

To: Auburn Planning Board
From: Megan Norwood, City Planner II, Request for Determination that the St. Louis Church be Designated as a Building of Community Significance for the Purposes of Adaptive Reuse Development Application
Date: September 10, 2019

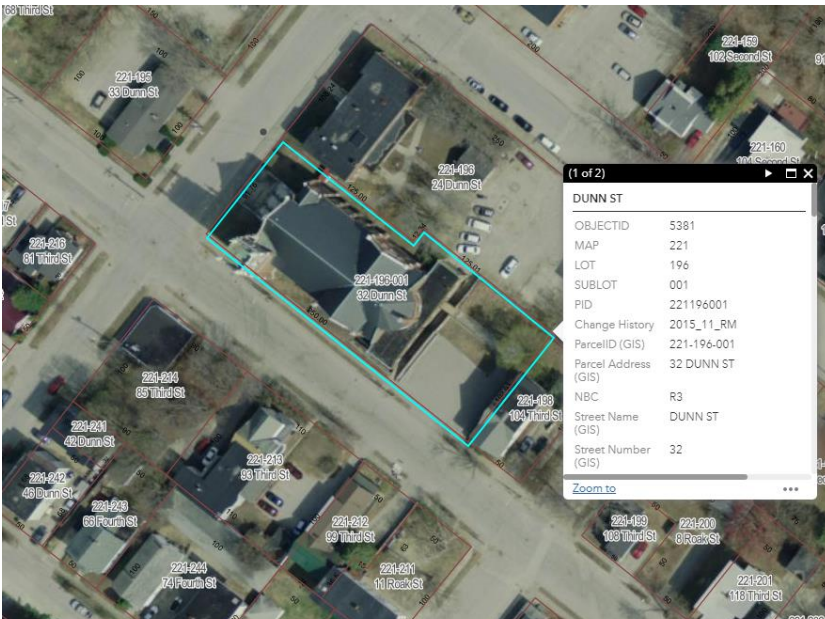


Figure 1: Aerial Image of 32 Dunn Street

I. PROPOSAL –

The City of Auburn is requesting a determination that the St. Louis Church be designated a building of community significance for the purposes of Adaptive Reuse, pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVI Division 3, Special Exception, Sec. 60-1335 of the Auburn Code of Ordinances.

The City (as the current owner of the Church) needs this designation to provide opportunities to reinvest in the church to attract prospective buyers. The St. Louis Church is located in the Multi-Family Urban Zoning District and a prospective buyer is contemplating its use for interfaith Christian worship, leasable office space, a community center, and possibly an art gallery, bookshop and café.

Adaptive reuse of structures of community significance is a Special Exception in all zoning districts in the City. The ordinance defines “Adaptive Reuse” as a Special Exception *permitting a structure of community significance to be used for one or more purposes, not otherwise permitted in the district in which the building is located, but which the Planning Board has determined will contribute to the preservation of a structure of community significance*, including without limitation, the following uses:

- (1) Bed and breakfast homes or inns;
- (2) Restaurants, diners or cafes;
- (3) Art studios and galleries;
- (4) Performing arts centers;
- (5) Medical and dental clinics;
- (6) Office space;
- (7) Municipal and government uses; and
- (8) Retail sales as an accessory use

The Multi-Family Urban Zoning District allows for Professional Offices (in historic buildings), Churches or Temples as Special Exception uses. However, the district on its own merits does not permit Cafés or recreational uses of land intended or designed for public use (land use most closely aligned with a Community Center).

The Adaptive Reuse Special Exception grants the Planning Board the authority to review and approve land uses not allowed in the underlying Zoning District but only if the Board deems the structure to be a “structure of community significance.” The St. Louis Church influenced adopting the Adaptive Reuse policy and Staff supports this use of the property. The alternative would likely mean demolition of a building with historical and aesthetic contributions to the community.

The decision to allow n worship, office space, community center and café in this building will need to be based on the premise that permitting these uses will contribute to the preservation of a structure of community significance.

