



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2016-171: To amend Ord. No. 2014-121-201, adopted Nov. 10, 2014, which authorized the special use of the property known as 1650 Overbrook Road for the purpose of authorizing multifamily dwellings with up to 205 dwelling units, to permit up to 117 multifamily dwelling units and other site amenities, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: June 20, 2016

PETITIONER

H. L. Salomonsky
Overbrook LLC
1553 E. Main St., Richmond, VA 23219

LOCATION

1650 Overbrook Road

PURPOSE

To amend Ord. No. 2014-121-201, adopted Nov. 10, 2014, which authorized the special use of the property known as 1650 Overbrook Road for the purpose of authorizing multifamily dwellings with up to 205 dwelling units, to permit up to 117 multifamily dwelling units and other site amenities, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property is an improved lot of 6.44 acres located on the block bounded by Overbrook Road to the south, Hermitage Road to the west, and a private alley running the length of the northern boundary. The primary masonry structure has a building footprint of 110,851 square feet and varies in building height between approximately 18 feet and 35 feet. A second masonry structure is located at the corner of Overbrook Road and Hermitage Road and it has a building footprint of 2,392 square feet. Located next to this building is one-story metal building 1,532 square feet in size.

The larger building was used historically as an old tobacco warehouse with interior columns and the applicant intends to preserve the building as recommended by the Department of Historical Resources.

In 2014, City Council adopted Ord. No. 2014-121-201, which authorized up to 205 multi-family dwelling units. The applicant proposes amending that ordinance to develop up to 117 dwelling units and provide 296 total parking spaces. The development of the primary building would take place in two sections, "Section A" and "Section B," with "Section B" being developed for future commercial use. "Section A" would be developed for up to 117 dwelling units. Site amenities include a swimming pool. The one-story masonry building at the corner of Overbrook Road and

Hermitage Road labeled “Section C” is designated for commercial use. The metal building would be removed.

The property is currently zoned M-1 Light Industrial, which does not permit the proposed multifamily use of the property. The City of Richmond’s Master Plan, adopted in 2001, also designates the subject property for “industrial” development. In keeping with the industrial zoning and Master Plan land use designation, the property has most recently been used for furniture sales.

For the Near West Planning District, The Master Plan states that “There are a number of vacant industrial and commercial properties within the District, many of which are within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Creative reuse strategies for these buildings or sites are needed” (p. 229).

Staff notes that the proposed multi-family use is not in compliance with the Master Plan designation of “industrial” for the subject property. However, it appears that further industrial use of the historic building is unlikely given the building’s size and configuration. Residential and commercial uses offer a reasonable alternative for reuse that would support preservation of the existing building.

Staff notes that the proposal does address the City’s goal of creating new higher quality housing targeted toward market rate rentals as is evidenced by the unit sizes and amenities. Staff notes that, given the large land area associated with the project, the resulting density is lesser than many similar adaptive re-use projects that have received approval. The successful renovation of the Todd Ham building and the Stove Works buildings at the corner of Hermitage and Leigh Streets indicates that this location is a desirable alternative to nearby residential areas such as Carver and the Fan District. This proposal would also provide adequate on-site parking for the proposed use and significant right-of-way and site improvements, including the installation of sidewalks and street trees along Overbrook.

Furthermore, the proposal uses creative and attractive architectural designs to ensure all dwelling units have windows and access to natural light as necessary to meet the Planning Commission’s Windowless Dwelling Unit Resolution.

Staff finds that the City Charter conditions relative to the granting of special use permits has been met. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the special use permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property is an improved lot of 6.44 acres located on the block bounded by Overbrook Road to the south, Hermitage Road to the west, and a private alley running the length of the northern boundary. The primary masonry structure has a building footprint of 110,851 square feet and varies in building height between approximately 18 feet and 35

feet. A second masonry structure is located at the corner of Overbrook Road and Hermitage Road and it has a building footprint of 2,392 square feet. Located next to this building is one-story metal building 1,532 square feet in size.

Proposed Use of the Property

In 2014, City Council adopted Ord. No. 2014-121-201, which authorized up to 205 multi-family dwelling units. The applicant proposes amending that ordinance to develop up to 117 dwelling units and provide 296 total parking spaces. The development of the primary building would take place in two sections, "Section A" and "Section B," with "Section B" being developed for future commercial use. "Section A" would be developed for up to 117 dwelling units. Site amenities include a swimming pool. The one-story masonry building at the corner of Overbrook Road and Hermitage Road labeled "Section C" is designated for commercial use. The metal building would be removed.

Master Plan

The City of Richmond's Master Plan, adopted in 2001, also designates the subject property for "industrial" development. In keeping with the industrial zoning and Master Plan land use designation, the property has most recently been used for furniture sales.

For the Near West Planning District, The Master Plan states that "There are a number of vacant industrial and commercial properties within the District, many of which are within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Creative reuse strategies for these buildings or sites are needed" (p. 229).

Zoning & Ordinance Conditions

The property is currently zoned M-1 Light Industrial, which does not permit the proposed multifamily use of the property. The M-1 District prohibits conversion of an existing building to residential use. The development of the primary building would take place in two sections, "Section A" and "Section B," with "Section B" being permitted for uses allowed in the B-6 Mixed-Use Business District. "Section A" would be developed for up to 117 dwelling units. "Section B" is currently occupied by a furniture business and it is the intention of the applicant to continue using "Section B" for commercial uses. However, B-6 does allow for residential uses.

The entire parking lot, including that portion on the north side of the property abutting a private alley, is proposed to contain landscaped islands planted with trees. The placement of landscaped islands relative to the number of parking spaces exceeds Zoning Code requirements.

The project exceeds the landscaping requirements of the district. On the Overbrook Road side of the building, the applicant proposes a ten foot (10') wide planter located within the property line separating the entire parking lot, (except for egress points), from a new five foot (5') wide concrete sidewalk to be located the public right-of way and which abuts a seven foot (7') wide swath of land, also in the public right-of way, containing new street trees planted forty feet (40') apart to be located between the sidewalk and the street along its entire length.

On the Hermitage Road side of the building, landscaping also exceeds that required in the M-1 District by providing buffers planted with street trees ranging in width from ten feet (10') to twenty-three feet (23').

On the Hardy Street side of the building, a landscaped pocket park is proposed between the parking lot and the building.

Surrounding Area

The properties to the north across a private alley and to the east is zoned M-1 Light Industrial and are occupied by the Richmond SPCA, warehousing, and general offices. The properties to the south across Overbrook Road are zoned M-2 Heavy Industrial District and are occupied by general offices, warehousing, Hardywood Brewery, Hermitage Investment Group, and A. H. Harris and Sons, a construction supply company. The property to the west, across Hermitage Road is zoned M-2 and is occupied by the Richmond Ambulance Authority.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff has contacted 2nd District Council Representative, Charles Samuels and has received one letter of opposition.

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