

HDC-24-22



Bristol Historic District Commission

Application for review of proposed Work

1. Property Address (Street & No.) 240 High Street

2. Plat # 18 Lot # 55

3. a. Applicant: Bristol Statehouse Foundation

b. Owner (if different from applicant written authorization of owner required):

Mailing Address:

Phone: 4019655985

Email:

4. a. Architect/Draftsman:

Phone:

Email:

b. Contractor:

Phone:

Email:

5. Work Category:

New Structure(s)

6. Description of proposed work:

Request placement of a temporary structure on property

7. Property History

Bristol Statehouse Foundation

Michael Rielly

Applicant's Name – Printed

Applicant's Sign

146

Date: February 14, 2024



CAI Property Card

Town of Bristol, RI

GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION	BUILDING EXTERIOR
LOCATION: 240 HIGH ST ACRES: 0.9183 PARCEL ID: 18 56 LAND USE CODE: 80 CONDO COMPLEX: OWNER: BRISTOL STATE HOUSE FOUNDATION CO - OWNER: MAILING ADDRESS: PO BOX 383 ZONING: R-6 PATRIOT ACCOUNT #: 1262	BUILDING STYLE: GovtBldg UNITS: 1 YEAR BUILT: 1800 FRAME: Masonry EXTERIOR WALL COVER: Stone ROOF STYLE: Gable ROOF COVER: Asphalt Shin
	BUILDING INTERIOR
SALE INFORMATION SALE DATE: BOOK & PAGE: SALE PRICE: 0 SALE DESCRIPTION: SELLER:	INTERIOR WALL: Plaster FLOOR COVER: HEAT TYPE: Warm & Cool FUEL TYPE: Oil PERCENT A/C: False # OF ROOMS: 0 # OF BEDROOMS: 0 # OF FULL BATHS: 0 # OF HALF BATHS: 0 # OF ADDITIONAL FIXTURES: 0 # OF KITCHENS: 0 # OF FIREPLACES: 2 # OF METAL FIREPLACES: 0 # OF BASEMENT GARAGES: 0
PRINCIPAL BUILDING AREAS	
GROSS BUILDING AREA: 10540 FINISHED BUILDING AREA: 7350 BASEMENT AREA: 2700 # OF PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS: 1	
ASSESSED VALUES	
LAND: \$184,100 YARD: \$0 BUILDING: \$1,729,200 TOTAL: \$1,913,300	
SKETCH	PHOTO



www.cai-tech.com

This information is believed to be correct but is subject to change and is not warranted.



200 feet Abutters List Report

Bristol, RI
February 29, 2024

Subject Property:

Parcel Number: 18-56
CAMA Number: 18-56
Property Address: 240 HIGH ST

Mailing Address: BRISTOL STATE HOUSE FOUNDATION
PO BOX 383
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Abutters:

Parcel Number: 14-1
CAMA Number: 14-1
Property Address: 259 HIGH ST

Mailing Address: PARELLA, BERNICE LIFE ESTATE
BATTISON, SALLY
259 HIGH ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Parcel Number: 14-2
CAMA Number: 14-2
Property Address: HIGH ST

Mailing Address: PARELLA, JENNIE LE PARELLA, MARY
249 HIGH ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Parcel Number: 14-27
CAMA Number: 14-27
Property Address: 235 HIGH ST

Mailing Address: REYNOLDS SCHOOL C/O BRISTOL
SCHOOL DEPT
151 STATE ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Parcel Number: 14-28
CAMA Number: 14-28
Property Address: 73 CHURCH ST

Mailing Address: TORTORICE, ANN MARIE, TRUSTEE
TORTORICE LIV TRST 11
43 BYFIELD ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Parcel Number: 14-29
CAMA Number: 14-29
Property Address: 69 CHURCH ST

