



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-176: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1213 Porter Street for the purpose of a church, or other place of worship, and a multifamily dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: June 20, 2023

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

1213 Porter Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1213 Porter Street for the purpose of a church, or other place of worship, and a multifamily dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize a lot split for an existing institutional use and the conversion of a second building to a multi-family use. The parcel is within an R-8 Urban Residential District. While the uses are permitted (multi-family is allowed as a conditional use), the proposed multi-family building does not meet the current front yard, side yard, rear yard, and lot coverage for a multi-family building. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposal would be consistent with the recommendations of the City's Master Plan pertaining to the varied housing types within the Neighborhood Mixed-Use land use category, including the varied lot sizes and housing types.

Staff further finds that the proposal would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area due to the location of the units, which have a walkability score of "70-89" which, according to the City's Richmond 300 Plan, makes the site a "Very walkable". This level of walkability offers alternatives to vehicles and, therefore, may reduce parking demand. (p.113)

Staff further finds that the proposed use would be consistent with the historic pattern of development in the area which is a mix of multi-family, two-family, single-family attached, and detached dwellings.

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 request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Manchester neighborhood on Porter Street between West 12th and West 13th Streets. The property is currently a 20,460 sq. ft. (.47 acre) parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use of the property is a church, or other place of worship, and a multifamily building, with a proposed development of approximately 6 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject property for Neighborhood Mixed-Use which is viewed as "...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 multifamily buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-8 Urban Residential District. This proposal does not currently meet the use standards and certain dimensional requirements for the R-8 district, warranting special use permit.

Additional conditions will be imposed by the amended ordinance, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a church, or other place of worship, and a multifamily dwelling, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The multifamily dwelling shall not contain more than three dwelling units.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the Special Use, the establishment of two lots, substantially as shown on the Plat, shall be accomplished by obtaining the necessary approvals from the City and recording the appropriate deeds and plats among the land records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond.

Surrounding Area

Surrounding properties are located in the same R-8 district as the property in question. Single-family residential is the dominant land-use in the vicinity.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$71,223 per year. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$21,367 per year, or \$1,781 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden.

Neighborhood Participation

The City notified area residents, property owners, and the Manchester Alliance neighborhood association about this application. The City has received two letters of support from nearby residents.

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