

SUBJECT: A report and recommendation on a zone change request for property located at 941-951 Monastery Street the Mt. Adams neighborhood from Single Family (SF-2) to Residential Multi-Family (RM-0.7).

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Owner:

Matthew Fenick
Metropolitan Design and Development
1077 Celestial Street #10
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Agent:

Tom Tepe
Keating Muething & Klekamp
1 East 4th Street #1400
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Purpose:

To allow for the development of a six unit condominium building with one curb cut.

BACKGROUND:

Metropolitan Design and Development owns six parcels at 941-951 Monastery Street, which comprise 10,463 square feet (Exhibit A). The current zoning allows for five single-family structures, each requiring an individual curb cut. The property owner/developer is requesting the zone change to allow for six condominium units in one building that would require one curb cut for off-street covered parking located on the first level of the structure (Exhibit B).

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Adjacent Land Use and Zoning:

North: OG, SF-2; office (Hixson) and vacant land.

East: OG, RM 0.7; single and multi-family.

South: RM 0.7; single and multi-family.

West: DD, RM 0.7; office (Hixson) and vacant land.

Existing Plans:

Mt Adams Hillside Urban Design and Renewal Plan, adopted by City Council in 1990, recommends R-6 zoning on the site (Figure 8 of the Plan). The R-6 zoning designation permitted high-density, multi-family uses, which required a minimum of 1,000 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit for "regular dwelling units." The plan specifically recommends 3-4 story tall buildings for the property south of the Oregon Street steps and assumes that existing buildings on site would remain.

The Scenic View Study, approved by City Council in 2007, identifies the subject property to exist approximately 500 feet outside of the nearest view corridor, the Ida Street Bridge View Corridor.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Planning Department staff conducted a public conference on this zone change request on October 2, 2007. Parties in attendance were Matthew Fenick, Brad Franz and Brian Folke representing the developer/property owner; Shannon Barrow and Richard La Jeunesse representing Hixson, an adjacent property owner; Eric Russo representing the Hillside Trust; and representing the Planning Department were Charles Graves, Director; Steve Briggs, Senior City Planner and Jennifer Walke, City Planner. Matthew Fenick explained the proposed development. He stated that the intention of the design was to accommodate a maximum building height of 35 feet across from the intersection of Monastery and Oregon Streets. The building height would decrease as the elevation rose eastwardly up Monastery Street in order to respect views, instead of stepping the buildings up the hill, which would result in a series of buildings each 35 feet in height from the front elevation and would be taller than the proposed structure. He noted that under the current zoning, five single-family homes would require five separate curb cuts. By providing a condominium development, the developers are limiting the curb cuts to one, thereby saving six parking spaces on Monastery Street, where on-street parking is in high demand. Richard La Juenesse, representing Hixson, noted that design quality, landscape buffering and height are important factors that should be addressed, especially along the rear of the proposed development, which is the façade facing Hixson's office complex. Eric Russo, Hillside Trust, noted that screening of the piers should occur to protect the

view from Hixson and downtown. He also noted that the 35 ft height elevation along the Monastery Street was an acceptable height.

Planning staff received three letters regarding the proposed zone change (Exhibit C, D, E). Harold L. Anness, Esq. the property owner across the street from the proposed development wrote in support of the zone change; the Hillside Trust wrote in support of the development as proposed, and the Mt. Adams Civic Association wrote that it does not object to the zone change.

ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED CHANGE:

The proposed development is consistent with recommendations made in the Mt. Adams Hillside Urban Design and Renewal Plan for multi-family development, but is less dense than what was permitted under the R-6 zoning designation recommended for the site in the Plan. The proposed development is one unit denser than what is permitted under the current zoning. However, the configuration of the units limits the building height to a maximum of 35 ft on the front elevation and provides off-street parking for residents that reduces the number of curb cuts from five (that are required under the current zoning designation SF-2) to one.

The RM 0.7 is the most dense residential district and for multi-family developments and does not mandate a maximum height for multi-family units. However, this district would require the least number of variances needed to accommodate the development as proposed, which is less dense and less tall than what is stipulated by the RM 0.7. The RM 0.7 is prevalent in this portion of the neighborhood. The subject site is adjacent to RM 0.7 designations on the east, south and west sides. The proposed heights and design are supported by adjacent residents as well as the Hillside Trust. The subject property also exists within a Hillside Overlay District, which mandates a public Hearing with the Hearing Examiner and provides an added layer of oversight to ensure that the development is built as proposed.

CONCLUSION:

1. The proposed zone change promotes homeownership in the City of Cincinnati.
2. The proposed zone change will allow for a reduction in the number of curb cuts, thereby minimizing disturbance to off-street parking spaces.
3. The proposed zone change will accommodate a design that preserves views in the neighborhood.
4. The proposed change is consistent with recommendations made in the Mt. Adams Hillside Urban Design and Renewal Plan.
5. The proposed development will have an added layer of oversight to ensure that it is developed as proposed through the mandatory hearing for new developments in the Hillside District.

RECOMMENDATION:

Planning Department staff recommends that City Planning Commission take the following actions:

APPROVE the zone change request for property located at 941-951 Monastery Street the Mt. Adams neighborhood from Single Family (SF-2) to Residential Multi-Family (RM-0.7).

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED:

Jennifer K. Walke
City Planner

Charles C. Graves, III
Director, City Planning Department