dwelling. The Board held duly noticed public hearings on April 13, 2022 and April 27, 2022, with the following members present throughout both hearings: Mr. Wolf, Ms. Rodriguez, Mr. Strother, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Scott.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Greenfield was present at the April 13, 2022 hearing, but not at the April 27, 2022 hearing, at which votes were taken. Ms. Maniotes was absent from both hearings.

WHEREAS, the Applicants sought a use variance from Table 12-1 of the Providence Zoning Ordinance of November 24, 2014, as amended (the "Ordinance") to establish the use as a Multi-Family Dwelling; and

WHEREAS, the Applicants further sought a dimensional variance from Table 14-1 of the Ordinance for a deficiency of required parking spaces; and

WHEREAS, prior to the hearings, the members of the Board individually made inspections of the Property and viewed the surrounding neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, Attorney Dylan Conley presented the Application and the testimony of Dustin Dezube, a principal member of the Applicant; Mr. Paige Bronk, AICP, whom the Board recognized as an expert in land use; Kevin Diamond, architect; and Stephen Dylag, Certified Real Estate Appraiser; and

WHEREAS, the Board considered the following documents:<sup>2</sup>

1. The Application dated March 8, 2022, with Appendices;
2. Resume and Report of Mr. Paige Bronk dated April 6, 2022;
3. April 13, 2022 Recommendation of Department of Planning and Development;
4. February 14, 2022 letter of support from Providence Preservation Society;
5. April 19, 2022 report from Dustin Dezube, including financial details;
6. Pro Forma Profit and Loss Statement;
7. Letters from abutters supporting the adaptive reuse of the Property; and

WHEREAS, the Board heard oral comment from Mr. Grant Dulgarian, and received multiple letters in support of the proposal; and

WHEREAS, the Board received, and the Chair read into the record, the recommendation of the Department of Planning and Development (the "DPD") dated April 13, 2022, recommending approval of the Application; and

WHEREFORE, after consideration of the application, the testimony, and all the evidence of record, the Board voted (5-0) to APPROVE the application for both use and dimensional variances, subject to the conditions set forth below.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

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<sup>2</sup> The Board did not consider the March 1, 2022 report of Kim Smith Barnett of MacRostie Historic Advisors because the expert witness was not present for questioning at the April 13, 2022 hearing. Further, the Board requested she be present at the subsequent hearing, but she did not appear. Nor did it consider the unsolicited legal memoranda submitted by counsel for the Applicant.

1. The Applicant shall execute a Master Lease Agreement to provide a minimum of 5 parking spaces on other properties in close proximity to the subject property, and shall submit the Agreement to the City for approval.
2. The Applicant shall apply to the Parking Administrator for on street parking for qualified residents of the structure.

By Order of the Zoning Board of Review.

  
SCOTT WOLF  
ACTING CHAIR

**ATTENTION:** SECTION 1902 OF THE ORDINANCE REQUIRES THAT ANY VARIANCE OR SPECIAL USE PERMIT GRANTED BY THE BOARD SHALL EXPIRE SIX MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FILING OF THE RESOLUTION IN THE OFFICE OF THE BOARD UNLESS THE APPLICANT SHALL, WITHIN THE SIX MONTHS, OBTAIN A LEGAL BUILDING PERMIT AND PROCEED WITH CONSTRUCTION; OR OBTAIN A LEGAL BUILDING PERMIT AND A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY WHEN NO CONSTRUCTION IS REQUIRED.

**NOTE:** THE ORIGINAL RESOLUTION IS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW AND MUST BE OBTAINED BY THE OWNER OR HIS/HER/ITS REPRESENTATIVE AND RECORDED IN THE LAND EVIDENCE RECORDS OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE BEFORE THE ISSUANCE OF A BUILDING PERMIT. A COPY OF THE RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE RESOLUTION HAS BEEN RECORDED MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE OFFICE OF THE ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW AND TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTION AND STANDARDS BEFORE THE ISSUANCE OF A BUILDING PERMIT.

**MOTION TO GRANT USE VARIANCE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS FOR DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE:**

**MADE BY:** Mitchell

**SECONDED BY:** Rodriguez

**MEMBERS VOTING IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION:** Mitchell, Rodriguez, Strother, Scott, Wolf

**MEMBERS VOTING AGAINST THE MOTION:** None

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**MOTION TO GRANT DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS:**

**MADE BY:** Mitchell

**SECONDED BY:** Rodriguez

**MEMBERS VOTING IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION:** Mitchell, Rodriguez, Strother, Scott, Wolf

**MEMBERS VOTING AGAINST THE MOTION:** None

Leo J. Perrotta  
Director



Jorge O. Elorza  
Mayor

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

*"Building Pride in Providence"*

July 14, 2022  
Dylan Conley  
123 Dyer Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Providence RI 02903

RE: Exception Letter for 180 George M Cohan Blvd

Dear Mr. Conley:

I am in receipt of your letter requesting an exception for 180 George M Cohan Blvd to obtain 40 overnight parking permits.

After reviewing the site, as well as the information that has been provided in your letter, this office has determined that it will grant twenty-two (22) Overnight Parking Permits for this property. Persons receiving a permit may also obtain (1) guest pass, in accordance with the current regulations.

This area is well suited to car-free living, with a walkable urban fabric, bike paths, and bus lines nearby. It is reasonable to plan for at least 25% of the units in this building to be rented to residents who do not have cars. However, I strongly recommend that you provide one or more of the following transportation demand management measures in order to further reduce parking demand from this development:

- Free or subsidized RIPTA passes
- Free or subsidized e-scooter and e-bike share (Spin) passes
- Free or subsidized Uber/Lyft memberships or rides
- Free or subsidized Zipcar memberships
- Posting, updating, and advertising information in the building and through communication to residents about alternative transportation options

Additionally, I am willing to grant up to two (2) additional overnight permits for this development if you agree to set aside up to two (2) of your off-street parking spaces for Zipcar. I will re-write this letter in the case that you choose to do that.

When residents apply for a permit, please instruct them to attach this letter to that application.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact this office at 401-680-7573

Sincerely,

Liza Farr   
Curbside Administrator, City of Providence  
[lfarr@providenceri.gov](mailto:lfarr@providenceri.gov)  
401-680-7573

700 Allens Avenue Providence, Rhode Island 02905  
Phone 401-467-7950/Fax 401-941-2567  
[www.providenceri.com/dpw](http://www.providenceri.com/dpw)

**180 GEORGE M. COHAN MEMORIAL BOULEVARD – PROVIDENCE  
VARIANCE (USE AND PARKING) ANALYSIS**



(TAP Map 17, Lot 650)

CITY OF PROVIDENCE, RI

April 6, 2022

**Prepared for:**

Dustin Dezube -180 GMC, LLC  
269 Wickenden St. FL 2  
Providence, RI 02903

Dylan Conley, Esq. - William J. Conley Law  
123 Dyer Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**Prepared by:**

Paige R. Bronk, AICP  
24 Weatherly Avenue  
Newport, RI 02840  
[pbronk03@gmail.com](mailto:pbronk03@gmail.com)

## **INTRODUCTION:**

This report addresses a review and analysis for a requested “Use Variance” and parking relief at 180 George M. Cohan Memorial Boulevard (TAP Map 17, Lot 650). A site visit has been conducted as a part of this analysis. This report has been prepared in anticipation of the City of Providence’s review.

## **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The proposal involves the conversion of a large, existing building from a student housing use to multi-family housing. A “use variance” is required since the property is located within an “R-2” zoning district and multi-family housing is not explicitly permitted. Although the existing use is similar, it is slightly different from the student housing use. 71 multi-family units are proposed within the existing structure and property.

## **PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND SURROUNDINGS:**

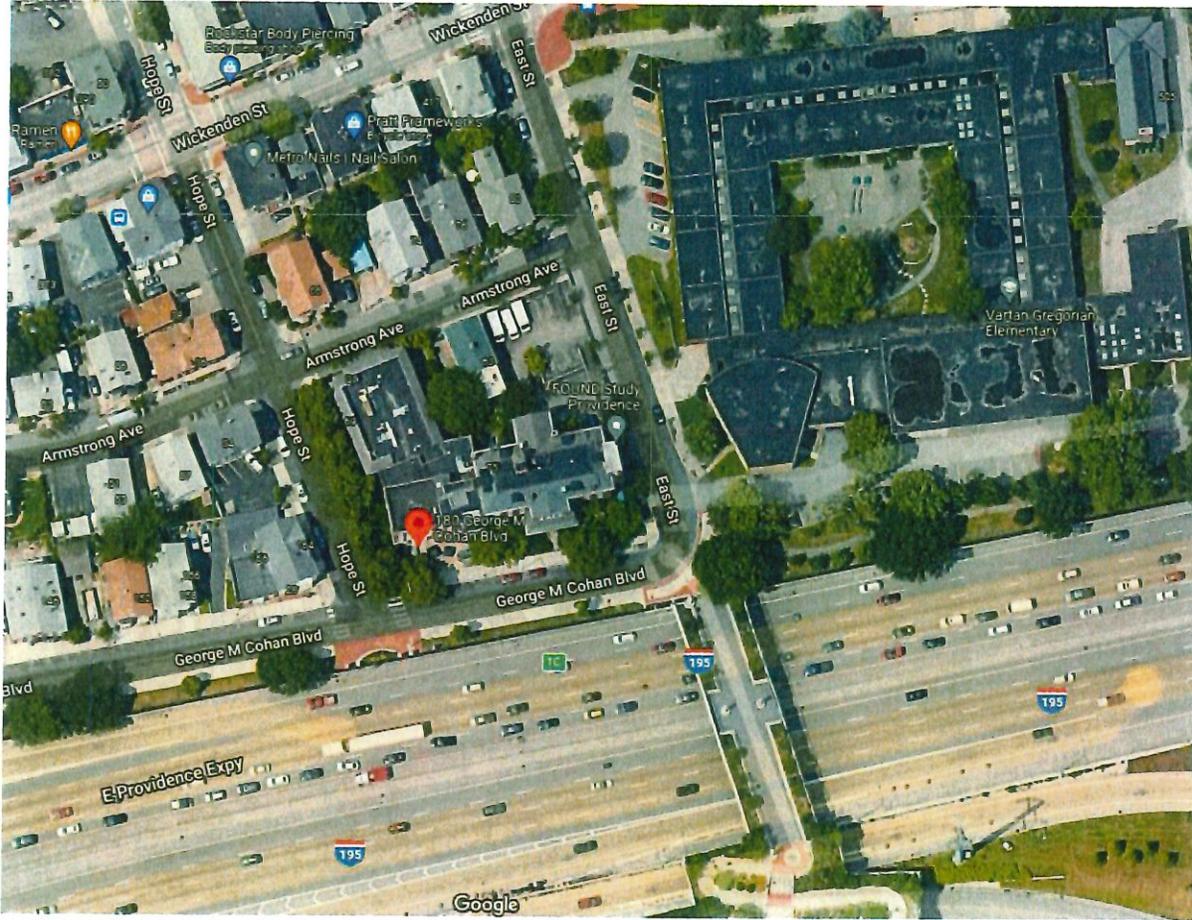
The subject property at 180 George M. Cohan Memorial Boulevard (TAP Map 17, Lot 650) was originally built to serve the long-term needs of a female senior population. It was renamed the “Tockwotton Home” in 1977. This “Tockwotton Home” use relocated to a more suitable and modern East Providence facility around 2013. Other past uses were a boarding school and the current student housing/dormitory use.

