

MINUTES
Plainwell Planning Commission
January 21, 2025

1. Chair Hammond called the regular meeting to order at 6:30pm in City Hall Council Chambers.
2. Pledge of Allegiance was given by all present.
3. Roll Call: Present: Chair Kevin Hammond, and Commissioners Stephen Bennett, Dale Burnham, Elizabeth Raich, Jay Lawson, and Lori Steele. Support Staff: Clerk JoAnn Leonard
Excused: Vice Chair Rachel Colingsworth, City Manager Justin Lakamper,
4. Approval of Minutes:
A motion by Steele, seconded by Lawson, to accept and place on file the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of the 11/05/2025 regular meeting. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.
5. Public Comment: None.
6. Chairperson's Report: None.
7. Recommendations and Reports:
 - A. **A motion by Steele, seconded by Raich, to open a Public Hearing at 6:34pm to hear comments regarding a Special Use Permit (SUP) Application for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). On a voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.**

Clerk Leonard discussed Special Use Permit Application (SUP) 2026-01, submitted by Amanda and Stephen Czarnecki for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) located on Parcel #55-380-002-00, legally described as LOT 2 ALSO E ½ LOT 3 VAN HORN'S ADDITION, commonly known as 413 W. Bridge St.

The Commission reviewed the following:

1. Staff Report dated January 21, 2026 (Exhibit A)
2. Special Use Permit Application 2026-01 (Exhibit B)

This parcel is zoned R1B. The ADU is preexisting, and located within a detached carriage house on the property. It has 520sq.ft. of living space, with a bathroom, kitchen and sleeping area suitable for no more than 2 people. The exterior of the carriage house matches that of the primary residence, and is in harmony with the character of the neighborhood. The application has met all of the relevant Ordinance requirements but two- the first being an Occupancy Permit, and the second being a Statement of Conditions filed with the Allegan County Register of Deeds.

Commissioner Comment:

1. Commissioner Burnham asked if the ADU Ordinance applies City wide, or just for this property?
 - a. Clerk Leonard answered that it is a City-wide Ordinance, allowing anyone in the City limits to apply for an Accessory Dwelling Unit. All Ordinance requirements would apply, and, as an ADU is considered a Special Use, the application would come to the Planning Commission first.
2. Commissioner Burnham asked when PCI would provide the Occupancy Permit? Does that need to be done first before recommending this Special Use Permit (SUP) to City Council?
 - a. Clerk Leonard answered that the SUP can be recommended to Council with conditions, the conditions being an Occupancy Permit and a Statement of Conditions filed at the County. When those two items are received, the SUP application would be complete, and would go to City Council for consideration.
3. Commissioner Bennett asked - So, we would just put that in the conditions, and it will be unmet? Until when?
 - a. Clerk Leonard answered until she received the Occupancy Permit and Statement of Conditions.
4. Commissioner Burnham - This was started in July of 2025, and we had a Planning meeting in November. I was under the assumption that it was a goal for November. Now we're back here, doing it again. Or is this a follow up from November?
 - a. Clerk Leonard answered that yes, Amanda first approached the City in July. At that time, ADUs were not allowed. The City had to have their law firm draft an Ordinance amendment, and then follow the legal process to have the new Ordinance approved by Planning and adopted by Council. It is a slow process.
5. Commissioner Burnham – So the next person who comes along, it is not going to take 7 months?
 - a. Clerk Leonard – No, because the Ordinance and the frame work is now in place.
6. Commissioner Burnham – So this will go to Council on Monday?
 - a. Clerk Leonard – It won't go to Council Monday because Amanda needs time to get the Occupancy Permit and Statement of Conditions filed. The timeline for sending this SUP to Council will be based on when those two documents are received.

Chair Hammond opened the floor for public comment.

