



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2024-198: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1220 West Cary Street for the purpose of a multifamily building containing up to 12 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: September 3, 2024

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

1220 West Cary Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize a twelve-unit multifamily building within the R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. While the use is permitted, the requirements for lot area and width are not met. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed multifamily building aligns with the Master Plan recommendations for Community Mixed Use land uses as the height and massing are a good model for appropriately-scaled infill development along this portion of West Cary Street.

Staff further finds that the increase of apartment units within this portion of the Fan neighborhood are a land use feature which supports Objective 15.1a which seeks to “increase the number of Richmonders living in a development pattern that encourages density and reduces dependency on single-occupancy vehicles”. The opportunity to walk to destinations is a critical component for residents, while also helping to reduce their overall carbon footprint and impact on traffic. (p. 159)

Staff also finds that the project is located on a Major Mixed-Use Street and supports the creation of additional housing, walkability, buildings pulled up to the street, and higher volumes of people.

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 general welfare of the community involved and would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved.

After introduction at City Council, it was noted that the introduced ordinance did not include certain conditions that would authorize the request, as proposed. The applicant has requested that these conditions be included in the ordinance. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit request with the following amendments:

- Up to six unrelated persons or combination of related and unrelated persons may reside within individual dwelling units.

- Interior doors to bedrooms within dwelling units may contain exterior locking mechanisms.
- Leases of occupancy shall be 30 days or greater in length and may include separate rental agreements for different occupants of the same unit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Fan neighborhood on West Cary Street between South Morris and South Brunswick Streets. The property is currently a 8,250 square foot (.19 acre) vacant parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed is a 12-unit apartment building. The proposed density of the parcel is 12 units upon 0.19 acres, or 63 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Community Mixed Use, which is defined as "Cluster of medium-density, walkable commercial and residential uses that provide neighborhood services to nearby residential communities and sometimes feature regional attractions."

Development Style: The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary significantly depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Uses may be mixed horizontally in several buildings on a block or vertically within the same building. Developments continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity.

Ground Floor: Ground floor uses engage with, and enliven, the street. Monolithic walls are discouraged, while windows, doors, storefronts, and other features that allow transparency and interaction between building and street are encouraged.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be off alleys whenever possible; new driveways are prohibited on priority and principal streets. Parking areas are located within the structure and to the rear of buildings and require screening; shared parking requirements are encouraged.

Intensity: Buildings generally ranging from two to six stories, based on street widths and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas, as necessary. New buildings that are taller than historical buildings should step back from the build-to line after matching the height of the predominant cornice line of the block.

Primary Uses: Retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Single-family houses, institutional, and government.

Major Mixed-Use Street

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, through commercial and mixed-use areas.
- Prioritize use and density-scaled sidewalks and crosswalks.
- Require form elements, such as buildings to the street with parking in the rear, as well as building windows and entrances on the street.
- Incorporate streetscape features, such as trees, benches, and trash receptacles

- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops.
- Prioritize the curbside for walking, bicycling, transit, and short-term parking access and loading for local shops and restaurants.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. The proposed use does not meet the following section:

Sec. 30-419.5. Lot area and width.

(5) Multifamily dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 4,000 square feet in total area and not less than 1,000 square feet in area for each dwelling unit.

Approximately 683 square feet are provided for each dwelling unit.

The special use permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily building with up to 12 units, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- Facilities for the collection of refuse shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Director of Public Works. Such facilities shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from adjacent properties and public streets.

Affordability

Median Family Income Richmond region = \$109,400 per year.*

Affordability threshold = 30% of household income towards housing costs.

= \$32,820 per year

= \$2,735 per month

Est. price provided by Applicant = \$2,400 per month

= 87% of Median Family Income, Richmond Region

**(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023)*

Surrounding Area

The area is a mix of zones and uses primarily intended to serve the VCU community including commercial, institutional, and residential.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the area residents, the Fan Area Business Alliance, Uptown Association, and Fan District Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. To this date, staff has not received any formal public comment on this application.

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