



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. 2017-130: To authorize the special use of the property known as 2515 East Main Street for the purpose of allowing a building to exceed the applicable height restrictions, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 17, 2017

PETITIONER

C. Samuel McDonald

LOCATION

2515 East Main Street (also referred to as 2525 East Main Street)

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 2515 East Main Street for the purpose of allowing a building to exceed the applicable height restrictions, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property consists of a 45,143 SF (1.04 acre) parcel improved with a surface parking area, located at the intersection of East Main Street, South 25th Street, and South 26th Street. The property is a part of the Shockoe Bottom neighborhood in the East Planning District and is located in close proximity to the proposed Shockoe Bottom station of the Pulse BRT line.

The applicant is proposing a mixed-use development that exceeds the B-5 height restriction. A special use permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposed mixed-use development would contribute to the mix of land uses supported by the Downtown Plan and Pulse Corridor Plan for the area.

Staff further finds that the proposed height would be consistent with the heights of existing buildings located along the abutting East Cary Street/Tobacco Row corridor within Shockoe Bottom, and with the recommendations of the Downtown Plan and Pulse Corridor Plan.

Staff further finds that the proposed development would be in close proximity to mass transit, provide bicycle storage on site, and provide adequate on-site parking for the uses of the property (and surplus parking for off-site uses) within an internal, structured parking 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 general welfare of the community involved and would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property consists of a 45,143 SF (1.04 acre) parcel improved with a surface parking area, located at the intersection of East Main Street, South 25th Street, and South 26th Street. The property is a part of the Shockoe Bottom neighborhood in the East Planning District and is located in close proximity to the proposed Shockoe Bottom station of the Pulse BRT line.

Proposed Use of the Property

A new construction mixed-use building consisting of up to 216 dwelling units (studio, 1- and 2-bedroom units), amenity space, and commercial space, a total of 241 on-site parking spaces (184 of which would serve the uses on the subject property), and secure storage for 56 bicycles.

The height of the building would be six stories along East Main Street and, due to a change in topography, eight stories at the rear of the property.

Master Plan

The subject property falls within an Urban Center Area of the Shockoe district, as established by the Richmond Downtown Plan. Such areas are “characterized by higher density, mixed use development, typically arranged on a fine grained street network, with wide sidewalks, regular tree planting, and minimal setbacks.” Moreover, the Urban Center Area demonstrates “a dense mix of office space, apartments, and retail located in four to six story brick buildings that front the street. Pedestrians have an active presence in these neighborhoods” (pp. 3.25 3.26).

Specifically for Shockoe Bottom, the plan states, “Shockoe’s urban fabric is among the best preserved in the city, with two to six story brick buildings defining the streets. The urban fabric of the district is ideal for pedestrians, with small blocks and intimate cobblestone streets. Many of the abandoned brick warehouses have been preserved and redeveloped as housing, shops, restaurants, and offices” (p. 4.56).

The Pulse Corridor Plan, which was recently adopted by the Planning Commission, designates the property along East Main Street (the Pulse BRT Corridor) for corridor mixed-use land use. Such a land use designation is found along major thoroughfares that have traditionally been commercial corridors. Medium density pedestrian- and transit-oriented development is to be encouraged on vacant or underutilized parcels. Recommended building heights range from two to ten stories, depending on the area (p. 29).

Specifically for the Shockoe Bottom Station area, the plan states “Shockoe Bottom and Tobacco Row allow for the continued development of multi-family residential buildings interspersed with commercial uses (p. 110).

Zoning & Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning district for the property is B-5 Central Business District, which limits the height of the building to five stories and requires 54 off-street parking spaces for the proposed dwelling units.

Additional conditions will be imposed by the special use permit ordinance, including:

-The use of the Property shall be as a mixed-use building, consisting of up to 216 dwelling units, amenity space, and commercial space, substantially as shown on the Plans.

-A total of 241 on-site parking spaces shall be provided on the Property, 184 of which shall serve the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.

-Signage on the Property shall meet the requirements of the underlying zoning district of the Property.

-All building materials, material colors, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

-The height of the Special Use shall not exceed six stories along East Main Street and eight stories along the rear of the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans.

-Mechanical units shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way, substantially as shown on the Plans.

-Secure storage for no fewer than 56 bicycles shall be provided on the Property for use by the dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans.

- The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way substantially as shown on the Plans, including new sidewalk ramps, a new entrance to South 25th Street, and brick sidewalk and granite curb restoration, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works.

- 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.

Surrounding Area

The current zoning for this property is B-5 Central Business District, which encompasses much of the area, with some nearby properties or adjacent blocks having an M-1 Light Industrial designation. A mix of land uses are present in the area.

Neighborhood Participation

A letter of support was received from the Shockoe Partnership.

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