



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2026-025: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1007 Melrose Avenue for the purpose of a commissary kitchen, an office use, and a library serving the existing nonconforming seminary, upon certain terms and conditions, and to repeal Ord. No. 87-305-88-9, adopted Jan. 11, 1988, and all amendatory ordinances thereto. (3rd District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 3, 2026

PETITIONER

Union Presbyterian Seminary

LOCATION

1007 Melrose Avenue

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize an existing commercial kitchen to operate as a commissary kitchen.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the subject property is designated Institutional on the Future Land Use Map in the Richmond 300 Master Plan. Institutional and cultural uses are listed as a primary use in this category. The proposed use would operate accessory to the larger institutional use.

Staff concludes that the proposed ordinance conditions substantially satisfy the safeguards established in the City Charter concerning the granting of Special Use Permits. 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 request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The proposed commissary kitchen is located in the building noted as 1101 Melrose Avenue on the campus of the Union Presbyterian Seminary. The campus occupies a block bounded by Melrose Avenue to the north, Westwood Avenue to the south, Chamberlayne Avenue to the east, and Brook Road to the west.

Proposed Use of the Property

Commissary Kitchen

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Institutional, which is defined as Public and quasi-public entities, such as local, state, and federal government, hospitals, universities, schools, and religious institutions.

Development Style: Several buildings owned by an institution are often connected by an engaging character that creates a campus-like environment.

Ground Floor: Active commercial ground floor uses are required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Residential uses may be permitted on the ground floor in certain sections of the area. Regardless, ground floor residential units should still have street-oriented façades with setbacks, front yards, and balconies where appropriate.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveway entrances are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages and minimal driveway entrances are allowed on secondary streets. Ground floor parking is prohibited on principal street frontages.

Intensity: Varies.

Primary Uses: Institutional, cultural, government, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Retail/office/personal service and multi-family.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-53 Multifamily Residential District where commissary kitchens are not specified as permitted uses.

If approved, this special use permit would impose development conditions, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a commissary kitchen, substantially as shown on the Plans, and an office use and a library serving the existing nonconforming seminary.
- All mechanical equipment, including heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units, serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- Identification of each of the premises at 1002 Westwood Avenue, 1010 Westwood Avenue, and 3406 Chamberlayne Avenue shall be limited to one sign, not exceeding six square feet in area, attached flat against an exterior surface of the building.
- There shall be no enlargement or exterior alternations to the building except for those which are shown on the Plans, and normal repair and maintenance.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding area is primarily residential.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Ginter Park Residents Association as well as area residents and property owners. A sign was posted on the property. Staff has not received any public comment on this request.

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