The subject property encompasses an entire block on the East Side of Providence within the Fox Point Neighborhood. This block is bound by George M. Cohan to the south, East Street to the east, Hope Street to the west, and Armstrong Avenue to the north. The property is one block south of Wickenden Street. The property is zoned “R-2” and directly abuts Interstate 195 and also India Point Park. Access to the Park is via a pedestrian overpass located directly across the street from the property. The Vartan Gregorian Elementary School at Fox Point is located adjacent to this property to the east with “PS” zoning. Residential neighborhood uses (single-family and duplexes) are common to the west and north. Additionally, small commercial stores are common one block from the property along Wickenden Street with “C-2” zoning. Overall, the area has some intensity as a result of many land uses converging in one area.

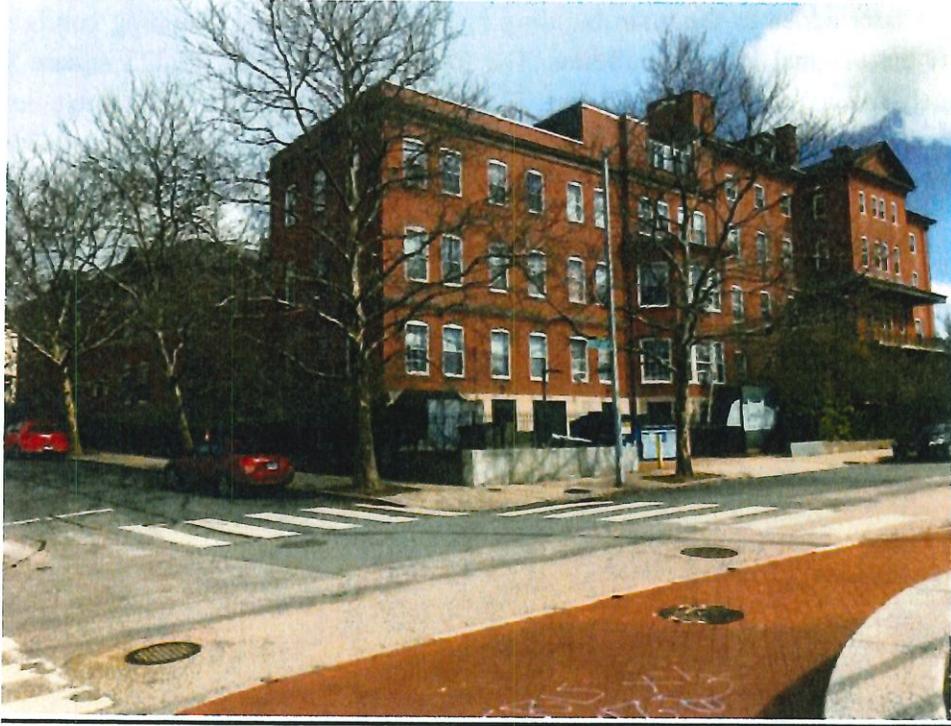
The lot consists of 27,272 square feet or 0.62 acres. The lot width is 180’ and lot depth is 185 feet. The existing building is “L” shaped and fronts both George M. Cohan Memorial Boulevard and Hope Street. The main portion of this historic structure was built in 1857. Interior building condition is rated “C-“ according to the Providence Tax Assessor’s (Vision) database. A building

addition was later added to the main building in 1993. That interior building condition is rated higher than the original historic building. The total structure holds 49,373 square feet and is approximately five (5) stories tall at 75 feet. The property is unique in that it is the tallest building in the immediate neighborhood and one of the largest. The only other building of similar size is the adjacent publicly-owned elementary school to the east. Existing lot coverage is 84%.

Below are photographs illustrating the subject property and building in the Fox Point neighborhood. Additional photos showing adjacent properties are attached as **Appendix A**.



**Aerial View of 180 George M. Cohan and Surroundings**



**Building view from southwest (above) and view from southeast (below).**



180 George M. Cohan Memorial Boulevard - Providence  
Variance (Use and Parking) Analysis  
Paige R. Bronk, AICP  
April 6, 2022



**Building view from the northeast (above) and view from the west (below).**



180 George M. Cohan Memorial Boulevard - Providence  
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April 6, 2022

## **EXISTING AND PROPOSED USE:**

Existing Use: The existing use for the property is “student housing” the Rhode Island International Academy (RIIA). Their website describes the facility as a, “Student dormitory and educational facility for international students attending local private schools.” Online videos and additional information further identify it as a student housing dormitory including rooms primarily serving multiple tenants. The on-site housing offerings include student transportation, kitchenettes, staffing, laundry, storage, full bathrooms, and lounge and study areas. The RIIA materials state the housing facility can hold over 120 students.

The building houses 44 student dormitory units with approximately 126 beds in the existing student housing use. Also, the existing “dormitory” or “student housing” uses occupy small units similar in character to modern, urban multi-family units.

FOUND Study Providence also advertises this property online for housing use. It appears this might target a seasonal (summer) rental market. Their website describes the use as, “FOUND Study Providence offers furnished, turnkey private and shared units in our centrally located living community. Residents enjoy communal amenities, including a dining room, lounges, laundry, and access to FOUND promotions, discounts, and other services.” FOUND further lists amenities such as laundry, furnishings, internet, security, community kitchen, flexible lease terms, utilities, and on-site management.

Regarding parking, there are 12 parking spaces that exist on the property. The parking configuration does not appear to be an efficient layout. There appears to be adequate on-street parking abutting the property.

Proposed Use: The proposed use is a 71-unit multi-family housing use (“Dwelling - Multi-Family Use”) in the existing building with minimal changes to the interior or exterior. There would be 33 studio units, 32 single-bedroom units, and 6 two-bedroom units. The units would be small in size and similar to the existing configuration. Additionally, there would be fewer actual “beds” given that the majority of the units are intended to accommodate a single person. This translates to fewer residents with the proposed multi-family use versus the existing “student housing” use.

The existing building envelope will not be changed. Lot coverage will essentially remain the same. The interior building configuration will remain the same with the objective of converting the existing “student housing” use into “multi-family housing.” Also, the project will pursue federal historic tax credits which holds high standards in maintaining the existing historic integrity of the building’s interior and exterior in current condition.

Regarding parking, the new “Dwelling – Multi Family” use and project would hold 26 parking spaces. These would also include appropriate spaces for disabled tenants. Again, there appears to be adequate on-street parking abutting the property. Additionally, there is access to nearby off-site parking to serve needs.

## **ZONING:**

### Zoning Purposes:

The following are excerpts illustrating City of Providence’s Zoning Ordinance Purposes. The purpose statements all align with the intent of the subject property’s variance request.

- A. Promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare.
- B. Providing for a range of uses and intensities of use appropriate to the character of the city and reflecting current and expected future needs.
- C. Providing for orderly growth and development which recognizes:
  - 1. The goals and patterns of land use contained in the Comprehensive Plan.
  - 2. The natural characteristics of the land, including its suitability for use based on soil characteristics, topography, and susceptibility to surface or groundwater pollution.
  - 3. The values and dynamic nature of coastal and freshwater ponds, the shoreline, and freshwater and coastal wetlands.
  - 4. The values of unique or valuable natural resources and features.
  - 5. The availability and capacity of existing and planned public and/or private services and facilities.
  - 6. The need to shape and balance urban and rural development.
  - 7. The use of innovative development regulations and techniques.
- D. Providing for the control, protection, and/or abatement of air, water, groundwater, and noise pollution, and soil erosion and sedimentation.
- E. Providing for the protection of the natural, historic, cultural, and scenic character of the city or areas in the municipality.
- F. Providing for the preservation and promotion of agricultural production, forest, silviculture, aquaculture, timber resources, and open space.
- G. Providing for the protection of public investment in transportation, water, stormwater management systems, sewage treatment and disposal, solid waste treatment and disposal, schools, recreation, public facilities, open space, and other public requirements.
- H. Promoting a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and groups, to assure the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens and their rights to affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing.
- I. Providing opportunities for the establishment of low and moderate income housing.
- J. Promoting safety from fire, flood, and other natural or unnatural disasters.

- K. Promoting a high level of quality in design in the development of private and public facilities.
- L. Promoting implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- M. Providing for coordination of land uses with contiguous municipalities, other municipalities, the state, and other agencies, as appropriate, especially with regard to resources and facilities that extend beyond municipal boundaries or have a direct impact on that municipality.
- N. Providing for efficient review of development proposals, to clarify and expedite the zoning approval process.
- O. Providing for procedures for the administration of the zoning ordinance, including, but not limited to, variances, special use permits, and, where adopted, procedures for modifications.
- P. Providing opportunities for reasonable accommodations in order to comply with the Rhode Island Fair Housing Practices Act, chapter 37 of title 34, the United States Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (FHAA), the Rhode Island Civil Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, chapter 87 of title 42, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), 42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.

“R-2” Zoning District Overview:

The property is zoned “R-2”. According to the Zoning Ordinance, “The R-2 Residential District is intended for areas of detached single-family and two-family, including semidetached, residential development of moderate density. Limited non-residential uses, which are compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods, may be allowed.” Additionally, maximum building height is 45 feet with buildings not to exceed three (3) stories. Maximum building lot coverage is 45%. Also, there are maximum impervious lot coverage requirements. In short, the “R-2” zoning was created and applied to this subject property many decades after its construction (with the exception of the 1993 addition).

The Zoning Ordinance also defines “Dwelling - Multi-Family” as, “A structure or development containing four or more dwelling units used for residential occupancy or one or more dwelling units in combination with a permitted non-residential use. A multi-family dwelling does not include a rowhouse dwelling.”

The Zoning Ordinance stipulates the land uses that are allowed (Permitted by Right or Permitted by Special Use) within the “R-2” zoning district below:

“R-2” Zoning District Allowable Uses:

The uses below are allowed either as permitted by right or by special use permit within the “R-2” District. “Dwelling – Multi-Family” is not a listed use within this “R-2” Zoning regulation.

Community Center: Permitted

Community Residence – Type I:	Permitted
Conservation Area:	Permitted
Cultural Facility:	Permitted
Day Care - Day Care Center, up to 8 people receiving day care:	Permitted
Day Care - Family Day Care Home:	Permitted
Dwelling – Accessory Dwelling Unit:	Permitted
Dwelling - Semi-Detached:	Permitted
Dwelling - Single-Family:	Permitted
Dwelling - Two-Family:	Permitted
Educational Facility - Primary or Secondary:	Permitted
Farmers Market:	Permitted
Park/Playground:	Permitted
Place of Worship:	Permitted
Plant Agriculture:	Permitted
Temporary Contractor’s Office:	Permitted
Temporary Emergency Housing:	Permitted
Temporary Mobile and Manufactured Homes:	Permitted
Temporary Outdoor Entertainment:	Permitted
Temporary Outdoor Storage Container:	Permitted
Community Residence – Type II:	Special Use
Country Club	Special Use
Day Care - Day Care Center, 9 to 12 people receiving day care	Special Use
Golf Course/Driving Range	Special Use
Lodge/Meeting Hall	Special Use
Neighborhood Commercial Establishment	Special Use
Public Safety Facility	Special Use
Utility	Special Use
Wireless Telecommunications	Special Use

Reasons Why the Allowable Uses in the “R-2” District Are Not Feasible at the Subject Property:

The allowable uses for the property at 180 George M. Cohan Memorial Boulevard are not appropriate for a variety of reasons. Each allowable use below offers a basic statement as to why such use is not feasible. In many instances, the interior historic building characteristics, particularly the high number of small rooms, is the common limiting factor as to why such uses are not feasible.

