



**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION**  
*REPORT: Master Plan Amendment for the Village at Park River*  
for consideration October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Planning & Zoning Commission  
**PREPARED BY:** Paul Ashworth, Senior Planner  
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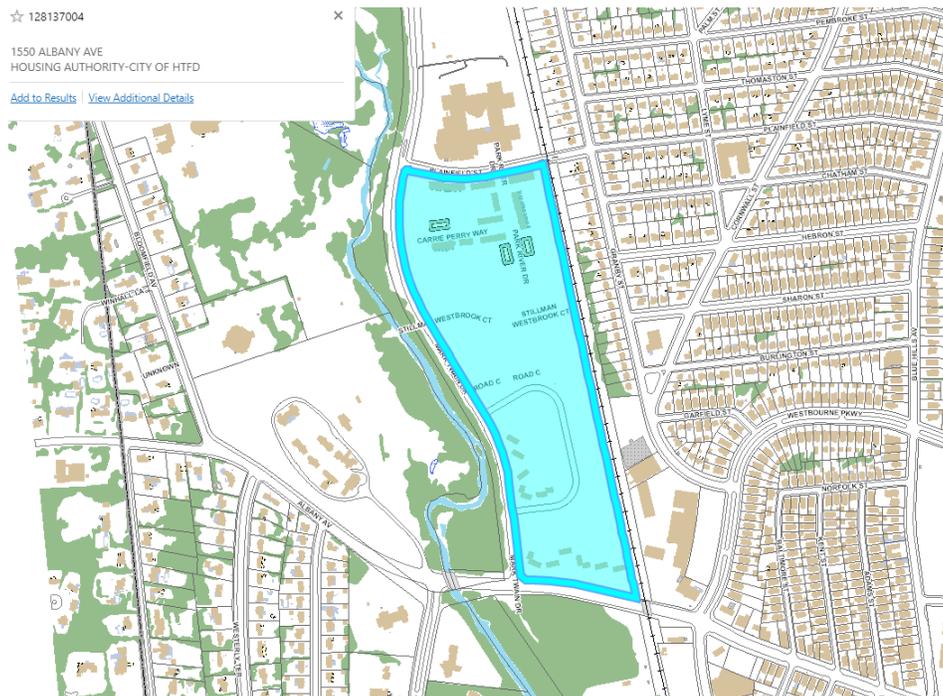
**PROJECT:** Village at Park River (Westbrook Village)  
1550 Albany Ave  
PARCEL ID: 128-137-004  
P&Z-COMM-2022-0689

**ZONE:** MX-2, Multi-Use Mix with Campus Overlay

**TYPE:** Special Permit for a revision to the Campus Overlay Master Plan for the Village at Park River (Westbrook Village) per Section 1.3.4 and Section 5.1.2.A

**APPLICANT:** Pennrose, LLC c/o Rio Sacchetti

**OWNER:** Housing Authority of the City of Hartford



**Overhead View – Hartford GIS 2021**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Applicant is requesting an amendment to the Westbrook Village Master Plan (the Master Plan) to accommodate several changes proposed by the Applicant. Changes include modification of the parking area, alteration to the footprints of Buildings 28 and 29, removal of the senior restriction for the residential units in Building 29, and the reduction of the overall number of residential units in the development from 432 to 412.

The original special permit for the Master Plan was granted on October 11, 2016 (P&Z-SPC PER-2016-0007, recorded in Land Records Vol 7493, PG 32) and included the redevelopment of the entire Westbrook Village housing development consisting of 360 residential units in 81 buildings on approximately 30 acres, into a mixed-income residential community consisting of 360 units in 39 buildings, subject to conditions. Subsequent amendments to the Special Permit Master Plan were approved with conditions by the Commission on July 24, 2018 (P&Z-SPC PER-2018-003, Land Records Vol 7493, PG 30); July 9, 2019 (P&Z-COMM-2019-0017, Vol 7553, PG 106); September 24, 2019 (P&Z-COMM-2019-0049, Vol 7539, PG 238); & May 25, 2021 (P&Z-COMM-2021-0399, Vol 7778, PG 141). The most recent approved Master Plan depicted 432 dwelling units within 29 buildings. At its meeting on August 12, 2019, Court of Common Council passed a resolution that the City abandon interest in Ogilby Drive and Dillon Road (see quit Claim Deed recorded in Land Records Volume 7571, PG 219).