Mailing Address: FITCH, JEFFERY & CHERYLANNE TE
645 STEPHEN RD
BURBANK, CA 91504

Parcel Number: 14-3
CAMA Number: 14-3
Property Address: 249 HIGH ST

Mailing Address: PARELLA, JENNIE LE PARELLA, MARY
249 HIGH ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Parcel Number: 14-30
CAMA Number: 14-30
Property Address: 2 SCHOOL CT

Mailing Address: NUNES INVESTMENTS, LLC
81 CHESTNUT ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Parcel Number: 14-31
CAMA Number: 14-31
Property Address: 67 CHURCH ST

Mailing Address: NUNES INVESTMENTS, LLC
81 CHESTNUT ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Parcel Number: 14-4
CAMA Number: 14-4
Property Address: 245 HIGH ST

Mailing Address: BURNHAM, H. BENNETT III
33 CENTRAL ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Parcel Number: 14-5
CAMA Number: 14-5
Property Address: 241 HIGH ST

Mailing Address: BURTON STREET PROPERTIES, LLC
490 RIVERSIDE DR
TIVERTON, RI 02878



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200 feet Abutters List Report

Bristol, RI
February 29, 2024

Parcel Number: 14-6
CAMA Number: 14-6
Property Address: 116 STATE ST

Mailing Address: INFANTE, MICHAEL G. ANN M. ETUX TE
116 STATE ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Parcel Number: 14-7
CAMA Number: 14-7
Property Address: 108 STATE ST

Mailing Address: PIRRI, ROBERT E. & JULIE A.
108 STATE ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809

Parcel Number: 14-8
CAMA Number: 14-8
Property Address: 69 COURT ST

Mailing Address: SCHOREN ENTERPRISES, LLC
Kimberly Walsh-Sorensen 20952 Monarch
Lane
Huntington Beach, CA 92646-5554

Parcel Number: 18-51
CAMA Number: 18-51
Property Address: 220 HIGH ST

Mailing Address: TOWN OF BRISTOL
10 COURT ST
BRISTOL, RI 02809



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February 26, 2024

Dear Members of Bristol’s Historic District Commission,

In hand I have the most current Historic Commission Agenda for the meeting scheduled for March 7, 2024. On this agenda, there is a proposal for permanent placement/accessory structure of a Santa House to the southern side of The Bristol Statehouse/Bristol County Courthouse (a registered 501C3); a different nonprofit, The James D. Rielly Foundation requests approval for an additional non-compliant accessory structure.

Taken from the Bristol Statehouse Foundation website: “The mission of the Bristol Statehouse Foundation embraces restoration, preservation and education. The restored and maintained building will serve as a site for the study, appreciation and enjoyment of our national, state and community heritage. Through exhibits, lectures, re-enactments and other programs, we will celebrate the essence of American history, our freedoms and our multi-cultural inheritance. We are committed to the youth of the town and region and specific activities will be dedicated towards bringing these values to them.” With that, a fictional Santa House is proposed to be permanently placed next to the important Bristol County Courthouse on the Town Common. Among the earliest directives of the Bristol founders in the Grand Articles of 1680 set aside a one-acre square for a Town Common which continues to be used and enjoyed today. The Courthouse is considered an outstanding Federal design, attributed to John Holden Greene or Russell Warren and served as one of the meeting places for the state's General Assembly from 1819 to 1852. Next to it and under the proposed Santa House are the numerous graves without distinct identification; although some of the stones have been moved across to the opposite side of Wood St., the exact location of all bodies has never been determined. In addition, four beautiful civic and religious buildings are on high street on the

common which were carefully considered before their construction in terms of their design and public benefit.

The Santa House is owned by a separate/private non-profit and was not vetted by the people of Bristol for consideration over its value to permanently take up space on the common. It violates countless historic preservation guidelines most noticeably its scale and design—it does not reflect the design of Bristol’s important architectural heritage. People in the historic district play by the rules of the HDC. This project undermines this process by slipping it in through a back door tactic—that it was supposed to be temporary and removed each year—but it is now deemed easier to leave it in place.

