



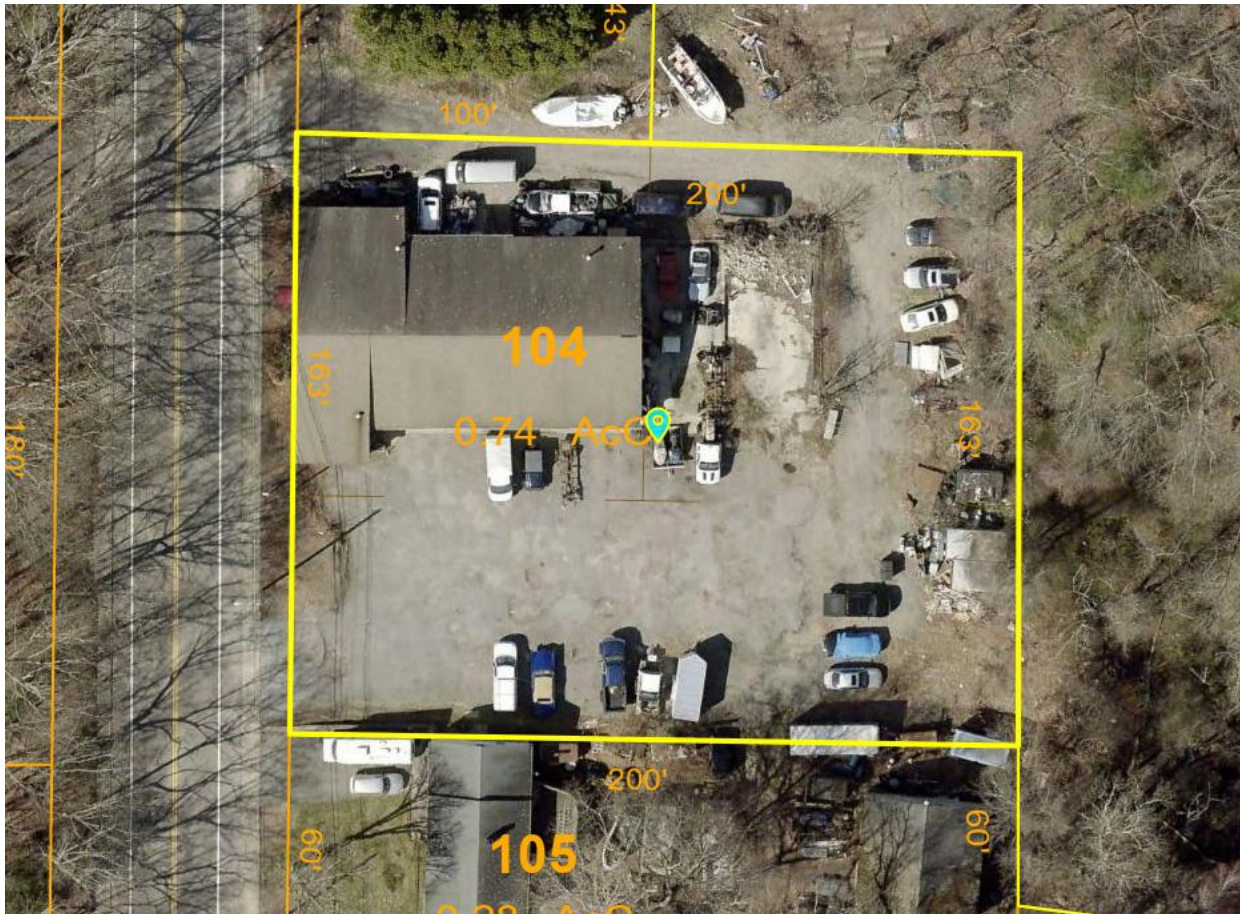
**TOWN OF COVENTRY, RI
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

STAFF REPORT

Project Name:	395 Knotty Oak Road Rehab + Extension
Plan Type:	Minor Land Development / Use Variance
Plan Review Phase:	Pre-Application
Owner/Applicant:	John W. Studley III
Address:	395 Knotty Oak Road
Plat / Lot / Zone:	AP 70 Lot 104 Zone R-20 Lot Size 0.74 acres
Existing Use:	Commercial
Proposed Use:	Commercial
Description:	Applicant proposes to construct a 3,600 SF addition, of which 2,500 SF would be a replacement of a fire damaged section of the building and 1,100 SF of the building would be new construction of additional space. The existing use is a pre-existing non-conforming use, therefore the additional space would represent an expansion of the non-conforming use, and would require a Use Variance.