Roadway names were adopted by the Planning & Zoning Commission for some of the new Westbrook Village network (roads previously known as Road A, Road B and Westbrook Ave) on May 12, 2020 (P&Z-COMM-2020-0185).

Construction of the Master Plan was approved for Phase I, II (P&Z-ASPREV-2018-0177), III (P&Z-ADMIN-2019-0456), IV-A (P&Z-ADMIN-2020-1189) and V (P&Z-ADMIN-2021-2456). Construction of Phase I, II and III are complete while phase IV-A is currently under construction.

### **KEY APPLICATION TIMELINES**

- Application Submission Date: September 8, 2022
- Date Application Accepted as Complete: September 8, 2022
- Application Date of Receipt: September 13, 2022 (sooner of either: date of next regularly scheduled meeting, or 35 days after acceptance of complete application)
- Public Hearing is scheduled to open on Tuesday, October 11, 2022; Open Hearing Deadline: November 17, 2022.
- Close Hearing Deadline (if opens October 11, 2022): (35 days after opening) Tuesday, November 15, 2022.
- CT General Statutes Sec.8-7D allow that the applicant may consent to one or more extensions of time, provided the total extension of all time periods shall not be for longer than 65 days\*.

## **LEGAL STANDARD**

Standard for Application Type:

The Commission reviews special permits in accordance with Zoning Regulations section 1.3.4. Special permits may be approved, approved with conditions, or denied.

Considerations the Commission may weigh in special permit review include: harmony with the plan of conservation & development; compliance with the purposes of the district; effect on existing development; creation of safety hazards in vehicular and pedestrian circulation; effects on traffic; compatibility with adjacent properties; suitability of arrangement of buildings, open space, and provision of light and air; impact on essential services; impact on stormwater runoff; impact on city services and infrastructure; tree and landscape provision; and pedestrian amenities. The Commission may deviate from the minimum requirements for building siting, height, street facades, accessory structures dimensions, tree installation, landscape installation, buffers, fencing, lighting, parking, signage, and street design by up to 15% upon certain findings.

## **STANDARD SPECIFIC TO THE USE**

### **Section 5.1.2.A: Special Permit**

Special permit for a master plan for the entire campus, showing the location of buildings, landscaping, and other development features, in accordance with special permit application requirements outlined in 1.3.4 Special Permits...

### **Plan of Conservation & Development Grow400 – Development**

- Convert closed schools to community use – Transforming closed school sites to senior housing, recreation facilities, and/or neighborhood-based day cares will allow intergenerational aging in place.

## **FINDING OF FACTS**

The Applicant described the proposed changes to the Master Plan verbally as seen below:

- Redrew phasing lines of Phases VI and VII to capture current development approach.
- Overall, consolidating parking footprints behind Building 27 and Building 29 and reduced number of overall parking spaces by 19 within Phases V through VII.
- Updated design of the mid-rise apartment buildings 28-29, including less 1-BR units and more 2-BR units and 3-BR units. This change reduced the total number of units by 20 (total units went from 432 to 412).
- Building 29 is no longer proposed as restricted to Seniors only.
- Updated preliminary landscape and hardscape design for Buildings 28 and 29

