



THE CITY OF KEY WEST PLANNING  
BOARD  
Staff Report

**To:** Chairman and Planning Board Members

**Through:** Katie P. Halloran, Planning Director

**From:** Scarlet Hammons, AICP, The Corradino Group

**Meeting Date:** February 16, 2023

**Agenda Item:** **Variance – 1905 Staples Avenue (RE# 00046930-000000):** A request for variance approval for non-complying front, side and rear setbacks, and building coverage, to allow a single family residence, located in the Limited Commercial (CL) Zoning District, pursuant to Sections 90-395, 122-390 and 108-346 of the City of Key West Land Development Regulations.

**Request:** To allow for a new three-story home to be built on a vacant lot.

**Property Owners/  
Applicant:** KW Empire, LLC/Trepanier and Associates, Inc.

**Location:** 1905 Staples Avenue (RE# 00046930-000000):

**Zoning:** Limited Commercial (CL)



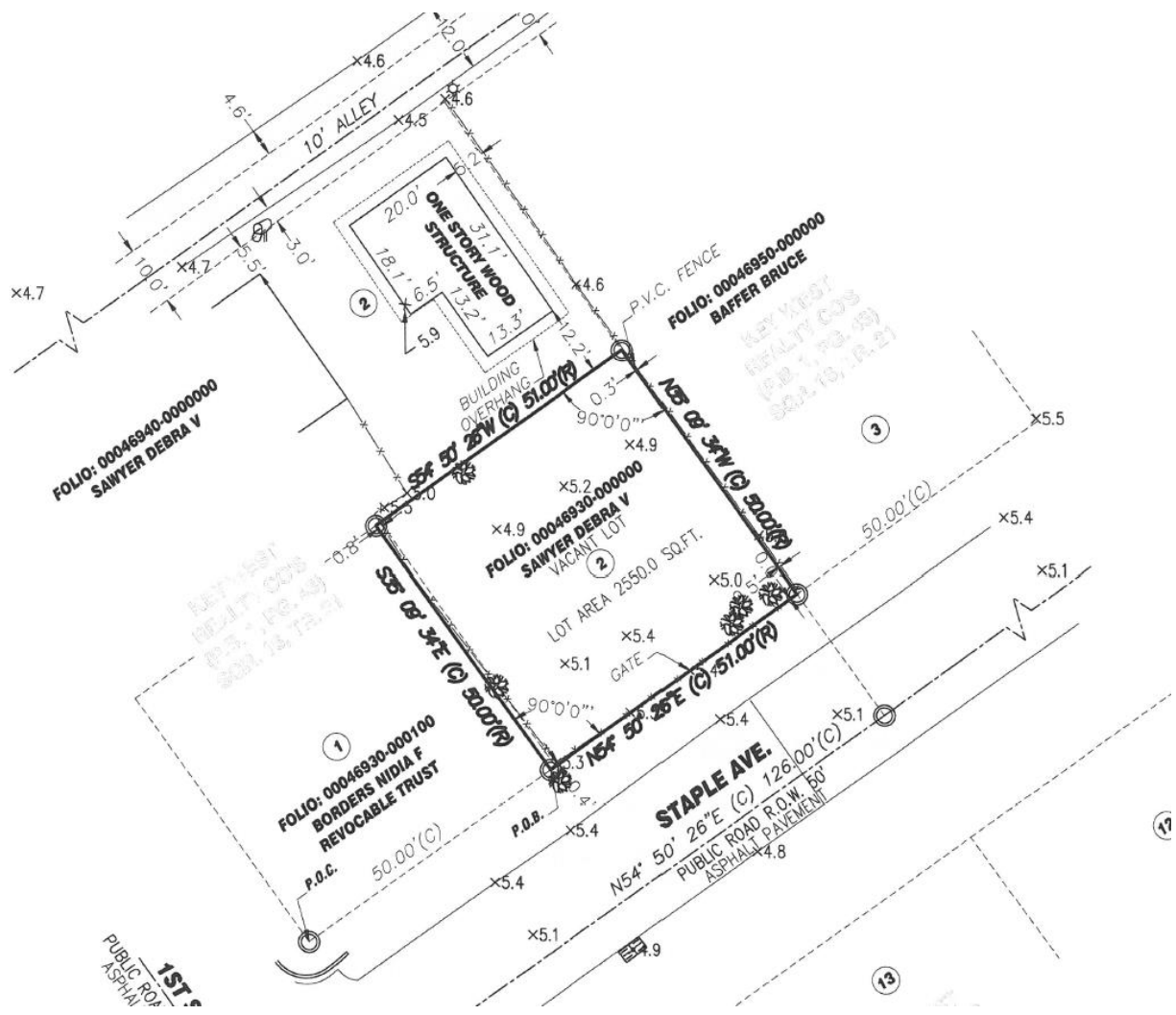
Pictures of the existing vacant lot with surrounding land-uses identified