The historical significance of a Santa house does not exist however, the character of our historic district defines Bristol as we know it. In attendance to HDC meetings, often with clients, as “they” come to learn the importance of preservation, I have come to learn the significance/reasoning of maintaining and preserving history with historical replication of yesteryear with windows, siding, roofing materials etc., which include building and accessory structures at often an enormous expense to proprietors; setting precedence will be problematic for Bristol moving forward as the face of the historic district will change the face of Bristol.

In addition, I hope to remind the Historic District Commission of something not conjecture in nature: in the past, an unexpected happening caused the Clydesdale horses to scoot into the crowd at almost that very spot of the Santa House location; placement of any structure behind the Fourth of July viewing stand can present a safety issue for individuals who struggle with movement and accessibility as it is not uncommon to see our viewing stand to capacity. Although Bristol prepares for the worst, current day poses many issues uncommon to expected outcome.

I am extremely concerned for Bristol.

Please consider keeping Bristol safe and beautiful.

Thank you for time.

Rayona Clemens
33 Elmwood Dr.
Bristol, RI, 02809
401-641-2618

February 10, 2024

To the Members of the Bristol Historic District Commission,

I am writing this letter in support of the James D. Riley Foundation’s request to keep the Bristol Santa House on the Bristol Statehouse grounds indefinitely.

As we know, the Town Common was originally used for public gathering (as the site of the first meeting house). In the early 1800s, the First Baptist Church and Statehouse were added to the site, with Byfield and Wally Schools added later in the century. Today, the Town Common is used for civic, recreational, social, educational, and spiritual purposes – freely open to everyone.

The Bristol Santa House is enhancing the current use of the Town Common by welcoming families and individuals (those with and without special needs) to visit and enjoy an immersive holiday experience without cost. It is totally run by volunteers. As a program of the James D. Rielly Foundation, the Bristol Santa House serves as a space for everyone to make treasured memories, regardless of any physical, mental, or financial challenges.

The building itself is not trying to appear to be a historic structure, yet it does not detract from the historic charm of the setting. The use of the structure perfectly suits the current use of the Common as a public site, accessible to all. I believe that as the Bristol Santa House becomes even more well-known, it will continue to serve its host Town as a destination site and experience.

I personally have only been associated with the James D. Rielly Foundation for a short time, having joined the board in January. I was compelled to join this joyful group of volunteers after witnessing the magic of the Bristol Santa House firsthand with my grandson, and then learning that the Santa House was just one part of the Foundation’s work. The Rielly Foundation performs acts of kindness and charity throughout the year, often anonymously. I love the thought that their work will only increase over time, given encouragement and support. I hope the HDC will support the Foundation’s work by providing a stable home base on the Town Common.

Thank you for your time!
Sincerely,



Dyan Vaughan
Board Member, James D. Rielly Foundation
Bristol resident for 42 years
98 DeWolf Ave. Bristol, RI
401-297-7702

Dear Honorable Members of the Bristol Historic Commission,

The James D. Rielly Foundation humbly requests the permanent placement of the Bristol Santa House on the property of the Bristol Statehouse, located on the Bristol Town Common. While seeking “permanent” placement, we recognize that the structure is not a permanent structure and can be removed, if desired, without adversely impacting the site. This proposal outlines the multifaceted benefits and assurances provided by the James D. Rielly Foundation, emphasizing its significant impact on the community and alignment with the Commission's values of historic preservation and community engagement.

