



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

CPCR.2020.009: To make a finding of blight for 1201 Porter Street and to recommend to the Richmond City Council a City Blight Abatement Plan to acquire the property to eliminate blight.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Director's Office, Department of Planning and Development Review
Date: May 4, 2020

PETITIONER

Mark A. Olinger, Director, Dept. of Planning & Development Review

LOCATION

1201 Porter Street

PROPERTY OWNER(S)

Mr. David B. Williams
Ms. Elma G. Williams
5270 Sheridan Lane
Richmond, VA

PURPOSE

To make a finding of blight for 1201 Porter Street and to recommend to the Richmond City Council a City Blight Abatement Plan to acquire the property to eliminate blight.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The spot blight abatement program is designed to address individual properties that are not maintained and have deteriorated in such a manner as to negatively affect the neighborhood. Under the program, the City is authorized, pursuant to a plan approved by City Council following a public hearing, to repair or acquire a property designated as blighted under the program. The City may recover the costs of repairing the property either from the owner or from the proceeds from the sale of the property. The program allows an owner of a blighted property to avoid any repair or other action by the City if an acceptable work plan for the elimination of blighted conditions is prepared and implemented.

The property at 1201 Porter Street is a two-story residential structure of 3,456 square feet of floor area constructed in 1876. This building has been unoccupied, neglected and left in a deteriorating condition for a number of years. Since 2016, the City has issued a number of violation notices and has attempted to work with the owners to develop an acceptable plan to repair the blighting conditions at this property, but the problems persist. Due to inaction by the owners, the exterior of the property has been compromised and exposed openings have had to be boarded by City contractors.

By letter dated 12/09/2019, the property owners David Williams & Elma G. Williams were notified of the following conditions of blight:

1. Property has been vacant since 1997;
2. The property has been designated as a derelict building since 2016;
3. Violations at the property have been abated by City contractors on three different occasions;
4. The chimney in the rear has collapsed and bricks are missing from the exterior of the structure;
5. Extensive roof damage exists allowing infiltration of water into the structure;
6. The headers on the structure are rotten, mortar is loose and falling out of the joints;
7. Cornices are rotten and falling away from the building;
8. Interior of the structure has sustained long term weather exposure; and
9. Windows and doors are missing from the structure, and structure is open to the weather, people and animals.

The standard for designating a property as blighted is found in Section 5-85 et seq. of the Richmond City Code. These provisions state that the “blighted” designation may be made if a property “endangers the public’s health, safety or welfare because the structure or improvement upon the property is dilapidated, deteriorated, or violates minimum health and safety standards.”

Staff finds that the property at 1201 Porter Street is blighted under section 5-120 of the Code of the City of Richmond and finds further that the owner of the blighted property has failed to present or implement an acceptable blight elimination work plan.

As a result, staff presents the following City Blight Abatement Plan for correcting the blighted conditions, which plan staff finds is consistent with city and state laws, reasonably designed to eliminate blighting conditions, and should be implemented:

- a. The property at 1201 Porter Street shall be acquired by the City.
- b. The City shall either demolish the property or, alternatively, renovate the property by either using contractors or selling the property so that it is restored to a condition in which it can be fully occupied.
- c. Should the City sell the Property, the Property shall be sold subject to a development agreement.

Therefore, staff recommends (i) the finding of blight and approval of the City Blight Abatement Plan as presented and (ii) the adoption of the Resolution.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property at 1201 Porter Street is a 7,095 SF (0.163 acre) parcel improved with a two-story residential structure of 3,456 SF of floor area constructed in 1876. The property is located at the southwest corner of West 12th Street and Porter Street, in the Manchester neighborhood.

Master Plan, Zoning, and Historic Designation

The subject property is zoned in the R-8 Urban Residential District, which allows single-family detached dwellings. The intent of the R-8 Urban Residential District is to preserve and enhance the established character of older urban residential neighborhoods in the inner areas of the City by ensuring that infill development, as well as redevelopment, will be consistent with the predominant existing development pattern of such neighborhoods.

The Downtown Plan includes the subject property in a General Urban Area. “The General Urban Area is characterized by medium-density, mixed-use development, distributed along medium-sized blocks. Old Manchester is an example of the general urban condition in Richmond. This district is characterized by single-family homes, sideyard houses, rowhouses, and small multifamily buildings, such as duplexes, triplexes, and quads. These buildings have variable setbacks and landscaping, and a limited mix of commercial and civic uses (p. 3.23).”

The property is located within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Commission of Architectural Review voted at its regularly scheduled meeting on February 25, 2020, to encourage the preservation of the Ingram House at 1201 Porter Street using historic rehabilitation tax credits and/or the tax abatement program.

Surrounding Area

Properties to the west, north, and east of the subject property are located within the same R-8 Urban Residential District as the subject property. Properties to the south are located in the R-63 Multi-Family Urban Residential District. A mix of single-family, two-family, multi-family, institutional land uses, as well as vacant land are present in the immediate vicinity of the subject property.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified adjacent property owners, residents, and the Manchester Alliance of the proposed resolution. No letters of support or opposition have been received.

Staff Contact: Mark A. Olinger, Director, Dept. of Planning & Development Review 804-646-6305

Attachments:

- 1. Location Map**
- 2. Spot Blight Abatement Authority Letter**
- 3. Specifications of Blight at 1201 Porter Street**
- 4. Photographs of 1201 Porter Street**
- 5. Resolution**