**Background:**

The subject property is located at 1905 Staples Avenue near the corner of First Street. The lot has been in this current condition at least since 1982, per the deed. The lot is approximately 50' X 51' or 2,550 square feet, and is the result of multiple subdivisions along this block of Staples Avenue. In 1969 the entire property known as 1905 Staples Avenue was owned together with its adjacent properties known as 1411 First Street and 1415 First Street. In 1972, the northern portion of the lot was separated as 1411 First Street, and in 1982, 1415 First Street was separated, leaving the remainder lot of 1905 Staples Avenue as it exists today. The property has remained vacant with no structures since that time; there are six mature mahogany trees and a strangler fig on the property today. The property owner has stated that his intent is to maintain the existing tree canopy and that the building and site conditions, such as a swale, will not affect the trees (including the root systems). Additional shrubs are intended to further enhance the property. The current property owner purchased the site in late 2021, according to the Monroe County Property Appraiser. The property was awarded one BPAS unit in 2021.

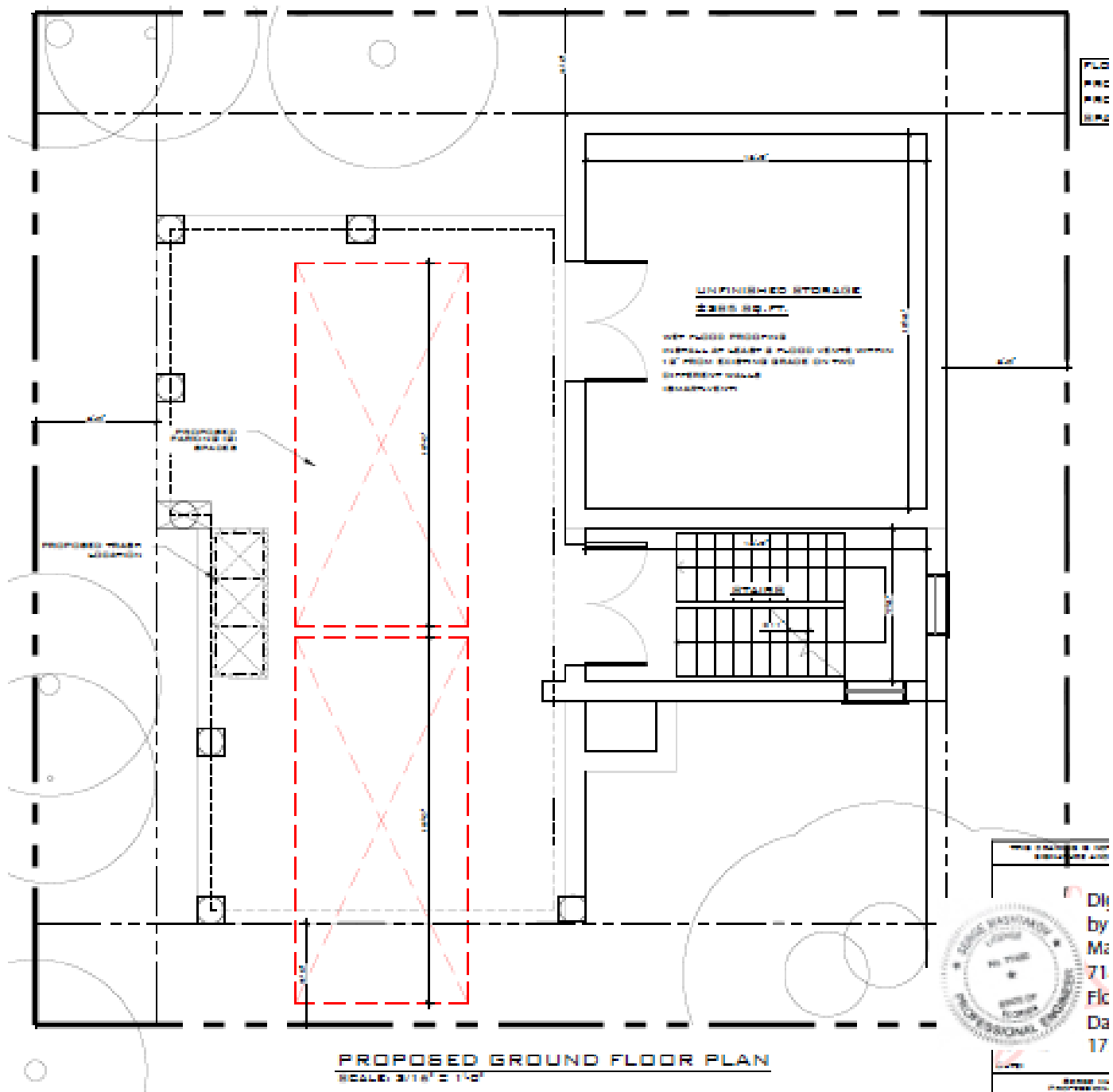
Past subdivisions





**Request:**

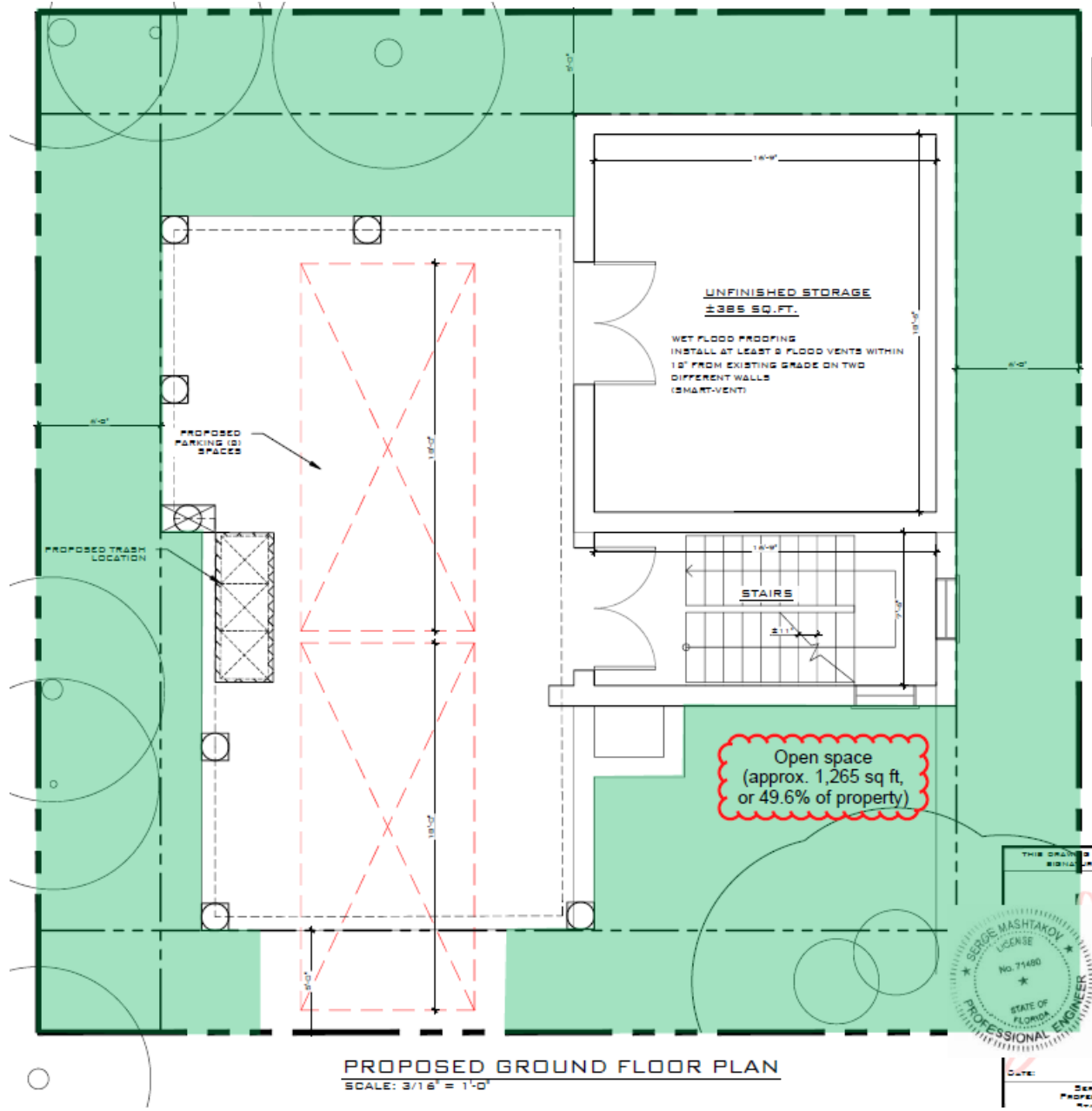
The request is to build a new three-story four bedroom home on a vacant lot. There are four proposed setback encroachments, on all four sides of the home. The applicant is requesting a variance from the front, rear and the two side setbacks. The applicant is also requesting a variance for exceeding building coverage maximums. The standards for all setbacks and coverage are described in Sec. 122-390 of the Land Development Regulations. At 2,550 square feet, the lot is about ¼ of the minimum lot size for properties zoned Limited Commercial (10,000 square foot minimum).



