



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2020-136: To authorize the special use of the properties known as 3700 Monument Avenue and 1301A North Hamilton Street for the purpose of a multi-family building containing up to 263 units, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: June 7, 2020

PETITIONER

Mark Baker – Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

3700 Monument Avenue and 1301A North Hamilton Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the properties known as 3700 Monument Avenue and 1301A North Hamilton Street for the purpose of a multi-family building containing up to 263 units, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is to construct a new multi-family building containing up to 263 units with off-street parking. Under current R-73 Multi-Family Urban Residential zoning standards, the proposal would not meet certain feature requirements, including setbacks and floor area ratio. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposal would be generally consistent with the recommendations of the City's Master Plan, particularly pertaining to the development style and features within the Corridor Mixed-Use land use category including the density, building height, and primary uses.

Staff finds that the proposal would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area due to the addition of structured, off-street parking provided on-site.

Staff finds that the proposed use would be consistent with existing multi-family, institutional, office, and commercial uses in the area.

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

1301A North Hamilton Street is currently improved with a 26,448 sq. ft. office building, constructed in 1981, situated on a 54,886 sq. ft. (1.26 acre) parcel of land. 3700 Monument Avenue is currently a surface parking lot situated on a 46,778 sq. ft. (1.2 acre) parcel of land. Both properties are located in the Sauer's Gardens neighborhood, bound by I-195, Monument Avenue, and North Hamilton Street.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant is proposing a Special Use Permit which would authorize a 263 unit multi-family building with 385 off-street parking spaces.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Corridor Mixed-Use which are uses "found along major commercial corridors and envisioned to provide for medium- to medium high-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented development."

Building sizes, "...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 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 are 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 streets. Parking areas are located within the structure and to the rear of buildings and require screening; shared parking requirements are encouraged. Buildings generally ranging from two to ten stories, based on street widths and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas. 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 (p. 60).

The property is also on a designated Great Street (Monument Ave) and Major Mixed-Use Street (Monument Ave and North Hamilton Street). Major Mixed-Use Streets are envisioned to:

- 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

Objective 14.5 of Richmond 300 states: Encourage more housing types throughout the city and greater density along enhanced transit corridors and at Nodes by amending the Zoning Ordinance.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for the subject parcel is R-73 (Multi-Family Residential). The City’s Zoning Administration reviewed the application and provided the following comments:

YARDS:

Section 30-420.5(1) Front Yard. There shall be a front yard with a depth of not less than 15 feet. *The Plans propose varied Front Yards between 10 to 12 feet.*

Section 30-420.5(2)b Side and Rear Yards. Side and rear yards for newly constructed multifamily dwelling and buildings accessory thereto shall be not less than 15 feet in depth. *The Plans propose side and rear yards between 0.3 to 6.5 feet.*

FLOOR AREA AND USABLE OPEN SPACE

Section 30-420.6(1) The floor area ratio shall not exceed 2.0, provided that the floor area ratio of building or portions thereof devoted to non-dwelling uses shall not exceed 1.4 *Not enough information is provided regarding the floor area ratio to determine compliance.*

Section 30-420.6(2) A usable open space ratio of not less than .25 shall be provided for dwelling uses. *Not enough information is provided regarding the open space ratio to determine compliance.*

PARKING:

[385] parking spaces are noted on the proposed plans. One parking space per dwelling unit would be required.

BICYCLE PARKING:

Long-term spaces are required at a rate of 1 space for every 4 dwelling units. That would require 66 long-term spaces. 6 short-term bike parking spaces would be required by normal zoning. *The proposal is providing 65 resident bicycles and 11 visitor bicycles.*

SIGNAGE:

There are no signs shown on the plans. Any signs not authorized by the SUP would have to conform to the underlying zoning district.

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

(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily dwelling containing up to 263 dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans. Amenity space shall also be provided on the Property.

(b) No fewer than 385 off-street parking spaces shall be provided on the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans. Up to 100 of the off-street parking spaces may be used as shared parking spaces for non-dwelling uses located off-site from the Property, provided that such non-dwelling uses are not routinely open, used, or operated after 6:00 p.m. or before 8:00 a.m. on any day.

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

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

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

(f) Storage for a minimum of 65 resident bicycles and 11 visitor bicycles shall be provided on the Property.

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 the installation of a new sidewalk and ramps, and 14 street trees, substantially as shown on the Plans, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works.

Surrounding Area

Adjacent properties are located within the R-53 Multi-Family and RO-2 Residential Office Zones. A mix of commercial, office, institutional, and single- and multi-family residential land uses are present in the vicinity.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$67,703. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income which equates to \$20,311 or \$1,693 per month or less to avoid a housing cost burden.* Based upon the median household income for the Richmond region and the estimated price of units provided by the applicant, the units are projected to be affordable to households making above 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).**

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates)*

*** (Based upon VHDA fixed-rate, 30-year mortgage, with 20% down and 4% interest)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Jefferson Terrace Civic Association, of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff has not received any letters of support or opposition.

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