

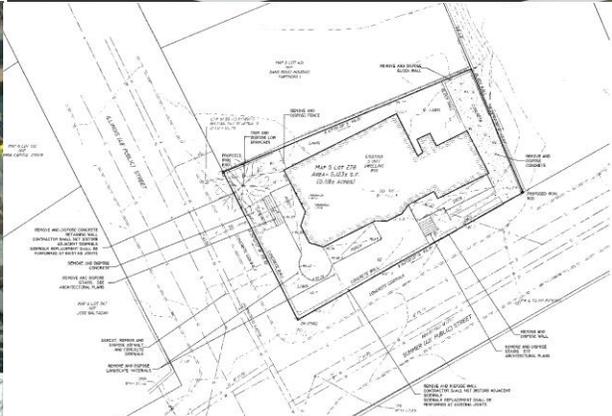
CITY OF CENTRAL FALLS

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING BOARD

CASE 2016-01-06-1 (115 ILLINOIS STREET)



SUMMARY

Application Type: Major Development - Master Plan and Preliminary Plan Approval

Address/AP/Ward: 115 Illinois Street; Assessor's Plat 5, Lot 278; Ward 3

Applicant: City of Central Falls **Property Owner:** City of Central Falls

Parcel Size: 5,140 SF **Zoning:** R-3

Project Description

The City is requesting Master Plan and Preliminary Plan Approval for a Major Development converting a multi-family home to classroom and residential space for a tutoring center: The Rhode Island College Innovation Lab. This project will create ground-floor tutoring space with residence area for the tutors on the upper floors. The project will take advantage of the existing building as much as possible, while introducing some changes to accommodate the new spaces proposed.

The structure originally was a grand Victorian single-family home. During the twentieth century, it was converted to a multi-family home. Over time, the property declined to the point where it became a nuisance and haven for illegal activity. As this property is across the street from the high school, the City identified it as an opportunity for public investment to eliminate blight. After acquiring the property, it was the subject of suspected arson last winter. This project will restore much of the older character of the structure with materials selected for their durability. The existing structure will be retained.

Discussion

Prior to approval of any land development project, the Board is required to make positive findings as outlined in **Section 3.F** of the "Land Development and Subdivision Review Regulations."

(1) Consistency with the Central Falls Comprehensive Plan

Element 1 of the *Central Falls Comprehensive Community Plan* outlines the City's Goals and Policies. The following goals are applicable to this application and make this project consistent with the Comprehensive Plan:

- State Goal 1, "To promote orderly growth and development that recognizes...the availability of existing and proposed public and/or private services and facilities."
- State Goal 1, Municipal Goal 5: "Encourage creative combinations of commercial and residential uses;"
- State Goal 3, Municipal Goal 2, "Target specific areas of the City in phases for comprehensive renewal;" and
- State Goal 6 and Municipal Goal 2, "Promote redevelopment of blighted areas."

(2) Compliance with the Central Falls Zoning Ordinance.

Per a Zoning Determination letter dated January 12, 2016, this project, as described, requires a Special Use Permit for the classroom spaces and a Dimensional Variance for insufficient off-

street parking. This project is scheduled to be presented to the Zoning Board of Review at their February meeting.

(3) No significant environmental impacts.

This project will have limited changes to the environment beyond the existing vacant use of the structure. The City has taken care to ensure construction debris disposal; construction material manufacture and transportation to site; heating, cooling, lighting, and appliance energy use; longevity of finish materials; landscape maintenance; effective stormwater management, tenant vehicle ownership; and tenant solid waste disposal will be undertaken with minimal impact to the environment.

(4) Sub-divisions and open space.

Does not apply

(5) Physical access to a public street.

This property has access to Illinois Street and Summer Street.

In addition, the Board must address the General Purposes of the Regulations as outlined in **Section 1.C:**

(1) Provide for the orderly, thorough and expeditious review and approval of land development and subdivisions;

The Board has 120 days to approve or deny the application from date application is certified complete (May 21, 2016)

(2) Promote high quality and appropriate design and construction of land development and subdivisions;

The applicant has submitted to the Board a full and complete set of architectural plans for review.

(3) Promote the protection of the existing natural and built environment and the mitigation of all significant negative impacts of any proposed development on the existing environment;

The existing structure will be retained.

(4) Promote design of land development and subdivisions which are well-integrated with the surrounding neighborhoods with regard to natural and built features, and which concentrates development in areas which can best support intensive use by reason of natural characteristics and existing infrastructure;

This proposed development largely takes advantage of existing infrastructure. Underground electrical service will be installed for aesthetic appeal. Water service will be upgraded for the provision of a fire suppression system.

(5) Encourage local design and improvement standards to reflect the intent of the *City of Central Falls Comprehensive Plan*, as amended, with regard to the physical character of the various neighborhoods and districts of the City;

Previously addressed.

(6) Require measures for mitigating the impact of new development on the community that are based on clear documentation of needs and are fairly applied and administered;

This redevelopment will create much-needed tutoring space for city students and will rehabilitate a nuisance, blighted property.

(7) Protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the community;

This redevelopment will provide a safe, secure space for students and tutors with controlled access to provide learning opportunities for both. Materials have been selected with public health in mind.

(8) Promote thorough technical review of all proposed land development and subdivisions by appropriate local officials and other experts;

Addressed in this process.

(9) Encourage the establishment and consistent application of procedures for record-keeping on all matters of land development and subdivision review, approval and construction.

Addressed in this process.

In regards to the request for a waiver of the requirements of **Section 4, "Improvement Guarantees,"** the following should be noted: Pursuant to Section 4 of the Regulations, the Planning Board can require an applicant to post a completion guaranty bond for up to 120% of the costs of completing public and private improvements to ensure project completion. The applicant has requested a waiver of said requirement as the Contractor is required to acquire performance and payment bonds for the full value of the project, per Rhode Island General Law. The City will retain ownership over the property and intends to maintain it at the same high level as other City-owned properties.

Recommendation

Based on the above discussion, staff recommends Master Plan and Preliminary Plan Approval conditional upon securing the necessary approval from the Zoning Board of Review.

Regarding request for waiver of the requirements of Section 4, "Improvement Guarantees," we recommend that the Applicant's request for a waiver of the requirements of Section 4 be granted.

Additionally, we recommend Final Approval be delegated administratively, given the straightforward public benefits of this project.