HIATUS
ADVISORY

FROM GAP TO GROUNDBREAKING · STAGE 01 · LOT REPORT

Lot Report

A 1926 corner building listed for sale
Church Hill North, Richmond,
Virginia

Sample engagement. The property and the buyer are illustrative. The zoning, historic review, building code and program rules are real as of the report date.

Prepared for	Dana Whitfield, prospective buyer
Prepared by	Hiatus Advisory
Date	September 19, 2026
Question asked	Can this building carry ten apartments and a shop, and what would the City and the historic district say?

THE ANSWER

What the property can do

A two-story brick corner building of 7,000 square feet on a 6,250 square foot lot in Richmond's UB Urban Business District, inside a National Register historic district and the City's Old and Historic District, listed at $595,000.

THE ANSWER

Seven apartments and a shop in the building as it stands. Eleven or twelve with a two-story addition in the rear yard, which the zoning allows by right and the Commission of Architectural Review will want to see behind the building and below its cornice. Ten does not fit inside the existing walls: the ground floor has to keep 1,167 square feet of commercial space across the whole street frontage, and the upper floor holds five units at a size a lender will finance. The building is a contributing structure in a National Register district, which qualifies a rehabilitation for the federal and Virginia credits and takes demolition, the third way to use the lot, off the table.

6,250 sf
LOT, 50 BY 125 FT, CORNER

7,000 sf
BUILDING, TWO FLOORS OF 3,500

1,167 sf
GROUND-FLOOR COMMERCIAL THE ZONING REQUIRES

28 ft
HEIGHT LIMIT IN UB, NO THIRD FLOOR

The property, from the public record

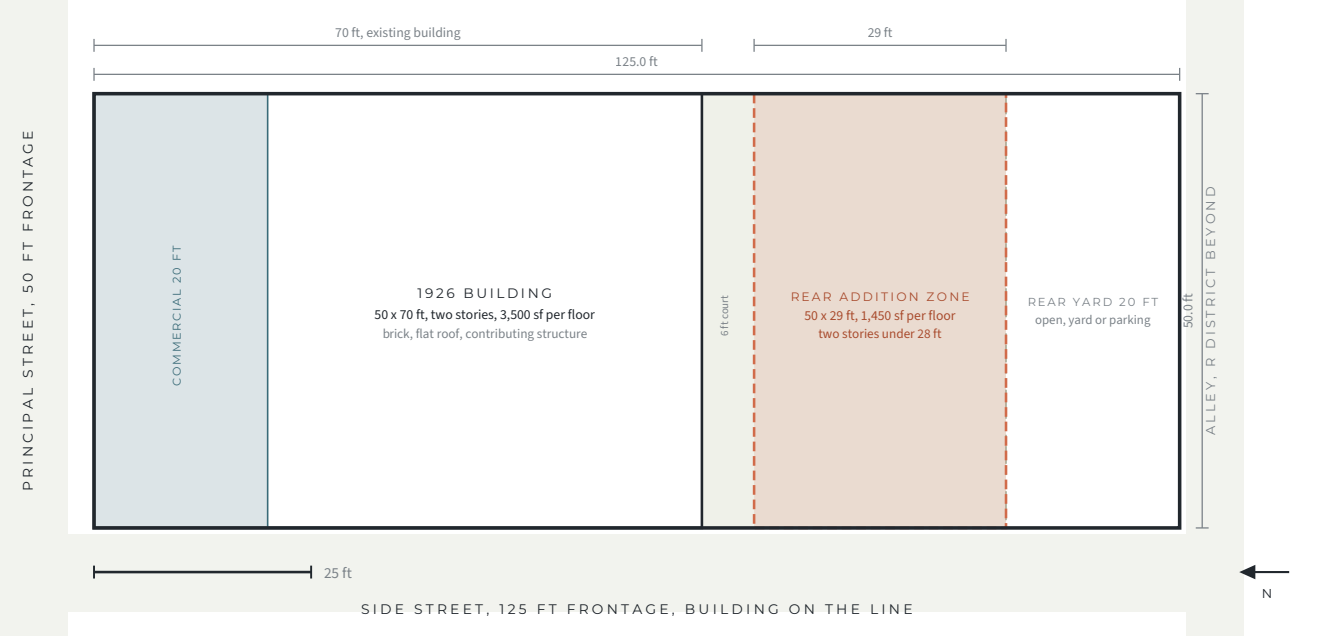
ITEM	FINDING
Location	Corner of a neighborhood commercial street and a residential side street, Church Hill North, Richmond. A live report records the address, parcel and legal description
Lot	6,250 sf (50 by 125 ft) by the assessor, 6,190 sf mapped. 50 ft of frontage on the principal street, 125 ft on the side street, alley at the rear
Zoning	UB Urban Business District, Richmond Code Sec. 30-433. The City's zoning rewrite (Code Refresh) is in a third draft and not adopted; the current ordinance applies
Historic status	Contributing structure in the Church Hill North Historic District (National Register 1997, expanded 2000). Inside the City's Church Hill North Old and Historic District (2007), so exterior work needs a Certificate of Appropriateness
Building	Built 1926, two stories, load-bearing brick, 50 by 70 ft footprint, 3,500 sf per floor, flat roof about 27 ft to the parapet, built to both street lines. Covers 56 percent of the lot
Condition and use	Ground floor a hardware store until 2024, vacant. Upper floor a former lodge hall, vacant, one stair. No condition assessment, structural evaluation or hazardous materials survey on file
Grade and hazards	Corner is the high point; about 4 ft of fall along the side street, flat lot. FEMA Zone X, no floodplain. No Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area
Utilities and parking	City water; combined sewer service area. Gas and power at the alley. No off-street parking, and none required
Listing and assessment	Listed at $595,000, 78 days on market. Assessed at $486,000 for 2026, of which $352,000 is improvements

