



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2024-017: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1912 West Cary Street for the purpose of a mixed-use development, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 6, 2024

PETITIONER

Nathan March - Johannas Design Group

LOCATION

1912 West Cary Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize a mixed-use development within an Urban Business District. While a portion of the proposed uses are permitted, the plans overall do not meet the current building height and off-street parking space width requirements. A Special Use Permit is, therefore, required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed density aligns with the Master Plan recommendations for Community Mixed Use which calls for buildings ranging from two to six stories and the use of step-backs from the first floor. The proposed is stepped back from the 2nd to 4th floors. (p. 58)

Staff also finds that the proposed mix of uses, ground-floor commercial, and rear parking, are all recommendations within Community Mixed Use.

Staff finds that the proposed aligns well with the Major Mixed-Use Street designation including the mix of uses, “buildings to the street with parking in the rear, as well as building windows and entrances on the street”, and “ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops”. The proposed is located within 100 ft. of a GRTC red line stop, which is a “high frequency route” for buses. (p. 72)

Staff further finds that the proposed supports Objective 15.1b which aims to locate jobs near housing to reduce transportation costs and air pollution. (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.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Fan neighborhood on West Cary Street at the corner of West Cary and South Granby Streets. The property is currently a 13,939 square foot (0.3 acre) parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The mixed-use development shall contain retail, a hotel with up to 19 guestrooms, and a special events space.

Master Plan

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

Primary Uses:

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

Secondary Uses:

Single-family houses, institutional, and government.

The property is also located within a designated "micro-node" which are notable places "within a neighborhood that generally provides goods and services to the immediate residents but may attract visitors." (p. 24)

This portion of Cary Street is designated as a Major Mixed-Use Street which has the following characteristics:

- 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 Urban Business. The proposed use is not permitted within the Urban Business District. The following sections of the Zoning Ordinance are not met:

Section 30-433.2. Permitted principal and accessory uses.

The proposed hotel use is not a permitted principal use.

Section 30-433.8. Height limit.

No building or structure shall exceed 28 feet in height.

The height of the proposed is 58 ft.

Section 30-710.3:1. Dimensions of parking spaces.

The aisle width must be 25' for full size stalls with a stall width of 8'.

The proposed aisle width is 23'

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a mixed-use development, substantially as shown on the Plans. The mixed-use development shall be authorized to contain (i) a retail use, within the area labeled as “Market” on the Plans, (ii) a hotel use with up to 19 guestrooms, and (iii) a special events use, including private parties, and civic and community events uses, within the areas labeled as “Lobby” and “Arcade Outdoor Expansion Area” on the Plans. All other uses permitted in the UB Urban Business District, pursuant to section 30-433.2 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, may also take place on the Property.
- The number of special events permitted on the Property shall be limited to 12 per year. Each special event shall be limited to 49 attendees, shall not extend beyond 11:00 p.m., and may include live or recorded music.
- No fewer than seven off-street parking spaces shall be provided the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed four stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially 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.
- In addition to the signs permitted in all districts, pursuant to section 30-505 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, signs substantially as shown on the Plans shall also be permitted on the Property.
- 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.

Surrounding Area

All adjacent properties are located primarily within the same UB District with R-7 Single and Two Family Urban Residential Districts to the north of the property. The area is generally single family residential, with some multi-family residential and small, neighborhood commercial uses present in the vicinity.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Fan Area Business Alliance and The Uptown Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. To this date, staff has not received any letters of support or opposition for this application from the above associations nor nearby residents.

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