



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Subd. No. 2016-004: Preliminary approval for the Church Hill North Subdivision at 1611 North 31st Street (85 lots).

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: March 7, 2016

PETITIONER

Emily Phillips, The Community Builders, Inc.

PROPERTY OWNER

City of Richmond

LOCATION

1501 and 1611 North 31st Street (the Old Armstrong High School site)

PURPOSE

To authorize a subdivision to create 85 lots for the development of a residential community not to exceed three hundred (300) dwelling units on approximately 21.76 acres of land located at 1501 and 1611 North 31st Street.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject properties are located in the North Church Hill neighborhood on North 31st Street between its intersections with Kuhn Street and Nine Mile Road. The properties are approximately 21.76 acres in area and are improved with the old Armstrong High School building, a stormwater detention basin and park facilities, including athletic fields, basketball courts, tennis courts and playground equipment.

A Preliminary Community Unit Plan (CUP) was approved by City Council via Ord. No. 2015-5-30 on February 9, 2015 that authorized the properties to be developed as single-family attached, single-family detached dwellings and multi-family dwellings. The ordinance requires a minimum of 50 single-family dwellings and set a maximum of 250 multi-family dwelling units to be developed on the properties. The multifamily will be configured in three different building types; apartment buildings (max of 2 buildings and 110 units), stacked flats (max of 43 buildings and 86 units) and townhouses (minimum of 54, maximum of 80 buildings and units). On July 20, 2015, the Planning Commission approved a preliminary plat with 82 lots for the proposed development. Since that time, the applicant has adjusted the unit mix to provide for six more lots that would be developed for single-family home ownership opportunity and increased the number of lots to be created to 85. The total number of dwelling units to be developed on the site is proposed to decrease from 264 approved in July 2015 to 256 under this preliminary plat. This amended preliminary subdivision plat would create the individual lots for the development and dedicate the public rights-of-way to serve the development.

The Land Use Plan of the City of Richmond's Master Plan designates the subject properties for Public & Open Space land use. Primary uses in this land use category include "publicly owned and operated parks, recreation areas, open spaces, schools, libraries, cemeteries and other government and public service facilities (p. 135). This designation reflects how the properties are currently used. The proposal is primarily residential in character with a proposed density of approximately 14 units per acre.

The CUP ordinance required public street and infrastructure improvements to be made to serve the development. The residential lots will all be serviced by alleys and have parking accessed from the rear of the lots. On-street parking, curb, gutter, street trees and sidewalks will be located throughout the development. There are several rights-of-way that will be 49 feet in width as opposed to the minimum 50 feet required by the subdivision ordinance (Section 94-71) due to the existing topography. The Planning Commission will have to authorize this exception to the minimum requirement.

Staff finds that the proposed pattern of development is consistent with the historical development pattern in North Church Hill, including the proposed setbacks, the provision of alleys, front porches and the street sections with sidewalks and on-street parking. Staff also finds that the design, arrangement and character of the multifamily units as townhomes and stacked flats on bulk parcels is similar to that of the surrounding single-family development and allows for future subdivision to create single-family lots and the opportunity for home ownership. Preliminary approval of the subdivision plat is recommended provided that:

1. All applicable provisions of the Subdivision Ordinance shall be met, with the exception of Section 94-71.
2. All applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance shall be met.
3. All applicable provisions of the Church Hill North CUP Ord. No. 2015-5-30 and the Old Armstrong High School – Community Unit Plan Preliminary Plan dated December 18, 2014 shall be met.
4. All applicable provisions of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance shall be met.
5. All applicable City utility and drainage standards and specifications shall be met.
6. All applicable Building Codes shall be met.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject properties are located in the North Church Hill neighborhood on North 31st Street between its intersections with Kuhn Street and Nine Mile Road. The properties are approximately 21.76 acres in area and are improved with the old Armstrong High School building, a stormwater detention basin and park facilities, including athletic fields, basketball courts, tennis courts and playground equipment.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed development consists of 256 dwelling units, developed as single-family attached, single-family detached dwellings and multi-family dwellings.

Master Plan

The Land Use Plan of the City of Richmond's Master Plan designates the subject properties for Public & Open Space land use. Primary uses in this land use category include "publicly owned and operated parks, recreation areas, open spaces, schools, libraries, cemeteries and other government and public service facilities (p. 135). This designation reflects how the properties are currently used. The proposal is primarily residential in character with a proposed density of approximately 14 units per acre.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The CUP ordinance allows for the development of up to 300 dwelling units on the site. The ordinance requires a minimum of 50 single-family dwellings and set a maximum of 250 multi-family dwelling units. The ordinance allows the development to occur in phases as long as each phase includes a minimum of 16% of the units developed as single-family. The multifamily may be configured in three different building types and in no case shall the total number of multifamily dwelling units exceed 250; apartment buildings (max of 2 buildings and 110 units), stacked flats (max of 43 buildings and 86 units) and townhouses (minimum of 54, maximum of 80 buildings and units). The number of units in the stacked flats may decrease and be replaced by units in townhouses; however, the number of overall multifamily units cannot be more than 250.

The ordinance also authorizes a management and leasing office with community meeting space on individual parcel at the entrance to the development along 31st Street. Open space will be provided in several locations throughout the development.

The standards for the different unit and building types would be as follows:

	Multifamily Building	Buildings on Bulk Lots	Single Family	Community Center
Minimum Lot Area	-	-	1600 sq. ft.	17,500 sq.ft.
Minimum Lot Area per Unit	-	1200 sq. ft.	1600 sq. ft	-
Maximum FAR	1.2	-	-	-
Minimum Yard Setback	Front: 10 ft. Side: 7 ft. Rear: 7 ft.	Front: 10 ft. Side: 6 ft. Rear: 20 ft.	Front: 10 ft. Side: 6 ft. Rear: 20 ft.	Front: 10 ft. Side: 6 ft. Rear: 20 ft.
Maximum Lot Coverage	70%	40%	55%	25%
Overall Max Height (limited to 2 stories along 31 st Street)	3 Stories maximum	3 Stories maximum	Principal: 3 Stories maximum	2 Stories maximum
Off Street Parking	0.4 space/du	1 space/du	2 space/du	None
Minimum dwelling Size	600 sq. ft.	600 sq. ft.	-	-

The ordinance requires public street and infrastructure improvements to be made to serve the development. The residential lots would all be service by alleys and have parking accessed from the rear of the lots. On-street parking, curb, gutter, street trees and sidewalks are required throughout the development.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding properties to the east and west are also located in the R-5 zoning district. The properties to the west are occupied by single-family residential uses. Oakwood Cemetery is located to the east. The properties to the north along Nine Mile Road are located in the B-2 zoning district and are occupied by a mix of commercial uses. The properties to the south are located in the R-5 and R-53 zoning districts and are occupied by single-family residential uses.

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