



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. No. 2021-216: To authorize the special use of the property known 1505 West Main Street for the purpose of a mixed-use building containing commercial uses and up to six multifamily dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: September 7, 2021

PETITIONER

John A. Conrad, Esq., 1520 W Main Street, LLC

LOCATION

1505 West Main Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known 1505 West Main Street for the purpose of a mixed-use building containing commercial uses and up to six multifamily dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a special use permit to allow for the construction of a three-story mixed-use building. The proposed uses within the buildings are permitted under the UB Urban Business District, however, the proposed height of the new mixed-use building (34') exceeds the height allowed under the UB District (which is 28'). While the applicant intends to meet the parking requirements of the PO3 (Main Street/Uptown Parking Overlay District), the ordinance provides flexibility should the proposed commercial uses differ from what is preliminarily contemplated. A special use permit is therefore necessary.

Staff finds that the proposed mixed-use building is consistent with the recommendations of Richmond 300. The recommended land use is Community Mixed-Use. The proposed commercial and multi-family uses are primary uses recommended in the Community Mixed-Use land use category. Staff feels that the proposed building is in keeping with the character of the existing area with a brick veneer front façade, double-hung windows, and cornice above the third story. An existing curb cut on West Main Street is proposed to be removed and replaced with new sidewalk, curbing and a street tree, which would enhance the streetscape and pedestrian experience on a street identified as a "Major Mixed-Use Street."

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 5,624 square feet, or 0.13 acres, and is located within the Fan neighborhood, near the intersection of West Main Street and Plum Street.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed Special Use Permit would allow for the construction of a new three story mixed-use building containing commercial uses and up to six dwelling units, while allowing for flexibility of future commercial uses by providing relief from current parking requirements.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property as Community Mixed-Use. This land use category is described as a cluster of medium-density, walkable commercial and residential uses that provide neighborhood services to nearby residential communities and sometimes feature regional attractions.

Development Style: The building size, 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 or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity.

Ground Floor: 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.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be off 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.

Intensity: Buildings generally ranging from two to six stories, based on street widths and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas, as necessary. 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.

The property is also in a location identified as a "micro node" on the Richmond 300 Nodes Map, which is a notable place in a neighborhood that provides goods and services primarily to the immediate residents but also may attract visitors.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The Property is currently located within the UB-PO3 Urban Business- Main Street/Uptown Parking Overlay District. The proposed height of the mixed-use building exceeds what is permitted under the UB Urban Business District. While the parking requirement can be satisfied with certain commercial uses, the parking requirements are being waived for any commercial uses permitted in the UB district in order to provide for flexibility of future tenants.

If adopted, the Special Use Permit would impose the following conditions on the properties:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a mixed-use building containing commercial uses and up to six multifamily dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) Uses permitted in the UB Urban Business District pursuant to Chapter 30, Article IV, Division 18 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, shall be permitted on the Property.
- (c) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed the height shown on the Plans.
- (d) A minimum of five off-street parking spaces shall be required for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.

Surrounding Area

The subject property and properties to the east, west, north and south are located within the UB Urban Business District and the PO3 Main Street/Uptown Parking Overlay District.

Commercial and mixed-use buildings also front on both sides of West Main Street to the east and west of the subject property, as well as to the south of the subject property fronting on S Plum Street.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners, The Uptown Association, The Fan District Association and the Fan Area Business Alliance. Staff has received no letters of support or opposition.

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