



**CITY OF COLUMBUS
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
(January 27, 2026 Meeting)**

STAFF REPORT

Docket No. / Project Title: BZA-25-3 (Housing Partnership Duplex)

Staff: Melissa Begley

Applicant: Housing Partnerships, Inc.

Property Size: +/- 4,880 square feet

Current Zoning: RE (Residential: Established)

Location: 834 Werner Ave, in the City of Columbus.

Background Summary:

The applicant is requesting conditional use approval to construct a new duplex on the subject property.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:

Approval; all criteria have been met.

Zoning Ordinance Considerations:

District Intent: The intent of the RE (Residential: Established) zoning district is as follows: To ensure the continued viability of neighborhoods and developments in existence on the effective date of the zoning ordinance. This district should be used to maintain traditional, contextually appropriate setbacks, uses, and other standards in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Current Property Information:	
Land Use:	Vacant
Site Features:	Undeveloped lot
Flood Hazards:	No flood hazards exist on the property.
Vehicle Access:	Werner Avenue (Local, Residential, Urban) Alley

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:		
	Zoning:	Land Use:
North:	RE (Residential Established)	Single-family residential
South:	RE (Residential Established)	Single-family residential
East:	RE (Residential Established)	Single-family residential Two-family residential
West:	RE (Residential Established)	Single-family residential Two-family residential

Interdepartmental Review:	
City Engineering:	No comments.
City Utilities:	No comments.
Technical Code Enforcement:	No comments.
Fire Inspector:	No comments.

Planning Consideration(s):

The following general site considerations, planning concepts, and other facts should be considered in the review of this application:

1. The applicant is requesting conditional use approval to build a new two-story duplex (with a 68 foot by 26 foot building footprint) on the subject property. Each unit of the duplex will be +/- 1,768 square feet. The duplex will have an entrance for one unit on the Werner Avenue frontage, and the other unit's entrance will be on the alley side of the building.
2. The concept plan submitted as part of this request includes 4 off-street parking spaces, accessed from the alley. This meets the minimum requirement of parking spaces prescribed in the zoning ordinance. Additional street parking is available on Werner Avenue.
3. The surrounding homes on the block are predominantly single story with front porches. The proposed structure will have a wide front porch and will not be out of character with the surrounding neighborhood, despite the additional height.
4. The subject property is served by public transportation, with nearby Route 3 of the ColumBUS transit system traveling 10th Street being less than 300 feet away from the site.
5. The subject property is in close proximity to an abundance of goods and services. The site is approximately a half of a mile walking distance from downtown Columbus, which includes the public library, several restaurants, banking, employment and other retail services. The closest public park is the 9th Street Park that is .09 miles mile to the west.
6. This project represents infill development. Infill development is beneficial to the community because it makes use of vacant or underutilized lots within the center city, strengthens the real estate market and property values in the area, and utilizes existing infrastructure.

7. The subject property is located within an urban neighborhood that is characterized by higher density and smaller lot sizes. Urban areas reflect a stronger presence of pedestrian traffic. Werner Avenue has sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Comprehensive Plan Consideration(s):

The Comprehensive Plan designates the future land use of properties in this area as Residential.

The Comprehensive Plan includes this property in the Columbus Central Neighborhoods character area. The following planning principles apply to this application:

1. Infill development that complements existing neighborhoods should be encouraged.
2. When conversion of single-family houses to multifamily is permitted, appropriate off-street parking should be required. Converting front yard areas to parking lots is not in the best interests of the area.

The following Comprehensive Plan goal(s) and/or policy(ies) apply to this application:

1. **POLICY A-2-9:** Preserve and enhance the character of neighborhoods. *Older neighborhoods have distinctive characteristics which should be retained. These vary from one neighborhood to another, but they include such things as smaller lots, lesser setbacks, service alleys, and a distinctive architectural style.*
2. **POLICY A-2-11:** Encourage all new development to be in scale (height, area, mass, setback, etc.) with its surroundings, determined on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. *New development should be designed in a manner that is sensitive to the surroundings.*
3. **POLICY A-4-2:** Encourage infill development, and/or use of vacant parcels for projects such as parks or other amenities which complement the neighborhoods in which they are located. *Vacant parcels represent lost opportunities, and they can become neighborhood nuisances. These parcels should be used, either for development, or for other neighborhood assets such as parks or community gardens. It is less expensive to develop these parcels than to create new subdivisions.*
4. **GOAL D-1:** Develop new housing where adequate public services can be provided economically.
5. **GOAL D-2:** Encourage development of a sufficient supply of diverse housing types, sizes, and price ranges in the community.
6. **POLICY D-2-1:** Encourage housing which is affordable to those whose incomes are below the median, particularly those significantly below the median. *A thriving community needs socio-economic diversity which in turn requires a range of housing prices. The city should encourage the development of housing in a variety of price ranges so that all citizens will have decent, safe, and sanitary housing at prices they can afford.*
7. **POLICY D-2-2:** Allow for various housing types. *A diverse population needs diverse housing. The city should encourage a variety of housing types, including single-family detached houses, townhouses, and apartments.*
8. **POLICY D-2-4:** Explore options for providing incentives for development of affordable housing which is consistent with these policies and conforms to an overall plan for community growth. *The private market produces a housing supply sufficient for those in middle- and upper-income categories, but land and development costs make it difficult for private entrepreneurs to produce houses that can be purchased by those in the lower income brackets. These incentives might include tax abatements and low-interest loans. The incentives would not include lower standards for houses or neighborhoods.*
9. **POLICY D-2-5:** Encourage neighborhoods which contain a diverse socioeconomic mix. *Socioeconomic diversity is beneficial to the community. The city should encourage developments which contain a variety of housing types and prices. The diversity of neighborhoods affects the diversity in public schools, particularly elementary schools. Traditional development, such as in the downtown area, contains a socioeconomic mix of housing types (apartments, single-family houses, duplexes, townhouses) in different price ranges.*
10. **POLICY D-2-6:** Encourage development of a sufficient supply of housing in all price ranges so that all citizens of the community can enjoy decent, safe, and sanitary housing in desirable neighborhood settings. *A diversity of housing prices and types accommodates a diverse population and differing preferences.*
11. **GOAL D-3:** Provide high-quality residential neighborhood environments.
12. **POLICY D-3-1:** Encourage projects which improve and revitalize neighborhoods. *Strong neighborhoods are the building blocks of strong communities. Projects which enhance neighborhood*

cohesiveness strengthen the community. Examples include neighborhood watch programs, neighborhood associations, clean-up projects, block parties, and recreation programs.

This property is located outside of but near the study area included in Envision Columbus, the Comprehensive Plan's Downtown Strategic Development Plan Element. The residential neighborhood near downtown was found to have opportunities for "individual or developer-led investment in housing that could support greater vibrancy and meet demand for quality housing stock at all price points." Envision Columbus also includes design recommendations for infill housing, including usable front porches, homes facing the adjacent streets, and new buildings complementing the existing residential block.

This property is within the study area for the Central Neighborhood Plan Comprehensive Plan Element, which includes housing-related recommendations, as follows:

1. Rehabilitate or replace substandard housing with housing that is safe, healthy, and affordable.
2. Encourage rehabilitated and replaced homes to be of character consistent with the scale, materials, and details of the surrounding single-family architecture.
3. Support a wider mix of residential types to meet demand and diversify the options. Currently, the Central Neighborhood's residential mix is largely single-family detached homes and apartment buildings. Consider townhouses (single-family attached homes), apartments above commercial, lofts in converted industrial/commercial space, and other similar designs to fill the gap of the "missing middle housing".
4. Support the continued development of rental housing in order to support the needs in the larger Columbus community but balance the demand for affordable housing with market rate residential to avoid the concentration and segregation of poverty.

Provisional Findings of Fact/Decision Criteria:

Section 12.4(D) of the Zoning Ordinance permits the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow conditional uses that meet the criteria listed below. The Board may impose reasonable conditions as part of an approval.

1. The proposal will not be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

Provisional Findings: No City departments or agencies, including the Engineering, Fire, and Code Enforcement Departments, expressed any concern for the proposed duplex as a use in this zoning district. *This criterion has been met.*

2. The development of the property will be consistent with the intent of the development standards established by the Zoning Ordinance for similar uses.

Provisional Findings: The property is located in an established downtown neighborhood that includes nearby duplex properties. As proposed, the duplex meets all development standards, such as minimum off-street parking and setbacks, that are intended to promote adequate circulation, maintenance, and fire safety. *This criterion has been met.*

3. Granting the conditional use will not be contrary to the general purposes served by the Zoning Ordinance, and will not permanently injure other property or uses in the same zoning district and vicinity.