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Public comment:

1. Karen Miller of 440 W. Bridge St. stated that the Czarnecki family had a done a beautiful job with the site, and had offered tours of the property to neighbors. They have answered everyone's questions, and she has no concerns with the proposed use. She supports them, and it happy to have this opportunity in her neighborhood. She hasn't spoken to any other neighbors who have concerns.
2. Jeremy Sanderson of 414 W. Bridge St., directly across the street, states that he toured the site a couple of times, and that it is tastefully decorated and pays tribute to the history of the home and district. The addition of one family, and one car will have no negative impact.
3. Amanda Czarnecki of 413 W. Bridge St., property owner, shared that she will be living in the main residence with her family, and that the ADU is a small studio style apartment.
 - a. Commissioner Bennett asked Amanda what the primary motivation for the ADU was. Is it a historic thing, or income producing?
 - i. Amanda answered that it started during Covid. She works in health care, and noticed a need for traveling healthcare worker lodging. The ADU is set up with everything a traveling healthcare worker requires. Now that Covid is less of a concern, she is considering using it as a short- or long-term rental unit, available to anyone who may need it. She notes that the apartment has been upgraded, and is very nice inside.
 - b. Commissioner Raich asked if there were special considerations due to it being a historic home.
 - i. Clerk Leonard stated that part of the Ordinance requirements is that the ADU exterior design be in harmony with that of the primary residence.

A motion by Steele, seconded by Lawson, to close the public hearing at 6:51pm. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

A motion by Burnham, seconded by Steele, recommending Special Use Permit Application 2026-01 from Stephen and Amanda Czarnecki for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) under Sec. 53-127 of the City of Plainwell Code of Ordinance to City Council for consideration, based on the findings of fact outlined in the staff report dated January 21, 2026 on the parcel identified as #55-380-002-00, 413 W. Bridge St., subject to the following conditions:

1. **The applicant shall meet all provisions of the Housing Code, Building Code, and any other applicable codes adopted by the City of Plainwell, and obtain an Occupancy Permit prior to use of unit.**
2. **The applicant shall sign a Statement of Conditions in a form acceptable to the Zoning Administrator and/or the Planning Commission containing a legal description of the subject property and specifying the restrictions on the accessory dwelling set forth in this Section as well as any other conditions imposed by the Planning Commission in granting Special Approval for the accessory dwelling. No building or zoning permits for the accessory dwelling shall be issued until the City Zoning Administrator is provided with satisfactory proof that the fully executed Statement of Conditions has been recorded with the Register of Deeds of Allegan County.**

On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

8. Communications:

A motion by Steele, seconded by Lawson, to accept and place on file the City Council Meeting Minutes from 10/27/2025, 11/10/2025, 11/24/2025, 12/08/2025, and 12/22/2025. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

9. Public Comments: None.

10. Staff Comments: None.

11. Commissioner Comments:

- A. Chair Hammond apologized for the process taking this long.
- B. Commissioner Steele thanked the Czarnecki family for hanging in there, so we can get this done right.
- C. Commissioner Burnham discussed a social media post that has since been removed. He encouraged attendance at Council meetings, as they provide firsthand, accurate information. He stated we need a better way to share information and get the word out. The timelines that our City takes to do simple tasks, it's not called for. We have a City Manager that works for us, can he make any decisions without discussing them with a lawyer? Is there a way to shorten these timelines? The Mill has been going on for 25 years- enough is enough. He also stated that that the two gals who work the counter at City Hall get chewed out often over things that are out of their control. That's not right, and anyone with concerns should bring them to the City Council, the City Manager or the Mayor. He stated that both Mayor Keeler and Mayor-Pro Tem Steele do a great job answering questions and taking the heat, and thanked them for that.

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- D. Commissioner Bennett asked Mayor Keeler and Mayor Pro Tem Steele for an update on the Mill redevelopment. Mayor Pro Tem Steele shared that the Mill development is a topic of discussion at Monday night's Council meeting, and encouraged attendance. Clerk Leonard added that Agenda packets and meeting minutes for all the Boards and Commissions are available on Plainwell's website, and are a valuable resource for what's happening in the City.
- E. Commissioner Bennett asked if the City gets pushback, sharing that he has been asked 'Why retail?' as opposed to more housing on. Mayor Keeler answered that the Master Plan calls for mixed use, both residential and commercial.

The Commission as a whole discussed how there are several different development plans happening on the mill site, and it is easy to forget that and focus on just one of the projects. There is a lot of land available, though interest in the land and development is lacking. The City can't develop the property, we don't have the money. We have to work with those companies and people who are interested. There was a discussion about traffic entry and exit from the Mill site, and if it might increase congestion. Commissioner Steele shared that traffic control was part of the plan.