Background and Existing Conditions

This item will be reviewed as a Pre-Application for a proposed Minor Land Development with an associated Use Variance of an 0.74-acre parcel at the location listed in the title block above. The subject parcel abuts residential uses on all sides. The existing garage was built in 1920. At some point between 2014 and 2018 the rear third of the building burnt down. There appear to be no wetlands on the property and the property is located in Zone X ("Area of Minimal Flood Hazard") of the FEMA flood zone.



The Pre-Application meeting with the Planning Commission is the first step in the overall application process where no votes are taken, no notification is required, and the applicant does not get an approval or denial on the project. The applicant is provided with initial feedback from the Planning Commission with the intention to help shape the project moving forward.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant has proposed to build a 3,600 square foot addition to the rear (east) of the existing structure. 2,500 square feet of the new construction would be a rebuild of the portion of the building that burned down. An additional 1,100 square feet of the proposed addition would extend south and east from the portion of the proposed building that would be a rebuild, shown in red, below.



Zoning

The subject parcel is zoned R-20 and currently enjoys pre-existing non-conforming status for the commercial use in a residential zone. The building sits within the front setback, almost on the property line. The proposed expansion would be located in the back of the building. Dimensional Variances are not required. However, the expansion of the structure beyond the area that was destroyed by fire triggers a Use Variance as it would constitute the expansion of a pre-existing non-conforming use.

Interdepartmental Review and Comments

Please see the attached report from the Technical Review Committee (dated December 8, 2025) for interdepartmental comments on this application.

Pre-Application Recommendations

Staff recommend that the Planning Commission allow the applicant to proceed to the Preliminary Plan / Unified Development stage of application and review, with the following guidance:

1. The applicant should refer to the December 8, 2025 Technical Review Committee report for direction on information to supply and plan edits to make at the Preliminary Plan application in coordination with Planning staff.
2. The applicant should consider any comments or concerns from members of the public with special attention to any opposing abutters.



TOWN OF COVENTRY

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TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: December 8, 2025
PROJECT NAME: "395 Knotty Oak Rd. Rehab + Extension"
PROPERTIES: AP 70, Lot 104
ADDRESS: 395 Knotty Oak Road
ZONE: R-20 (Residential)
OWNER/APPLICANT: John W. Studley III

This matter came before the Coventry Technical Review Committee at its December 8, 2025 meeting as a Pre-Application Plan for a Minor Land Development project in accordance with Article V, D.3. of the Coventry Subdivision & Land Development Regulations.

An application and plan were initially submitted for review on November 21, 2025. The applicant has proposed to build a 3,600 square foot addition to the rear (east) of the existing structure. 2,500 square feet of the new construction would be a rebuild of the portion of the building that burned down. An additional 1,100 square feet of the proposed addition would extend south and east from the portion of the proposed building that would be a rebuild. The applicant is also applying for a Use Variance for the expansion of a pre-existing non-conforming use. This project will be reviewed under Unified Development Review in which both the Minor Land Development and the Use Variance will be decided by the Planning Commission.

The members of the Technical Review Committee reviewed the following documents related to this application when preparing the comments below:

395 Knotty Oak Rehab – Checklist.pdf
395 Knotty Oak Rehab – Plan.pdf

TOWN ENGINEER

- A) A drainage plan and drainage calculations are required for the addition and any new impervious parking in accordance with Article XIII.D of the Town of Coventry Design and Public Improvement Standards.
- B) Upon project completion, a Certificate of Conformance (COC) from the Engineer of Record (EOR) shall be required. The COC shall certify that the constructed project meets all required standards, regulations and specifications in the permitting and construction documents. A certificate of occupancy will not be issued until COC is received and accepted by the town.

PRINCIPAL PLANNER

- Planning Staff note that this Pre-Application submission for a Minor Land Development would be heard under Unified Development Review as a Use Variance would be required.
- The applicant would need to seek a Use Variance for the expansion of a pre-existing non-conforming commercial use.
- Staff recommend more complete answers on Form ZBR-UV at Preliminary Plan stage.
- Staff note that there will be no increase in impervious cover due to the entire parcel being paved.
- Applicant will be required to have engineered site plans with a Class I survey at the Preliminary Plan stage.
- Seeking clarification if the new structure will match the height of the existing structure.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

- No comments at this time.

FIRE REPRESENTATIVE

- Concern about Fire Dept Access on the back side and around the building.

POLICE CHIEF

- No comments at this time.

PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR

The Planning Commission Chair recused as this item will be heard before the Planning Commission.