



# CITY OF RICHMOND

## Department of Planning & Development Review

### *Staff Report*

**Ord. No. 2021-205:** To authorize the special use of the property known as 1508 Belleville Street for the purpose of a multi-family building containing up to 126 units, upon certain terms and conditions.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** August 16, 2021

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#### **PETITIONER**

Jennifer D. Mullen

#### **LOCATION**

1508 Belleville Street

#### **PURPOSE**

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1508 Belleville Street for the purpose of a multi-family building containing up to 126 units, upon certain terms and conditions.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit which would allow for a multi-family building within a B-7 Mixed-Use Business Zoning District. The proposed use does not meet specific feature requirements of sections 30-446.7(1) and 30-710.1(4)a regarding maximum number of stories and minimum off-street parking spaces, respectively, of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020). A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the development is generally consistent with the recommendations of the City's Richmond 300 Master Plan pertaining to Industrial Mixed Use areas, particularly regarding appropriate height for development, as well as Objective 4.1h., which states that the City should "Require adequate distribution of windows and architectural features in order to create visual interest." Due to the proposed balconies on all floors, the proposed building incorporates a larger area of street-front permeability than is typically seen in new residential buildings. (p. 100)

Staff finds that the proposed design achieves Objective 4.1o., which seeks to "Increase building permeability by requiring new buildings to have functioning entrances from the sidewalk and restricting blank walls at ground level." The proposed use includes individual entrances to dwellings from the sidewalk. (p. 100)

Staff further finds that the proposed Special Use would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area as the proposed building includes 70 off-street, and 6 on-street, parking spaces, and is convenient to mass transit. The proposed is also located within walking distance to the Cleveland Station of the City's Bus Rapid Transit (Pulse) corridor, which achieves Objective 15.1a and 15.1b., which aim to "Increase the number of Richmonders living

in a development pattern that encourages density and reduces dependency on single-occupancy vehicles” and “Increase use of mass and active transportation options”, respectively. (p. 159)

Staff finds that with the ordinance conditions the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, continue to be met. Specifically, staff finds that the proposed amendment 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.

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## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description**

The property is located in the Scott’s Addition neighborhood on Belleville Street adjacent to CSX Railroad. The property is a 34,408.71 sq. ft. (.79 acre) parcel of land and is improved with a 22,113 sq. ft., one-story commercial building constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1938.

### **Proposed Use of the Property**

The application is for a six story, multi-family building with off-street parking.

### **Master Plan**

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Industrial Mixed-Use which is defined as “Formerly traditional industrial areas that are transitioning to mixed-use because of their proximity to growing neighborhoods and changes in market conditions. These areas may still retain some light industrial uses.” The development style includes a mix of building types with low-scale, post-industrial buildings that are adapted for a new use are adjacent to new taller residential and/or office buildings. These areas allow "maker uses" to continue while encouraging more individuals to live, work, and play in the area. Buildings should have street-oriented façades with windows and door openings along street frontages. New light industrial uses are compatible with residential and office uses, and are attractively buffered. 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 are required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveway entrances are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages and minimal driveway entrances are allowed on secondary streets. Vehicular access to parcels should use alleys where possible. Loading for trucks must be provided off-street. Parking lots and parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings. Intensity: Medium-to high-density, three to eight stories. Primary Uses: Retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space. Secondary Uses: Institutional and government.

### **Zoning and Ordinance Conditions**

The current zoning for this property is B-7 (Mixed-Use Business). The City’s Zoning Administration reviewed the application and provided the following comments:

*The proposal is demolish existing buildings and construct a new multifamily (126 units) six-story building. The property is located in the B-7 (Mixed-Use Business District) and has a rectangular shape with an area of approximately 34,408.71 square feet (0.79 acres). The property is currently improved with two single-story buildings containing approximately 22,113 square feet of floor area.*

*Please be advised that the following conditions of the proposed multifamily building do not comply with the current zoning regulations:*

**Sec. 30-446.7. Height:**

*In the B-7 mixed-use business district, no building shall exceed five stories in height when there are existing buildings in the block. Story height shall be not less than ten feet and not greater than 15 feet, except that the ground floor of a building may be of greater height. The proposed six-story building does not meet the height limit of five stories.*

**Sec. 30-710.1(4.1)e. Number of spaces required for particular uses:**

*The off-street parking requirement for new construction multifamily dwelling units in the B-7 district is one parking space per dwelling unit. The proposed 126 dwellings units require 126 parking spaces. Seventy (70) off-street parking spaces are proposed in the ground floor parking deck and six on-street parking spaces are credited towards the parking requirement. 126 parking spaces are required and 76 are proposed.*

This special use permit is conditioned on the following special terms and conditions:

3(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily dwelling containing up to 126 dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans. Amenity space shall also be provided on the Property.

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

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

(d) No fewer than 70 off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use, substantially 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 32 long-term bicycles and six short-term 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, 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 and nearby properties are of the same B-7 District as the subject property. The Scott's Addition neighborhood is also comprised of TOD-1 (Transit Oriented Nodal Development) along Broad Street and Arthur Ashe Boulevard. A mix of residential, commercial, and some industrial uses are present in the vicinity of the subject property.

**Affordability**

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$68,529 per year. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$20,559 per year, or \$1,713 per month, or less to avoid a housing cost burden.\* The applicant has informed staff that the units will be market rate.

\*(U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

**Neighborhood Participation**

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Scott's Addition Boulevard Association (SABA) of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff has received a letter of non-opposition from SABA.

**Staff Contact:** Jonathan Brown, Senior Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-5734