12. Adjournment:

A motion by Steele, seconded by Lawson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:12pm. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
JoAnn Leonard, City Clerk

Exhibit A



"The Island City"

MEMORANDUM

211 N. Main Street
Plainwell, Michigan 49080
Phone: 269-685-6821
Fax: 269-685-7282

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: JoAnn Leonard, Zoning Administrator
DATE: January 21, 2026
SUBJECT: Special Use Permit Application

REQUEST: Special Use Permit Application – Accessory Dwelling Unit

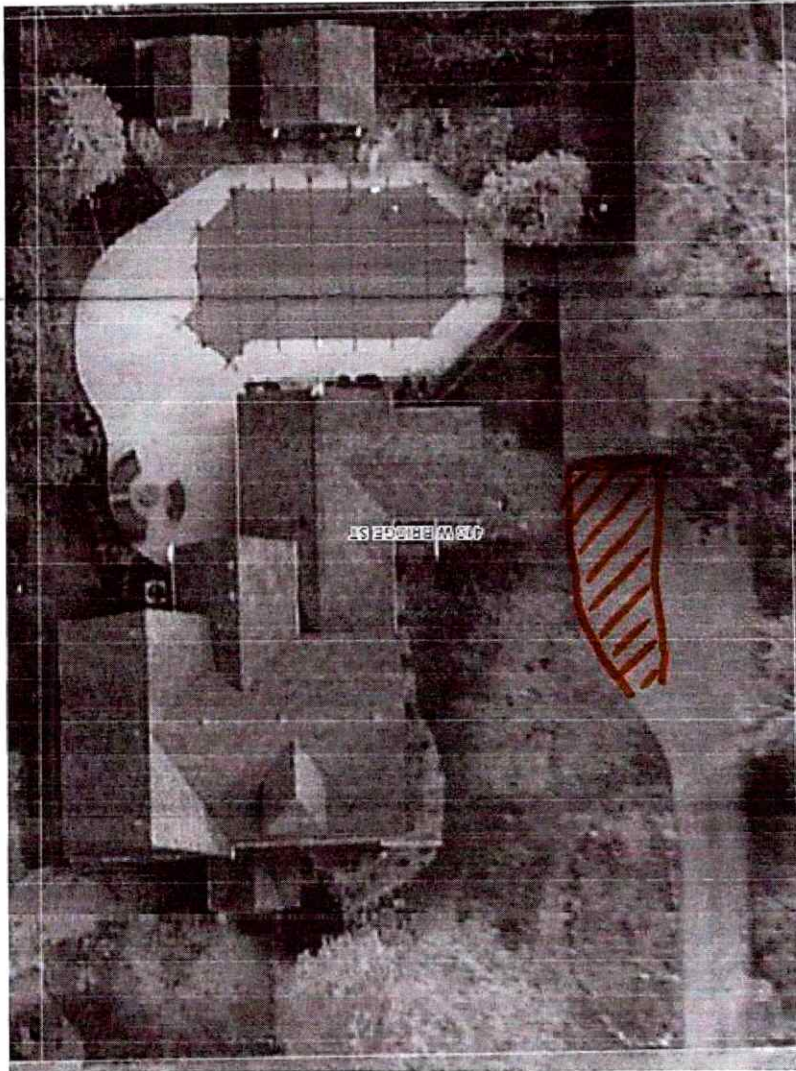
(SUP 2026-01) **Stephen and Amanda Czarnecki** are requesting permission to use an existing Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), under Sec. 53-127, on parcel #55-380-002-00, legal description LOT 2 ALSO E 1/2 LOT 3 VAN HORN'S ADDITION, commonly known as 413 W. Bridge St., in a Residentially Zoned district (R1B), within the City of Plainwell, Allegan County, MI.

Staff has limited review to those ordinance standards directly affected by the proposed special use.

Aerial View:



Site Plan:



/// = Guest Parking

RELEVANT ORDINANCES:

Sec. 53-8. PERMITTED USES AFTER SPECIAL APPROVAL

L. Accessory Dwelling Unit, subject to the requirements of Sec. 53-127

Sec. 53-12. PERMITTED USES AFTER SPECIAL APPROVAL

H. Accessory Dwelling Unit, subject to the requirements of Sec. 53-127

Sec. 53-127. DWELLING UNIT CONVERSIONS & ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUs)

- A. Dwelling Unit Conversions – N/A
- B. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

