

City Planning Commission



Ordinance 2021-016 321 West Grace Street Special Use Permit



February 16, 2021

Proposal for Special Use

- **To authorize the special use of the property known as 321 West Grace Street for the purpose of a mixed-use building containing up to 16 stories and up to 177 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.**

321 W. Grace Street

.476 acre parcel

Corner of N. Monroe and W. Grace Streets.

Contains an unscreened parking lot.



Proposed Use

Sixteen story mixed-use building

177 dwelling units

Ground floor commercial

Ground floor and rooftop amenity spaces

57 parking spaces

Storage room for 45 Bicycles



Richmond 300 Master Plan Designation: Downtown Mixed-Use & Monroe Ward Priority Growth Node

- **Downtown Mixed Use:**
 - High density development
 - Pedestrian & Transit oriented development
 - Redevelop underutilized spaces
 - Urban form may be of larger scale than existing patterns
 - Ground floor engages with the street
 - Priority given to non-automotive transit
 - Five story minimum height
 - Multi-family, retail/office/personal service are primary uses



Richmond 300 Master Plan Designation: Downtown Mixed-Use & Monroe Ward Priority Growth Node

- **Monroe Ward Priority Growth Node Vision:**
 - Transform from detached parking to significant residential and office mixed-use
 - Compliment historic with denser development on vacant land
 - Create critical mass of residents, shoppers, workers in the area



Richmond 300 Master Plan: Other Considerations

- The Richmond 300 Master Plan
 - Property called out on the Monroe Ward Conceptual Site Plan as a potential building site
 - Designates this portion of Grace Street as a Major Mixed-Use Street
 - Objective 4.1 - Create and preserve high-quality distinctive and well designed neighborhoods
 - Objective 6.1 – Increase residents and jobs at Nodes and transit corridors. Prioritize multimodal transportation
 - Objective 14.5 – Encourage more housing types throughout city and greater density along enhanced transit corridors

Zoning: B-4 Central Business District and Monroe Ward Plan of Development POD-2

The intent of the B-4 Central Business District:

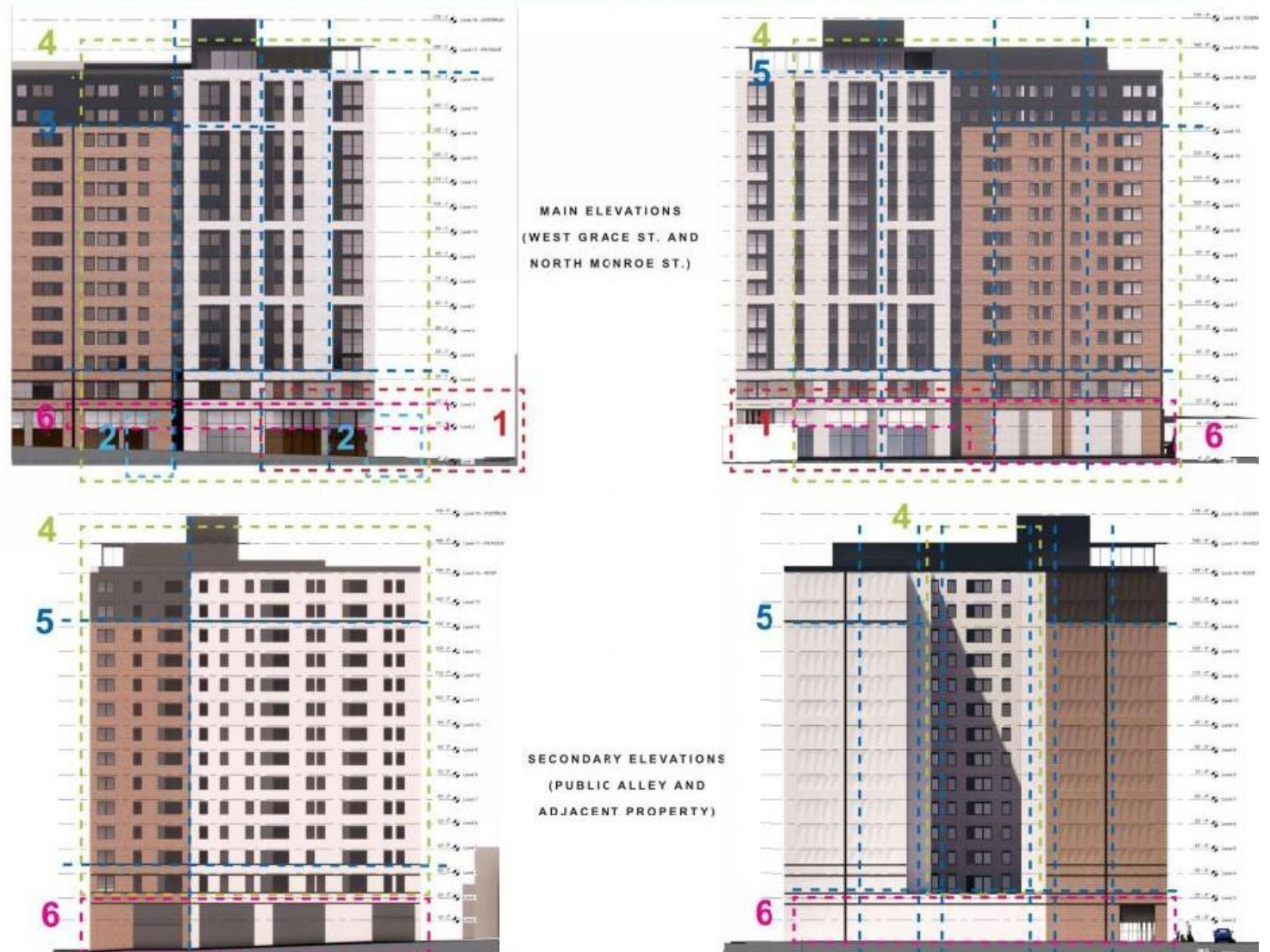
- Promote dense TOD with greater building height
- Redevelop surface parking lots
- Improve streetscape and pedestrian environment
- Provide uniform setbacks
- First floor commercial uses
- Windows along street frontage facades



