



Application for **SPECIAL USE PERMIT**

Department of Planning and Development Review  
Land Use Administration Division  
900 E. Broad Street, Room 511  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
(804) 646-6304  
<http://www.richmondgov.com/>

Application is hereby submitted for: (check one)

- special use permit, new
- special use permit, plan amendment
- special use permit, text only amendment

**Project Name/Location**

Property Address: 1913, 1915 Grove Avenue Date: 04/04/2018  
Tax Map #: W0000855006 Fee: \$300.00  
Total area of affected site in acres: 0.107 acres

(See **page 6** for fee schedule, please make check payable to the "City of Richmond")

**Zoning**

Current Zoning: R-6

Existing Use: Church Facilities, Child Care Center/Day Nursery, and permitted ancillary uses

**Proposed Use**

(Please include a detailed description of the proposed use in the required applicant's report)  
Convert historic row houses currently owned by The Trustees of Tabernacle Baptist Church to have two apartments per row house for rental, keeping historical aspects of each row house as possible

Existing Use: Church Facilities

Is this property subject to any previous land use cases?

Yes  No  If Yes, please list the Ordinance Number: 2018-051

**Applicant/Contact Person:** Tabernacle Baptist Church, c/o Donna Soyars  
Company: Tabernacle Baptist Church  
Mailing Address: 1925 Grove Avenue  
City: Richmond State: VA Zip Code: 23220  
Telephone: (804) 921-0769 Fax: (804) N/A  
Email: soundsidedfs@gmail.com; severns@tbrichmond.org; shicks@williamsmullen.com

**Property Owner:** Trustees of Tabernacle Baptist Church  
If Business Entity, name and title of authorized signee: Kathleen McGraw, Trustee

(The person or persons executing or attesting the execution of this Application on behalf of the Company certifies that he or she has or have been duly authorized and empowered to so execute or attest.)

Mailing Address: 8294 Stumpy Road  
City: Hanover State: VA Zip Code: 23069  
Telephone: (804) 337-3997 Fax: ( ) N/A  
Email: mcgraw8294@comcast.net; shicks@williamsmullen.com

**Property Owner Signature:** Kathleen A. McGraw

The names, addresses, telephone numbers and signatures of all owners of the property are required. Please attach additional sheets as needed. If a legal representative signs for a property owner, please attach an executed power of attorney. **Faxed or photocopied signatures will not be accepted.**

**NOTE:** Please attach the required plans, checklist, and a check for the application fee (see Filing Procedures for special use permits)

## APPLICANT'S REPORT

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT: Amendment to Approved Ordinance 2018-051**  
**ADDRESSES: 1911-1915 Grove Avenue**

### INTRODUCTION

Tabernacle Baptist Church (TBC) has a remarkable 138-year history, being one of the largest Sunday Schools on the east coast in the 1940's through the 1960's. The two row houses adjacent to the church were deeded to TBC and its Trustees (1915 deeded on 9/4/1940; 1913 deeded on 2/1/1951) and used in TBC's heyday for Sunday School classes and church offices. Our educational building, aka the Williams Building, where the Tabernacle Child Care Center (TCCC) and other church educational classes occur, was dedicated on November 25, 1956. As the population move from the city to the suburbs occurred in the 1970's, the need for the two row houses to accommodate the large numbers of congregants dwindled. This lack of use and reduced resources resulted in the row houses receiving less attention that we would like over the years.

Our congregation has experienced a resurgence over the past ten years in both numbers of who are actively engaged in our ministry activities, as well as the amount of energy and effort applied to service to our community and the world at large. Yet, financial resources needed to achieve our goals in addressing the needs of some of our facilities remains one of the challenges we face. This is similar to stories of other urban churches in our area and our country in regards to the challenges we face and the financial resources available to us. TBC strives, as in the past, to be a vital partner in our neighborhood for service to its residents and how we address the physical appearance of the buildings we own. It is that partnership with our neighbors that allows us now to attempt to conserve and renovate the two row houses.