Provisional Findings: The property is located in an established residential area that includes neighboring duplex properties. The use is consistent with others in the neighborhood and the structure will meet all applicable development standards. The duplex includes design details consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. *This criterion has been met.*

4. The proposed use will be consistent with the character of the zoning district in which it is located and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Provisional Findings: The applicant's proposal for the duplex use is consistent with the intent of the RE (Residential: Established) zoning district. It is also consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's goals for encouraging renovation and revitalization of established residential neighborhoods and providing a diversity of housing. The Comprehensive Plan, through the Downtown Plan and Central Neighborhood Plan Elements, also recommends new home construction in character with its surroundings. If the duplex includes design details consistent with the surrounding neighborhood, *this criterion has been met.*

Board of Zoning Appeals Options:

In reviewing a request for conditional use the Board may (1) approve the petition as proposed, (2) approve the petition with conditions, (3) continue the petition to a future meeting of the Board, or (4) deny the petition (with or without prejudice). Failure to achieve a quorum or lack of a positive vote on a motion results in an automatic continuance to the next regularly scheduled meeting.



Record No: BZA-25-3

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)
Application

Status: Active

Submitted On: 11/25/2025

Primary Location

834 WERNER AVE
COLUMBUS, IN 47201

Owner

HOUSING PARTNERSHIP INC
Cottage Ave. 2158 Cottage Ave. COLUMBUS,
IN 47201

Application Information

Application Type*

Conditional Use

You may enter multiple requests for the same application type. If you are also requesting a different application type, you will need to submit a separate application.

Conditional Use Request

I am requesting a Conditional Use per Zoning
Ordinance Section (insert the ordinance section
number below):*

3.12B

Please Describe the Proposed Use:*

To build a duplex on this property.

The approval of the conditional use will not be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community. For example: What harm could come from approving the conditional use? Would it create any public safety issues? Why or why not?*

HPI has a strong reputation for providing affordable, safe housing in our community. There should be no safety issues from approving this conditional use.

The development of the property will be consistent with the intent of the development standards established by the Zoning Ordinance for similar uses. For example: Will the conditional use be able to meet minimum building setbacks, parking standards, and other requirements? If not, are variances being sought to address those items?*

We are complying with all setback standards, parking and all requirements.

Granting the conditional use will not be contrary to the general purposes served by the Zoning Ordinance, and will not permanently injure other property or uses in the same zoning district and vicinity. For example: Are there risks that the conditional use will cause harm to the neighbors' ability to use and enjoy their property? Is there reason to believe that the conditional use will cause harm to neighboring property values?*

This property should significantly increase neighboring house values and should not affect the neighbors' ability to use and enjoy their property.

The conditional use will be consistent with the character of the zoning district in which it is located and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Will the conditional use change the character of the area? Will it involve a building, operation, or features that are significantly different than what is common to the zoning district?*

Just across the street, the 4th lot to the north, 851 Werner is zoned RM.

The City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan can be found at:
<https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/>.

The Bartholomew County Comprehensive Plan can be found at:
<https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/comprehensive-county-plans/>.

Applicant Signature

The undersigned acknowledges that the information included in and with this application is completely true and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and belief. * Denotes a required field

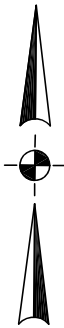
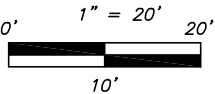
Signature*

✓ Jonathan Zeh
Nov 25, 2025

SITE PLAN

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

LOT 6A IN MICHAEL WERNER'S ADDITION, 3RD REPLAT, RECORDED AS INSTRUMENT NO. 2024005057 IN PLAT BOOK S, PAGE 144D, IN THE OFFICE OF THE RECORDER OF BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY, INDIANA.