1. **Community Impact and Accessibility:** In the 2023 season alone, the Bristol Santa House welcomed over 4,100 visitors across 21 days in December, including 150 families with children with disabilities. This demonstrates the house's role as an inclusive and cherished holiday destination.
2. **Economic and Structural Considerations:** The Bristol Santa House's annual relocation is financially burdensome and physically detrimental to the structure. Establishing a stable location would alleviate these concerns, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the house.
3. **National Recognition and Local Tradition:** The Bristol Santa House has become an annual tradition attracting visitors from as far as Alaska and California and has also gained national media attention for its inclusive approach, particularly for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).
4. **Regulatory Compliance and Safety:** The structure is fully ADA compliant, meeting the Bristol building inspector and the State of Rhode Island standards. It adheres to all safety requirements, is fully insured, and will include hurricane ties and added security measures such as additional outdoor lighting and cameras to enhance safety for the Town Common and surrounding areas.
5. **Support and Assurance:** The proposal enjoys the support of the Bristol Statehouse Foundation Board of Directors and has garnered extensive public backing. Additionally, the James D. Rielly Foundation will establish an escrow account specifically for the removal and restoration of the site, should it ever be necessary, ensuring no financial burden falls on the town.
6. **Enhanced Community Service:** Granting permanent status to the Bristol Santa House would enable the James D. Rielly Foundation to expand its services throughout the year, further benefiting those in need, enhancing community engagement, and helping to serve as an economic engine for the town.
7. **Architectural and Historical Integrity:** The design of the Bristol Santa House, reminiscent of an 1890s train depot, complements the historical character of the Bristol Statehouse and the Town Common, respecting the aesthetic and cultural significance of its proposed permanent location.

In conclusion, the permanent establishment of the Bristol Santa House on the Bristol Statehouse property represents a unique opportunity to enrich the Bristol community, preserve and enhance local traditions, and provide a model of inclusivity and accessibility. We respectfully request the Bristol Historic District Commission's approval, confident that this initiative aligns with our shared goals of community service, public engagement, respect for Bristol's historical character, and desire for its economic growth.

Sincerely,

James D. Rielly Foundation

Appendices:

- Site Plan
- Letter from Bristol Statehouse Foundation Board of Directors
- Documentation of ADA compliance and building inspector approval
- Harmonizing New Construction with Historic Charm: The Bristol Santa House at the Bristol Statehouse
- Letters of support from community members and stakeholders

From: RAMPTina@yahoo.com <ramptina@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Feb 15, 2024 at 10:22 AM
Subject: Letter of support
To: Mike Reilly Santa <mjrielly@gmail.com>

Dear Town of Bristol

I am writing to you in support of a permanent location for the Santa House. The Santa house is an amazing experience for children of all abilities to have a Santa experience. This is not something that is usually open to them in any other circumstances. This house would also serve a year-round visit with Santa for those children who might not make it to their next Christmas .

I am the CEO and founder of an organization called RAMP real access, motivates progress. We educate and advocate for accessibility and inclusion and a businesses, events and organizations to ensure accessibility and inclusion to all.

For my work with my nonprofit, I was also appointed by President Biden to the United States Access Board. Disappointment for the architecture and transportation commission, I see across the country how valuable something like the Santa house is to the community.

This house is a one of a kind across the country, and Rhode Island is blessed to have it right here and beautiful Bristol. The Santa House is ADA compliant, meets local and state standards, and is absolutely RAMP real access, motivates progress approved. I am in 100% support of keeping the Santa house in this permanent location year-round.



Thank You,
Tina Guenette
RAMP real access motivates Progress
President / CEO / Founder
2023 RI person of the year
United States Access Board- Public Member
Governor’s Commission on Disability
Governors commission on Aging
2023 North America World Ambassador
USA SLICC Ambassador 2022
Cell-401-524-6256
[Email-RAMPTina@yahoo.com](mailto:RAMPTina@yahoo.com)
Website: www.RAMPisinclusion.com
Facebook / YouTube - RAMP real access motivates progress
Twitter - @RAMPisinclusion
Instagram - RAMP is inclusion
“Don’t just SIT there.... make a DIFFERENCE”

