



March 29, 2024

Project Name: The Residences at Fairview

Address: 484 Fairview Avenue

Narrative: Church Conversion to Residential Apartments

The underlying land for the proposed development was home to the Quidnick Baptist Church. Over the past few years, church attendance has steadily decreased and while the church has continued to hold events such as prayer meetings, bible studies and music ministry events, there were as few as eight members that regularly attended Sunday morning services.

We worked with the church board members to find a smaller location that will best suit their needs and they were able to relocate nearby in West Warwick. In January we closed on the property and are excited to propose the conversion of the church building located at 484 Fairview Avenue, Coventry, RI 02816 to eighteen (18) residential dwelling units. There is an existing three unit multi-family dwelling on the property so there will be a total of 21 residential units.

Adaptive reuse

This church conversion into residential use is permitted by right, under new RI State Law, Adaptive reuse, enacted by the General Assembly effective January 1, 2024. The Act relating to Towns and Cities- Zoning Ordinances was introduced on March 3, 2023 by State Representatives Alzate, Shekarchi, Tanzi, Donovan, Shallcross, Smith and McNamara to amend Sections 45-24-21 and 45-24-37 of the General Laws in Chapter 45-24 entitled “Zoning Ordinances.”

After review of the new state law, Adaptive Re-use and specific amendments to the Zoning Ordinances, we assert confidently the conversion of the religious facility located at 484 Fairview Avenue, Coventry, RI 02816 into residential dwelling units is permitted by right under the adaptive reuse statute which states the following:

(h) (1) Adaptive reuse. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, adaptive reuse for the conversion of any commercial building, including offices, schools, religious facilities, medical buildings, and malls into residential units or mixed use developments which include the development of at least fifty percent (50%) of the existing gross floor area into residential units, shall be a permitted use and allowed by specific and objective provisions of a zoning ordinance, except where such is prohibited by environmental land use restrictions recorded on the property by the state of Rhode Island department of environmental management or the United States Environmental Protection Agency preventing the conversion to residential use.

(i) The specific zoning ordinance provisions for adaptive reuse shall exempt adaptive reuse developments from off-street parking requirements of over one space per dwelling unit.

(ii) Density. (A) For projects that meet the following criteria, zoning ordinances shall allow for high density development and shall not limit the density to less than fifteen (15) dwelling units per acre:

(I) Where the project is limited to the existing footprint, except that the footprint is allowed to be expanded to accommodate upgrades related to the building and fire codes and utilities; and

(II) The development includes at least twenty percent (20%) low- and moderate-income housing; and

(III) The development has access to public sewer and water service or has access to adequate private water, such as a well and and/or wastewater treatment system(s) approved by the relevant state agency for the entire development as applicable.

(B) For all other adaptive reuse projects, the residential density permitted in the converted structure shall be the maximum allowed that otherwise meets all standards of minimum housing and has access to public sewer and water service or has access to adequate private water, such as a well, and wastewater treatment system(s) approved by the relevant state agency for the entire development, as applicable, the density proposed shall be determined to meet all public health and safety standards.

(iii) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, for adaptive reuse projects, existing building setbacks shall remain and shall be considered legal nonconforming, but no additional encroachments shall be permitted into any nonconforming setback, unless otherwise allowed by zoning ordinance or relief is granted by the applicable authority.

(iv) For adaptive reuse projects, notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, the height of the existing structure, if it exceeds the maximum height of the zoning district, may remain and shall be considered legal nonconforming, and any rooftop construction shall be included within the height exemption

Section 2. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2024.

This act provides the adaptive reuse for the conversion into residential shall be a permitted use and allowed, aligning with the updated provisions of the zoning ordinance. Presently, there are twenty (23) parking spaces on site which meets the minimum off-street parking requirement of 1 space per unit. The church will be converted to six (6) studio apartments and (12) one-bedroom apartments. The residential apartments are focused on work force housing and will be priced to support moderate income housing. The proposed development will adhere to the 20% affordable housing requirement that will result in five (5) deed restricted units.

This said property has access to town sewers, and as a result, we have submitted our application containing required engineer plans to the town engineer for approval. The sewer committee board and town council have both granted the sewer connection approval in December 2023.

All proposed units will adhere to the minimum housing standards. The building will be equipped with an advanced, state-of-the-art fire alarm and sprinkler system to ensure life safety. The plans for architecture, life safety, fire alarm and sprinkler suppression have all been submitted to their respective town departments.

Our goal is to create modern, comfortable living spaces that will attract and retain tenants. Moreover, we will maintain and preserve the church's original architectural features such as the bell tower, while also making necessary modifications for residential use. This development serves as a means of cherishing our history, while growing simultaneously.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We are very excited for this project.

Respectfully Yours,

Tyler Leonard
Synergy Capital, LLC