

CITY OF RICHMOND
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
LAND USE ADMINISTRATION



June 1, 2012

Nolen Blackwood
Blackwood Investments, Inc.
349 S. Laurel St
Richmond, VA 23220

**RE: Special Use Permit
349 S Laurel St - Parcel No. W0000168025
File No. 9680**

Mr. Blackwood:

Your application for the above referenced property has been circulated to various City agencies for their review and comments have been prepared. Please review the following considerations and comments pertaining to your proposal.

According to the Richmond Downtown Plan, the subject property is located within a General Urban Area, which is "characterized by medium-density, mixed-use development, distributed along medium-sized blocks" (p. 3.23). The City of Richmond's Master Plan further designates the subject property at the corner of South Laurel Street and Albemarle Street for Single-Family (Medium Density) land use. Primary uses in this category are single- and two-family dwellings, both detached and attached (p. 133). The subject property is also located within the Oregon Hill National Historic District.

The Downtown Plan makes the assertion that "a corner store within the [Oregon Hill] neighborhood should be pursued" and stresses the importance of "rehabilitation of blighted and vacant buildings" (pp. 4.17-18). The proposed project would provide a single-family residential unit above a commercial use (i.e. a bicycle repair shop) within a corner-lot building used historically as a neighborhood grocery that now sits vacant. The bicycle repair shop use falls within appropriate corner commercial uses as established by the Downtown Plan (p. 4.17-18) and the proposed renovation would replace the currently enclosed storefront with historically appropriate windows.

As a reminder, please make every effort to discuss your proposal with Council Representative Jewell and the local civic association. We have already received indication of provisional support from the neighborhood (see attached OHNA Letter). Staff is appreciative of your continuing efforts in engaging both City staff and neighborhood residents in order to achieve the goal of creating developments that respect the existing character of the community. With these considerations, staff offers the following comments for your proposal:

Land Use Administration (Matthew Ebinger, 804-646-6308):

Plans

Sheet A.201:

1. The notes indicate the trash containers will be kept in the courtyard, the applicant's report indicates the trash containers will be located in the alley. Please address this discrepancy and be aware that trash cans are not allowed in the alley.
2. The notes indicate no signage is proposed as this time, the applicant's report states there will be no freestanding signs yet asks for a sign area variance to 32 square feet. Is signage proposed at this time? If so, show the location and dimensions of the proposed signage.
3. Modify the note regarding the basement to clarify if it will be included as part of the commercial use or residential use. Based on our pre-application meeting, it is our understanding that this space is to be included in the commercial use.
4. Indicate if the garage is to be included as part of the commercial use or residential use. Based on our pre-application meeting, it is our understanding that this space is to be included in the residential use.
5. Label the two rooms to the rear of the first floor. They appear to be office or storage space.
6. The figures shown in the Area Summary do not match the figures shown in the applicant's report. Please address this discrepancy.
7. The submitted floor plans indicate that the second floor unit has four bedrooms. Please be aware that under current zoning regulations, no more than three unrelated individuals may occupy one dwelling unit and the single-family dwelling unit use precludes the use of separate rental agreements for different occupants or exterior locking mechanisms on interior doors of rooms for occupants.
8. Correct the following misspellings: "mechincal" and "albarmarle".

Sheet A.301

1. Albemarle Street Elevation: The first floor window to the right of the storefront appears to be the transom of a former doorway. Based on the plans, a new full-sized window is to be installed. Please label as such.

General Comments:

1. Include plans for the basement.
2. Will the exterior color of the structure be changed?
3. Provide a parking study containing evidence that there is sufficient on-street parking available for the bicycle shop patrons. If possible, provide information on the current patrons of the bicycle shop (e.g. what proportion of patrons require parking spaces).

Applicant's Report

1. Existing Conditions, Master Plan: Replace "Master" with "Downtown" and "Urban Core" with "General Urban".

Department of Public Utilities:

NOTE: Comments have not yet been received by Land Use Administration. These comments will be forwarded to you as they become available.

Building Inspections (George Woodall, 804-646-6978):

1. Please refer to the attached memorandum.

Right of Way Management (Doug Mawby, 804-646-0110):

1. Please refer to the attached memorandum.

Zoning Division:

NOTE: Comments have not yet been received by Land Use Administration. These comments will be forwarded to you as they become available.