**The proposed changes are graphically examined below:**

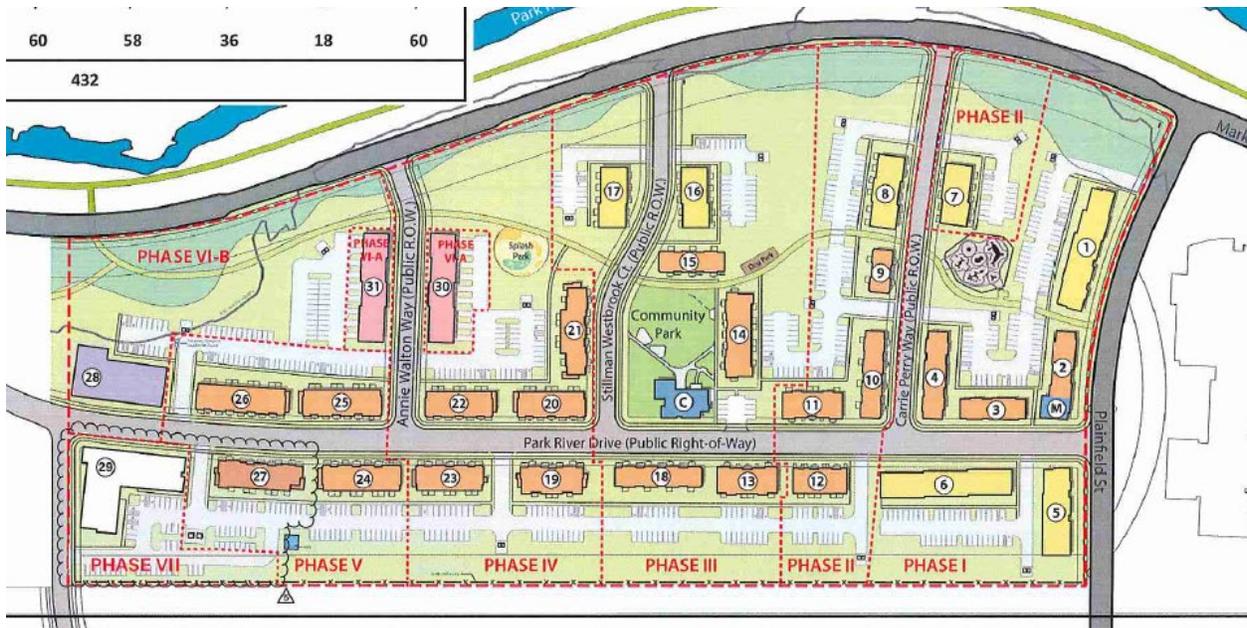


Figure 1. Approved Master Phasing Plan – Freeman Companies 2021

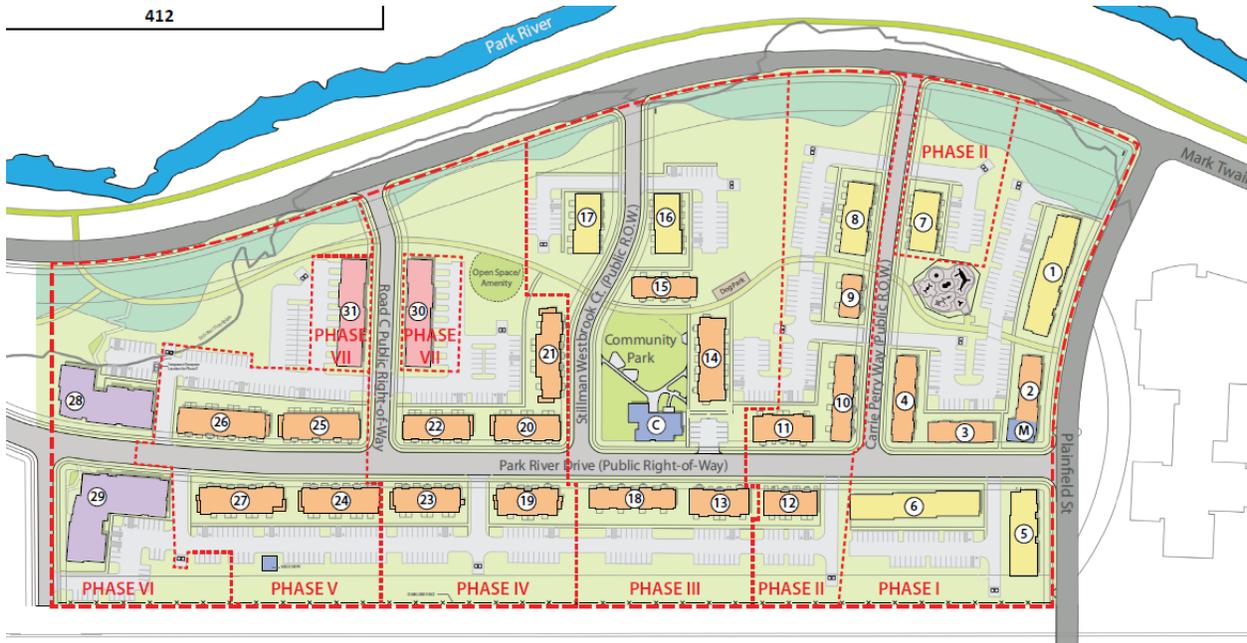


Figure 2. Proposed Master Phasing Plan – Freeman Companies 2022



Figure 3. Apartment Building, No. 29 – Freeman Companies 2022

**COMMENTS RECEIVED (DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, NRZs, PUBLIC)**

The Blue Hills NRZ was notified of this application via email on September 14, 2022. No comments were received at the time of this writing.

**ANALYSIS**

The proposed changes as outlined in the finding of facts appear to meet the requirements of Section 5.1.2.A in that the revised Master Plan depicts the entire campus, shows the location of buildings, landscaping and other development features. The only exception is the proposed adjustment to the footprint of Building 29. Building 29 has been pulled back from the corner creating an outdoor space akin to a courtyard. However, Section 5.1.3.C.(1)(a) of the Regulations specifically requires that “All corners on Primary Streets be occupied by buildings.” In this case, Park River Drive is considered a Primary Street and the per the regulation the building should occupy the corner. While a courtyard is consistent with the intent of the Campus overlay in that it could potentially provide additional pedestrian amenities and contribute to the pedestrian oriented nature of a campus, Section 5.1.3.C.(1)(a) of the Regulations would suggest that a courtyard should be located somewhere other than corners on primary streets.

The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Division, in partnership with the Housing Division, is currently drafting an Affordable Housing Plan. In the most recent draft of the plan an overall goal is identified of increasing the number of affordable residential units available to seniors. The current proposed change would remove a restriction that would otherwise reserve as many as 44 residential units