



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2014-139: To rezone the properties known as 2301, 2323, 2325, and 2329 East Main Street from the M-1 Light Industrial District to the B-5 Central Business District.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 7, 2014

PETITIONER

C. Samuel McDonald
Property Results, LLC
201 Hull Street Suite A, Richmond, VA 23224

LOCATION

2301, 2323, 2325, and 2329 East Main Street

PURPOSE

To rezone the properties known as 2301, 2323, 2325, and 2329 East Main Street from the M-1 Light Industrial District to the B-5 Central Business District.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property is comprised of three separate parcels, occupying approximately 0.8 acres, and located on the block bounded by East Main Street to the north, South 24th Street to the east, and South 23rd Street to the west. Two existing 3-story structures joined by a courtyard occupy the property along with a parking area along South 24th Street. The property was historically used for cigarette and cigar manufacturing and recent attempts were made to use the property for office and commercial uses.

The applicant proposes to convert the buildings to 70 dwelling units with a mix of studios and 1 and 2-bedroom units. The lower level of the building at the corner of the private alley and South 23rd Street may be used for restaurant or office uses. Under B-5 zoning, 70 dwelling units would require 18 parking spaces if they are located within a building that contains other principal permitted uses. The proposed B-5 district would not require any off-street parking for any commercial or office use of the property. The applicant has indicated that 28 parking spaces will be provided on site and that he owns a one parcel on the block bounded by East Main Street to the north, South 26th Street to the east and South 25th Street to the west, which could be used for additional surface parking. However, additional parking over that required by the B-5 district (1 parking space per 4 dwelling units) would not be required under the proposed rezoning.

The Richmond Downtown Plan as an Urban Center Area, which "is characterized by higher density, mixed-use development, typically arranged on a fine-grained street network, with wide sidewalks, regular tree planting, and minimal setbacks" (p. 3.25).

Staff finds the B-5 zoning district to be an appropriate zoning for the property and the proposed multifamily and commercial uses. The B-5 zoning is supported by the recommendations in the

City's Downtown Plan and the surrounding area is comprised of B-5 zoning occupied by a mix of multifamily and commercial uses. However, there are parts of the existing building that contain no existing window openings leaving it unclear how these sections, if used for dwelling uses, will have access to natural light. For this reason, staff cannot confirm the proposed project's conformance with the Planning Commission's Windowless Dwelling Unit Resolution. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the rezoning to B-5 subject to a condition certifying that the proposed adaptive reuse will comply with the Planning Commission's Windowless Dwelling Unit Resolution.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property is comprised of three separate parcels, occupying approximately 0.8 acres, and is located on the block bounded by East Main Street to the north, South 24th Street to the east, and South 23rd Street to the west. Two existing 3-story structures joined by a courtyard occupy the property along with a surface parking area along South 24th Street. The property was historically used for cigarette and cigar manufacturing and recent attempts were made to use the property for office and commercial uses.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant proposes to rezone the property from M-1 Light Industrial to B-5 Central Business in order to convert the existing building to residential use.

Master Plan

The Richmond Downtown Plan as an Urban Center Area, which "is characterized by higher density, mixed-use development, typically arranged on a fine-grained street network, with wide sidewalks, regular tree planting, and minimal setbacks" (p. 3.25).

Zoning & Ordinance Conditions

The property is located at 2323, 2325, and 2329 East Main Street, which is located in the East Planning District. The rezoning request is to rezone 0.80 acres from M-1 Light Industrial District to B-5 Central Business District. Though the M-1 district does permit multifamily, office, and restaurant uses, Section 114-452.1 of the Zoning Code limits multifamily use by stating that, "No building shall be erected for a dwelling use or converted to such unless permitted by the board of zoning appeals," "in which event, such use shall be discontinued within ten years from the date such use is permitted," unless certain other conditions are met. These required conditions are not compatible with the proposed multifamily use.

The proposed uses, which include multifamily dwellings, offices, and a restaurant, are all permitted uses in the B-5 District. The applicant "contemplates" developing 70 studio, 1 and 2-bedroom apartments. For 70 dwelling units, the B-5 zoning would require 18 off-street parking spaces (1 per 4 units) as long as there is another principal permitted use within the building. The District does not require off-street parking spaces for restaurant or office uses.

Other dimensional and site development requirements in the B-5 District include maintaining existing building setbacks, screening parking and refuse areas, providing parking no closer to the street frontage than the building, and limiting the maximum height to 5 stories.

Surrounding Area

The property to the north across East Main Street is zoned B-5 Central Business District and is occupied by Farm Fresh grocery store, Subway, Starbucks and other commercial uses. The properties to the east across South 24th Street and south across an alley are also zoned B-5 and occupied by multifamily apartments. The properties to the west are zoned M-1 and are occupied by office and commercial uses.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff contacted 7th District Council Representative, Cynthia Newbille and the Shockoe Bottom Neighborhood Association. Staff received a letter of support from The Shockoe Partnership and Shockoe Bottom Neighborhood Association.

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