LEGEND

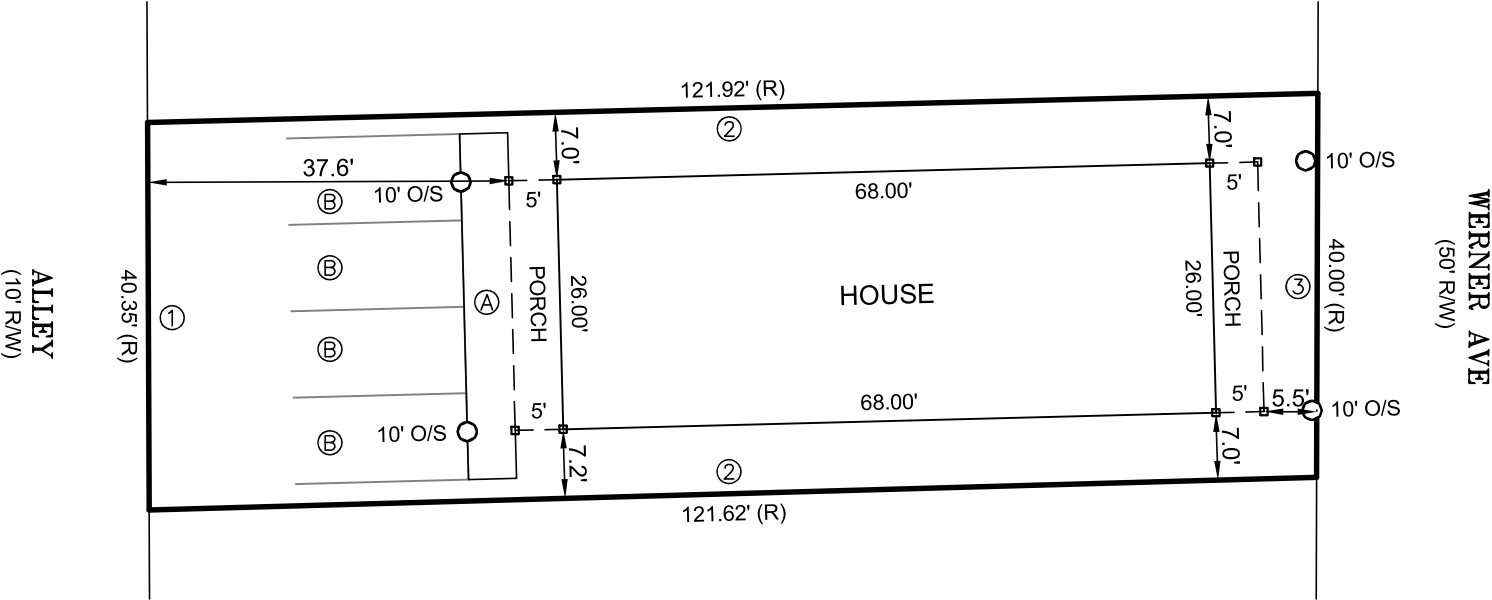
- (R) =PER RECORD DESCRIPTION OR PLAT
- =SET HUB W/TACK FOR OFFSET
- =SET CONSTRUCTION STAKE

- Ⓐ 5' CONCRETE WALK
- Ⓑ 9'x18' PARKING SPACE

SETBACKS

- ① MINIMUM REAR SETBACK: 10' (ORDINANCE SEC. 3.12 C)
- ② MINIMUM SIDE SETBACK: 5' (ORDINANCE SEC. 3.12 C)
- ③ MINIMUM FRONT SETBACK: 25' (SMALLEST SETBACK PROVIDED BY ALL OTHER PRIMARY STRUCTURES ON THE SAME SIDE OF THE STREET ON LEGAL LOTS OF RECORD WITHIN 300' OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY) (ORDINANCE SEC. 3.12 C)

SEC. 3.12C Residential: Established (RE)



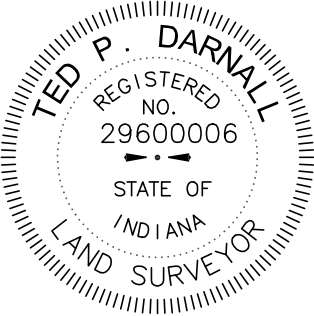
NOTES

1. THIS PLAN SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS A BUILDING PLAN. SEE THE BUILDING/ARCHITECTURAL PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION ON THE STRUCTURE. ALL DIMENSIONS SHOULD BE FIELD VERIFIED BY THE CONTRACTOR, AND ANY DISCREPANCIES REPORTED TO THE ARCHITECT/DESIGNER PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION. ALL DISTANCES OF, AND MEASURED TO, THE BUILDING ARE MEASURED TO THE FOUNDATION, AND DO NOT INCLUDE OVERHANGS.
2. THIS PLAN DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A BOUNDARY SURVEY. THIS PLAN SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR DETERMINATION OF BOUNDARY LINES, OR CONSTRUCTION OF FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS SUCH AS FENCES OR BUILDINGS.
3. THIS PLAN DOES NOT IMPLY SUITABILITY OF THIS SITE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BASEMENT.
4. UNDERGROUND UTILITIES/STRUCTURES WERE NOT LOCATED AS A PART OF THIS PLAN, BUT MAY EXIST ON THIS SITE. BEFORE GROUND DISTURBING ACTIVITIES ARE BEGUN, LOCATIONS OF UTILITIES SHOULD BE OBTAINED BY THE APPROPRIATE AGENCIES BY CONTACTING INDIANA 811.