Lot lines and areas come from the City's parcel mapping and the assessor, not from a survey. Building dimensions are from the footprint layer and the listing, not from measured drawings.

THE SITE

The lot, drawn to scale

The building fills the front 70 feet of the lot. Behind it, 55 feet of yard to the alley: 20 feet of it a required rear yard, because the alley abuts a residential district, and 29 feet of it a place for a two-story addition after a six-foot light court off the existing rear wall. The commercial band is the ground-floor depth the zoning requires along the entire principal frontage.



GOVERNING RULE	STANDARD	SOURCE
Apartments in UB	Permitted by right in the same building as other permitted uses, above the ground floor or to the rear of the commercial space, so as not to interrupt commercial frontage	Richmond Code Sec. 30-433.2(8)
Ground-floor commercial	At least one third of the ground floor or 1,000 sf, whichever is greater, and at least 20 ft deep along the entire principal street frontage except for entrances. Here: 1,167 sf, the full 50 ft, 20 ft deep	Sec. 30-433.2(8)
Height	28 ft maximum. The existing parapet sits near it; no third floor or rooftop addition by right	Sec. 30-433.8
Yards	None required in UB, except 10 ft beside and 20 ft behind where the lot abuts or faces an R district across an alley. The rear yard applies; the interior side does not	Sec. 30-433.5
Parking	None. Richmond repealed minimum parking requirements citywide in April 2023	City Council, April 2023
Historic review	Certificate of Appropriateness for any exterior change: windows, storefront, masonry, additions, demolition. Reviewed against the district guidelines	Old and Historic District Guidelines
Credits	A contributing building rehabilitated to the Secretary's Standards for income-producing use qualifies for the 20 percent federal and 25 percent Virginia credits	26 USC 47; Va. Code 58.1-339.2

THREE WAYS TO USE THE PROPERTY

What fits under each path

A building on a lot has different paths from an empty lot. Each carries its own unit count, its own review and its own relationship to the credits that decide whether a rehabilitation here can be financed.

PATH	UNITS	REVIEW	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
A. Keep and convert	Seven: five upstairs, two behind the shop, plus 1,167 sf of commercial space	Certificate of Appropriateness for windows and storefront; building permit as a change of occupancy to R-2; credit application Parts 1 to 3	Five units of 520 to 800 sf upstairs off a new corridor and a second stair; two ground-floor units at the rear with the yard; the corner storefront kept as the shop. Credits apply to the whole rehabilitation
B. Convert and add	Eleven or twelve: the seven above plus four or five in a two-story rear addition of 1,450 sf per floor	The same reviews, plus Commission review of new construction. The rear yard and the 28 ft limit govern the addition	A two-story wing behind a six-foot light court, below the cornice, joined at the corridor. Not credit-eligible itself; does not disqualify the rehabilitation if it reads as compatible and subordinate
C. Clear and rebuild	About the same as B, with none of the credits	Demolition of a contributing structure needs Commission approval, reserved for structures that cannot be saved	Not a path. A new 28 ft building on 6,250 sf yields roughly what A and B yield together, after a demolition the district will not approve for a sound brick building

