



## CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**Ord. No. 2023-234:** To authorize the special use of the property known as 912 Tulip Street for the purpose of a mixed-use building, with off-street parking, upon certain terms and conditions.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** October 2, 2023

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#### **PETITIONER**

Lory Markham - Markham Planning

#### **LOCATION**

912 Tulip Street

#### **PURPOSE**

To authorize the special use of the property known as 912 Tulip Street for the purpose of a mixed-use building, with off-street parking, upon certain terms and conditions.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for the purpose of mixed-use building, including thirteen residential units, ground floor commercial, and nine off-street parking spaces within an R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential Zoning District. The proposed use is not currently permitted by sections 30-419.2, 30-419.5(5), 30-419.6(2)b, 30-419.7, and 30-419.10(1) concerning uses, lot area and width, side yards, usable open space, and maximum height, respectively, of the Code of the City of Richmond. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

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 land use designation. The building and portion of the site are currently vacant and underutilized making this designation ideal for the proposed mixed-uses.

Staff also finds that the proposed is located near a designated Major Mixed-Use Street, which is intended for higher volumes of people interacting within commercial and residential uses. The proposed location of the mixed-use building is located within a highly walkable area and carries a walkability score of "70-89," which is described as a "very walkable". The proposed may potentially provide additional services and a destination for nearby residents and visitors in an already vibrant neighborhood. (p. 113)

Staff finds that the proposed adaptive re-use of the existing building, which was initially constructed in 1936, demonstrates a creative way towards implementing Objective 3.1 within the Richmond 300 Master Plan which states "Preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures, neighborhoods, cemeteries, and landscapes that contribute to Richmond's authenticity." (p. 94)

Staff finds that during a current development trend of housing construction, the future use of the property will assist in achieving Objective 15.1b which aims to “locate jobs near residents” The proposed commercial uses are within an established, high-density neighborhood. (p. 159)

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.

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## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description**

The property is located in the Church Hill Central neighborhood between Carrington and Venable Streets. The property is currently a 9,518 sq. ft. (.21 acre) parcel of land and is improved with a 2,976 sq. ft. vacant commercial building, initially constructed in 1936 and later expanded in 1941 and 1946.

### **Proposed Use of the Property**

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.

The property is located on a designated Major Mixed-Use Street, which includes characteristics such as:

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, through commercial and mixed-use areas
- Prioritize use and density-scaled sidewalks and crosswalks
- Require form elements, such as buildings to the street with parking in the rear, as well as building windows and entrances on the street
- Incorporate streetscape features, such as trees, benches, and trash receptacles
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Prioritize the curbside for walking, bicycling, transit, and short-term parking access and loading for local shops and restaurants

**Zoning and Ordinance Conditions**

The current zoning for this property is R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. The proposed use does not meet the below zoning requirements of permitted uses on corner lots, therefore an SUP is required.

Sec. 30-419.2 Permitted principal uses.

*The mix of uses is only permitted on corner lots.*

Sec. 30-419.5(5) Multifamily dwellings.

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 proposed square feet for dwelling units is between 641 and 903 square feet in area.*

Sec. 30-419.6(2)b Side Yards.

There shall be side yards of not less than five feet in width.

*The proposed side yards are between approximately 2 and 3 feet in width.*

Sec. 30-419.7 Usable open space. In the R-63 district, usable open space of not less than 30 percent of the area of the lot shall be provided for multifamily dwellings.

*At a lot size of 9,517.88 SF, the required usable open space is 2,855.36 SF. The provided usable open space was calculated at ~1,538 SF*

30-419.10(1) Height. Story height as defined in Article XII of this chapter shall be not less than ten feet and not greater than 14 feet.

*The proposed first floor height is approximately 15 feet.*

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a mixed-use building, with off-street parking, substantially as shown on the Plans. Up to 13 dwelling units may be located on the Property. The areas labelled “Commercial” on the Plans may contain permitted principal uses on corner lots, pursuant to Section 30-419.3 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.
- No fewer than nine off-street parking spaces shall be provided on the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- Visitor bicycle parking shall be provided, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three stories.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans, subject to the applicable regulations of Chapter 30, Article IX, Division 4 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.
- All mechanical equipment 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, substantially as shown on the Plans.

### **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.

The applicant has informed staff that the units will be market rate.

### **Surrounding Area**

Surrounding properties are primarily within the R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. The surrounding land uses are primarily a mix of single-, two-, and multi-family residential with some commercial and mixed-uses in the vicinity.

### **Neighborhood Participation**

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Union Hill Civic Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. Public comments has been received and included in the public record.

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