Community Center: The large size of the building and myriad of small rooms are not conducive to community gathering space.

Community Residence – Type I: The large size of the building and myriad of small rooms are not conducive to a use limited to six (6) or fewer persons

Conservation Area: There is no conservation open space on the property.

Cultural Facility: The lack of parking, large size of the building and myriad of small rooms, are not conducive to a museum style use that is open to the general public.

Day Care - Day Care Center, up to 8 people receiving day care: The large size of the building and myriad of small rooms are not conducive to a use limited to eight (8) or fewer persons

Day Care - Family Day Care Home: The large size of the building and myriad of small rooms are not conducive to a use limited to six (6) or fewer persons

Dwelling – Accessory Dwelling Unit: There is no accessory structure on site.

Dwelling - Semi-Detached: The large size of the building cannot viably be split into just two (2) semi-detached units.

Dwelling - Single-Family: The large size of the building cannot viably be used as a single housing unit.

Dwelling - Two-Family: The size of the building cannot viably be divided into just two (2) units.

Educational Facility - Primary or Secondary: The lack of parking, size of the building, and particularly the myriad of small rooms is not conducive to a modern school facility which requires classrooms large enough for large numbers of persons and large amenity spaces such as gyms, cafeteria, auditorium, theater, workshops, labs etc.

Farmers Market: The structure does not have a viable loading or means of disbursement for temporary produce sales. Additionally, the small rooms inside are not conducive to a farmers market operation.

Park/Playground: There is not open space and the structure itself is not a viable playground.

Place of Worship: The large size of the building and myriad of small rooms are not conducive to a use that requires regular, large-scale, temporary assembly

Plant Agriculture: The building cannot viably support plant agriculture.

Temporary Contractor’s Office: The building is not temporary, no temporary use is viable.

Temporary Emergency Housing: The building is not temporary, no temporary use is viable.

Temporary Mobile and Manufactured Homes: The building is not temporary, no temporary use is viable.

Temporary Outdoor Entertainment: The building is not temporary, no temporary use is viable.

Temporary Outdoor Storage Container: The building is not temporary, no temporary use is viable.

Community Residence – Type II: The size of the building and myriad of small rooms are not conducive to a use limited to eight (8) or fewer persons.

Country Club: The structure, the lack of parking, and the myriad of small rooms is not conducive to a use that relies upon routine gatherings at scale for social purposes.

Day Care - Day Care Center, 9 to 12 people receiving day care: The size of the building and myriad of small rooms are not conducive to a use limited to twelve (12) or fewer persons.

Golf Course/Driving Range: There is no space to support this use at the property. The building occupies the majority of the land.

Lodge/Meeting Hall: The structure, the lack of parking, and the myriad of small rooms is not conducive to a use that relies upon routine gatherings at scale for social purposes

Neighborhood Commercial Establishment: This use requires a primary residential use, which in this case would be a maximum of two residential units plus a commercial space. The size of the building and myriad of small rooms are not conducive to a use limited to three (3) units.

Public Safety Facility: The size of the building, structure and building envelop and grounds, and myriad of small rooms are not conducive to a use limited to public safety agencies, such as the fire department and police departments, including the dispatch, storage, and maintenance of police and fire vehicles or kennels for canine units.

Utility: The building is not conducive for use solely as a utility.

Wireless Telecommunications: The building is not conducive for use solely as a utility.

#### Zoning Parking Requirements:

The Zoning Ordinance requires one on-site space per dwelling unit for “Dwelling – Multi-Family” uses. This translates to 71 on-site parking spaces. The balance of the 71 spaces minus the 26 provided spaces equals a shortfall of 45 spaces. However, the proposed parking (26 spaces) is 14 spaces greater than the “Student Housing/Dormitory” use which is perceived as more intensive than the proposed “Dwelling – Multi-Family” use. The measure of intensity is “beds” and “people.” There will be fewer beds and people with the proposed 71 unit “Dwelling – Multi-Family” use. Additionally, the owner has plans for using some walkable off-site locations to assist with parking needs.

The existing historic building configuration and size drives the dwelling unit count. Similarly, the available lot size remaining after deducting the existing historic building coverage establishes the area for parking. The remaining area for parking can only realistically accommodate 26 parking spaces. The limitation is driven by the unique characteristics of the subject lot and existing historic structure. It is also believed that a hypothetical new “Dwelling – Multi-Family” use and building of this size, built in Providence’s downtown, likely would receive a reasonable discount on the number of parking spaces required.

**“VARIANCE” ZONING AUTHORITY, PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS:**

The Providence Zoning Ordinance, *Section 1902* addresses variance authority and procedures. The regulation explicitly states and requires the following standards (*bolded and italicized*) be addressed. Each standard is followed by a response specific to the subject property.

- a. 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 property is unique in several ways. The building’s large size, building height, number of floors (five), parcel size, historic age of the building, historic use of the building, city rating of building interior quality is marginal at (C-), and its location adjacent to Interstate 195. Additionally, the past uses have all ended due to not being sustainable over time. Notably, the former “Tockwotton Home” illustrated that the building is no longer suitable for even its original intended use. Other uses have not succeeded either. A more modern and long-term sustainable use is needed that best matches the property and building characteristics.

There is no specific physical or economic disability of the applicant, however the property holds physical and economic challenges. Given the building’s age, some environmental remediation is needed as a part of the rehabilitation. Additionally, there is a need to retrofit the grounds and parking lot to address ADA deficiencies. Lastly, there is limited ability to accommodate significantly more parking on site given the building footprint and site conditions.

- b. That the hardship is not the result of any prior action of the applicant and does not result primarily from the desire of the applicant to realize greater financial gain.*

The applicant has not taken any prior action to cause hardships or challenges for this property. The applicant is seeking to best create a long-term sustainable use and model for this large, historic building. The variance being sought pertains to matching the best use (“Dwelling – Multi Family) to this unique, 49,373 square foot building given the interior configuration is designed for small unit living.

No feasible use exists from the listed uses in the “R-2” use table. Individual reasons for why each use is infeasible were previously stated. The largest limiting factor as to why each use is infeasible relates to the large size of the multi-story building in combination with the small

size of the interior historic units and floor configuration. Making significant changes to the building interior will destroy the integrity of the building and also jeopardize the pursuit of historic tax credits for the property. Altering the interior of the building will undoubtedly cause irreversible harm to the historic quality, character and integrity of the building.

The applicant is not seeking relief to realize greater financial gain. The sought relief to make the project economically viable and to sustain the property over a long period of time. The only use of the building that makes any sense is dwelling – multifamily, given the unique character of the subject lot, the size of the existing historic building and the structure of the historic interior layout which establishes the existing small interior spaces.

***c. 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.***

The requested variance will not alter the neighborhood. The general character of the surrounding area is a combination of residential, institutional, and commercial plus it directly abuts a federal interstate highway (I-195) and waterfront park. Overall, the area has some intensity as a result of many land uses converging in one area. The granting of the requested variance meets and complies with the stated intent and purposes of the Zoning Ordinance (as stated in this report).

Additionally, the requested variance also meets the intent and purpose of the City of Providence’s Comprehensive Plan. The Plan offers key highlights and priorities that align with this variance request. These include: redevelopment, linkages to transportation systems, walkability, historic preservation, increasing housing supply and options, revitalizing and preserving housing, connection to public spaces and the waterfront, reuse of buildings, and supporting compact urban development with greater mixture of housing.

***d. That the relief to be granted is the least relief necessary.***

The applicant is seeking the least relief necessary, which is to use the existing building as a “Dwelling – multifamily.” The building is not naturally configured for other “R-2” uses nor are the other uses sustainable. Also, the dwelling unit count is dictated by the way the historic building is structured. No major changes to the building are proposed in order to follow the lead of the structure. The units have almost entirely been derived from the existing wall configurations and rooms as is necessary in a Historic Tax Credit proposal.

Additionally, the available lot size remaining after deducting the existing historic building coverage establishes the area for parking. The remaining area for parking can only realistically

accommodate 26 parking spaces. The limitation is driven by the unique characteristics of the subject lot and existing historic structure. Parking is being maximized on the remaining available land on the parcel.

*In addition, the Zoning Board of Review, or the City Plan Commission, as part of unified development review, requires that evidence be entered into the record of the proceedings showing that:*

- a. In granting a use variance, the subject land or structure cannot yield any beneficial use if it is required to conform to the provisions of this Ordinance. Nonconforming use of neighboring land or structures in the same district and permitted use of lands or structures in an adjacent district are not considered in granting a use variance.*

As a result of the existing unique property and building conditions, none of the allowed “R-2” uses stated in the Zoning Ordinance are feasible for this large, historic property. As previously stated, the largest limiting factor as to why other uses are infeasible relates to the large size of the multi-story building in combination with the small size of the interior historic units and floor configuration. Making significant changes to the building interior will destroy the integrity of the building and also jeopardize the pursuit of historic tax credits for the property. Altering the interior of the building will undoubtedly cause irreversible harm to the historic quality, character and integrity of the building.

Essentially, the property is challenged and will not succeed if bound by the existing “R-2” land use table. The property is not like others in the neighborhood. It is unique and is worthy of special consideration to ensure appropriate reuse and protection to best serve Providence’s revitalization efforts.

- b. 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. The fact that a use may be more profitable or that a structure may be more valuable after the relief is granted is not grounds for relief.*

If the parking dimensional variance is not granted, the project would simply not be viable or feasible. The historic building (interior and exterior) must be kept intact to preserve the historic integrity of the structure. Without doing so, the Federal historic tax credits will not be granted. Additionally, if a portion of the building was demolished to increase parking, the project would lose its intended purpose and therefore would not be financially feasible. The variance request is not to expand the building, but to preserve the structure for long-term sustainability primarily driven by its natural orientation including interior small unit configuration.