II. DEPARTMENT REVIEW –

- a. *Police* – No comments.
- b. *Auburn Water and Sewer* – The water service to the building will need to be upgraded based on the proposed uses.
- c. *Fire Department* – Due to the proposed mixed use and change in occupancy requirements, a review by the State Fire Marshall Office will be necessary to confirm the structural integrity of the building. In addition, any use of the building other than a place of worship which is essentially grandfathered, would require a sprinkler system and a working fire alarm system regardless of whether or not it is an Adaptive Reuse.
- d. *Engineering* – No comments.
- e. *Public Services* – No comments.
- f. *Economic and Community Development* – The structure is a legally nonconforming structure in the MFU District. With the Adaptive Reuse Special Exception, the Planning Board has the ability to grant uses that are not otherwise permissible in the Zoning District. The ordinance does require Performance Standards for these uses, regardless of which district they are proposed to be located in and the Planning Board still has to review a proposal for Adaptive Reuse in accordance with Sec. 60-45, Site Plan/Special Exception Review. The primary Performance Standards being: Off-Street Parking & Loading and Access Management.

An example of standard parking requirements for sample uses are as follows:

Christian Worship – One per each five seats or equivalent bench seating capacity

Professional Office – One per 200 square feet of gross floor area

Community Center – (*Recreational Uses – Swimming Pool & Skating Rink*) requires one per 100 square feet of gross area per facility.

Café – (*Restaurant*) requires one per each three seats of equivalent bench seating capacity.

For mixed use structures, the parking requirement per *Sec. 60-608* is the sum of various uses computed separately unless it can be demonstrated to the Planning Board’s satisfaction that the need for parking by each occurs at different times. This may be the case here depending upon hours of operation proposed for each of the different uses. For example, what are the hours proposed for services at the Church vs. Professional Offices? Before granting a Special Exception, the Planning Board would need to say a layout of the inside of the building and the different types of uses as well as an idea of the hours of operation to be able to evaluate the parking.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the area calls for High Density Neighborhood Conservation (HDNC) which encourages reinvestment in existing structures and densities, by allowing flexible parking requirements, and besides residential, allows for community services and government uses.

III. PLANNING BOARD ACTION – When a proposed project is reviewed, findings for approval of Sections 60-1277 and 60-1336, and associated ordinances, would be required:

A. Site Plan Review, Section 60-1277: The board shall require evidence of the following:

1. *Does the site plan protect adjacent areas against detrimental or offensive uses on the site by provision of adequate surface water drainage, buffers against artificial and reflected light, sight, sound, dust and vibration; and preservation of light and air?*
2. *Is the convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site and in relation to adjacent areas adequately addressed?*
3. *Are the proposed methods of disposal for wastes adequately addressed?*
4. *Does the site plan provide adequate protection of environmental features on the site and adjacent areas?*

B. Special Exception, Section 60-1336: The board shall require evidence of the following:

1. *That the special exception sought fulfills the specific requirements, if any, set forth in the zoning ordinance relative to such exception.*
2. *That the special exception sought will neither create nor aggravate a traffic hazard, a fire hazard or any other safety hazard.*
3. *That the special exception sought will not block or hamper the master development plan pattern of highway circulation or of planned major public or semipublic land acquisition.*
4. *That the exception sought will not alter the essential characteristics of the neighborhood and will not tend to depreciate the value of property adjoining and neighboring the property under application.*
5. *That reasonable provisions have been made for adequate land space, lot width, lot area, stormwater management in accordance with section 60-1301(14) green space, driveway layout, road access, off-street parking, landscaping, building separation, sewage disposal, water supply, fire safety, and where applicable, a plan or contract for perpetual maintenance of all the common green space and clustered off-street parking areas to ensure all such areas will be maintained in a satisfactory manner.*
6. *That the standards imposed are, in all cases, at least as stringent as those elsewhere imposed by the City building code and by the provisions of this chapter.*
7. *That essential city services which will be required for the project are presently available or can be made available without disrupting the city's master development plan.*

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS –

Planning Staff recommends the Board make a formal determination that the St. Louis Church is a building of community significance for the purposes of an Adaptive Reuse application pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVI, Division 3, Sec. 60-1335.

Optional Findings and Motions:

I make a motion to determine the St. Louis Church located at 32 Dunn Street (PID 221-196-001) in the Multifamily Urban Zoning District to be a building of community significance for the purposes of an Adaptive Reuse application pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVI, Division 3, Sec. 60-1335 of the Auburn Code of Ordinances.

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