



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2022-192: To authorize the special use of the property known as 2300 Fairmount Avenue for the purpose of a building containing an office use and up to four multifamily dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 5, 2022

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources on behalf of 2300 Fairmont RVA LLC

LOCATION

2300 Fairmount Avenue

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 2300 Fairmount Avenue for the purpose of a building containing an office use and up to four multifamily dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is proposing the adaptive reuse of a former church building to include office use and up to four multifamily dwelling units. The subject property is located in the R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential Zoning District, in which the proposed office and multifamily uses are not permitted uses. Therefore a special use permit is requested.

Staff finds the proposed special use permit would be consistent with the Richmond 300 Master Plan which recommends Neighborhood Mixed Uses for the property. This designation calls for highly walkable urban neighborhoods with a small, but critical, percentage of parcels providing retail, office personal service, and institutional uses.

The proposed use is also located in the 25th Street and Nine Mile Neighborhood Node which is described as a “place that can accommodate additional growth in jobs and population.”

Staff finds that with the ordinance conditions the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, are met. 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.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The 6,250 square foot subject property is located on the northeast corner of Fairmont and North 23rd Street. An Alley runs along the rear of the property and connects to North 23rd Street. The

property is improved with a 3,372 square foot single-story building originally constructed as a church. City records indicate that the building is noted as being in very poor condition for its age.

Proposed Use of the Property

Office use and up to four multifamily dwelling units within the existing building and proposed addition to the building.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property and neighborhood as Neighborhood Mixed Use. This land use category is described 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.

The subject property is also located in the 25th Street and Nine Mile Neighborhood Node. The Vision for the node is: The intersection of N. 25th Street and Nine Mile Road is located at the

center of the East End, consisting of commercial and institutional uses. The long-envisioned grocery store has been realized in the form of the Market at the 25th which is located on formerly-vacant land on the north side of the intersection. Improvements to the intersection in the form of a new roundabout have been recently completed. Institutional uses that help anchor the Node, which are in addition to the commercial uses along N. 25th Street and Nine Mile Road, include the East End Library, the J. Sargent Reynolds Culinary School, and the Richmond Community Hospital run by Bon Secours. In the future, this Node can be an even better version of itself, continuing to serve the commercial and civic needs of East End residents. Its location at the center of East End can be a bridge between the neighborhoods to the north and the Union Hill and Church Hill neighborhoods to the south. Vacant parcels that exist along the commercial corridor are developed into mixed-use and commercial uses that front the street. Underutilized parcels with non-historic structures and parking lots fronting the street are redeveloped. Vacant residentially-zoned parcels within proximity to the intersection of 25th and Nine Mile are developed into residential uses that are complementary to the existing residential neighborhood and increase the population of the area to help support future commercial uses in the area.

Primary Next Steps

- Rezone the Community Mixed-Use areas of this Node along N. 25th Street and Nine Mile Road, which are currently zoned “B-2 Community Business District”, in alignment with the Future Land Use Plan to allow for a mix of uses and increased residential density by-right (see Goal 1 and Goal 14).
- Implement design standards to create a high-quality and well-designed neighborhood Node and explore the creation of signature public art (see Goal 4 and Goal 17).
- Implement high-frequency transit along N. 25th Street and Nine Mile Road (see Goal 8).
- Improve pedestrian and bike infrastructure to/from this Node – specifically improving the streetscape along Nine Mile Road to tie in more seamlessly with the existing streetscape along N. 25th Street (see Goal 4 and Goal 8).

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

Zoning Administration reviewed this request and recommended approval without comment.

If adopted, the Special Use Permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a building containing an office use and up to four multifamily dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) If the uses listed in subsection 3(a) are operated in such a manner as to be classified as a social service delivery use, a management program shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator prior to such operation.
- (c) No off-street parking shall be required for the Special Use.

(d) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed two stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(e) All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

(f) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

(g) Signs on the Property shall be limited to (i) signs permitted in all districts, pursuant to section 30-505 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and (ii) signs permitted in the R-63 District, pursuant to section 30-507.1 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended

Surrounding Area

The surrounding neighborhood contains a mix of residential, commercial, office and institutional land uses. All surrounding properties are within the same R-6 District as the subject property. Parcels farther east, at the intersection of Nine Mile Road, North 25th Street, and Fairmount Avenue are in the B-5 Mixed-Use Business District.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners, as well as the Unity Civic League. Staff has received no letters of opposition or support.

Staff Contact: David Watson, Senior Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-1036