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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Jamie Murphy, City Planner

RE: Request of Parkstone Development Partners on behalf of Corktown Historic Developments, LLC to show a PD (Planned Development) zoning district where an R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning district is currently shown on four parcels commonly known as 2099, 2087, 2081, and 2075 Vermont Street. **(RECOMMEND APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS)**

DATE: April 30, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

The City Planning Commission (CPC) staff recommends approval of the request of Parkstone Development Partners on behalf of Corktown Historic Developments, LLC to show a PD (Planned Development) zoning district where an R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning district is currently shown on four parcels commonly known as 2099, 2087, 2081, and 2075 Vermont Street to permit the development of a six-unit residential building.



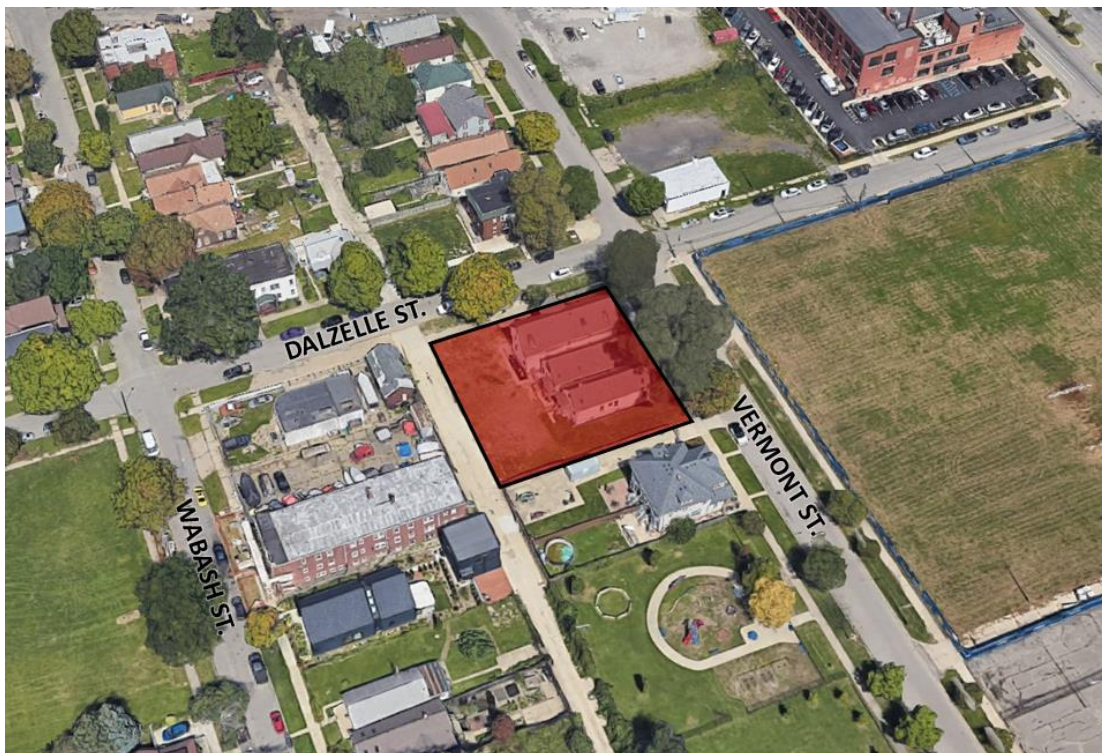
BACKGROUND AND UPDATED PROPOSAL

The CPC has received a request from Parkstone Development Partners on behalf of Corktown Historic Developments, LLC to amend District Map No. 42 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, by showing a PD (Planned Development) zoning district where an R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning district is currently shown on four parcels commonly known as 2099, 2087, 2081, and 2075 Vermont Street. The property is located at the southwest corner of Dalzelle and Vermont Streets which is south of Michigan Avenue and west of Rosa Parks Boulevard.

The subject site is currently occupied by three historic residential structures facing Vermont Street which are not proposed to be altered. This request was originally submitted in 2021, but the existing structures suffered extensive damage due to the flooding that summer and the project was delayed while repairs were underway. A public hearing was scheduled in June 2023 but the applicant requested that it be delayed so that additional community engagement could be conducted.