Harmonizing New Construction with Historic Charm

The Bristol Santa House at the Bristol Statehouse

The Bristol Santa House is currently situated on the grounds of the Bristol Statehouse (constructed in 1819). The Santa House is not a permanent structure, and while it is new construction, it is built in a style meant to convey historic charm (reminiscent of an 1890s train depot, compatible with the construction date of the Statehouse). The structure does not detract from the character of the adjacent/host property (the Bristol Statehouse) or the Town Common. Even though the Santa House is not new construction, we will address the points below pertaining to new construction situated near historic buildings and historic sites.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/new-construction-in-historic-properties.htm>

According to the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#) – Standard 9 in particular – and the [Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings](#), new construction needs to be built in a manner that protects the integrity of the historic building(s) and the property's setting. (Respect the overall character of the site.)

Related new construction – including buildings, driveways, parking lots, landscape improvements, and other new features – must not alter the historic character of a property. A property's historic function must be evident even if there is a change of use.

The historic character of the site is as a Town Common – a site for recreation, public, social, and civic activities open to all. The Bristol Santa House is free and open to the public, serving as a site for recreational, social, and charitable activities.

The location of new construction should be considered carefully in order to follow the setbacks of historic buildings and to avoid blocking their primary elevations. New construction should be placed away from or at the side or rear of historic buildings and must avoid obscuring, damaging, or destroying character-defining features of these buildings or the site.

The Bristol Santa House is currently situated at the side of the historic Bristol Statehouse and does not block or obscure any historic building.

Protecting the historic setting and context of a property, including the degree of open space and building density, must always be considered when planning new construction on a historic site. This entails identifying the formal or informal arrangements of buildings on the site and whether they have a distinctive urban, suburban, or rural character. For example, a historic building traditionally surrounded by open space must not be crowded with dense development.

In properties with multiple historic buildings, the historic relationship between buildings must also be protected. Contributing buildings must not be isolated from one another by the insertion of new construction.

The Santa House does not disrupt the historic relationship between the Statehouse and the two school buildings located on the same elevation.

As with new additions, the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of new construction on the site of a historic building must be compatible with those of the historic building. When visible, and in close proximity to historic buildings, the new construction must be subordinate to these buildings. New construction should also be distinct from the old and must not attempt to replicate historic buildings elsewhere on site and to avoid creating a false sense of historic development.

The Bristol Santa House is subordinate to its host organization's structure – the Bristol Statehouse. Features of the Bristol Santa House that complement the historic Bristol Statehouse include the following:

- *The body color of the Santa House closely approximates that of the Statehouse. (The body color of the Statehouse was selected by historic paint analysis.)*
- *The Statehouse features 3 colors: a tan body and brown trim, with white window trim and muntins. The Bristol Santa House features 3 colors: a tan body and red trim, with white window muntins.*
- *Both structures have cupolas and metal weathervanes.*
- *The simple balustrades of the Santa House porch mimic the balustrades of the central tower, cupola, and 2nd-floor window "porch" of the Statehouse.*
- *The arched doorways of the Santa House (side and front) mimic the central 2nd-floor main elevation arched window of the Statehouse.*
- *There is a gable on the center front elevation of each structure.*
- *Both structures have shutters and simple columns/posts on the front elevations.*

The examples below show how the Bristol Santa House is reminiscent of an 1890s train depot, compatible with the construction date of the Bristol Statehouse.



