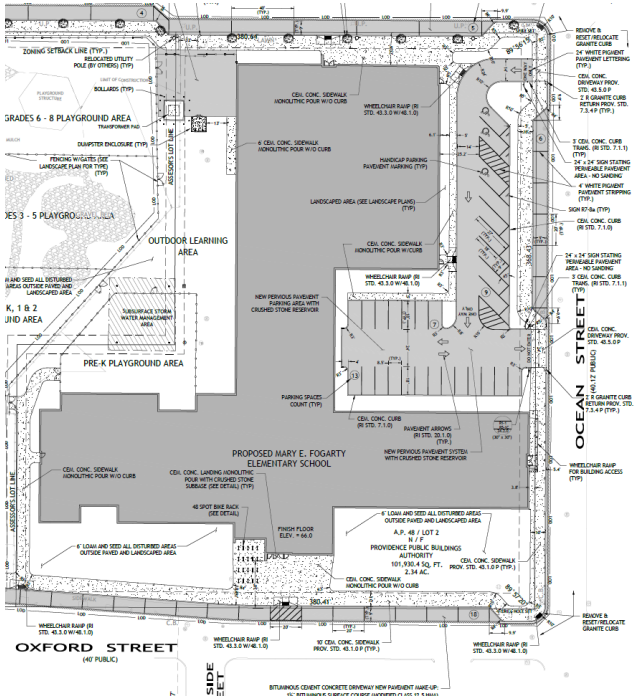


# Providence City Plan Commission

August 20, 2024



## AGENDA ITEM 3 - 199 OXFORD STREET



Site plan



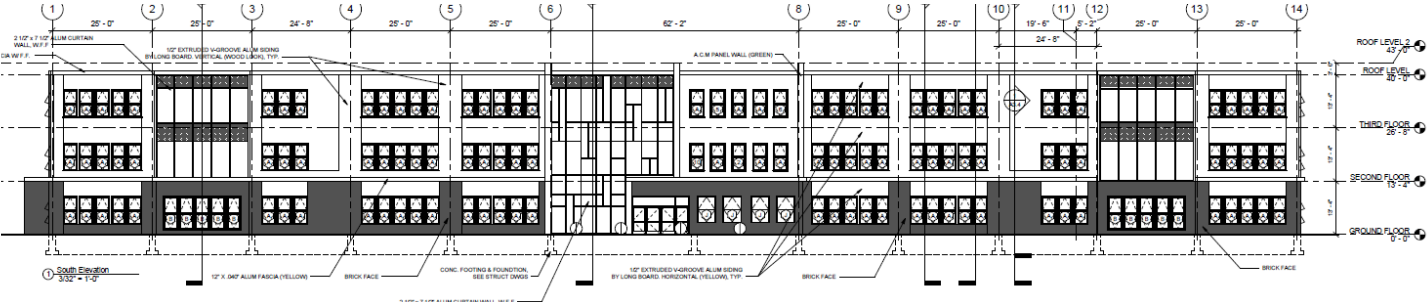
View from corner of Oxford Street



Aerial view of the site

### OVERVIEW

<b>OWNER/APPLICANT:</b>	City of Providence, Owner and Applicant	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION:</b>	The applicant is requesting preliminary plan approval for construction of a three story pre-k to middle school building following demolition of the structure. The applicant is requesting a waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage.
<b>CASE NO./PROJECT TYPE:</b>	<b>24-021 UDR</b> Preliminary Plan		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION:</b>	199 Oxford Street AP 48 Lot 2; PS zoning district	<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Approval of the preliminary plan
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD:</b>	Lower South Providence	<b>PROJECT PLANNER:</b>	Choyon Manjrekar



Oxford Street elevation and rendering

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The subject lot measures approximately 101,785 SF (2.33 acres) in the PS zone with frontage on Oxford, Sayles and Ocean Streets, and occupied by a school building. The applicant is proposing to construct a three story, 40’ tall pre-k to middle school building following demolition of the existing structure. The applicant is seeking preliminary plan approval and received a variance from the corner side setback requirement on Ocean Street pursuant to UDR where a minimum of 10’ is required in the PS zone but approximately 3.7’ will be provided. A waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage is being requested.

**ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES**

Use

The subject lot is zoned PS where educational facilities are permitted by right.

Dimensions and site design

Both Oxford Street and Sayles Streets are considered front lot lines as the subject lot is a through lot. The building is laid out in a ‘T’ shape, occupying the length of Oxford Street and extending northwards to Sayles Street. The building will meet and exceed the minimum front yard setback requirement of 10’ from both streets. The CPC granted a variance from the corner side setback requirement of 10’ at the preliminary plan stage where a setback of 3’7” from Ocean Street is proposed.