## **FINDINGS:**

In reviewing the 180 George M. Cohan Memorial Boulevard proposal and the relevant zoning provisions, the following are my professional planning findings based upon the materials presented and related analysis:

- The former “Tockwotton Home” moved from this historic facility to a new, modern East Providence location in 2013.
- No other long-term viable uses have succeeded for this structure and property.
- The parcel fronts on Interstate-195, but lacks direct access to the highway.
- The parcel is larger in size at 0.62 acres than most residential lots in the neighborhood.
- The “L-Shaped” building is taller (75 feet and five stories) and is larger (49,373 square feet) than all others within this “R-2” district in the neighborhood.
- The existing historic building was constructed in 1857 and scores “C-“ in condition according to the tax records. Also, an addition was built in 1993.
- The existing building was constructed for a particular use (care for an aging population) catering to small units for a particular population segment and it is not configured for other non-residential uses.
- Multi-family residential is the only known feasible use for this property given its size, configuration, height, and location.
- The remaining area on the parcel for parking can only realistically accommodate 26 parking spaces. The limitation is driven by the unique characteristics of the subject lot and existing historic structure.
- The “Dwelling - Multi-family” use is of lesser intensity than the “Student Housing/Dormitory” use since there will be fewer beds and residents within the existing historic building;
- The requested variance will not alter the neighborhood and is in keeping with the intent and purposes of the Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

In conclusion, the proposed variance request for 180 George M. Cohan Memorial Boulevard has been evaluated, and in my opinion:

- The proposal satisfies the required “Variance” standards within the Zoning Ordinance.
- The requested variance will not alter the neighborhood and is in keeping with the intent and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan.
- The relief to be granted is the least relief necessary.

Paige R. Bronk, AICP

Paige R. Bronk

04/06/2022

**APPENDIX A:  
ADDITIONAL PHOTOS**



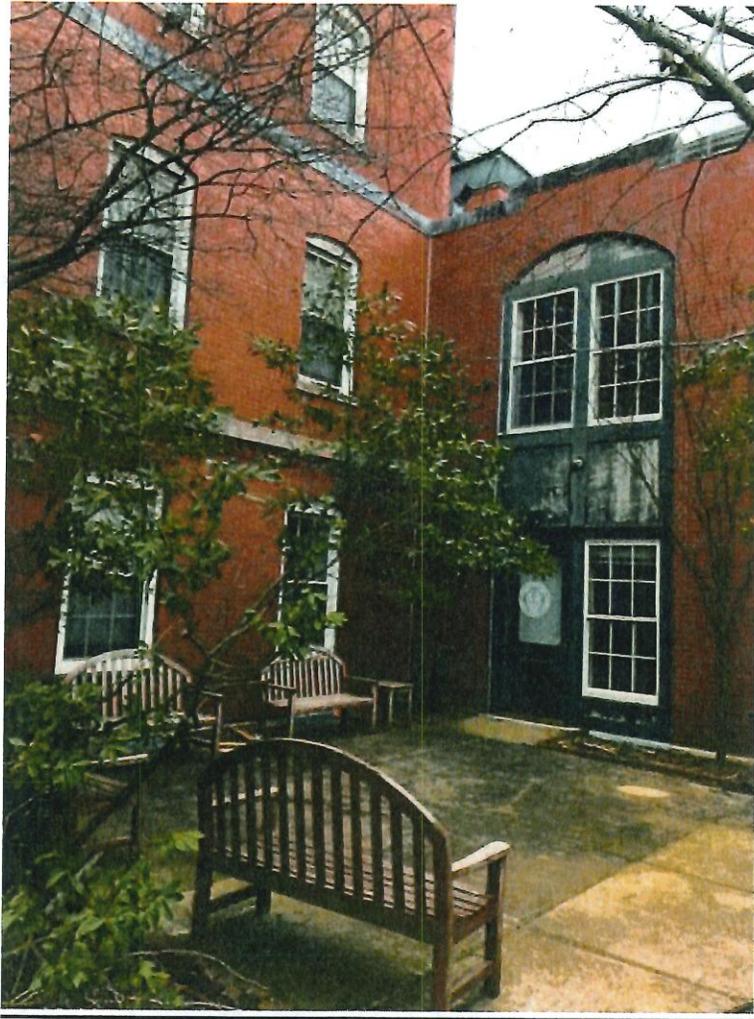
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April 6, 2022

**Exhibit 6**

**Comprehensive Plan Citations**

1. P. 122, LU3 Maintain and Enhance Residential Areas, Subsection B promotes the adaptive reuse of historic non-residential buildings in residential areas through increased residential density.
2. P. 22-23 Limited Areas for Growth
  - a. There is a discussion about facilitating density in former Mill Buildings, this project is comparable in concept
  - b. 2.3 Opportunities Smart growth calls for infill and higher densities
3. P. 25, Sustainability and the Environment, Goal 1 –
  - a. Reuse and Infill is sustains historic buildings as well as sustains the health of the city through appropriate density
4. P. 35, Sustainability and the Environment, Objective SE4: Sustainability and the Built Environment, subsection F is a specific call out for the reuse of existing buildings
5. P.39 is a specific call out to funding the State Historic Tax Credit to make historic structures viable, this Federal Historic Tax Credit Project is no different
6. P. 44 Objective BE5 Preservation Planning, subsections A and B look to prevent displacement through rehabilitation of structures of historic merit
7. P. 45, Objective BE 7, Neighborhood Character and Design, Subsection E-1 – focus of rehabilitation of infill in residential areas
8. P. 110, LU2 Direct Growth, Subsection B3, specifically calls out the encouragement of the adaptive reuse of historic structures where financially feasible.
  - a. The proposal today comes at 0 cost to the City
9. P. 56 – Housing – Create, Revitalize and Preserve

**City of Providence**  
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

**PETITION TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

TO THE HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE:

*The undersigned respectfully petitions your honorable body*

I, **Dylan Conley**, by and through and with the permission of **180 GMC LLC**, hereby petition the City Council to change the Official Zoning Map of the City of Providence by changing the zoning district designation for the property located at:

180 George M. Cohan Blvd  
Assessor's Plat 17, Lot 650

and shown on the accompanying map<sup>1</sup> **Attached below as Exhibit 1**, from **[R-2]** to **[W-2]**.

Further attached hereto is **Exhibit 2**: are two (2) sets of mailing labels with the names and addresses of all property owners within two hundred feet (200') of the property.

Signature: /s/ Dylan Conley

Name: Dylan Conley, Esq. #8969

Title: Attorney, on behalf of **Petitioner**

Telephone No.: (401) 415-9835

Email Address: DConley@wjclaw.com

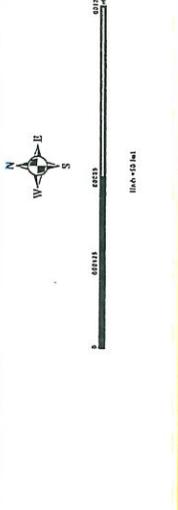
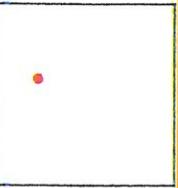
Exhibit 1





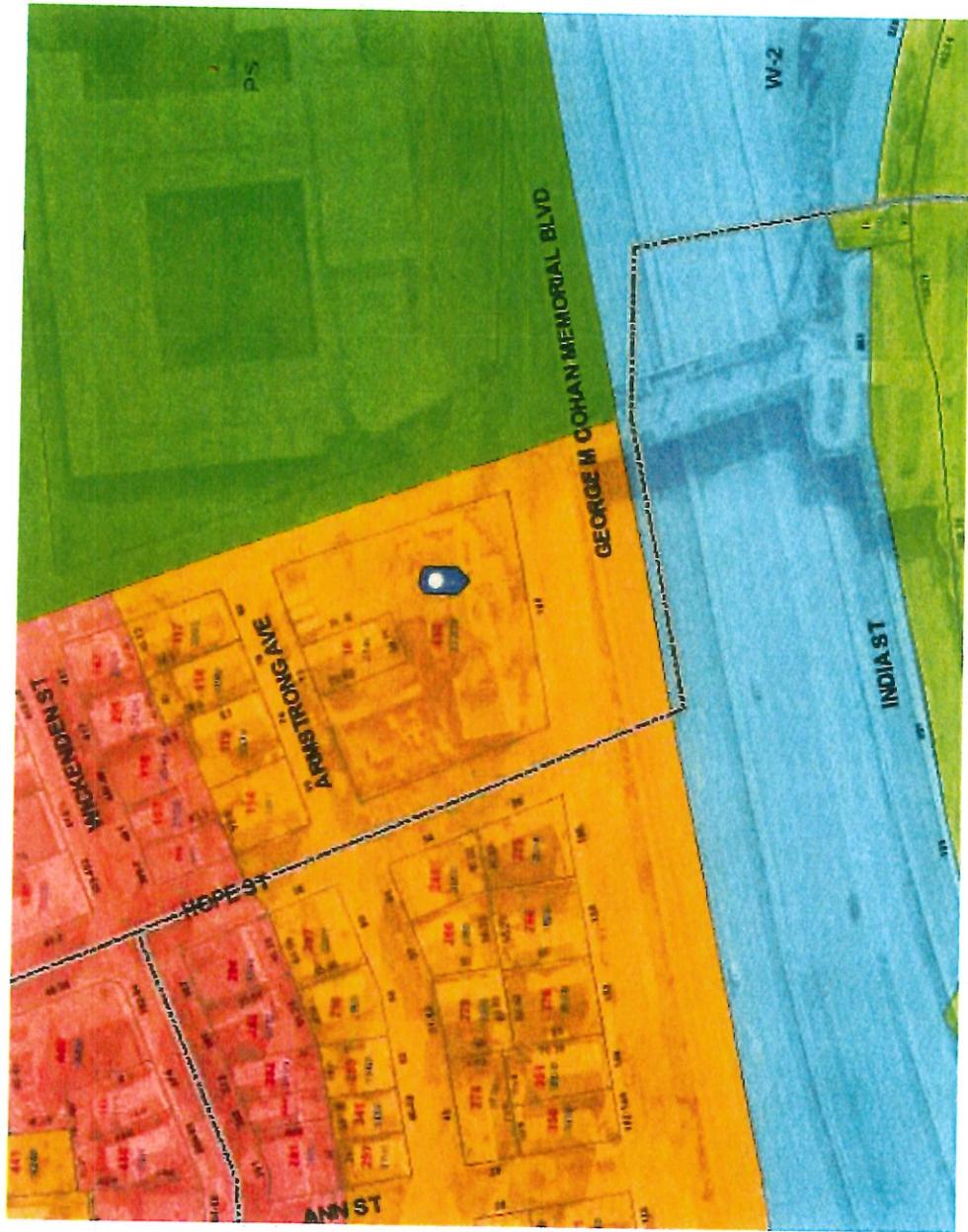
Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, City of Providence, Department of Planning and Development

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**P**

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND  
 DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
 JOE B. FLORZA, MAYOR | DOUGLAS B. GIBSON, AICP, DIRECTOR



