

Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2022 9:48 AM
To: Brown, Jonathan W. - PDR <Jonathan.Brown@rva.gov>
Cc: Saunders, Richard L. - PDR <Richard.Saunders@rva.gov>
Subject: 5N Colonial Opposition Letter

Dear Mr. Brown,

My husband and I live across the street from subject property at 2903 Floyd Avenue, the house with the vegetable garden streetscape. After moving into the house and defining the outdoor spaces with post and tube railings based on pictures of the house from a 1905 photo, 10 years after the house was built, we never thought of walling off the neighbors and community from the garden. We also have never considered scraping the house and building an apartment building on this double lot, though I'm sure it could bring great profits and more taxes. But our community is more than just a transaction. And we love the diversity of people and residential densities on our block: from six-plexes to single family, lower-income to upper-income, brick or stone, and sometimes a nice old 1895 clapboard building, all on one block.

As you may have guessed, we are not fans of the 5 N Colonial proposed demolition and rebuild for reasons that relate to optics and precedent. We have seen this process in cities in which we have lived or hear about from relatives being witness to the unwitting transaction of the teardown and Frankenstein replacement house. There is an irony here that one would want to move to an historic neighborhood that they fall in love with, only to kick the old house off of the property and build a tower complete with items such as a party deck served by an elevator, complete with two or three units below to bank the operation. It may be clever but it is not well thought out or friendly, neighborly, or even appropriate.

We are fans of the Richmond 300 Master Plan and realize that there will be many conversations and debates as new zoning regulations are explored in many neighborhoods. We appreciate this process and look forward to helping to give voice to our little neighborhood and its history and future. We feel like the first place to start is to make sure that developers that are looking to utilize the Special Use Permit process, start by making complete and quality applications that answer all that is requested in the language of the application itself. We also think that the applicant should clearly state what zoning regulations they are actually asking the community to absorb. In addition, since we now have the Richmond 300 Master Plan to reference, we can also see if the developer is looking ahead to making their project a viable candidate for Richmond's aspirational future and how all that is being given to them by Special Use is also offset by how they intend to give back to the neighborhood and community, aspirations that should benefit us all.

Please help the applicant make a full application by addressing the issues by ordinance or approach as listed below. Please also consider requiring the ordinance to include that the building be owner-occupied since there has been frequent reference to this as a security, benefit for having higher building density and the earlier request to allow a forth unit for Air B&B use.

Special Use Permit Application

1. Identify all occupiable spaces by name and area (sf), within the building or on the roof of the building.
2. Include graphic scale on all plans and elevations.
3. List single materials in elevations, not, “either”, “or”. “Synthetic Stucco”, or EIFS, is almost the opposite of masonry. Synthetic Stucco does not meet the West of Boulevard material requirements and is not contextual to the neighborhood.
4. Show height at top of third floor, not including parapet. Every occupiable space above that line is above the third floor.
5. Show mechanical equipment location and screening so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
6. Show refuse and recycling can location and screening so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
7. Provide landscape plan or narrative, ideally incorporating native pollinator species as per Richmond 300 Master Plan.
8. Show exterior lighting plan or narrative, ideally incorporating strategy with focus on meeting International Darksky Association (IDA) and zero light trespass requirements, as per Richmond 300 Master Plan.
9. Provide notes relevant to separate sanitary and storm sewer piping, including that all downspouts are to be connected to storm sewer piping or that an area of pervious ground cover and plantings are to be designed to prevent major storm event runoff.
10. Identify strategy for alleyway improvements, i.e. brick pavers.

Zoning Code 30-412

Please note that that all seven of the non-conforming uses shown below should be included in the application, not just the first two.

1. Number of dwelling units shall be limited to one- and two-family dwelling units. Three dwelling units are shown in the submitted plans.
2. One parking space per dwelling unit is required. Only two parking spaces are shown in the plans.
3. Building shall not exceed 35 ft in height. Building design shows 43'-1" in height to top of 4th floor.
4. A minimum 50 ft wide street frontage is required. The plat shows only 36.21 ft of Colonial Avenue street frontage.
5. A minimum of 6000 sf property area are required. The plat shows 3627.16 sq ft.
6. Side yards to be 5 ft minimum. Site plan shows a 3'-3" south property line.
7. Show building impervious footprint area. Appears to exceed 55% maximum coverage with front porch.

Richmond 300 Master Plan

1. Vision and Land Use (Neighborhood Mixed Use): Parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings.
2. Objective 9.3: Improve alleyways, expand green alleyway program.
3. Objective 15.3: Require stronger energy-efficiency and green-building standards of developers requesting zoning variance and/or site plan approvals.
4. Carytown Node (Appendix C): New development should be compatible with the existing historic structures, and efforts should be made to preserve the existing historic fabric.

Thank you again for your time and patience.

Sincerely, Catherine May
2903 Floyd Avenue