Monroe Ward Plan of Development POD-2 Overlay Design Elements

Six design elements.

1. Hold the Corner
2. Entrances that face the street
3. Appropriate setbacks/stepbacks
4. Transparency
5. Façade Articulation
6. Screened Parking/Services

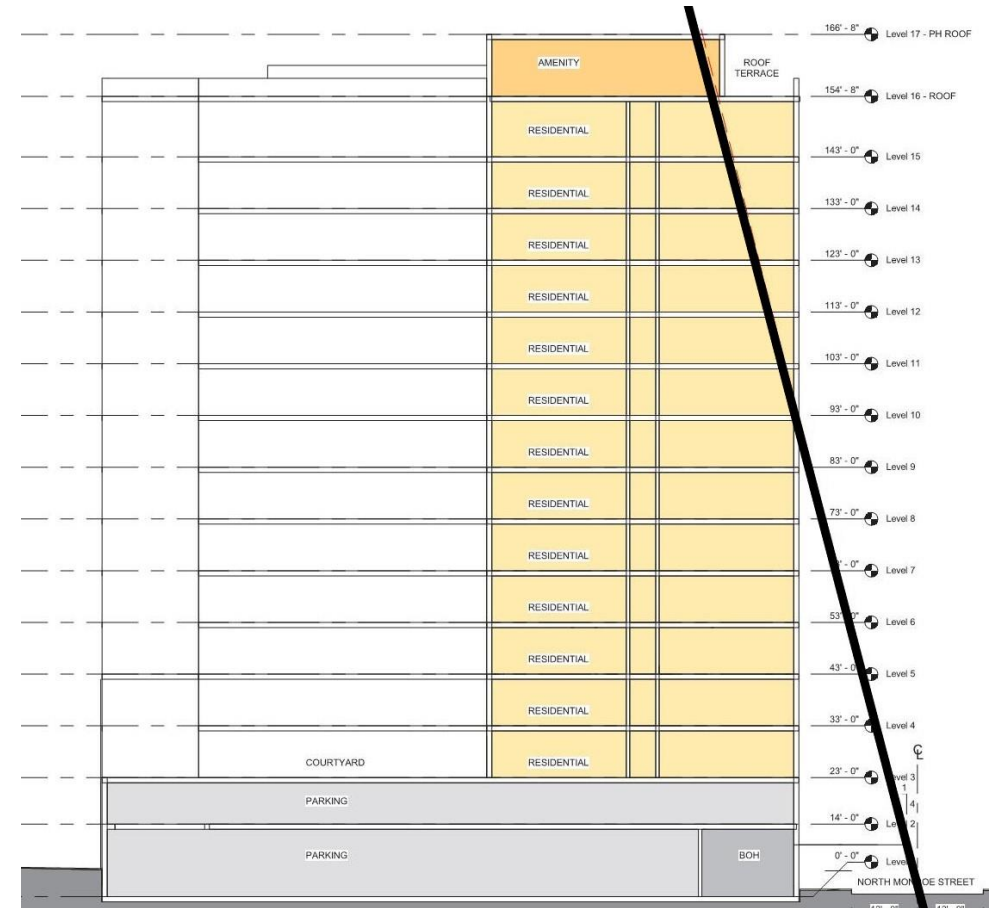


B-4 Central Business District Lot Features Addressed by Special Use Permit

Allow intrusion into incline planes on W. Grace and N. Monroe Streets.



W. Grace Street



N. Monroe Street

Other Zoning Requirements Addressed by Special Use Permit

Definition of a family:

Family defined as no more than three unrelated persons.

- The proposal requests four unrelated persons.
- Individual rental contracts, locks on interior bedroom doors

Ordinance Development Conditions

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a mixed-use building containing up to 16 stories and up to 177 dwelling units that will individually house more than three unrelated persons, with amenities and commercial uses on the ground floor, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) No fewer than 57 off-street parking spaces, of which no more than nine may be tandem off-street parking spaces, shall be provided for the Special Use.
- (c) All building materials, building colors, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (d) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed 16 floors, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (e) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- (f) Up to four unrelated persons or combination of related and unrelated persons may reside within individual dwelling units.

Ordinance Development Conditions

- (g) Interior doors to bedrooms within dwelling units may contain exterior locking mechanisms. .
- (h) Leases of occupancy shall be 30 days or greater in length and may include separate rental agreements for different occupants of the same unit.
- (i) The portion of the ground floor of the building labeled “Retail/Retail Equivalent” (the “Ground Floor Retail”) on sheet A.4 of the Plans shall be used exclusively for commercial uses permitted in the B-4 Central Business District. Notwithstanding the limitations in the preceding sentence, all or a portion of the Ground Floor Retail may be used for common amenity space or other use customarily incidental to a student housing development, upon a showing by the Owner to the Zoning Administrator that, for a period of not less than 12 months from the date of issuance of the final certificate of occupancy for the Special Use, all or a portion of the Ground Floor Retail has not been occupied by a commercial use and that all or a portion of the Ground Floor Retail has been made available for occupancy for the duration of such period at commercially reasonable rates. Satisfaction of the requirements of this subsection shall be evidenced by a certificate of zoning compliance for the Property issued by the Zoning Administrator.