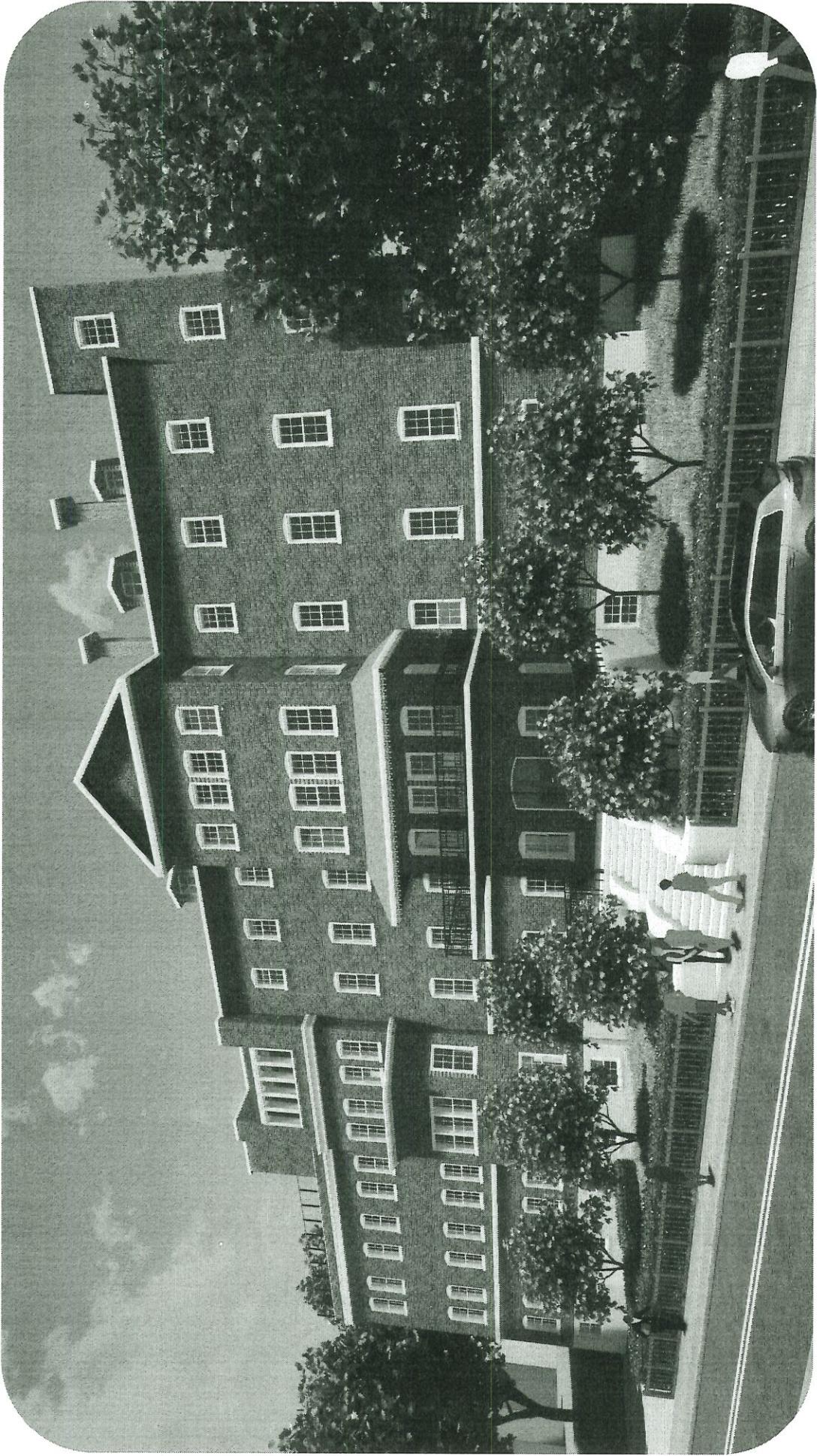


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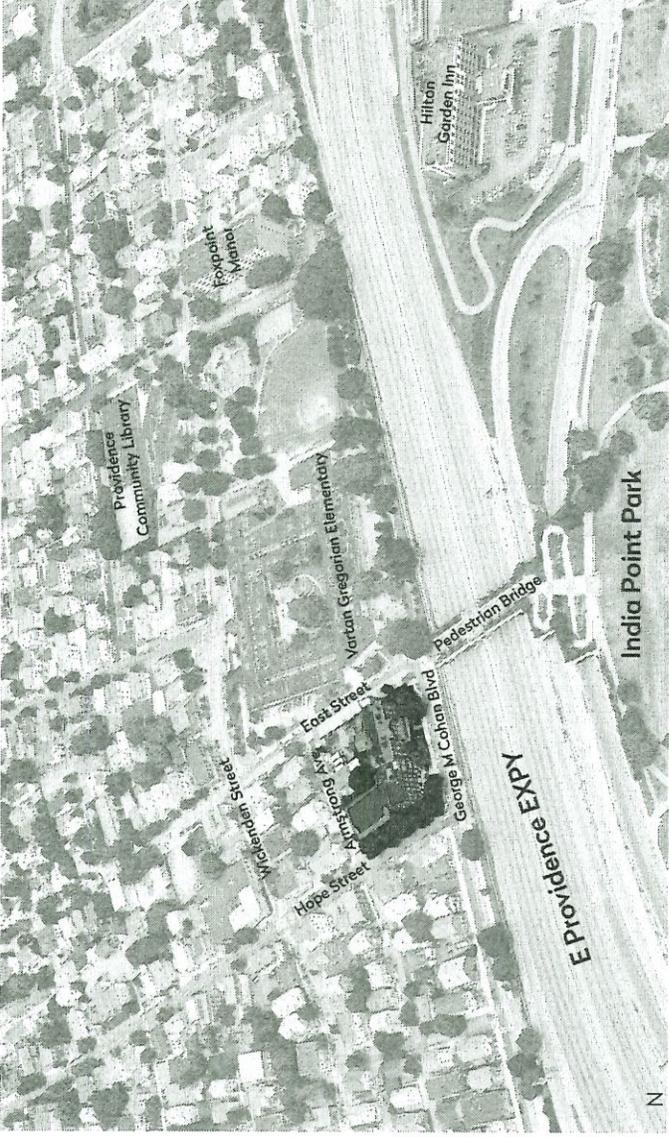
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PROVIDENCE  
ARCHITECTURE Co.

RESIDENCES AT INDIA POINT



LOCUS MAP [ N.T.S.]

**Project Description:**

The proposed project at 180 George M Cohan Blvd intends to re-use and revitalize the existing historic structure in a manner that minimizes disturbance to its existing layout and structure to the greatest extent reasonable possible.

The existing 50,000 square foot structure has served many purposes over the last century, ranging from a nursing home to most recently an off campus dormitory with ancillary support spaces such as classrooms and meeting rooms. Given the existing structure and layout of the building, the intent of the project is to reuse the building for multi-family housing. The proposal is designed to maintain the layout of each level of the building by preserving the primary walls that define main corridors, stair halls, elevators, and the demising partitions between the existing units.

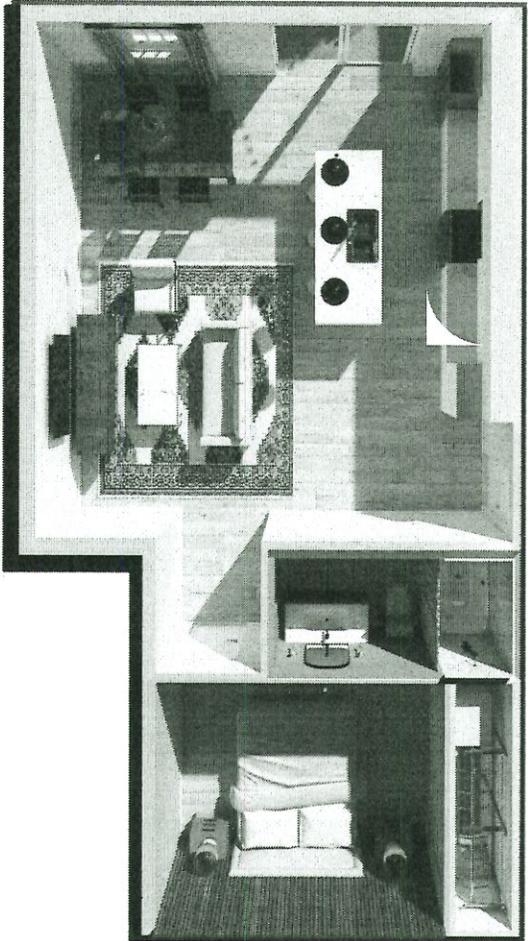
No changes are proposed to the existing building footprint. The proposal also includes minimal exterior improvements. Retaining walls, patios, doors and windows are proposed at the basement level of the building, all of which are not visible from the street. Additional minor improvements to the exterior are limited to the addition of light wells to serve existing and proposed basement windows, landscaping, and hardscaping, and in-kind repair and replacement of deteriorated architectural elements as needed.