San Juan-By-The-Sea, CA Train Depot - 1890
Source: www.Etsy.com
https://i.etsystatic.com/14602514/r/il/d7d95c/1548562263/il_1140xN.1548562263_gox5.jpg



Menlo Park, CA Railroad Station - 1890
Source: www.wikimedia.org
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Menlo Park Railroad Station, 1890.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Menlo_Park_Railroad_Station,_1890.png)



Lowry, VA Train Depot - 1890

Source: www.ebay.com

<https://i.ebayimg.com/images/g/R6EAAOSwVFIUBjb2/s-l300.jpg>



Woonsocket, RI Train Depot - 1882

Source: Valley Breeze

<https://bloximages.newyork1.vip.townnews.com/valleybreeze.com/content/tncms/assets/v3/editorial/2/58/25887669-d933-5cf8-bb90-f654d5666b2a/612f84b839e69.image.jpg?resize=400%2C253>



Bristol Santa House

Proposed Site Plan

The Bristol Santa House provides a magical, inclusive experience focused on children with special needs and their families. We welcome children of all ages and abilities to share their holiday wishes and immerse in the Christmas spirit.

Our accessible, sensory-friendly environment creates a place where children with autism, Down syndrome, mobility impairments, and other developmental disabilities can comfortably visit Santa regardless of physical, mental, or economic challenges. Bringing the joy of Christmas to children with special needs and their families is the heart of our mission.

