



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

**Ord. No. 2021-011** - To authorize the special use of the properties known as 501, 509, and 511 Decatur Street for the purpose of a mixed-use building containing up to 118 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** February 1, 2021

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#### **PETITIONER**

Lory Markham – Markham Planning

#### **LOCATION**

501, 509, and 511 Decatur Street

#### **PURPOSE**

To authorize the special use of the properties known as 501, 509, and 511 Decatur Street for the purpose of a mixed-use building containing up to 118 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The applicant is requesting a special use permit to allow for a mixed-use building that would not meet screening standards for the parking deck portion of the development fronting Decatur Street, due to the determination that Decatur Street is the principal street frontage for the property, not East 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

Staff finds that the development will provide commercial uses along East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and a portion of Decatur Street and the development will assist in the continued revitalization of the Manchester area and be generally consistent with the recommendations of the Master Plan.

Staff finds that the development would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area.

Staff finds that with the ordinance conditions the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the Special Use Permits, are met. Specifically, staff finds the proposed rezoning 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.

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## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description**

The subject properties consist of a combined 22.065 SF (.51 acre) of vacant land. The properties are located in the Old Town Manchester neighborhood between 5th and 6th Streets.

### **Proposed Use of the Property**

Multi-family with ground floor commercial and off-street parking.

### **Master Plan**

The Richmond 300 Master Plan recommends a future land use for these parcels to be Destination Mixed-Use. This category is defined as key gateways featuring prominent destinations, such as retail, sports venues, and large employers, as well as housing and open space. Located at the convergence of several modes of transportation, including Pulse BRT or other planned transit improvements.

Development Style: Higher density, transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites. New development should be urban in form, may be of larger scale than existing context, and, where relevant, should pay special attention to the historic character of the existing context. Development should enhance the public realm and create a sense of place. Many buildings are vertically mixed-use. 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. Active commercial ground floor uses are required on street-oriented commercial frontages.

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 street frontages. Surface parking is prohibited as a principal use; when surface parking is provided as an accessory use, it should be located to the rear of buildings and screened. Parking requirements are reduced to allow more market-based parking strategies, including shared parking.

Intensity: Buildings typically a minimum height of five stories.

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

These properties are also within one of the Manchester National/Regional Nodes, the vision for this node is: Manchester continues to increase in population and economic activity to support a thriving business corridor along Hull Street. The formerly industrial part of Manchester provides jobs as well as housing. Manchester is connected to South Richmond and the Downtown Core by a network of greenways along former railways, along roads, and along Manchester Canal. A variety of housing options in Manchester are available to low-, moderate-, and high-income individuals. Manchester's interconnected street grid is enhanced with street trees and improved infrastructure to support pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

No residential density is specified for this designation. The density of the project is approximately 231 units per acre.

### **Zoning and Ordinance Conditions**

The properties are currently located in the B-4 Central Business District. The following zoning regulations are not being met by the proposal, warranting special use permit approval.

The Special Use Permit is necessary because the parking deck doesn't have the required screening along the principal street frontage (Decatur Street). *REF Zoning Ordinance Sec. 30-440.1(22)a*

Sec. 30-440.1. - Permitted principal and accessory uses.

*(22)a - No portion of the ground floor of such structure located along a principal street frontage or priority street frontage shall be used for parking or related circulation of vehicles, but such portion shall be devoted to other permitted principal uses which shall have a depth of not less than 20 feet along the principal street frontage or priority street frontage or to means of pedestrian or vehicle access, provided that vehicle access along such street frontage shall be permitted only when no other street or alley is available for adequate access. In the case of a portion of a story located along a principal street frontage or priority street frontage and having less than five feet of its height above the grade level at the building façade along the street frontage, the provisions of this paragraph prohibiting parking or related circulation of vehicles shall not apply, provided that parking spaces shall be completely screened from view from the street by structural material similar to the material of the building façade. Upper stories of such structure may be used for parking or related circulation of vehicles subject to the fenestration requirements set forth in Section 30-440.7(2);*

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If approved, the special use permit ordinance would impose conditions on the property, including:

3(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a mixed-use building containing up to 118 dwelling units and commercial uses on the ground floor, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) The number of parking spaces provided on the Property shall meet the requirements of the underlying zoning district.

(c) All building materials and material color shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

(d) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed a height of seven stories 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) Storage for no fewer than 30 resident bicycles shall be provided on the Property.

(g) Signs on the Property shall follow the sign requirements of the underlying zoning district.

4(c) 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.

(e) The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way, including the installation of six street trees, new sidewalk, and sidewalk ramps at the corner of Decatur Street and East 5th Street and Decatur Street and East 6th Street, substantially as shown on the Plans, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works. All improvements and work within the public right-of-way shall be (i) completed in accordance with the requirements of the Director of Public Works, (ii) considered completed only upon written confirmation by the Director of Public Works that such improvements and work are in accordance with such requirements, (iii) transferred to the City, following the written confirmation by the Director of Public Works, pursuant to a transfer of interest document approved as to form by the City Attorney and accepted by the Chief Administrative Officer or the designee thereof on behalf of the City. The Chief Administrative Officer or the designee thereof, for and on behalf of the City, is hereby authorized to accept, in the manner for which this subsection provides, all improvements and work required by and meeting the requirements of this subsection. The final certificate of occupancy shall not be issued for the Property until all requirements of this subsection are fully satisfied.

### **Surrounding Area**

Zoning districts surrounding the property are a mix of B-4, B-5, B-6 and B-7 Mixed-Use Districts. This area of the City has experienced rapid growth in the form of multi-family, infill development in recent years.

### **Neighborhood Participation**

The Manchester Alliance and area residents and property owners were notified of this application. Staff has not received any letters in support of, nor opposition to, the proposed Special Use Permit.

**Staff Contact:** Jonathan Brown, PDR, Land Use Division, 804-646-5734