What fits, by plan

PLAN	UNITS	COMMERCIAL	HEIGHT	NOTE
Buyer's ask: ten units in the existing building, small shop	10	under 1,167 sf	27 ft	Does not comply. The frontage rule takes the ground floor the tenth unit needs, and ten units in 7,000 gsf are studios a lender will discount
A. Existing building, converted	7	1,167 sf	27 ft	Complies. One-bedrooms and a two-bedroom at the corner; the shop on the corner
B. Converted, with a rear addition	11 to 12	1,167 sf	28 ft	Complies on zoning; the addition goes to the Commission. A yes to the buyer's question, with a different building
Rooftop addition	n/a		over 28 ft	Not permitted by right and unlikely at the Commission. Not drawn

THE RULE THAT SHAPES THE PLAN

The commercial frontage. UB requires the ground floor along the whole principal street to stay commercial to a depth of 20 feet, and at least a third of the floor in all. On a 50 by 70 foot building that is 1,167 square feet, which is also the most leasable space on the block. The apartments go above it and behind it. The buyer's plan put two of them in it.

BEFORE THE OFFER

What will cost time or money

ITEM	WHAT TO EXPECT	BASIS
Change of occupancy	Store and hall to apartments is a change of occupancy under the Virginia Existing Building Code: sprinklers throughout the converted area, a second means of egress from the upper floor, rated separations between the shop and the units, Type B accessibility in the ground-floor units, and a sewer capacity review for twelve new kitchens and baths. None is optional	2021 VEBC, 13 VAC 5-63
Surveys before a permit	An asbestos inspection is certified by the owner before any permit issues on a building permitted before 1985; lead paint rules apply to pre-1978 housing. A structural evaluation of the hall floor and roof is a lender condition	Va. Code 36-99.7; DOLI
Historic review	Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission, which meets monthly: window repair rather than replacement, the storefront kept, an addition behind and below the building	Old and Historic District Guidelines
Credits	Part 2 approval from the Department of Historic Resources and the Park Service before construction starts; the credits fund at Part 3, after completion. Plan the money around that timing	DHR; NPS Technical Preservation Services
Short-term rental	Permit required; whole-unit short-term rentals in a multifamily building are capped at a third of the units. Underwrite the apartments as apartments	Richmond STR ordinance (2023)
Tax exemption	The City's affordable housing partial tax exemption runs fifteen years for rehabilitations reserving 30 percent of units for households at or below 80 percent of area median income; the 2026 rent ceilings sit at or above market here	Richmond AHTEP
Schedule	Surveys and schematic design two to three months, Parts 1 and 2 with the Commission four to six, permits two to three, construction ten to twelve. A feasibility period under four months cannot hold the first two steps	Hiatus read

WHAT THIS REPORT IS NOT

It is not a survey, a title review, an appraisal, a condition assessment or a permit application. Lot lines and areas come from the City's mapping data, building dimensions from the footprint layer, and codes change. Before anyone buys, designs or borrows against anything in this report, confirm it with the City of Richmond's zoning administrator and the Commission's staff, and open the walls with an engineer.

The next step

A 30-minute call with Jesse or Ryan comes with this report, to walk through the drawing and the difference between the ten units asked for and the eleven the lot can give. What the conversion costs, what the credits are worth, what the apartments rent for and what a bank will lend are the questions this report does not answer. They are the gap analysis, and they belong inside a feasibility period.

This document is a sample. The property, the buyer and the listing are illustrative; no such engagement took place. The Richmond ordinance, Virginia law, program terms and review process cited were checked against public sources in September 2026. A live report pulls the property facts from the City's parcel, zoning, historic district and footprint layers, the assessor and the USGS elevation model on the report date. Hiatus Advisory is the development advisory practice of Hiatus Capital Management LLC, Bend, Oregon.