Ordinance Development Conditions

- (j) The eastern façade of the building, to the extent permitted by the Virginia Statewide Building Code, shall include windows substantially as shown on sheet A16 of the Plans or, in the alternative, substantially as shown on sheet A15 of the Plans.

- (k) The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way, including improvements to the alley, the installation of nine new street trees, the installation of a sidewalk ramp at the corner of West Grace Street and North Monroe Street, and sidewalk repair along West Grace Street and North Monroe Street.

Affordability, Surrounding Area, and Neighborhood Participation

Affordability

The units are intended to be rented out at market rate.

Surrounding Area

The property is located in the B-4 Central Business District, as are surrounding parcels to the north, east, and west.

To the south, across the alley on property located in the RO-3 Residential Office Zoning District, is a 14-story multi-family apartment building containing 234 dwelling units.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Downtown Neighborhood Association and adjacent residents and property owners of the proposal. Letters of opposition have been received.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Staff finds that the proposal to redevelop an unscreened parking lot with a mixed-use building is consistent with the recommendations of the Master Plan. Specifically, it aligns with the Master Plan's vision for the Downtown - Monroe Ward Priority Growth Node and would contain a mix of uses recommended for the Downtown Mixed-Use land use designation.

Staff finds the proposed development, specifically its design and architectural elements, addresses several of the strategies within Objective 4.1. The residential density provided by the project supports Objectives 6.1 and 14.5 by providing additional ridership opportunities for transit in the area. It would also contribute to the revitalization of the area.

Staff finds that the proposal is consistent with the intent of the B-4 Central Business District and would generally accomplish the Monroe Ward Plan of Development Overlay District's purpose to establish appropriate developments.

Staff further finds that the proposal would not pose an undue burden on the availability of onstreet parking in the area.

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 safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community and would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of this special use permit request.