The site is located in City Council District 6 and measures 0.37 acres. The proposed map amendment is to permit the development of a multiple-family residential building that would consist of six townhouse units along the alley property line. The initial proposal was for five townhouse units and three stacked apartment units, but was scaled down in response to feedback at the public hearing. The street side of the site contains three historic homes—a five-unit multiple-family dwelling and two single-family dwellings. The total development as newly proposed would include 13 units (seven existing and six new).

The proposed project is not allowed in the existing R2 district because multiple principal buildings are not allowed on one lot (Sec. 50-8-56). Also, several dimensional variances would be required as the proposed structure does not comply with setback, lot coverage, floor area ratio (FAR), or parking requirements. No other residential district would allow the project without multiple variances; the SD1 district would mostly allow it, but it would also permit commercial uses which would not be appropriate for the area.

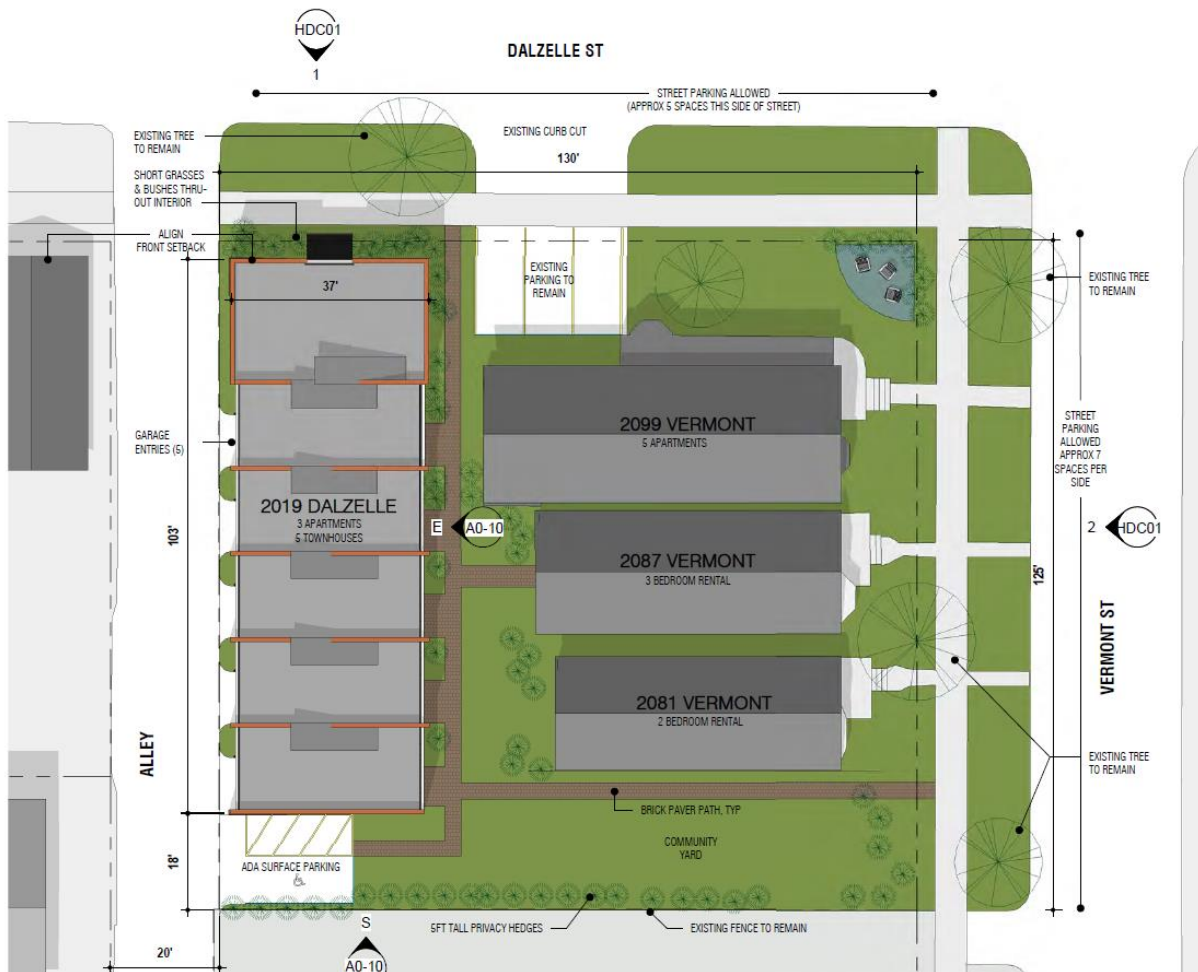


PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

A public hearing was held for this request on January 18, 2024, and was continued to February 1, 2024, due to notice issues. At the first meeting, three people spoke in support of the project, one additional person supported new development but was concerned about parking, and a fifth person was in opposition. At the second meeting, two people spoke with concerns about parking, density, and issues during the previous construction at the site.

