



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. 2017-126: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1717 East Cary Street for the purpose of allowing a building to exceed the applicable height restrictions, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 17, 2017

PETITIONER

M. Ann Neil Cosby – McGuireWoods

LOCATION

1717 East Cary Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1717 East Cary Street for the purpose of allowing a building to exceed the applicable height restrictions, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property consists of a 0.2 acre (8,712 SF) parcel improved with an historic, 5-story brick structure located at the southwest corner of the intersection of East Cary Street and South 18th Street. The property is located in the Shockoe Bottom neighborhood.

The applicant is proposing the expansion of an existing building as part of renovations for a proposed office use (business incubator). The renovated building would exceed the height requirements of the B-5 zoning district by one story. A special use permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposed use would contribute to the mix of land uses supported by the Downtown Plan and Pulse Corridor Plan for the area, and would be in close proximity to mass transit and provide bicycle parking on-site.

Staff further finds that the proposed height would be consistent with the heights of existing buildings located along the East Cary Street corridor within Shockoe Bottom and with the recommendations of the Downtown Plan and Pulse Corridor Plan.

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.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property consists of a 0.2 acre (8,712 SF) parcel improved with an historic, 5-story brick structure located at the southwest corner of the intersection of East Cary Street and South 18th Street. The property is located in the Shockoe Bottom neighborhood.

Proposed Use of the Property

Expansion of an existing building to include a sixth floor, as part of renovations for a proposed office use (business incubator).

Master Plan

The subject property falls within an Urban Center Area of the Shockoe district, as established by the Richmond Downtown Plan. Such areas are “characterized by higher density, mixed use development, typically arranged on a fine grained street network, with wide sidewalks, regular tree planting, and minimal setbacks.” Moreover, the Urban Center Area demonstrates “a dense mix of office space, apartments, and retail located in four to six story brick buildings that front the street. Pedestrians have an active presence in these neighborhoods” (pp. 3.25 3.26).

Specifically for Shockoe Bottom, the plan states, “Shockoe’s urban fabric is among the best preserved in the city, with two to six story brick buildings defining the streets. The urban fabric of the district is ideal for pedestrians, with small blocks and intimate cobblestone streets. Many of the abandoned brick warehouses have been preserved and redeveloped as housing, shops, restaurants, and offices” (p. 4.56).

The subject property is also located within the study area of the City’s Pulse Corridor Plan, which was recently approved by the Planning Commission, and has been designated as a Neighborhood Mixed Use area. Such areas “are cohesive districts that provide a mix of uses, but with a larger amount of residential uses than other mixed use districts. They are an urban, walkable environment with limited neighborhood oriented uses incorporated along key commercial corridors”. Recommended building heights are limited to up to eight stories, depending on neighborhood (p. XII). Specifically for the Shockoe Bottom Station area, the draft plan states “Shockoe Bottom and Tobacco Row allow for the continued development of multi-family residential buildings interspersed with commercial uses (p. 110).

Zoning & Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning district for the property is B-5 Central Business District.

Additional conditions will be imposed by the special use permit ordinance including:

- The use of the Property shall be as an office building with a height no greater than six stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- Bicycle parking for no fewer than eight bicycles shall be provided on the Property,

substantially as shown on the Plans.

- Use of the outdoor [rooftop] patio shall be accessory to the office use of the Property and shall cease by no later than 11:00 p.m. daily.
- Signage pertaining to the Special Use shall conform to the applicable requirements of the underlying zoning of the Property.
- All building materials 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.
- The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way substantially as shown on the Plans, including a new curb cut and entrance to East Cary Street with granite curbing, the replacement of a concrete sidewalk with brick, the widening of brick sidewalk, and the relocation of a streetlight, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works
- 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

A mix of M-1 Light Industrial, M-2 Heavy Industrial, B-5 and B-5(C) zoning districts surround the subject property. A mix of commercial, office, mixed use, industrial and residential land uses are present in the area, as well as active railroad property along the southwestern border of the subject property.

Neighborhood Participation

No letters of support or opposition were received.

Staff Contact: Matthew J. Ebinger, AICP, Acting Principal Planner, (804) 646-6308