for seniors. The City of Hartford Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD), also identifies a goal in the Grow400 element specifically identifying a path to create more senior housing. The proposed elimination of the senior restriction is therefore not consistent with the current draft of the City’s Affordable Housing Plan, or the POCD.

Some of the drawings provided, including but not limited to the floor plans and the building elevation drawings were not reviewed for strict adherence to the Zoning Regulations under Section 1.3.4. Such development characteristics will be reviewed administratively prior to construction at time of Site Plan review, as required by Section 5.1.2.B. It should be noted that the elevation

drawings and other conceptual plans provided appear to meet the general spirit of the Zoning Regulations.

Staff finds that the proposed changes to the Westbrook Village Master Plan, with the exception of the proposed footprint of Building 29 and the elimination of the reservation for seniors of the units within Building 29, are consistent with the intention of the Zoning Regulations and the Plan of Conservation and Development.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of this application with conditions.

**A draft resolution follows.** To address the issues raised in the Analysis, staff proposes the following condition be added to the resolution:

1. Building 29's footprint shall be adjusted to meet the occupation of the corner requirement at time of site plan review; and

Staff also recommends that Building 29 remain reserved for senior housing.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Project Narrative
2. Proposed Phasing Plan

**REVIEWED AND EDITED BY,**

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Aimee Chambers, Director



**CITY OF HARTFORD  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
1550 ALBANY AVENUE  
WESTBROOK VILLAGE (VILLAGE AT PARK RIVER) SPECIAL PERMIT FOR  
MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT**

- Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application and attached documents regarding the request for a Special Permit for a revision to the Campus Overlay Master Plan for the Village at Park River (Westbrook Village) per Section 1.3.4 and Section 5.1.2.A; and
- Whereas,** The Westbrook Village Master Plan was first approved via Special Permit by the Planning & Zoning Commission on October 11, 2016 and recorded in the Land Records Vol 7493, Pg 32; and,
- Whereas,** The Westbrook Village Master Plan was most recently revised via Special Permit by the Planning & Zoning Commission on May 25, 2021 (P&Z-COMM-2021-0399) and recorded in the Land Records Vol 7778, PG 141; and,
- Whereas,** The subject property consists of approximately 30 acres located on the north side of Albany Avenue and east of Mark Twain Drive; and,
- Whereas,** The proposed changes to the Master Plan include the adjustment of the phasing lines, the alteration of the parking lot and building footprints of Building 27 and 29, the reduction in total units from 432 to 412, and the removal of the restriction that residential units in Building 29 be reserved for seniors; and
- Whereas,** The proposed changes are consistent with the Zoning Regulations Section 1.3.4 regarding Special Permits via Section 5.1.2.A regarding Master Plans in the Campus Overlay; and
- Whereas,** The provided elevation drawings and floor plans are considered “concept plans” and will be reviewed for strict adherence to the Zoning Regulations prior to construction at time of site plan review consistent with Section 5.1.2.B; and
- Whereas,** The Westbrook Village Master Plan for redevelopment of the subject property continues to be in the public interest and not injurious to the surrounding community; and

Now therefore Be It

**Resolved,** That the City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby approves the request for Special Permit for a revision to the Campus Overlay Master Plan for the Village at Park River (Westbrook Village) per Section 1.3.4 and Section 5.1.2.A, as shown on the 21-page plan, revised September 2, 2022, titled *Westbrook Village* with the following conditions:

1. Building 29's footprint shall be adjusted to meet the occupation of the corner requirement at time of site plan review; and

**Resolved,** That staff recommend that Building 29 remain reserved for senior housing.

Be It Further,

**Resolved,** This 11<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2022.

## Attachment 1 – Project Narrative

### 4. PROJECT NARRATIVE:

Pennrose-Cloud, LLC (the "Applicant") is seeking Special Permit approval for a Master Plan, pursuant to Section 5.1.2.A of the City of Hartford's Zoning Regulations, for the redevelopment of the former Westbrook Village located at 1550 Albany Ave (the "Property"). The Property is owned by the Housing Authority of the City of Hartford ("HACH") and is in a Multi-Use Mix District (MX-2) with a Campus Overlay. The Property is an approximately 30-acre site which currently has 200 resident units located in 18 recently completed buildings across Phases I, II, and III. Phase IV, comprised of 60 units is currently in construction and Phase V, comprised of 58 units has been awarded and will break ground early next year. The Applicant is proposing to construct a new residential mixed-income community named Village at Park River. The Applicant is planning to submit Site Plan application to the Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission for Phase VI of the project following approval of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan, which is anticipated to be constructed in seven phases, will include a mix of building types across the Property, with a current total of 31 residential buildings containing 412 units and a Community Building, as more specifically set forth in detailed plans included with the application. The buildings are anticipated to include rental apartment buildings, owner occupied residential homes, and community/management facilities.

The development team has worked closely with the City throughout the evolution of the Master Plan to conceive a design that at its core is built to respond in detail to the City's progressive zoning and planning code, while remaining flexible to exterior planning forces that will inform the designs of future phases, such as development financing and community participation. Major elements from the master plan are derived directly from Westbrook residents' and community stakeholders' feedback:

- Tree lined neighborhood streets featuring homes with front porches to provide abundant defensible spaces and eyes on the street.
- Multi-purposed open space amenities including community gardens, picnic areas and playgrounds.
- A centralized community building that is well-programmed for a multi-generational community.

As the design and development team's thinking evolves with each phase, Pennrose-Cloud is resubmitting the masterplan to achieve the following goals:

- Redrew phasing lines of Phases VI and VII to capture current development approach

- Overall, consolidating parking footprints behind Building 27 and Building 29 and reduced number of overall parking spaces by 19 within Phases V through VII.
- Updated design of the mid-rise apartment buildings 28-29, including less 1-BR units and more 2-BR units and 3-BR units. This change reduced the total number of units by 20 (total units went from 432 to 412)
- Building 29 is no longer proposed as restricted to Seniors only
- Updated preliminary landscape and hardscape design for Buildings 28 and 29

The proposed revitalization of Westbrook Village identified in this Master Plan is the result of long-term collaboration between and among various local City agencies in a collaborative effort with HACH and the Applicant to leverage local and state resources to provide much needed redevelopment of the Property.