In addition, Commissioners were concerned about trash arrangements, affordability, parking, scale, density, and appropriateness of the proposed building. There were also questions about the viability of the proposal due to proximity to overhead electrical lines in the alley. Updated regulations prohibit occupied structures within ten feet of electrical lines. A subsequent meeting with a DTE representative confirmed that the lines could be buried which would allow the building plan to proceed.

In response to concerns about parking and density, the development team revised the proposal to eliminate two units, reverting to an earlier version of the building as six townhouse units. The effect is a slightly smaller building (the dimension along the alley frontage shrinks from 103 feet to 97 feet) and each of the new units would have one parking space in a garage on the ground floor (accessed from the alley). Additionally, this version of the proposal is the one that was reviewed and approved by the Historic District Commission in 2021.



Site Plan as initially proposed



Site Plan as currently proposed

STAFF ANALYSIS

Zoning Ordinance Approval Criteria

Section 50-3-70 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance lists eight approval criteria on which zoning map amendments must be based. Following are the relevant criteria with CPC staff's analysis in italics:

- Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or meets the challenge of some changing condition, trend or fact. *The proposed amendment will meet the challenge of the demand for additional residential units in general, but especially in Corktown. Some people want to live in denser, more walkable areas with nearby commercial uses. This development would meet a small portion of that demand.*
- Whether the City and other service providers will be able to provide adequate public facilities and services to the subject property, while maintaining adequate levels of service to existing development. *Adequate public services are available to service the site. Existing electrical lines in the alley will be buried to meet DTE setback requirements.*
- Whether the proposed amendment will have significant adverse impacts on other property that is in the vicinity of the subject tract. *Adverse impacts to surrounding properties are not expected. Although the development would bring additional residents and traffic to the area,*

six units is minimal compared to other recent commercial and residential developments in the neighborhood such as the Michigan Central rehabilitation, the Perennial Apartments (200+ units), and the Godfrey Hotel.

- Whether the proposed rezoning will create an illegal “spot zone.” *The PD District is designed as a flexible zoning district that is required to be compatible with its surroundings. It does not constitute an illegal spot zone.*



Alley Elevation as initially proposed (top) and currently proposed (bottom)

PD District Approval Criteria

In addition to the approval criteria for map amendments, Section 50-3-96 of the Zoning Ordinance lists specific approval criteria for Planned Developments. Following are the criteria with CPC staff’s analysis in italics:

1. Whether the subject site covers a minimum of two acres of contiguous land under the control of one owner or group of owners, except, that upon determining that an adequate development can be accomplished on a parcel of lesser size, the City Planning Commission may waive this requirement and is capable of being planned and developed as one integral unit, except in unusual circumstances. *While the development **does not cover two acres**, the proposed development can be accomplished on the existing 0.37 acre site.*
2. That no other zoning district classification would be more appropriate. *As discussed in the previous report, no other residential zoning district would allow the proposed development and other zoning districts would allow commercial uses which may be inappropriate.*
3. That the development will result in a recognizable and substantial benefit to the ultimate users of the project and to the City, where such benefits would otherwise be unfeasible or unlikely to be achieved. The benefits can be accomplished through a higher quality unified

design that would be required by the typical regulations of this chapter. These benefits shall be demonstrated in terms of preservation of natural features, unique architecture, extensive landscaping, special sensitivity to land uses in the immediate vicinity, particularly well-designed access and circulation systems, and/or integration of various site features into a unified development. *The development would not be allowed by other residential zoning districts. A business or mixed-use zoning district would allow the development but would not provide the additional oversight that is afforded by the PD district.*

4. Whether the location of the proposed Planned Development District is appropriate. *The location of the PD district is appropriate as the area is a mixture of zoning districts and the site is on the edge between several different districts.*
5. Whether the proposed planned development substantially responds to the intent of Section 503 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, being MCL 125.3503, to:
 - a. Permit flexibility in the regulation of land development;
 - b. Encourage innovation in land use and variety in design, layout, and type of structures constructed;
 - c. Achieve economy and efficiency in the use of land, natural resources, energy, and the providing of public services and utilities, encourage useful open space; and
 - d. Provide better housing, employment, and shopping opportunities that are particularly suited to the needs of the residents.