We are in a position to take on a project to conserve these historical buildings and convert them into apartments that will benefit both our community and our church. This renovation effort will require some relief from current City zoning requirements. It is our understanding that the current layout of the row houses and Williams Building on the referenced parcel occurred before the current R-6 zoning requirements were in place. We hope that this historical aspect will be given special consideration in the approval of this request.

The address for the parcels where these row houses are located is 1913 and 1915 Grove Avenue. Our Williams Building is located adjacent to the back of these two row houses. TBC received approval of ordinance 2018-051 on 3/26/18 concerning approval of SUP request SUP-023978-2017 providing relief from specific zoning requirements related to the size and location of our fenced playground at 1911 Grove Ave. and allowing for increased occupancy necessary to serve additional children for the Tabernacle Child Care Center located in the Williams Building, which occupies the rear portions of the parcels referenced herein. This SUP amendment request is being submitted to address requests related to the two row houses fronting Grove Avenue:

- additional R-6 zoning relief specific to the lot size and density requirements for 1913 and 1915 Grove Avenue,
- as well as a change in row house zoning type from single-family to two-family dwelling,
- and any other zoning restrictions applicable to the use of a portion of the parcels as rowhouses, as described herein, and as subdivided as shown on the enclosed plat.

We wish to keep the buildings as they exist in location and size (as described in the attached existing site plan), asking for relief of current zoning code requirements that ultimately will enable us to proceed with our planned conservation/renovation efforts.

TBC has made every effort to be prepared to implement our renovation plans upon obtaining the necessary approvals from the City of Richmond:

- TBC and its Trustees have been approved for a construction loan that will be used for this renovation project.
- We have met with our neighbors to introduce this conservation concept at a high level, and we have received very positive feedback regarding our desire to conserve these historic buildings.
- TBC has communicated with the Fan District Association (FDA), and we plan to continue this open communication regarding our plans as the project moves forward.
- Our selected contractor for row house renovation is ready to proceed with construction after TBC receives the approval of this amended SUP request, approval of a request for parcel split, and other building permit requirements.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

1913 and 1915 Grove Avenue are currently listed as Parcel #W0000855006, zoned as R-6. The tax parcel measures 59.41' in width at the Grove Avenue front and 179.5 feet in length. Our records indicate that the single tax parcel consists of two separate, subdivided parcels. The two row houses on provide a street appearance that has not changed over the years, with the typical front porch and small landscaping area that measure approximately 15.5' from house front to sidewalk. The two-story brick houses with basement measure as follows: 1913 Grove Ave. = 91.43' in length and 29.14' in width (though variable); 1915 Grove Ave. = 91.43' in length and 26.25' in width (though variable). The two row houses include a sidewalk measuring 3.5' wide between them starting at Grove Avenue, varying to 9.3' at the back of the houses. The row house identified as 1913 Grove Avenue is bordered on the east side by the church's walkway into the asphalt playground area, with that sidewalk measuring 3.5' feet in width. Row House 1915 Grove is bordered on the west side by the walkway to TBC's church offices, 10' feet in width at the Grove Avenue front and varying only slightly to the back of the row house.

Both row houses are adjacent to the Williams Building, comprising the entirety of the rear yards of the row house parcels, with an existing passageway from the 1913 row house into the Williams Building and a passageway from the basement of the 1915 row house into the main church building. Simultaneously with this proposed amendment to the existing SUP, TBC intends to subdivide the rowhouse parcels to (a) separate the Williams Building from the row houses, and limit each row house parcel to the footprint of each row house, as depicted on the enclosed plat.

The Williams Building is located on the remainder of this parcel of row house parcels, measuring approximately 59' wide (varies slightly for access alley between the Williams Building and the main church building) and 88.32' in length. The exterior of the three-story Williams Building is comprised of painted cinder block.