1. Intent. Accessory dwelling units are intended to accommodate the needs of family members residing upon a single parcel, but who desire separate quarters, as well as to provide additional attainable housing options for community residents.
2. Accessory dwelling units shall be permitted as special approval use in the R-1A, R- 1B Single-Family Residence Zoning District and R-1C, Single- and Two-Family Residence District, subject to the requirements of Sec. 53-130 and the following standards:
 - a. The application shall include front and side elevations.
REMARK: WAIVED - Unit already exists
 - b. Accessory dwelling units shall not be located within the footprint of an existing single-family dwelling unit and shall only be permitted if constructed as a separate building or as an expansion of an existing accessory building. The conversion of existing single-family dwellings into two (2) or three (3) dwelling units within the footprint of the existing single-family dwelling shall be considered a dwelling unit conversion and regulated in accordance with subsection A above.
REMARK: MET - ADU is located in a detached carriage house
 - c. No more than one (1) accessory dwelling unit shall be permitted on a single parcel, and it shall not be located on a parcel with more than one dwelling unit.
REMARK: MET – There is one ADU on this parcel
 - d. The property owner shall occupy either the principal structure or the accessory dwelling unit as their primary residence.
REMARK: MET – The property owner will occupy the primary residence
 - e. The accessory dwelling unit shall include, at a minimum, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a sleeping area separate from the primary residence, and shall meet all provisions of the Housing Code, Building Code, and any other applicable codes adopted by the City of Plainwell.
REMARK: PARTIALY MET – Will be a condition of approval Inspection by PCI for Code compliance and Occupancy Permit required before use of unit. (Refer to **Sec. 53-130 K**. Inspection)
 - f. The exterior design of an accessory dwelling unit, whether attached or detached to a building or structure, shall be compatible with the principal dwelling and any other accessory buildings or structures on the parcel. The building form, construction materials, dimensions, and landscaping shall remain consistent with the principal structure and in harmony with the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood.
REMARK: MET – Carriage house exterior matches that of primary residence
 - g. The owners of the subject property shall sign a Statement of Conditions in a form acceptable to the Zoning Administrator and/or the Planning Commission containing a legal description of the subject property and specifying the restrictions on the accessory dwelling set forth in this Section as well as any other conditions imposed by the Planning

Commission in granting Special Approval for the accessory dwelling. No building or zoning permits for the accessory dwelling shall be issued until the City Zoning Administrator is provided with satisfactory proof that the fully executed Statement of Conditions has been recorded with the Register of Deeds of Allegan County.

REMARK: UNMET – This is a condition of final approval by Council

- h. Unit Floor Area. Accessory dwelling units shall have a minimum floor area of no less than four hundred (400) square feet. An accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed the gross floor area of the principal dwelling.

REMARK: MET – The ADU is 520 sq. ft.

- i. The accessory dwelling unit shall comply with setback, height, and other applicable dimensional requirements for accessory buildings, as applicable, of the R-1A, R-1B Single-Family Residence District and R- 1C, Single- and Two-Family Residence District.

REMARK: MET – Unit contained within existing carriage house.

- j. Accessory dwelling units and any accessory buildings to which they may be attached are exempt from the requirement that detached accessory buildings be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from any main building.

REMARK: MET

- k. At least one (1) off-street parking space shall be provided for the accessory dwelling unit; and such parking spaces shall be in addition to the off-street parking required for the principal dwelling.

REMARK: MET – See site plan

- l. If a detached accessory building larger than two hundred (200) square feet exists on the property, an accessory dwelling unit shall be attached to the detached accessory building. The conversion of an accessory building or garage into an accessory dwelling unit shall comply with all applicable building codes for dwelling units.

REMARK: MET

Sec. 53-130. SPECIAL APPROVAL USE PROCEDURE, SPECIAL APPROVAL USE PERMITS.

In order that this chapter be flexible and reasonable, special approval uses are provided for in various zoning districts and require special approval use permits granted by the City Council after the body has received a written recommendation from the City Planning Commission. Conformance to special approval use standards is required in addition to all other requirements of this chapter. All uses are declared to possess characteristics of the unique and distinct form that each specific use shall be considered on an individual case. The granting of a special use permit does not negate the requirements for any other required permit(s).

A. *Standards for the consideration of special approval uses.* The review of a special approval use shall consider the following:

- 1. The general safety, health and welfare of the community-at-large; this shall include:
 - a. Accessibility of the property in question to fire and police protection;
 - b. Traffic conditions, creating or adding to a hazardous situation;

c. Transportation design requirements, if any, which will be needed to accommodate any traffic impact for the use intended; and

d. Appropriateness of the location, nature and height of the proposed use to the size, type and kind of buildings, uses and structures in the vicinity and adjacent properties, including the safety and convenience of people therefrom.

