



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-221: To authorize the special use of the property known as 324 North 27th Street for the purpose of a wall sign, upon certain terms and conditions.

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

PETITIONER

Erin Keene, Second Bottle Wine and Snack Shop

LOCATION

324 North 27th Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a special use permit to authorize one wall sign, substantially as shown on the plans. The proposed wall sign exceeds the maximum square footage permitted by Sections 30-504(6) and 30-512(2) of the Zoning Ordinance.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property contains a lot area of approximately 0.79 acres and is currently occupied by a commercial retail store. The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to allow for a painted mural on the side of the existing building. The proposed mural (from here on out referred to as the "painted wall sign") is considered a wall sign, per the City of Richmond Zoning Ordinance. Since the proposed painted wall sign exceeds 32 square feet and 25 percent of the area of the subject wall, a special use permit is required.

Staff finds that this request is compatible with strategy 4.2(d) of the Richmond 300 Master Plan, which encourages "outdoor art features on private land and buildings as part of a city-building aesthetic." (p. 102)

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 property is located within the Church Hill neighborhood on the western corner of East Marshall Street and North 27th Street. The property is currently a 0.079 acre parcel of land, improved with a 3,700 square foot mixed-use building.

Proposed Use of the Property

Painted wall sign on an existing mixed-use building.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Neighborhood Mixed-Use. This designation 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 UB – Urban Business. The proposed painted wall sign exceeds the maximum square footage permitted by Sections 30-504(6) and 30-512(2) of the Zoning Ordinance.

This special use permit is conditioned on the following special terms and conditions:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a wall sign, substantially as shown on the Plans, subject to the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Commission of Architectural Review.
- The Special Use shall not exceed the dimensions shown on the Plans.
- In addition to the signs permitted in section 3(a) of this ordinance (i) signs permitted in all zoning districts, pursuant to section 30-505 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and (ii) one sign, not to exceed two square feet in area, and not internally illuminated, pursuant to section 30-512 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, shall be permitted on the Property.

Surrounding Area

The adjacent corner properties are all located within the same UB Urban Business District and primarily are improved with existing commercial uses. The other nearby properties are primarily located within the R-8 Urban Residential District and are improved with single-family and single-family attached dwellings.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Church Hill Central Civic Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. To date, staff has not received any letters of support or opposition from the Association or nearby residents.

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