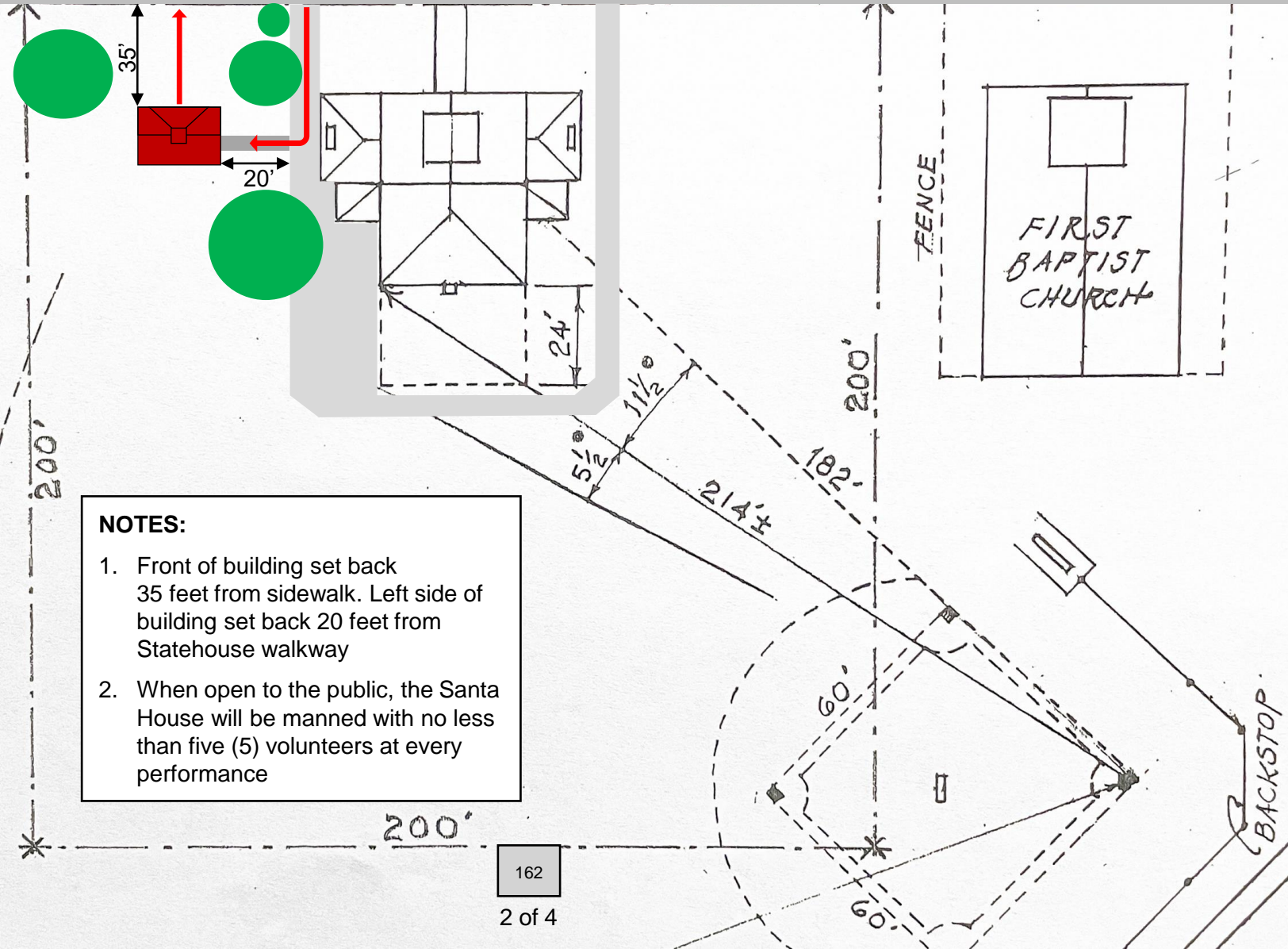
HIGH STREET

ACCESSIBLE
PARKING
SPACE



EXIT ENTER

SIDEWALK



NOTES:

1. Front of building set back 35 feet from sidewalk. Left side of building set back 20 feet from Statehouse walkway
2. When open to the public, the Santa House will be manned with no less than five (5) volunteers at every performance



NOT TO SCALE



NOT TO SCALE



July 31, 2023

Bristol Town Council
10 Court Street
Bristol, Rhode Island 02809

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm that the James D. Rielly Foundation ("JDRF") has the permission of the Bristol Statehouse Foundation ("BSF") to display the JDRF's "Santa House" on the BSF's property located at 240 High Street during the 2023 Christmas Season.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Lewis".

Chris Lewis
President
Bristol Statehouse Foundation

February 13, 2024

To the members of the Bristol Historic District Commission,

I am writing to express my support for the location of the Bristol Santa House to remain on the property of the Bristol State House throughout the year.

My support for this is two-fold. First, the continued moving of the building is damaging it with each move. It was not built to withstand the repeated rigors of lifting and moving from its current location to storage and back again. Each time it is moved, more damage occurs and when it was placed this past November none of the doors were operational and each entailed specialty work to make them operational albeit not to the extent as they were originally. My concern is that if moved again, it may make it impossible for the Bristol Santa House to be operational at all. I would hate to see that happen especially after the positive impact it has had the first two seasons.

Second, the impact that the House has on the local community and beyond is heartwarming to say the least, as it provides an opportunity for those children, and adults, with special needs to take part in something they could not prior to the existence of the Bristol Santa House. Leaving it would open up new opportunities for the James D Rielly Foundation to offer additional programs throughout the year to further enhance the lives of those with special needs as well as those without. Not only for Bristol residents, but well beyond the state from Maine to Alaska.

I hope that the HDC will support this unique and inclusive destination and allow the Bristol Santa House to remain where it now sits.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Ferrick
Board Member, James D Rielly Foundation
21 Sandy Lane
Bristol, RI





STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Senate Citation

Be it hereby known to all that the Rhode Island Senate hereby offers its sincerest congratulations to:

The Bristol Santa House

Whereas, the Bristol Santa House has become synonymous with the warmth, kindness, and generosity that characterizes the best of Rhode Island and its people, we hereby proclaim the Bristol Santa House as "Santa's Official Home" in the State of Rhode Island

The entire membership extends its very best wishes on this memorable occasion and expresses the hope for continued good fortune

Proposed this 4th day of December 2023 at Mount Hope Farm in Bristol Rhode Island

Dominick J. Ruggiero
DOMINICK J. RUGGERIO
President of the Senate

Linda Ujifusa
LINDA UJIFUSA
Senator D-11

Wally Felag, Jr.
WALLY FELAG
Senator D-10

Pam Lauria
PAM LAURIA
Senator D-32

Ryan W. Pearson
RYAN W. PEARSON
Majority Leader of the Senate