



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. No. 2023-226: To authorize the special use of the property known as 9 South Harvie Street for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 12 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: August 21, 2023

PETITIONER

University Property – Luke Esposito

LOCATION

9 South Harvie Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 9 South Harvie Street for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 12 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property is located in the Urban Business zoning district. The current use, which has commercial uses along the street frontage and residential uses to the rear, is permitted in this district. Residential units shall only be permitted as an accessory to a permitted use. The subject property currently has ten dwelling units and commercial floor space in the front. The proposal calls for the conversion of the commercial floor space to two addition dwelling units. Therefore, a Special Use Permit is requested.

Staff finds that the proposal would be consistent with the recommendations of the City's Master Plan recommendation for Community Mixed-Use, where multi-family dwellings are listed as an appropriate primary use.

Staff further finds that, while the proposal would not provide off-street parking, the area is well served by the GRTC. The 5 Route runs as a loop along Cary Street and Main Street and the subject property is located mid-block between these streets. This conforms to Objective 6.1 in the Equitable Transportation Chapter, which specifically calls for residential development near public transportation. The proposal also conforms to objective 15.1 of the Thriving Environment chapter, which calls for increasing residential density to encourage transit ridership and reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles.

Staff further finds that the proposed use would be consistent with the historic pattern of development in the area, which contains commercial, institutional, single-family, and multi-family uses.

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 0.23 acre subject property is located on the eastern side of South Harvie Street between West Main Street and West Cary Street. Alleys run adjacent to the north, south and eastern property lines. According to the City Assessor's records, the subject property contains a 9,616 square foot single-story masonry building constructed in 1930.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use of the property will convert the existing commercial floor space within an existing mixed-use development into residential dwellings. This proposed conversion does not conform to the underlying UB zoning.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Community Mixed-Use.

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.

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

Secondary Uses: Single-family houses, institutional, and government.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The subject property is in the UB - URBAN BUSINESS zoning district. The current use of commercial along the South Harvie Street frontage with residential in the rear is a permitted use in the UB district. The conversion of the commercial space to dwelling units is not permitted by the ordinance; dwelling units can only be located in buildings with another permitted principal use.

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily dwelling containing up to 12 dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans.

- No off-street parking spaces shall be required on the Property.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

Surrounding Area

Properties to the north, across West Main Street, are zoned R-6 Single-Family Attached. To the south, along West Cary Street, properties are zoned R-63 Multi-Family Urban Residential.

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 71% of the Area Median Income (AMI) affordability threshold**

Based upon census tract 404, for which 9 South Harvie Street is located, these units are projected to be 66% of the affordability threshold.** In other words, the units may be affordable to well over half of households in the census tract.

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

*** (Virginia Housing, 2023., based upon 30-year term, 20% down payment, at 7% interest)*

**** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Tract 504)*

Neighborhood Participation

The City notified area residents and property owners, the Uptown Association, the Fan Area Business Alliance, and the Fan District Association about this application. Staff has received no correspondence noting opposition.

Staff Contact: David Watson, PDR, Land Use Division, 804-646-1036