The proposed development meets all four of these intents.

6. That the proposed type and density of use shall not result in an unreasonable increase in traffic or the use of public services, facilities and utilities, that the natural features of the subject site have the capacity to accommodate the intended development, and that the development shall not place an unreasonable burden upon surrounding land or landowners. *A similar, smaller building previously existed in the proposed location. Although the proposed building is larger, the addition of six residential units will not be a significant increase in the neighborhood.*
7. That the proposed planned development is consistent with the Master Plan, as determined by the Planning and Development Department (PDD). *The PDD has submitted a report confirming the proposal's consistency with the Master Plan (the full report is attached).*
8. Whether uses and structures that are planned for the Planned Development District comply with all applicable site design standards and use regulations which are specified in Section 50-11-15. *See the next section for discussion.*

PD District Design Criteria

In addition to the approval criteria for map amendments, Section 50-11-15 of the Zoning Ordinance lists design criteria for the evaluation of Planned Developments. Following are the relevant criteria with CPC staff's analysis in italics:

- Scale, form, massing, and density. Scale, form, massing and density should be appropriate to the nature of the project and relate well to surrounding development. *The scale and massing of the proposed development is consistent with that of surrounding development. Although the proposed building is larger than several nearby buildings, it is comparable in size to several others. Additionally, the Historic District Commission has reviewed and approved*

the proposal as being consistent with the elements of design for the Corktown Historic District.

- Compatibility. The proposed development should be compatible with surrounding development in terms of land use, general appearance and function, and should not adversely affect the value of properties in the immediate vicinity. *The proposed development is compatible with surrounding development—most of the immediate area is developed with residential buildings.*
- Open space. Adequate public and private open space should be provided for light and air, landscaping and, where appropriate, for passive and active recreation. Lot size, setbacks and yard requirements are flexible, but the City Planning Commission will be guided by standards that appear in comparable zoning ordinance district classifications. *The proposed open space for the development is adequate and comparable to other residential zoning districts. The open space is configured differently than required in other districts which prompted the rezoning request to PD; however, adequate open space is provided.*
- Preservation and restoration. Preservation and restoration of buildings having architectural or historic value should be considered a primary objective. *The existing historic houses on the site have been completely rehabilitated and would not be affected by this proposal.*

Master Plan Consistency

The subject site is located within the Corktown area of Neighborhood Cluster 4 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies. The Future Land Use map for this area shows “RLM – Low-Medium Density Residential” for the subject property. The Planning and Development Department (PDD) has reviewed this proposed rezoning and determined that it is generally consistent with the Master Plan and would not change the overall character of the neighborhood. PDD further concluded that the building would fit the scale of the area and that the new units would not add a significant amount of traffic. The full report is attached for reference.

Community Input

The applicant canvassed the neighborhood and held an in-person community meeting in June 2021 (when this application was originally submitted). A second community meeting was held via Zoom on May 22, 2023. A total of seven people attended the meeting. Parking was the main concern of the residents and the developer will continue monitoring the parking situation.

When the public hearing was scheduled in June 2023, several nearby residents and property owners expressed concern about the density of the proposed development and its potential effect on parking, utilities, and as a precedent for future development. In response, the applicant held several additional meetings with nearby residents and property owners and found that many support the project.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis and consistent with the approval criteria, CPC staff recommends approval of this map amendment request with the following conditions:

1. That all development must be in accordance with the site plan, elevations, and landscape plans in the drawings dated 4/3/2024 and prepared by Push Design, LLC.

2. That final site plans, elevations, lighting, landscape and signage plans be submitted by the developer to the staff of the City Planning Commission for review and approval prior to submitting applications for applicable permits.

Attachments: Proposed Plans dated 4/3/2024
PDD Master Plan Interpretation

cc: Antoine Bryant, Director, PDD
Karen Gage, PDD
Greg Moots,
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James Foster, BSEED
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