



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2025-272: To authorize the special use of the property known as 2301 Fairmount Avenue for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 17 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions. (7th District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: January 6, 2026

PETITIONER
Baker Development Resources

LOCATION
2301 Fairmount Avenue

PURPOSE

The applicant requests to authorize the reuse of a building formerly occupied as a church for a multifamily dwelling, containing up to 17 units. Multifamily dwellings are not a permitted use in the R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District. A Special Use Permit is therefore necessary to proceed with this request.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the subject property is designated as Neighborhood Mixed-Use on the Future Land Use Map in the Richmond 300 Master Plan. Large multifamily buildings (10+ units) are cited as a secondary use for this designation.

Staff finds that the proposed use is consistent with Goal 3, Objective 3.2 of the City's Master Plan, which identifies the need to encourage adaptive reuse to reduce the demolition of historic buildings.

Staff concludes that the proposed ordinance conditions substantially satisfy the safeguards established in the City Charter concerning the granting of Special Use Permits. Specifically, staff finds that the proposed use would not be detrimental to the general welfare of the community involved and would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Fairmount neighborhood on the corner of Fairmount Avenue and North 23rd Street. The property is currently a 6,600 sq. ft. (.15 acre) parcel of land improved with a former church building

Proposed Use of the Property

The adaptive reuse of a church building into 17 dwelling units. The proposed density is 17 units upon 0.15 acres or 113 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Neighborhood Mixed-Use, which is defined as existing or new highly walkable urban neighborhoods that are predominantly residential with a small, but critical, percentage of parcels providing retail, office, personal service, and institutional uses.

Development Style: These areas feature a variety of building types that are close to one another and create a unified street wall. The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas vary depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics.

Future development should generally complement existing context. Setbacks, plazas, and parks create a sense of place and community gathering areas. New developments on larger parcels continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity within the neighborhood and to adjacent neighborhoods. In historic neighborhoods, small-scale commercial uses exist today or should be allowed to reestablish. In new neighborhoods, small scale commercial buildings should be introduced.

Ground Floor: Regardless of use, buildings should engage the street with features such as street-oriented façades with windows and door openings along street frontages. Appropriate setbacks, open space, front porches, elevated ground floors, and other features that provide a sense of privacy should be provided for residential uses.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveways are prohibited on Priority and Principal Street frontages. Vehicular access to parcels should use alleys wherever possible. Parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings.

Intensity: Building heights are generally two to four stories. Buildings taller than four stories may be found along major streets. Parcels are generally between 1,500 and 5,000 sq. ft.

Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), and open space.

Secondary Uses: Large multi-family buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential. The following features of the proposed development do not comply with the current zoning regulations:

Section 30-412.1. – Permitted principal uses

Multifamily dwellings are not a permitted use

If approved, this special use permit would impose development conditions, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily dwelling containing up to 17 dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No off-street parking will be required for the Special Use.
- No fewer than eight bicycle parking spaces shall be provided on the Property.
- The height of the Special Use shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements, including walkways, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding area is a mix of residential and commercial uses.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the New Visions Civic League, area residents and property owners. A sign was posted on the property. Staff has received no letters to date regarding the proposal.

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