FLC  
 REC  
 REC  
 REC

Di  
 by  
 Ms  
 71  
 Flc  
 Da  
 17





**Site Data Table**

	<b>Required/Allowed</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Variance Requested</b>
Lot Size	10,000 sq ft	2,550 sq ft	No Change	Legal non-conforming lot
Impervious Surface	60% 1,530 sq ft	12% 320 sq ft	49% 1,242 sq ft	No
Building Coverage	40% 1,020 sq ft	0% 0 sq ft	49% 1,242 sq ft	Variance Needed 9% requested
Open Space Requirement	35% 893 sq ft	88% 2,230 sq ft	49% 1,248 sq ft	No
FAR	NA	0.0	No Change	No
Front Setback	10' ft	N/A	5'	Variance Needed 5' requested
Rear Setback	10'	N/A	5'	Variance Needed 5' requested
Side Setback (East)	15' ft	N/A	6'	Variance Needed 9' requested
Side Setback (West)	15' ft	N/A	6'	Variance Needed 9' requested
Height	40'	0"	38.8"	No
Parking	2 spaces per unit	0	2	No

The applicant is requesting a variance pursuant to Sections 90-395, Section 122-390(4), Section 122-390(5) and Section 122-390(6) of the City of Key West Land Development Regulations:

For the proposed front setback: Sec. 122-390 (6)a  
10' is required by code; 5' is proposed by the applicant

For the proposed side (east) setback: Sec. 122-390 (6)b  
15' is required by code; 6' is proposed by the applicant.

For the proposed side (west) setback: Sec. 122-390 (6)b  
15' is required by code; 6' is proposed by the applicant.

For the proposed rear setback: Sec. 122-390 (6)a  
10' is required by code; 5' is proposed by the applicant

For the proposed building coverage: Sec. 122-390 (4)a  
40% is required by code; 49% is proposed by the applicant

**Process:**

**Planning Board Meeting:** February 16, 2023  
**HARC:** TBD  
**Local Appeal Period:** 10 days  
**DEO Review Period:** up to 45 days

**Staff Analysis- Evaluation:**

The criteria for evaluating a variance are listed in Sections 122-395 of the City of Key West Land Development Regulations. The Planning Board before granting a variance must find all the following:

1. *Existence of special conditions or circumstances. That special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved and which are not applicable to other land, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district.*

Special conditions exist which are peculiar to the land. The block was subdivided several times, creating a left-over remainder parcel, which is one quarter the legal lot size for this zoning district.

