



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2020-264: To authorize the special use of the property known as 111 Spring Street for the purpose of a parking deck, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 1, 2021

PETITIONER

Daniel Hayes – Draper Aden Associates for Virginia Housing Development Authority

LOCATION

111 Spring Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 111 Spring Street for the purpose of a parking deck, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a special use permit to authorize the use of a parking deck within an RO-3 Residential Office and an M-1 Light Industrial Zone. Structured parking facilities are allowed within these districts. However, the application does not meet certain feature and layout requirements within the RO-3 and M-1 Districts. A special use permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposed parking deck would provide off-street parking for office use, which is a use supported by the Richmond 300 Master Plan. Specifically, the office use is the VHDA headquarters facility, which will undergo an expansion to provide additional office space. Staff does not perceive a land use impact generated by construction of the parking deck that would justify conditioning approval of the special use permit on an obligation that the property owner make the parking garage available for public use.

Staff finds that the subject property is a triangular parcel and the proposed parking deck would be offset from Second Street, rather than having frontage directly along and parallel to Second Street, allowing for open space and landscape buffering, particularly at the corner of Second Street and Spring Street.

Staff finds the installation of street trees, landscaping, and new sidewalk will improve the pedestrian experience and that the proposed structure would not adversely affect views of the river from Second Street.

Staff further 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 subject property consists of a 56,131 SF or 1.3 acre parcel of land. The property is located in the Gambles Hill neighborhood along 2nd Street between the Spring and 1st Streets.

Proposed Use of the Property

Structured parking deck containing up to 286 parking spaces for adjacent Virginian Housing Development Authority office building and expansion

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject property for Downtown Mixed-Use land use. This use is described the central business district of the city and region. The district features high density development with office buildings, residential buildings, and a mix of complementary uses, including regional destinations in a highly-walkable urban environment.

Development Style: Higher density pedestrian and transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites. Historic buildings are adapted for new uses. Future development should be urban in form and may be of larger scale than existing context. Plazas and setbacks create an engaging street life. Many buildings are vertically mixed-use. New developments continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity.

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. Active commercial ground floor uses required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be of alleys whenever possible; new driveways are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages. Surface parking is prohibited as a principal use. Parking requirements are substantially less in these areas than other areas of the City and are largely eliminated. Buildings typically a minimum height of five stories. Primary uses include retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, institutional, government, and open space. (p. 66)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The zoning of the subject property is R-O3 - Residential Office and M-1 - Light Industrial. The following comments were provided by Zoning Administration:

ZONING AND USE: The subject property is located in both the M-1 (Light Industrial) and RO-3 (Residential Office) zoning districts.

Parking decks are permitted in the RO-3 zoning district, provided that:

a. No portion of the ground floor of such structure located along a principal or priority street frontage shall be used for parking or related circulation of vehicles, but such portion shall be devoted to other permitted principal uses which shall have a depth of not less than 20 feet along the principal priority street frontage or to means of pedestrian or vehicle access, provided that vehicle access along such street frontage shall be permitted only when no other street or alley is available for adequate access. In the case of a portion of a story located along a principal street frontage having less than five feet of its height above the grade level of the building façade along the street frontage, the provisions of this paragraph prohibiting parking or related circulation of vehicles shall not apply, provided that parking spaces shall be completely screened from view from the street by structural material similar to the material of the building façade. Upper stories of such structure may be used for parking or related circulation of vehicles subject to the fenestration requirements set forth in section 30-428.10. This requirements is not being met (Sec. 30-428.1(6)a)

Parking decks are permitted in the M-1 zoning district, provided that:

a. No portion of such structure located along a principal street frontage shall be used for parking or related circulation of vehicles, but shall be devoted to other permitted principal uses, which shall have a depth of not less than 20 feet along the principal street frontage, or to means of pedestrian or vehicle access, provided that vehicle access along such street frontage shall be permitted only when no other street or alley is available for adequate access. In the case of a portion of a story located along a principal street frontage and having less than five feet of its height above the grade level at the building façade along the street frontage, the provisions of this subdivision prohibiting parking or related circulation of vehicles shall not apply, provided that parking spaces shall be completely screened from view from the street by structural material similar to the material of the building façade; This requirement is not being met (Sec. 30-438.1(32)a)

YARDS:

RO-3 District:

Front (S 1st Street): Minimum 15' Requirement not met (Sec. 30-428.6(a))

Side (southern property line): Minimum 10' (Met)

Street Side Yard: Minimum 10' Requirement not met for new pedestrian bridge on parcel at 601 N Belvidere Street (Sec. 30-630.1(a))

M-1 District:

Front Yard (S 1st Street): Minimum 15' within 100' of R or RO district within the same block Requirement not met (Sec. 30-630.3)

Conditions will be imposed by the special use permit ordinance, including:

3(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a parking deck containing up to 286 parking spaces, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed the height shown on the Plans.

(c) All building materials, elevations, and landscaping shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

(d) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

4(c) 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.

(e) The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way, including installation of a new concrete sidewalk along South 2nd Street, a new brick sidewalk and entrance along Spring Street, five street trees along South 2nd Street, and four street trees along Spring Street, substantially as shown on the Plans,

Surrounding Area

Surrounding properties are located in the RO-3 and M-1 Districts. A mix of institutional, open space, and office land uses are present in the vicinity.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified adjacent property owners, the Downtown Neighborhood Association, and Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association. Staff has received letters from the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association and an area resident.

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