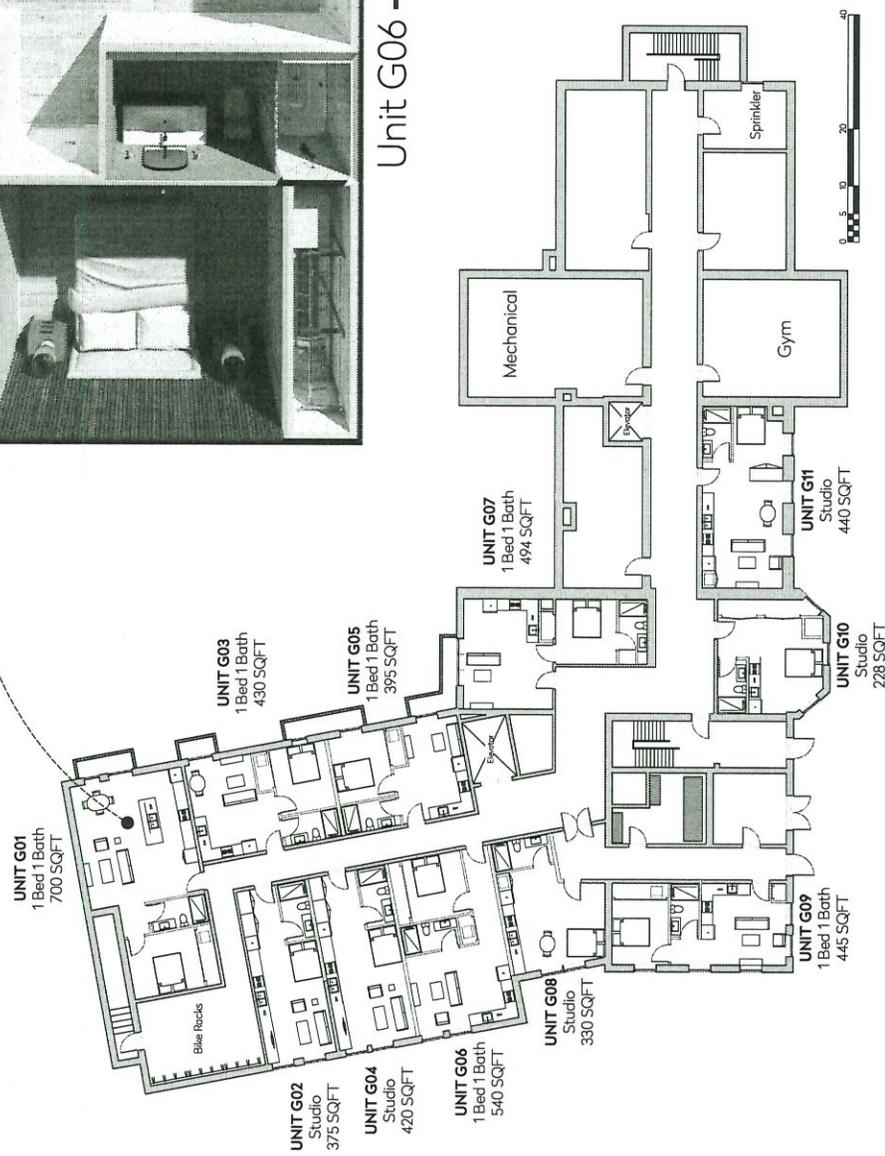
RESIDENCES AT INDIA POINT

PROJECT OVERVIEW





Unit G06 - 1 Bed 1 Bath - 700 SQFT



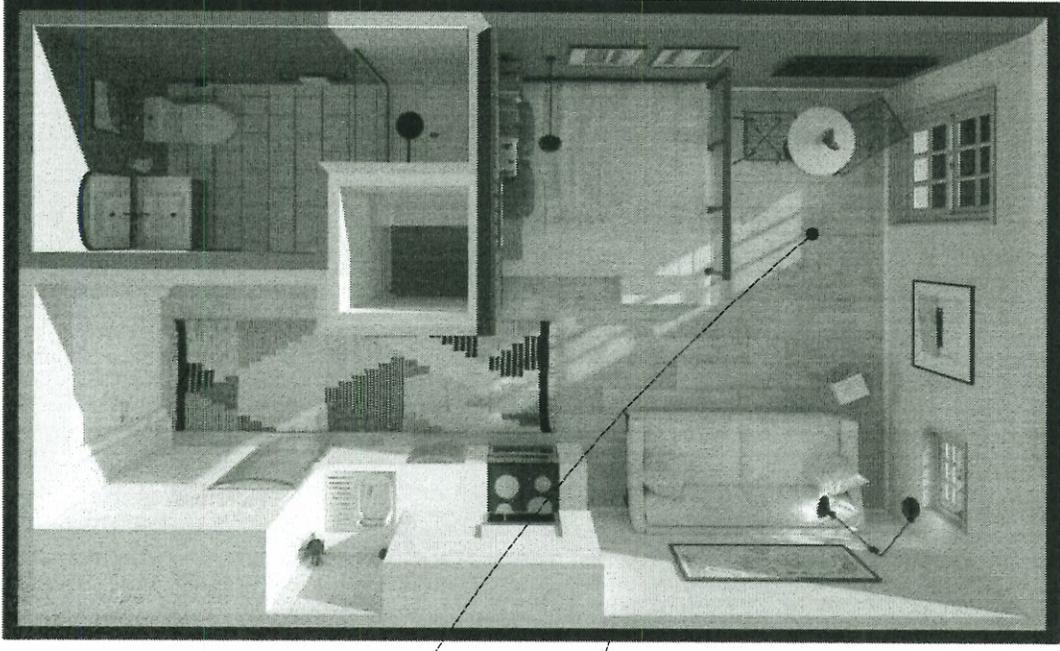
- Existing Walls
- Proposed Walls

- Existing stairwells to remain
- Location of existing hallways to remain
- Existing exterior walls and openings to remain
- Existing historic entryway to remain at the South side of the building

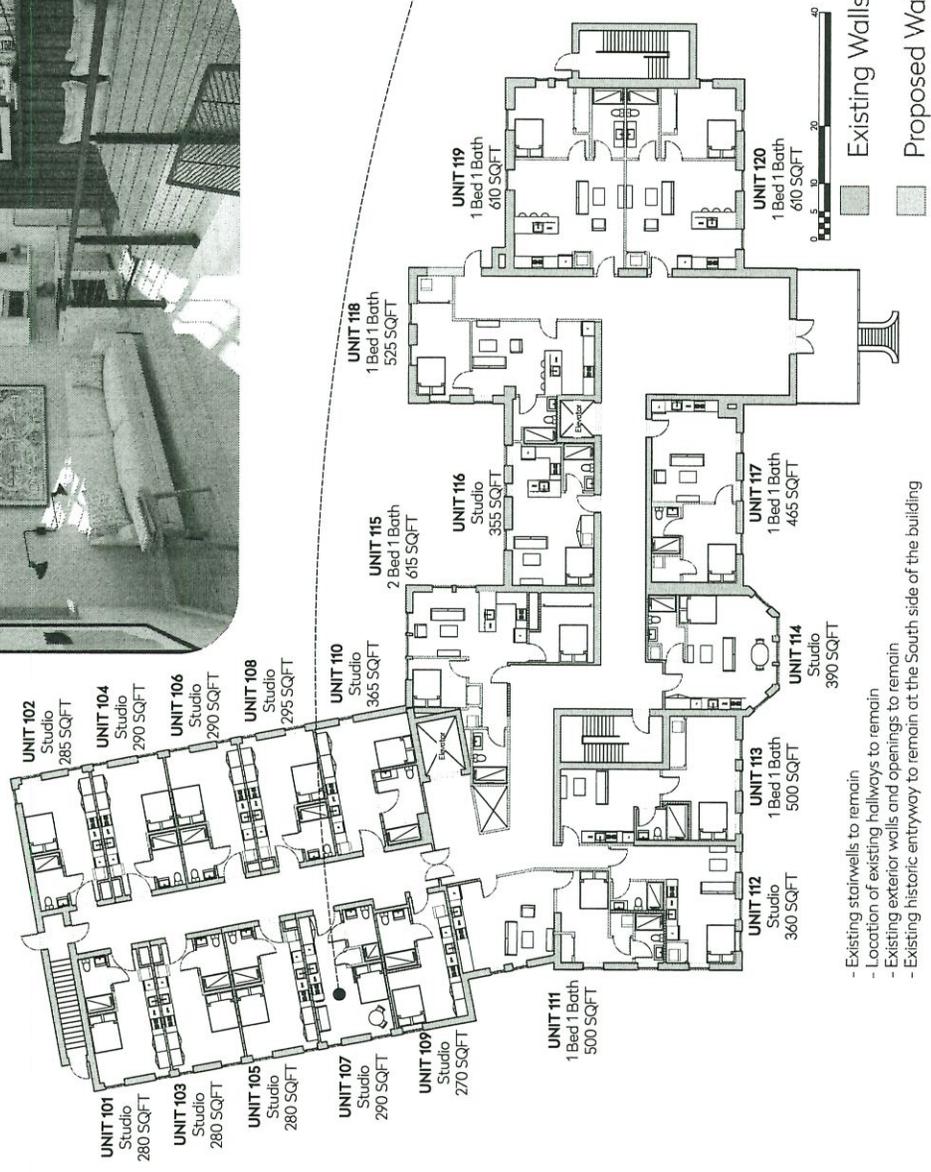
**PROVIDENCE  
ARCHITECTURE Co.**

RESIDENCES AT INDIA POINT

GARDEN LEVEL



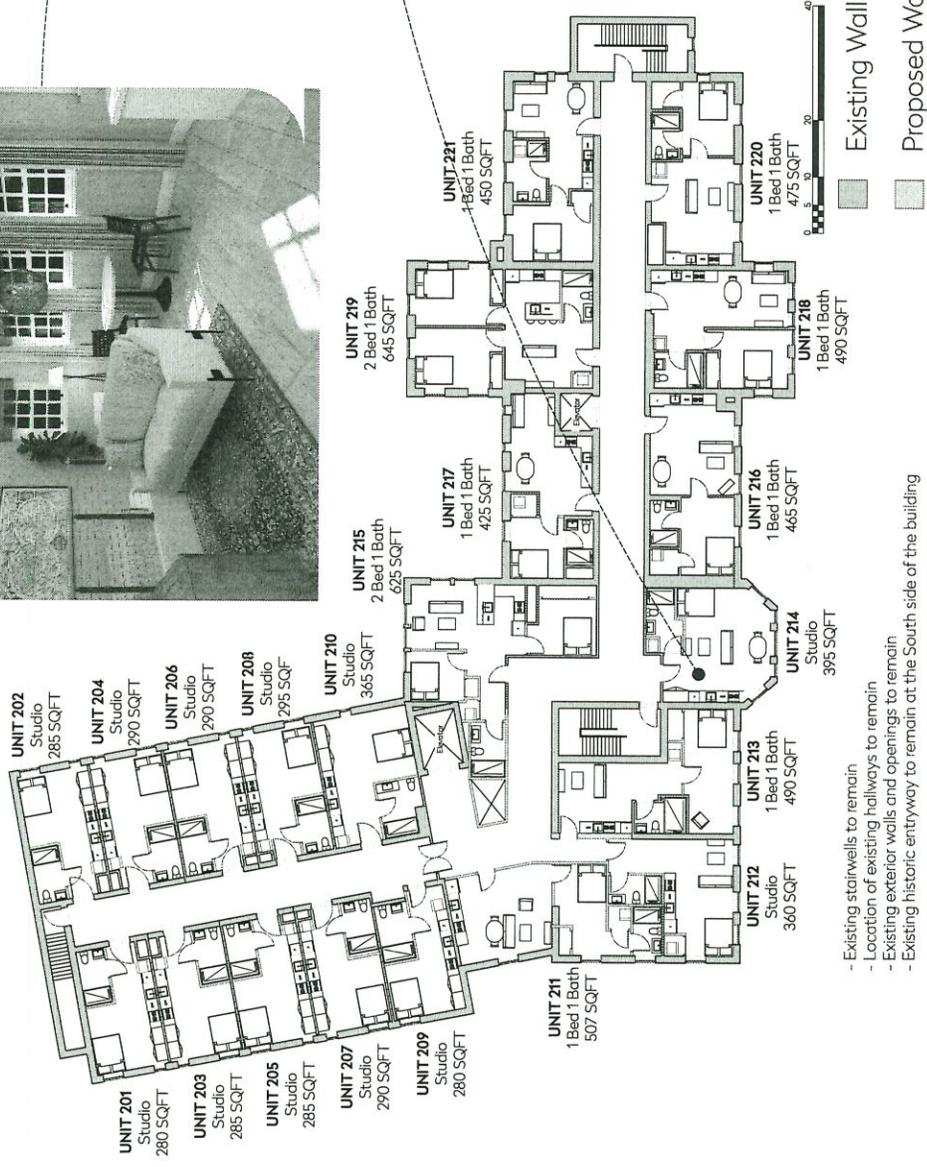
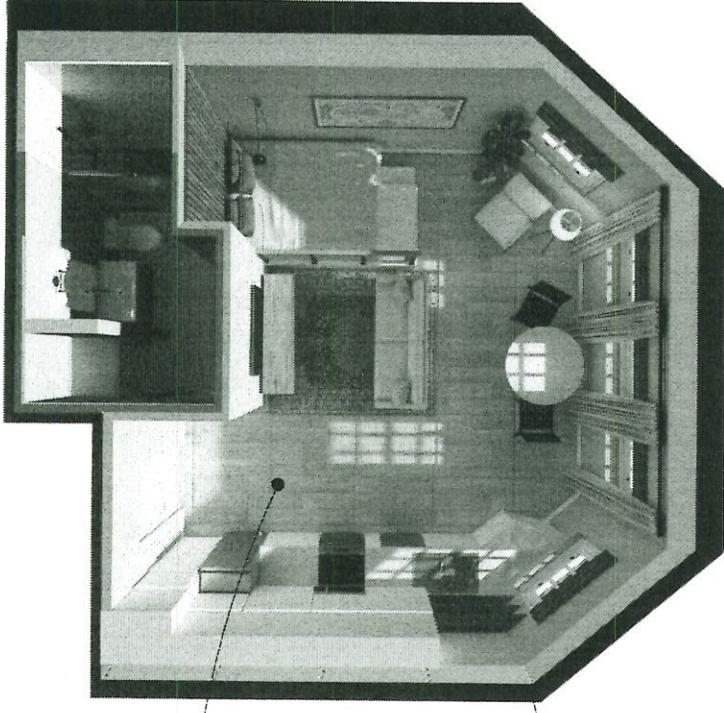
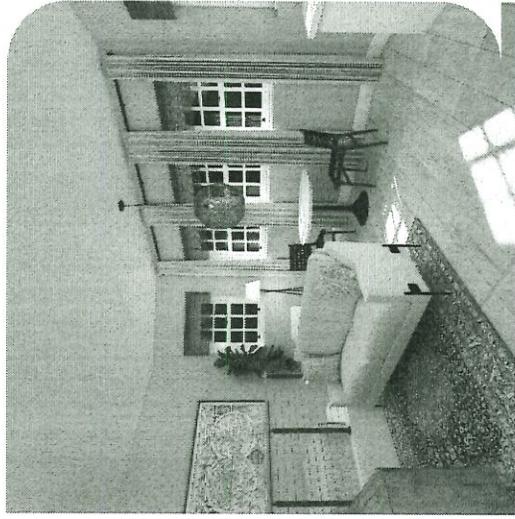
Unit 107 - Studio - 280 SQFT