**IN COMPLIANCE**

2. *Conditions not created by applicant. That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the action or negligence of the applicant.*

The block was subdivided several times through the 70's and 80's, creating the existing non-conforming lot. The lot was not created by the applicant who purchased the property in 2021. The setbacks and building coverage proposed by the applicant, however are related to the action of the applicant. The applicant could propose a smaller structure that could comply with at least some, if not all, of the dimensional criteria.

**NOT IN COMPLIANCE**

3. *Special Privileges not conferred. That granting the variance requested will not confer upon the applicant any special privileges denied by the land development regulations to other lands, buildings, or structures in the same zoning district.*

Granting of the requested variances may confer special privileges to the applicant. Similar lot size conditions are found in neighboring properties. While the majority of the lots on the block are 100' in depth, this property is half of that length. The variance process is



available to all property owners in the same district. As noted above, the owner could propose a more modestly sized structure for this small lot.

**NOT IN COMPLIANCE**

4. *Hardship Conditions Exist. That literal interpretation of the provisions of the land development regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by the other properties in this same zoning district under the terms of this ordinance and would work unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant.*

The current property is legal non-conforming because it does not comply with existing applicable zoning code requirements for lot size given it was subdivided multiple times. However, small lots are not uncommon within the City of Key West. A smaller structure could be accommodated on the property.

**NOT IN COMPLIANCE**

5. *Only minimum variance granted. That the variance granted is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building, or structure.*

The applicant is requesting variances from all setbacks and building coverage, which are a design consideration. The applicant has the opportunity to design a smaller home, which could meet at least some of the setbacks and building coverage requirements.

**NOT IN COMPLIANCE**

6. *Not injurious to the public welfare. That the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the land development regulations and that such variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public interest or welfare.*

There is potential for injuries to the public welfare with the lack of parking for four bedrooms which could accommodate multiple tenants with vehicles. Mitigative techniques may minimize off-site parking impacts.

**NOT IN COMPLIANCE**

7. *Existing nonconforming uses of other property shall not be considered as the basis for approval. No nonconforming use of neighboring lands, structures, or buildings in the same district, and no permitted use of lands, structures, or buildings in other districts shall be considered grounds for the issuance of a variance.*

This application does not rely on other nonconforming lots and structures as justification.

## IN COMPLIANCE

### **Concurrency Facilities and Other Utilities or Service (Section 108-233):**

It does not appear that the requested variance will trigger any public facility or utility service capacity issues.

### **The Planning Board shall make factual findings regarding the following:**

***That the standards established by the City Code have been met by the applicant for a variance.***

The standards established by the City Code have not been fully met by the applicant for the variance requested.

***That the applicant has demonstrated "Good Neighbor Policy" by contacting or attempting to contact all noticed property owners who have objected to the variance application, and by addressing the objections expressed by these neighbors.***

The Planning Department received two public comments for the variance request which were forwarded to the applicant.

***The Planning Board shall not grant a variance to permit a use not permitted by right or as a conditional use in the zoning district involved or any use expressly or by implication prohibited by the terms of the ordinance in the zoning district.***

No use not permitted by right or as a conditional use in the zoning district involved or any use expressly or by implication prohibited by the terms or the ordinance in the zoning district would be permitted.

***No nonconforming use of neighboring lands, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district and no permitted use of lands, structures, or buildings in other zoning districts shall be considered grounds for the authorization of a variance.***

No such grounds were considered.

***No variance shall be granted that increase or has the effect of the increasing density or intensity of a use beyond that permitted by the comprehensive plan or these LDRs.***

No density or intensity of a use would be increased beyond that permitted by the comprehensive plan or these LDRs.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Variance request to exceed the allowed front, rear and side setbacks and building coverage does not comply with all the evaluation criteria. The Planning Department recommends **DENIAL**.

If the Planning Board chooses to approve the variances requested, the Planning Department recommends the following conditions:

1. The proposed construction shall be consistent with the plans, signed, sealed and dated 8/5/22 by Artibus Design for 1905 Staples Avenue.
2. There shall be no parking in the open space in the front yard outside of the covered carport.
3. Consistent with City Code, commercial vehicles shall not be parked in the right of way.
4. Four covered bike/scooter parking spaces shall be added to the plans.