The eastern and western portion of the building fronting on Oxford Street will be composed of two towers providing learning houses for two classes on the first and second floors and learning houses for grades 7 and 8 on the third floor. Each house will be composed of learning studios and common space. The first floor extension toward Sayles Street will also include a gymnasium, cafeteria, and office space.

The façade is composed of brick, aluminum siding and glass, with ample transparency on each face. The 40' height as calculated from average grade is within the 50' height limit of the zone.

Three separate playgrounds for different grades will be located in the park on the adjacent lot.

#### Parking

A total of 22 parking spaces are needed to meet the requirement of one space per three employees with 66 employees expected. The applicant will meet the requirement onsite providing a total of 29 spaces on the lot. Additional onstreet parking will also be available.

Forty eight bicycle parking spaces will be provided to meet the requirement of three spaces per classroom.

#### Landscaping

With a lot area of 2.3 acres, approximately 30,500 SF of canopy coverage is required. The applicant will meet and exceed this requirement, proposing approximately 59,000 SF of canopy coverage on the site and in the adjoining park.

#### Drainage

A drainage plan that demonstrates a reduction in pre and post development conditions has been submitted. The plan notes that the new development will reduce the amount of impervious surface on the site by 26% over what currently exists. The plan proposes to employ four sub-watershed areas that will treat and release stormwater. Calculations show that there will be a reduction in runoff for one to 100 year storm events. An operation and maintenance plan for the system has also been submitted.

#### Traffic

A traffic study has been submitted. It examines the effects of traffic flow in and around the school and on the street intersections of Ocean and Sayles Streets. Most activity occurs during morning drop-off and afternoon pickup hours. Buses drop students off at the intersection of Sayles and Burnside Streets with a bus monitor and crossing guard escorting students to the school. Parents park on Oxford Street, queuing for approximately 5-10 minutes. During the afternoon dismissal, buses are loaded from Oxford Street with parents picking up students on Sayles Street. Traffic congestion is observable for short periods during dismissal. The study also analyzes sight distances at various intersections and analyzes accident data. The study recommends improving the sidewalk, providing signage, and that a car queuing area be implemented to prevent idling and blocking of travel lanes on Oxford Street. The study found that traffic calming measures and signage on adjoining streets have reduced accidents and curbed speeding. The study finds that the new school can be accommodated without much impact on neighboring streets.

#### Dimensional variance

The CPC granted a variance from the corner side setback requirement at the master plan stage. The setback requirement is 10', but approximately 3'7" will be provided.

#### Waiver

The applicant requested a waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage, particularly from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RI DEM). It is the DPD's opinion that the waiver should be granted pursuant to section 1006 of the Development Review Regulations as it would be in the interest of good planning practice and allow the applicant to proceed with the development process. The DPD recommends that the CPC grant the waiver with the condition that the permits be submitted at the permitting stage.

## **Findings—Land Development Project**

Section 1005 of the Commission's *Development Review Regulations* requires that the City Plan Commission make the following findings as part of their approval of all land development project applications. Based on the analysis contained herein and subject to the conditions contained in this report, staff has prepared the following findings regarding the request for approval of the Master Plan:

1. *Consistency—The proposed development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies.*

The subject property is located in an area that the future land use map of Providence Tomorrow: The Comprehensive Plan intends for public space/open space. The plan describes this area as one intended for open space and public facilities. As schools are intended for this designation, the development would conform to the comprehensive plan. The development would conform to objective CS-1 of the comprehensive plan which encourages development and provision of public educational facilities in the City.

2. *Compliance with Zoning Ordinance—The proposed development is in compliance with the standards and provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.*

Use: Educational facilities are permitted by right in the PS zone.

Dimension and design: The development complies with the dimensional and design requirements of the PS zone. The CPC granted relief from the corner side setback requirement through UDR at the master plan stage. The development will conform to the ordinance.

Parking: The applicant will meet the vehicle and bicycle parking requirement.

Landscaping: The applicant will meet the canopy coverage requirement.

3. *Environmental Impact—There will be no significant environmental impacts from the proposed development as shown on the final plan, with all required conditions for approval.*

No negative environmental impacts are expected as the applicant is required to conform to all environmental regulations.

4. *Buildable Lot—The subdivision or development project, as proposed, will not result in the creation of individual lots with such physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations and building standards would be impracticable.*

There are no physical constraints that impact development of this property.

5. *Street Access—All proposed development projects and all subdivision lots shall have adequate and permanent physical access to a public street. Lot frontage on a public street without physical access shall not be considered compliance with this requirement.*

Physical access to the site is provided from Oxford, Ocean and Sayles Streets.

## **Recommendation—Waiver from submission of state approvals**

The CPC should grant the waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage subject to the condition that the applicant submit the approvals at the permitting phase.

## **Recommendation—Land Development Project**

Based on the foregoing discussion and having granted the requested waiver, the CPC should vote to approve the preliminary plan.