



PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

November 14, 2022
Mr. Michael Gazdacko, Chairman
City Planning Commission
Via Email

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Dear City Planning Commission:

The Providence Preservation Society opposes demolishing the extant 1892 building at 230 Waterman Street.

The former funeral home is characteristic of the turn-of-the-century residences found on the East Side of Providence. The structure predates the commercial district in which it is located today, and is one of the only remaining structures of its kind. As this area was overlooked for inclusion in the National Register historic district nomination, it is imperative that we foster good stewardship of these properties. Without this foresight, the character of this neighborhood will be lost entirely.

We feel that any plans for the reuse of this building can and should integrate the existing building. The design should also communicate with other historic buildings in the Wayland Square neighborhood. The current plans accomplish neither; the current designs shared with the public show no evidence of the original building footprint or any architectural continuity. In fact, the design is so commonplace it could be easily found in any recently developed parcel of Providence, adding nothing to the architectural fabric of the area.

Finally, we urge the Commission to consider the emotional component of such a building – this was a recently functioning funeral home. Many residents on the East Side have relied on the services of this building to mourn their loved ones. This additional level and intensity of significance for East Side families is one of serious consideration.

Providence's current Comprehensive Plan describes a vision for Providence that is "rich in character – honoring our historic character, producing excellence in design and showcasing our spectacular waterfront location." To demolish this building in return for a run-of-the-mill apartment building does not honor the current history, architecture, or context of the building and immediate neighborhood. Such a decision would be shortsighted and unaligned with the ideals we endeavor to embody as residents of this city. We expect that the Commission will make a decision in favor of the existing building and that development plans for this property include the concerns named in this letter.

Sincerely,

Adriana Hazelton
Advocacy Manager, Providence Preservation Society