



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-206: To authorize the special use of the property known as 10 South Rowland Street for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling, with off-street parking, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 17, 2023

PETITIONER

Lewis Little, Waltham Trust & Caplit Holdings LLC

LOCATION

10 South Rowland Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 10 South Rowland Street for the purpose of a multi-family dwelling, with off-street parking, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit which would allow for a six-unit multi-family building, with six, off street parking spaces, within an R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. While the proposed use is permitted within the R-63 zone, the application does not meet the requirements for lot area and side yard width. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposal would be consistent with the recommendations of the City's Master Plan pertaining to the varied housing types within the Community Mixed-Use land use category including the varied lot sizes and building heights. The proposed units are located within a micro-node and are within one block of two Major Mixed-Use Streets; both of which call for higher densities and opportunities for walkability.

Staff also finds that the proposal would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area due to the inclusion of six (6) off-street parking spaces.

Staff further finds that the proposed use would be consistent with the historic pattern of development in the immediate area, which is a mix of commercial with residential above, as well as single-family, two-family and multi-family residential.

Staff finds that the proposed development supports several objectives that emphasize the property's high walkability score, including Objective 15.1a, which states "Increase the number of Richmonders living in a development pattern that encourages density and reduces dependency on single-occupancy vehicles." (p. 159) The proposed units are also located within a designated micro-node, which are areas that are defined as places that provide "...goods and services to the immediate residents but may attract visitors." (p. 24) The proposed development is located within one block of West Cary and West Main Streets, which offer many destinations for residents and their daily needs within walking distance. The location is also within ½ block from an existing

GRTC transit route and a designated Enhanced Transit Route which is defined as a route "...to accommodate a higher number of future riders (residents, visitors, and employees) within close proximity of the Enhanced Transit Route. (p. 76)

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 request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property consists of a 1,866 sq. ft. building, constructed in 1910, on a parcel of 4,800 SF, or .11 acres, in area, and is located on South Rowland Street between West Main Street and West Cary Street. The property is a part of the Fan neighborhood.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use of the property is a six-unit multifamily building.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject property for Community Mixed-Use which is viewed as a "Cluster of medium-density, walkable commercial and residential uses that provide neighborhood services to nearby residential communities and sometimes feature regional attractions."

Development Style: The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary significantly depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Uses may be mixed horizontally in several buildings on a block or vertically within the same building. 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.

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 streets. Parking areas are located within the structure and to the rear of buildings and require screening; shared parking requirements are encouraged.

Intensity: Buildings generally ranging from two to six stories, based on street widths and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas, as necessary. New buildings that are taller than historical buildings should step back from the build-to line after matching the height of the predominant cornice line of the block.

The property is located adjacent to a designated Micro Node, which is "a notable place within a neighborhood that generally provides goods and services to the immediate residents but may attract visitors." (p. 24)

The density of the proposed development is six units upon .11 acres, or 54 units per acre.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-63 (Multifamily Urban Residential). The following zoning regulations are not being met by the proposal, warranting special use permit approval.

LOT AREA AND WIDTH

Sec. 30-419.5. Multifamily dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 4,000 square feet in total area and not less than 1,000 square feet in area for each dwelling unit.

The existing lot area is 4,800 sq. ft. Six (6) units are proposed; 6,000 square feet required.

SIDE YARD

Sec. 30-419.6(2). There shall be side yards of not less than five (5) feet in width except where buildings are attached.

The proposed side yards are approximately 1 ft. in width.

Additional conditions will be imposed by the amended ordinance, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily dwelling, with off-street parking, substantially as shown on the Plans. The dwelling may contain up to six dwelling units.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No fewer than six off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way, including the installation of a street tree and installation of new sidewalk, substantially as shown on the Plans, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works.

Surrounding Area

Surrounding properties to the east, south, and west are located in the same R-63 district as the property in question, with properties to the north primarily within RO-2 Residential Office and R-7 Single-and Two-Family Urban Residential Districts. Multi-family residential and commercial are the dominant land-uses in the vicinity.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$71,223 per year.* The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$21,367 per year, or \$1,781 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden. Based upon the median household income for the Richmond region, and the estimated pricing provided by the applicant, the proposed rental units are projected to be affordable to households making between approximately 140% of the Area Median Income (AMI) affordability threshold**

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates)*

*** (affordability threshold is \$1,781 per month or less)*

The median household income for census tract 411, for which 10 South Rowland Street is located, is \$57,359 per year. The proposed units are projected to be 174% of the affordability threshold.***

**** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Tract 411)*

Neighborhood Participation

The City notified the Fan Area Business Alliance about this application. Staff has received one letter of opposition from a nearby resident.

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