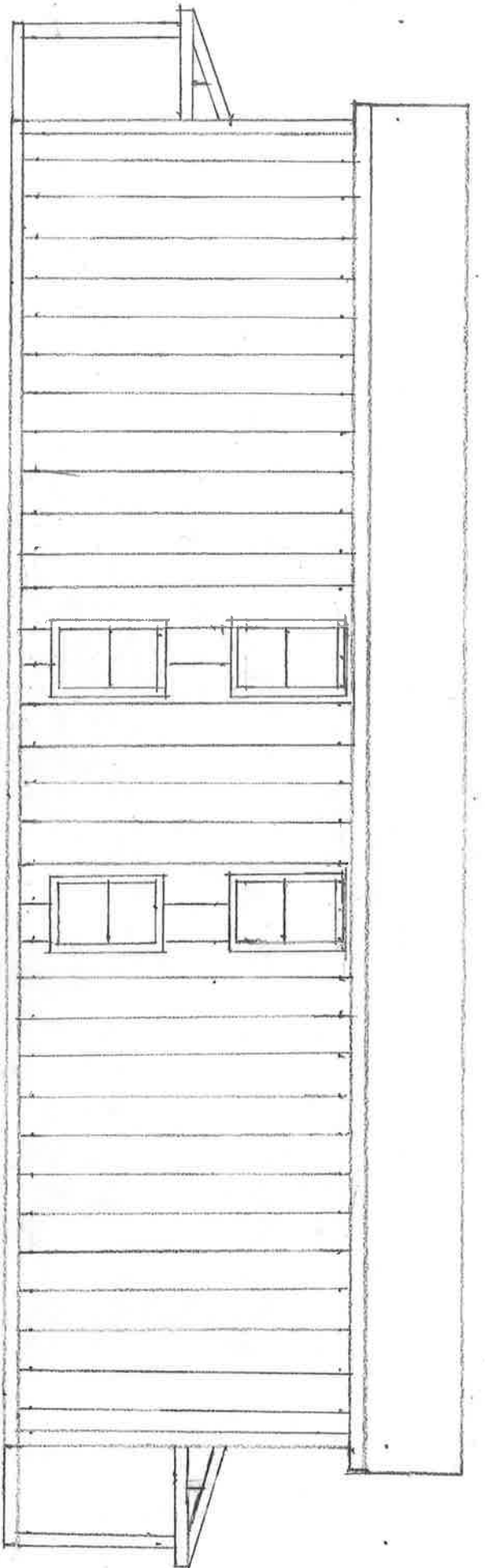
CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS DRAWING AND THE FIELD WORK ON WHICH IT IS BASED WAS PREPARED UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION.

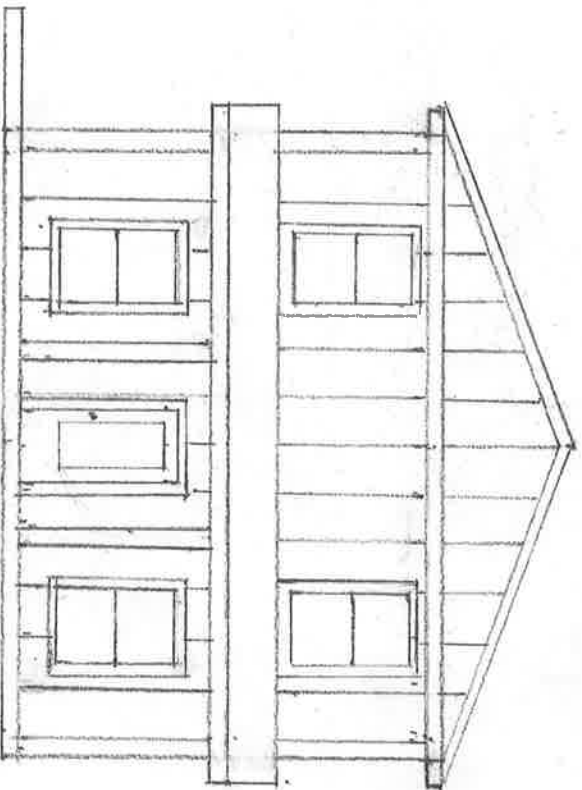
Ted P. Darnall
TED P. DARNALL PS 29600006
SEPTEMBER 22, 2025



REV.NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY:
 1428 Lafayette Avenue, Columbus, IN 47201 812.372.7398 www.milestonedesign.org			
THRIVE/HOUSING PARTNERSHIP INC. SITE PLAN 834 WERNER STREET COLUMBUS, IN 47201			
JOB NO: 25610		SHEET: 1 OF 1	DATE: 09-22-2025
FILE NAME: E:\PROJECTS\25000\25610\25610HSO.DWG			



SIDE ELEVATION



STREET & ALLEY ELEVATION