Fire and Emergency Services:

NOTE: Comments have not yet been received by Land Use Administration. These comments will be forwarded to you as they become available.

Once all comments have been received and addressed, please submit 6 full size sets of plans along with a letter detailing your response or revisions to the plans. Should you have any questions or if you would like to schedule a meeting before resubmitting your proposal, please do not hesitate to contact me at (804) 646-6308 or via e-mail at Matthew.Ebinger@Richmondgov.com.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Ebinger, AICP
Senior Planner

Attached: Building Inspections Memorandum
 Right of Way Management Memorandum
 OHNA Letter



CITY OF RICHMOND

INTRACITY CORRESPONDENCE

To: Matthew Ebinger, Senior Planner

From: George A. Woodall, Engineer II

Date: May 23, 2012

Subject: Special Use Permit – 349 S. Laurel Street

The following building code comments are based on a review of the plans submitted. These are items that must be addressed with the building permit submission unless they affect the location of the building on the site or its appearance.

- Virginia is under the IBC 2009 building code, adopted by the state with amendments as VCC 2009.
- Virginia is under ICC/ANSI A117.1-2003 for technical requirements for accessibility.
- 20% of construction cost should be devoted to accessibility improvements per Section 3411.7 Exception 1 IBC 2009.
- Additional or revised plans may result in additional comments.

If you have any questions please contact George A. Woodall at 804-646-6978 or george.woodall@richmondgov.com



CITY OF RICHMOND

(FOR INTRACITY CORRESPONDENCE)

MEMORANDUM

May 29, 2012

TO: Matthew Ebinger, Senior Planner
Land Use Administration, DCD

FROM: Doug Mawby, Development Review Engineer
Right of Way Management, DPW

RE: **349 S Laurel Street – Special Use Permit**

The Department of Public Works (DPW) Right-of-Way Management has reviewed the fore-mentioned SUP application to re-codify the existing use/configuration of this structure. Right-of-Way Management has the following comments:

1. Any existing or proposed encroachments at this location must be approved through the encroachment process prior to issuance of any permits.
2. Any deficiencies in the public sidewalk must be repaired by the developer.
3. Any work done within the public right of way in order to redevelop this building will require a Work in Streets Permit with drawings detailing the work to be done.

If you have any questions concerning this subject, please contact me at 646-0110.

Ms. Lory Markham
Planning Department
City of Richmond



Dear Ms. Markham,

At the April 24, 2012 meeting of the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association (OHNA), we considered the Special Use Permit requested by Nolen Blackwood for 349 South Laurel Street. The neighborhood association voted to support the Special Use Permit with the following two stipulations that were agreed upon by the applicant:

- 1). Only one dwelling unit would be permitted on the property in addition to the business use of the first floor of the building.
- 2). No alcohol sales would be permitted on the property

Mr. Blackwood is requesting the Special Use Permit to allow a retail/commercial use on the first floor of the building. Historically, there was a storefront on the first floor of 349 S. Laurel, and this use would be in keeping with the historical function of the building. Corner storefronts were a common feature of 19th century neighborhoods, such as Oregon Hill, and OHNA has encouraged the use of these storefronts by neighborhood-friendly businesses.

The building at 349 S. Laurel Street has limited parking, other than a two car garage on the property that will be dedicated to the one residential unit above the commercial space. Although adequate parking is of great concern in the Oregon Hill neighborhood, in voting to support the Special Use Permit, we considered the special nature of the business proposed as the tenant of the first floor of the building. A bicycle shop is the proposed tenant, and it would, to some extent, cater to clientele traveling by bicycle. A bicycle store at this location should encourage more bicycle transportation in the neighborhood. We note that the proprietors of the proposed bicycle shop live only a half block away, on the 400 block of S. Laurel, so minimal staff parking will be required. Furthermore, by agreeing to the stipulation that there will be only one dwelling unit permitted on the property, the owner has reduced the possibility that a large number of occupants would have vehicles.

Thank you for your consideration of the comments of OHNA concerning the proposed Special Use Permit at 349 S. Laurel Street. We would encourage you to approve the Special Use Permit and to permanently incorporate the two agreed upon stipulations above into the Special Use Permit.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Hancock
OHNA, President
April 25, 2012