REMARK: MET

2. Any potential decrease in the market value of adjacent buildings, uses and structures which are permitted by right under current zoning, if the proposed use is granted;

REMARK: MET – No negative impact on surrounding residences is expected

3. Harmony with the Land Use Planning Program of the city. This considers whether the location and size of the proposed use, the nature and intensity of the activities involved, the size of the site with respect to existing and future streets (giving access to it), parks and drainage systems will be in harmony with the Land Use Plan of the city and the character of land use which is intended by the Land Use Plan for the area or district in question;

REMARK: MET

4. Impact from the applicant's proposed use, its location and intensity and the height of its buildings, walls, fences and other structures upon the appropriate character of development intended for the area as deemed desirable by the city's Land Use Plan;

REMARK: MET

5. Any hazards arising from storage and use of inflammable fluids; and/or

REMARK: DOES NOT APPLY

6. The operations in connection with any special approval use shall not be environmentally objectionable to nearby properties by reason of noise, fumes, pollution, vibration or lights to an extent which is more than would be the operations of any use permitted by right for that district wherein the special use is proposed.

REMARK: MET

STAFF COMMENTS: Amanda Czarnecki approached the City in July 2025, sharing that she was interested in renting out a one-bedroom apartment located within a detached carriage house on her property. The apartment had been used by the previous owners for family members and guests, but not as a rental unit. Plainwell's Code of Ordinance did not allow Accessory Dwelling Units, and Amanda's request began the process of working with Planning and the City to update the Ordinance. Amanda has worked closely with the City throughout the process, and has met all the requirements but two- and Occupancy permit and a Statement of Conditions filed with Allegan County. It is my opinion that this Special Use Permit Application be recommended to City Council for consideration with conditions, as shown in the suggested motion below.

ATTACHMENT(S):

Special Use Permit Application 2026-01

OPTION FOR MOTIONS:

If the Planning Commission determines that the standards have not been met, revisions are necessary or more information is needed, this request could be denied or tabled.

If the Planning Commission concurs that the standards of the ordinance have been met, the following motions are offered:

SUGGESTED MOTION: I motion to [recommend / recommend with conditions / deny / table] Special Use Permit Application 2026-01 from Stephen and Amanda Czarnecki for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) under Sec. 53-127 of the City of Plainwell Code of Ordinance to City Council for consideration, based on the findings of fact outlined in the staff report dated January 21, 2026, on the parcel identified as #55-380-002-00, 413 W. Bridge St., subject to the following conditions:

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"The Island City"

City of Plainwell Special Use Permit Application

Fee: \$100.00

Permit #
2026-01

Plainwell City Hall
211 N. Main Street
Plainwell, MI 49080
Phone: 269-685-6821
Fax: 269-685-7282
www.plainwell.org

Owner/Applicant Information:

Name: Amanda Czarnecki

Address: 413 W Bridge St, Plainwell MI 49080 #55-380-002-00

Phone Number: 269-420-6273

Email Address: amanda.p.ridenour@gmail.com

Request is for a special permit to (specify use): _____
Use of carriage house apartment for rental.

Legal Description of Property: _____
Family home with detached ADU apartment

Address of Property: 413 W Bridge St, Plainwell MI 49080

Present Use and Zoning of Property: 2nd floor apartment not being rented, 1st floor storage

Attach an accurate drawing showing the following:

1. Property boundaries
2. Existing structures
3. Location of abutting streets
4. Existing zoning on adjacent properties
5. Locations of buildings on adjacent properties
6. Proposed new structures

Names and addresses of all other persons, firms or corporations having a legal interest in the property:
Steven Czarnecki 413 W Bridge St Plainwell, MI 49080

Applicant/Owner Signature: Date: 12/17/25

Administrative Use Only:	
Date of Application:	_____
Fee Amount:	_____ Date: _____
Council Action:	_____ Date: _____
Effective Date:	_____



413 W. Bridge St. Carriage House Apartment

About the Apartment:

Our 1869 home includes a carriage house that is about 1,040sq ft. The 2nd floor of the carriage house is an apartment that is 520sq ft. This apartment is self contained with its own entrance, a kitchen, lavatory, and a living/studio style bedroom. Our unit is 1 bed, 1 bath, and only large enough to house 2 people. All of the buildings on the property have been maintained to keep the historical charm and integrity that we have come to appreciate in our beloved historical district.



