



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. No. 2023-092: To amend and authorize Ord. No. 2018-310, adopted December 17th, 2018, which authorized the special use of the property known as 2712 East Leigh Street for the purpose of up to seven multifamily dwelling units and an accessory office, to allow for additional uses permitted on corner lots within the R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 1, 2023

PETITIONER

Vitas Reinikovas

LOCATION

2712 East Leigh Street

PURPOSE

To amend and authorize Ord. No. 2018-310, adopted December 17th, 2018, which authorized the special use of the property known as 2712 East Leigh Street for the purpose of up to seven multifamily dwelling units and an accessory office, to allow for additional uses permitted on corner lots within the R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is to amend an existing ordinance to allow for R-63 uses permitted on corner lots (including art galleries, and retail and office uses) within a building that is mid-block. A Special Use Permit amendment is therefore required. This request will amend a previous Special Use Permit that was approved in 2018 and allowed for multi-family use.

Staff finds that the proposal would be consistent with the recommendations of the City's Richmond 300 Master Plan pertaining to the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Category. The proposed commercial use aligns with the recommended secondary uses within the Plan.

Staff further finds that the proposal would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area as the site contains seven (7) off-street parking spaces, as well as on-street parking in the immediate vicinity.

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 amendment request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Church Hill neighborhood on East Leigh Street between North 27th and North 28th Streets. The property is currently a 7,584 sq. ft. (.17 acre) parcel of land and is improved with a 4,332 sq. ft., two-story, residential building.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant is proposing a Special Use Permit amendment which would authorize commercial uses permitted within section 30-419.3, concerning permitted principal uses on corner lots.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Neighborhood Mixed-Use which is defined as "Existing or new highly-walkable urban neighborhoods that are predominantly residential with a small, but critical, percentage of parcels providing retail, office, personal service, and institutional uses."

Development Style:

These areas feature a variety of building types that are close to one another and create a unified street wall. The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas vary depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Setbacks, plazas, and parks create a sense of place and community gathering areas. New developments on larger parcels continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity within the neighborhood and to adjacent neighborhoods. In historic neighborhoods, small-scale commercial uses exist today or should be allowed to reestablish. In new neighborhoods, small scale commercial buildings should be introduced.

Ground Floor:

Regardless of use, buildings should engage the street with features such as street-oriented façades with windows and door openings along street frontages. Appropriate setbacks, open space, front porches, elevated ground floors, and other features that provide a sense of privacy should be provided for residential uses.

Mobility:

Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveways are prohibited on Priority and Principal Street frontages. Vehicular access to parcels should use alleys wherever possible. Parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings.

Intensity:

Building heights are generally two to four stories. Buildings taller than four stories may be found along major streets. Parcels are generally between 1,500 and 5,000 sq. ft.

Primary Uses:

Single family houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), and open space.

Secondary Uses:

Large multi-family buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. The City's Zoning Administration has reviewed the application and has informed that no zoning implications exist.

The special use permit amend would impose amended conditions on the property, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to seven multifamily dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans, an accessory office, and permitted principal uses on corner lots in accordance with section 30-419.3 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, except for grocery stores, convenience stores, and specialty food and beverage stores, including bakeries where products are sold principally at retail on the premises, and restaurants, tea rooms, cafes, delicatessens, ice cream parlors, and similar food and beverage service establishments. The area of the Special Use labeled on the Plans as "Office" may contain an accessory office used for property management purposes or for the permitted principal uses on corner lots authorized by this ordinance and shall not contain grocery stores, convenience stores, or specialty food and beverage stores, including bakeries where products are sold principally at retail on the premises, and restaurants, tea rooms, cafes, delicatessens, ice cream parlors, and similar food and beverage service establishments.
- Up to seven on-site parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use of the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and landscaping shall be substantially as shown on the Plans, unless otherwise approved by the Commission of Architectural Review prior to the issuance of a building permit for the Property.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed the height as shown on the Plans.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- Exterior bicycle storage for four bicycles shall be provided, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The hours of operation for the permitted principal uses on corner lots authorized by this ordinance shall be limited to 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily.
- The number of employees for the permitted principal uses on corner lots authorized by this ordinance shall be limited to two.

Surrounding Area

Properties to the West are located within the R-8 Urban Residential Zone, with some R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential to the east of the property. The area is primarily single family residential, with some multi-family residential and small, neighborhood commercial uses present in the vicinity.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Church Hill Association of RVA of the proposed Special Use Permit amendment. Staff has received one letter of concern from a nearby resident. The Church Hill Association has not commented on this application.

Staff Contact: Jonathan Brown, Senior Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-5734