- Existing stairwells to remain
- Location of existing hallways to remain
- Existing exterior walls and openings to remain
- Existing historic entryway to remain at the South side of the building

**PROVIDENCE ARCHITECTURE Co.**

RESIDENCES AT INDIA POINT



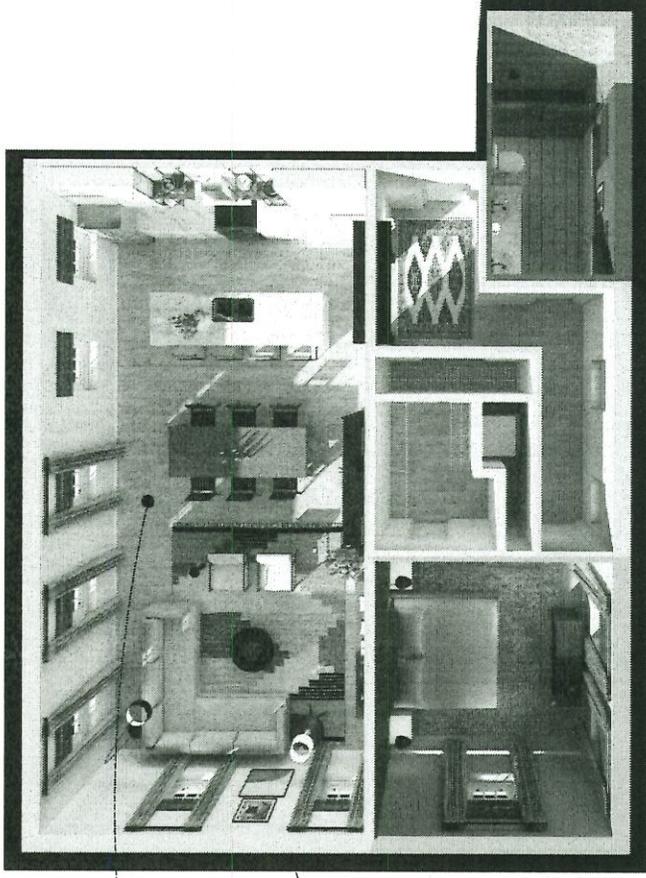
- Existing stairwells to remain
- Location of existing hallways to remain
- Existing exterior walls and openings to remain
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Unit 214 - Studio - 395 SQFT

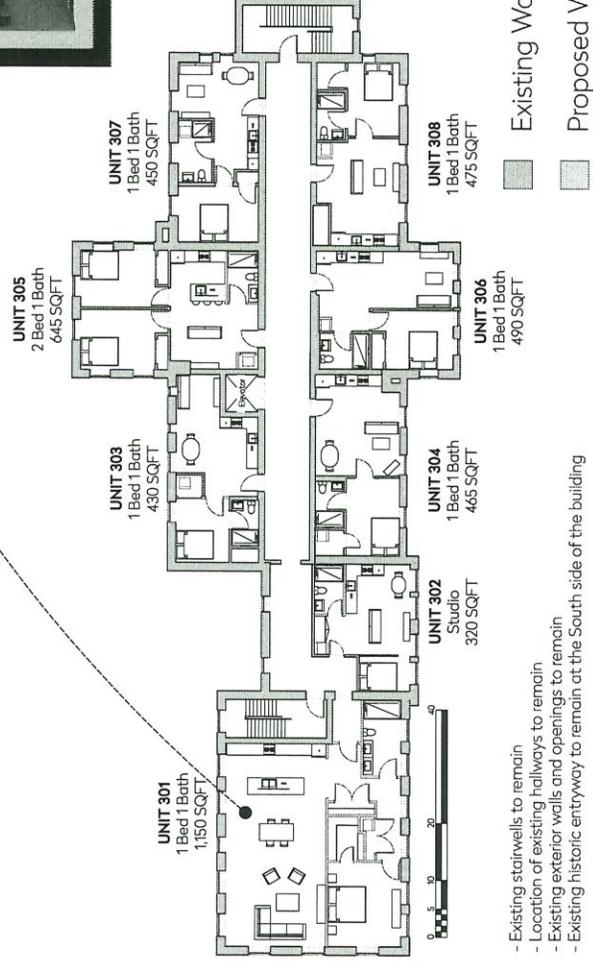
**PROVIDENCE  
ARCHITECTURE Co.**

RESIDENCES AT INDIA POINT

SECOND FLOOR



Unit 301 - 1 Bed 1 Bath - 1,150 SQFT



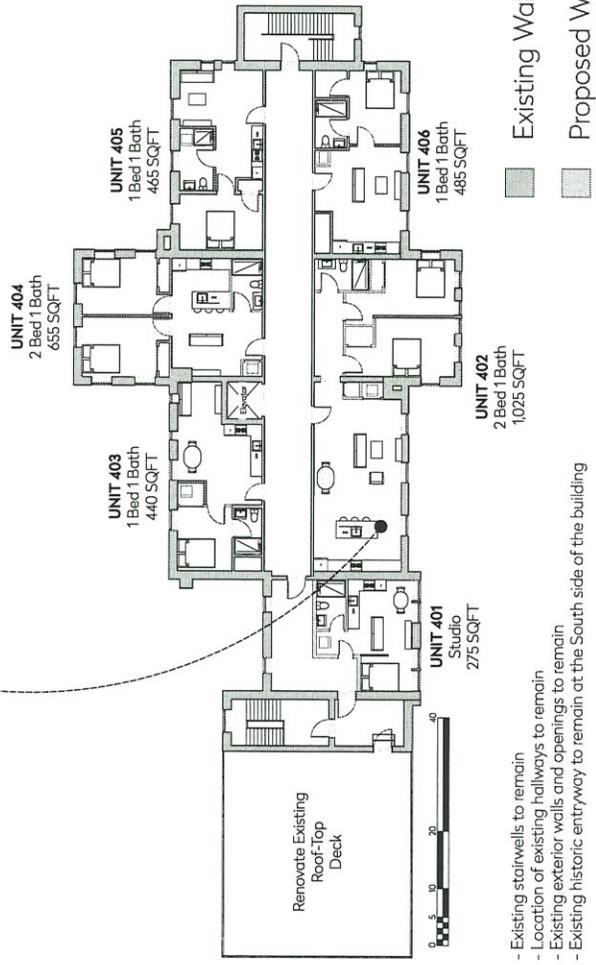
- Existing stairwells to remain
- Location of existing hallways to remain
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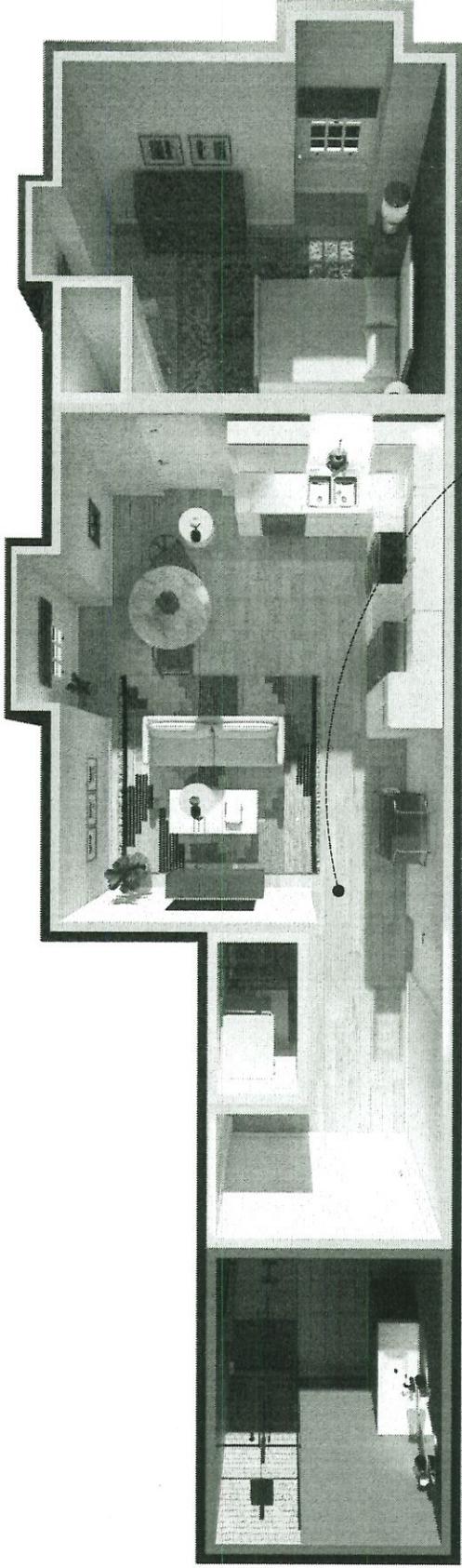
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RESIDENCES AT INDIA POINT