Secured parent/child access to the TCCC classrooms is provided via a main entrance located at the rear of the sidewalk separating the row houses from Grove Avenue. Street parking is used as needed

by all parents for drop-off and pick-up. Staff parking is available in the church's Granby Street parking lot.

Alley access to the Williams Building location is available for emergencies if needed. Additional egress doors are also available for child safety and safe access to the adjacent playground area.

The main church offices can be accessed from the entrance separate from TCCC entrance from Grove Avenue via the walkway that is on the west border of 1915 Grove Avenue. Parking is available in the church's parking lot on Meadow Street, as well as on the street as marked by applicable signage.

**Existing Zoning:** R-6

**Master Plan Designation:** Single Family – Medium Density

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant requests that the amended SUP permit Tabernacle Baptist Church (TBC) relief from the requirements and restrictions applicable to the parcels pursuant to the current R-6 zoning classification as provided under the City of Richmond Zoning Ordinance to allow for both row houses to be used as two-family dwellings, enabling TBC to convert the two row houses into two apartments per row house. Plans provided for each row house reflect our desire to construct within each row house (i) a single two-bedroom, two bathroom apartment and (ii) a single three-bedroom, three-bathroom apartment.

The applicant also requests that the SUP permit an exception to parcel density requirements for the current R-6 zoning, keeping the buildings as currently located on the current parcel and in existing footprint, size, and exterior style, as may be subdivided pursuant to the enclosed plat. TBC intends to submit a request to subdivide and consolidate the current parcels into three separate parcels, assuming approval of this SUP request, enabling us to separate each of the row houses and the Williams Building into individual lots. We recognize that this request will require an exception to current density requirements, noting that the row houses and the Williams Building will occupy the vast majority of each separate lot where they would be located and on lot sizes that are less than current code for two-family dwellings. TBC requests a waiver of R-6 zoning requirements related to the size of side and rear yards and related restrictions as applied to each newly created parcel.

Understanding that the row house conversion to apartments will require specific steps to address fire code requirements, TBC proposes that a two-hour fire wall be placed at the back of the row houses, adjacent to the Williams Building. This will require that:

- We relocate our current TCCC main entrance to be located on the east side of the Williams Building, utilizing a current exit door towards the playground. TBC will relocate the shed that would present a potential obstacle to that new entrance, as well as relocate the sandbox that borders the 1913 row house next to the shed. This new entrance will remain a secured entrance, with all parents using Grove Avenue for parking for drop-off and pick-up of their children. They will use the sidewalk access on the east side of the 1913 row house to access the new entrance.
- Plans include the new fire wall eliminating any direct access from the row houses to the Williams Building and to the church. The current access points will be cut off by the construction of the fire wall.
- The windows on the west side of the 1913 row house will be closed with masonry construction to also provide fire protection.

TBC will include the sidewalk access to the playground on the east side of 1913 Grove Avenue as part of the Williams Building lot in connection with the subdivision of the parcels. This access can be used to provide access for the apartment tenants to take their trash receptacles to the 20' alley behind the church's playground and the Williams Building for regularly scheduled City trash collection. We also plan to provide covered trash receptacle storage, convenient to each row house in the existing sidewalk access between the two row houses.

Apartment tenants will be provided one free parking space per apartment in our church-owned lot on Meadow Street to help alleviate any concerns related to parking availability on the street near the row houses.

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

The proposed use is appropriate for the subject property and it meets the criteria set forth in the Charter of the City of Richmond that the use will not (i) be detrimental to the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community involved; (ii) tend to create congestion in streets, roads, alleys and other public ways and places in the area involved; (iii) create hazards from fire, panic or other dangers; (iv) tend to cause overcrowding of land and an undue concentration of population; (v) adversely affect or interfere with public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, water supplies, sewage disposal, transportation or other public requirements, conveniences and improvements; or (vi) interfere with adequate light and air.

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