Bathroom



Entrance (private)



1 Bed (studio style living)



Dining (eat in kitchen)

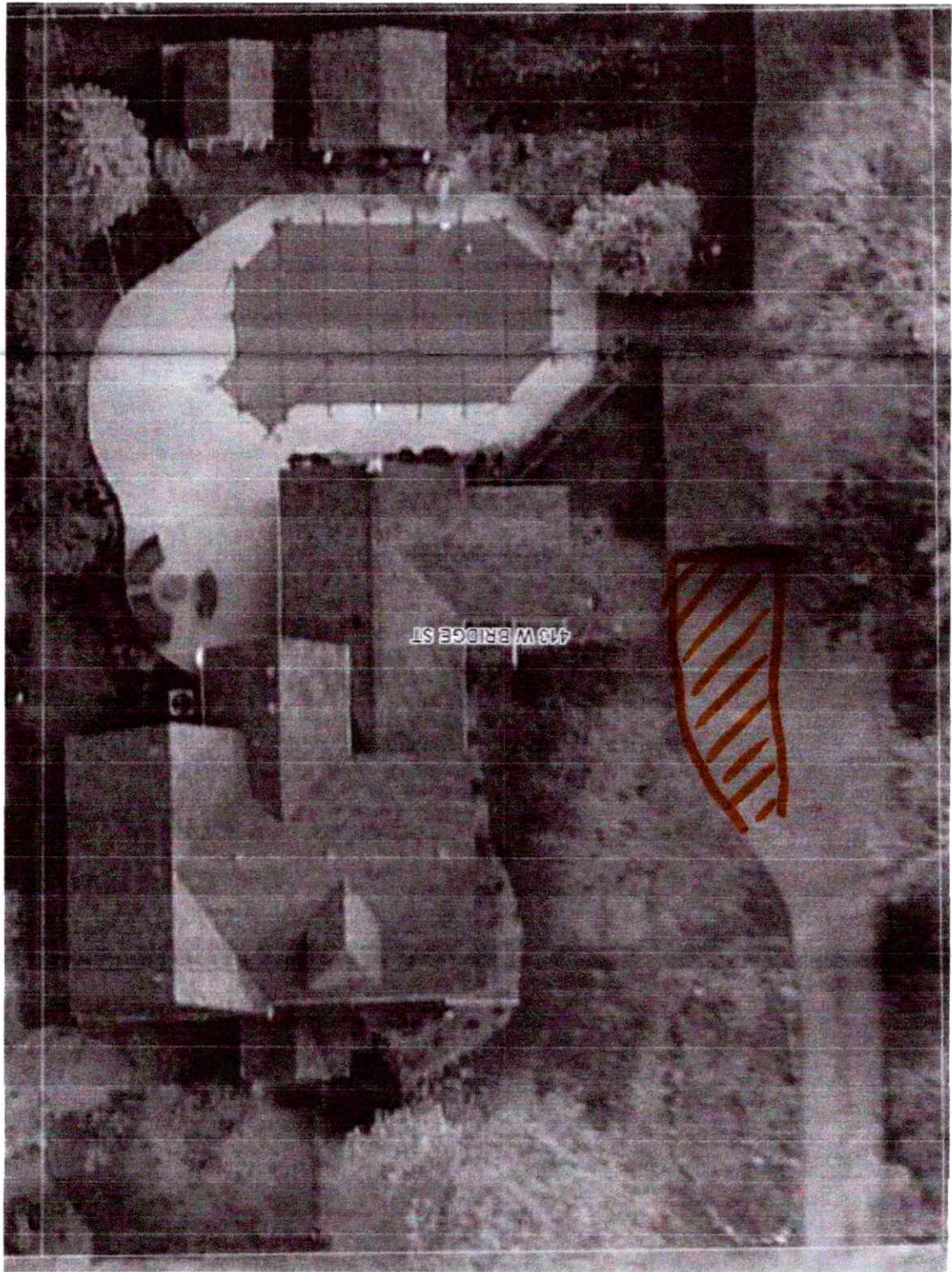


Livingroom (studio style living)



Kitchen

There are no employees. The unit is 1 bed and can have 1 single person or a couple (2 guest max)



/// = Guest Parking

SITE PLAN