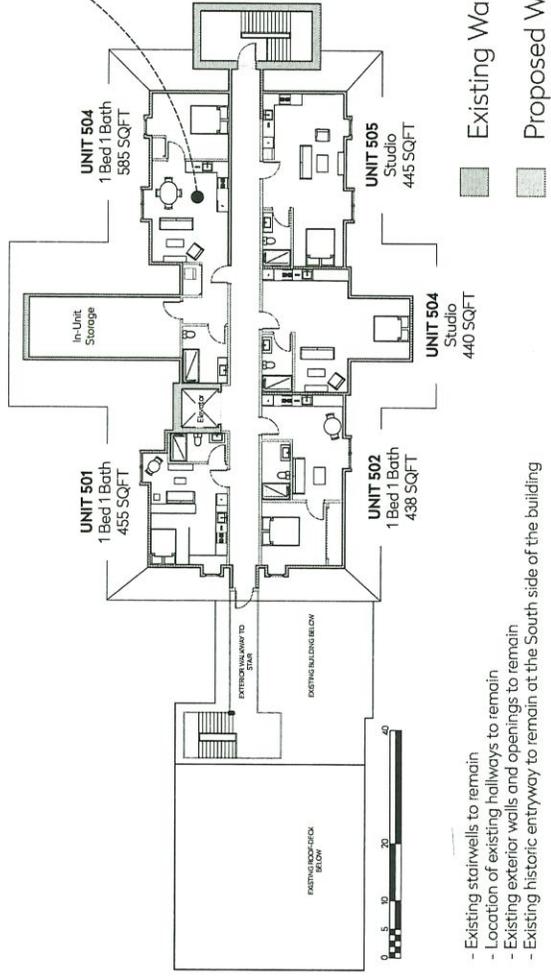


Unit 402 - 2 Bed 1 Bath - 1,025 SQFT





Unit 503 - 1 Bed 1 Bath - 870 SQFT



- Existing stairwells to remain
- Location of existing hallways to remain
- Existing exterior walls and openings to remain
- Existing historic entryway to remain at the South side of the building

**PROVIDENCE  
ARCHITECTURE Co.**

RESIDENCES AT INDIA POINT

FIFTH FLOOR

# City of Providence

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

## PETITION TO THE CITY COUNCIL

TO THE HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE:

*The undersigned respectfully petitions your honorable body*

I, **Dylan Conley**, by and through and with the permission of **180 GMC LLC**, hereby petition the City Council to change the Official Zoning Map of the City of Providence by changing the zoning district designation for the property located at:

180 George M. Cohan Blvd  
Assessor's Plat 17, Lot 650

and shown on the accompanying map<sup>1</sup> **Attached below as Exhibit 1**, from **[R-2]** to **[W-2]**.

Further attached hereto is **Exhibit 2**: are two (2) sets of mailing labels with the names and addresses of all property owners within two hundred feet (200') of the property.

Signature: /s/ Dylan Conley

Name: Dylan Conley, Esq. #8969

Title: Attorney, on behalf of **Petitioner**

Telephone No.: (401) 415-9835

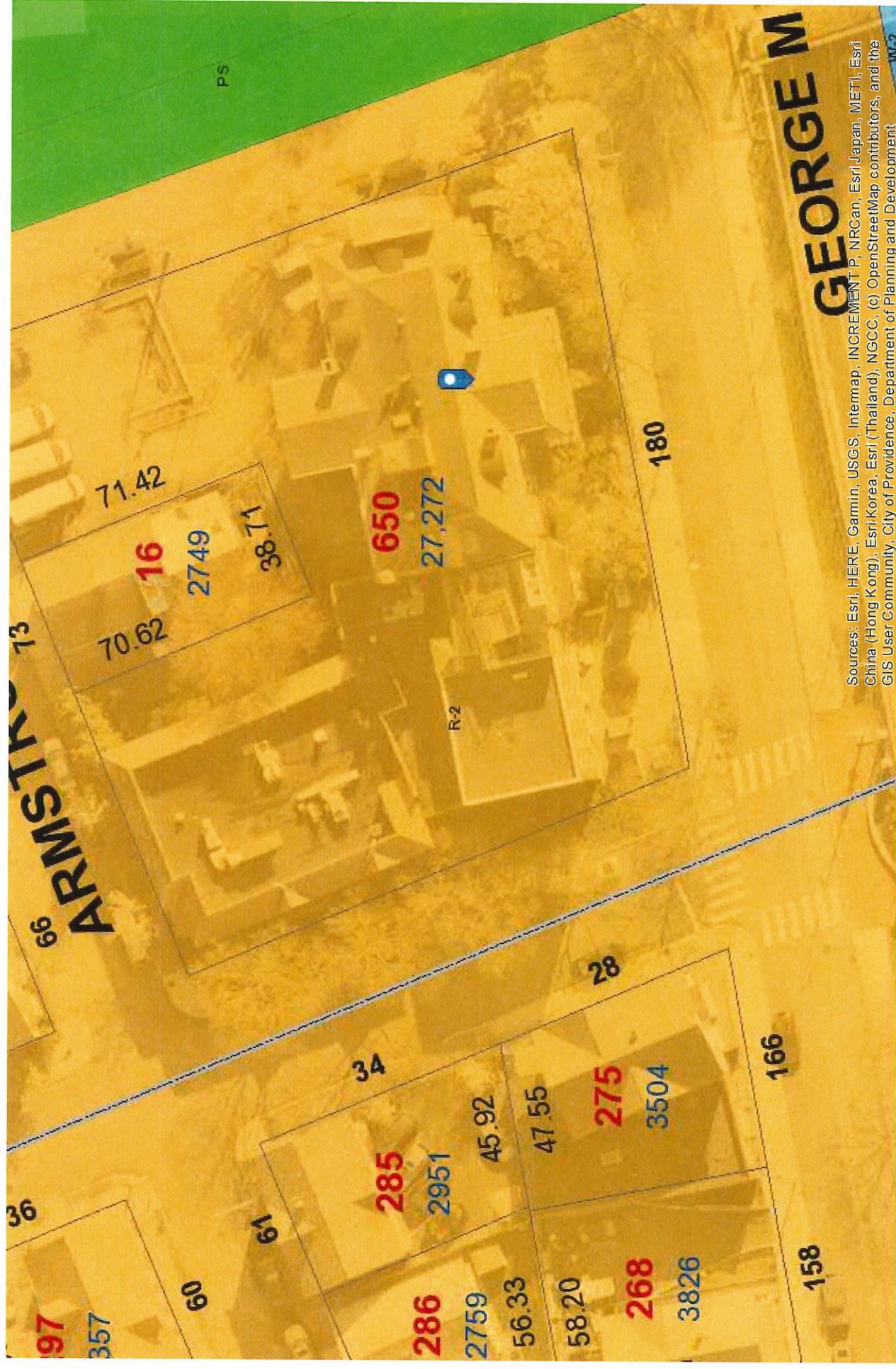
Email Address: DConley@wjclaw.com

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<sup>1</sup> The Map includes:

- a) Existing and proposed boundaries
- b) Zoning district boundaries
- c) Existing streets, roads, and their names
- d) City and Town Boundaries where visible





Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, City of Providence, Department of Planning and Development



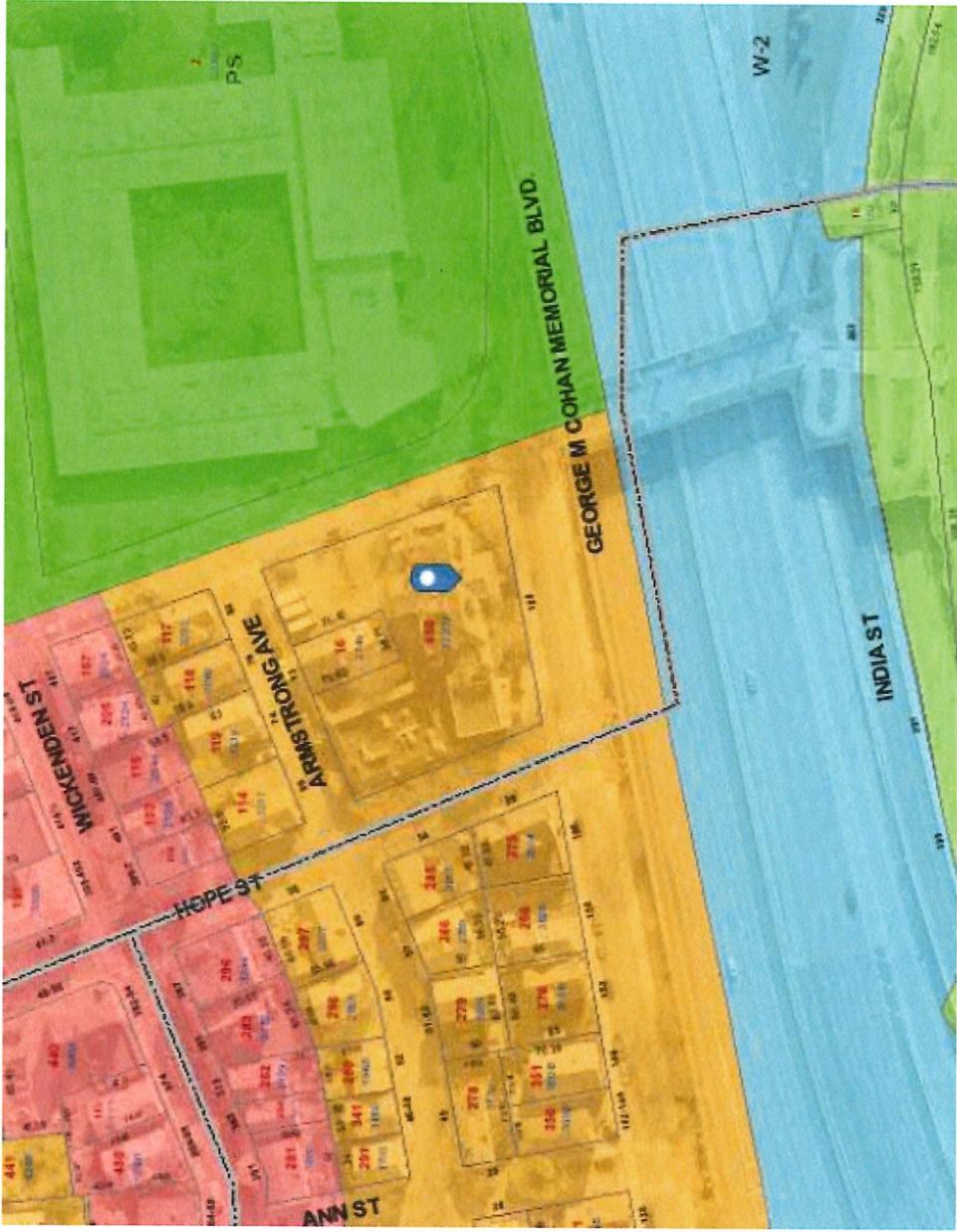
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Date: 1/10/2021



PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

PROVIDENCE THE CREATIVE CAPITAL  
 DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
 JOE O. ELORZA, MAYOR | BOBIE JACKSON AIGR, DIRECTOR





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Oteri Robert A	408 Columbus Ave	Boston	MA	2116
Pereira Arthur For Life	51 Armstrong Ave	Providence	RI	2906
Pereira Arthur For Life	53 Armstrong Ave	Providence	RI	2903
Providence Public Buildings Authority	444 WESTMINSTER ST	PROVIDENCE	RI	02903-3222
Providence Public Buildings Authority	455 Wickenden St	Providence	RI	2906
Richards Michelle C	73 Armstrong Ave	Providence	RI	2903

Sheridan John T	73 Armstrong Ave	Providence	RI	2903
Silva Jose	158 George M. Cohan Blvd	Providence	RI	2906
Silva Manuel O	156 George M Cohan Blvd	Providence	RI	2903
Silva Manuel O	156 George M. Cohan Blvd	Providence	RI	2906
Singh Manpreet	7 Country Candle Ln	Northborough	MA	1530
Wickenden 387 LLC	374 Wickenden St	Providence	RI	2903
Wickenden 387 LLC	387 Wickenden St	Providence	RI	2906