



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2024-088: To authorize the special use of the property known as 2127 Idlewood Avenue for the purpose of a dwelling unit within an accessory building to a single-family attached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: April 2, 2024

PETITIONER

Seth Tandett

LOCATION

2127 Idlewood Avenue

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to allow for a dwelling unit within an accessory structure to a single-family attached dwelling within the R-6 Single Family Attached Residential District. While the accessory dwelling unit is a permitted use in the R-6 District, it exceeds the allowable floor area ratio. Therefore, a Special Use Permit is required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds the proposal is consistent with the recommendations of the City's Master Plan pertaining to the Neighborhood Mixed-Use land use category, including accessory dwelling units as a primary use.

Staff further finds that the proposed use would be consistent with the historic pattern of the development in the area, which is primarily single-family dwellings, many with accessory structures. Staff finds that this use is not disruptive to the existing fabric of the neighborhood.

Staff also finds that the proposed use is consistent with Objective 14.5 of the City's Master Plan to which seeks to, "encourage more housing types throughout the city" (Richmond 300, p. 152). This objective aims to allow for accessory dwelling units by-right.

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

The property is located in the Byrd Park neighborhood between South Shields Avenue and South Rowland Street. The property is currently a 2,040 square foot (.047 acre) parcel of land with a single-family attached dwelling.

The current zoning for the property is R-6 - Residential (Single Family Attached). Adjacent properties are within the same R-6 District.

Proposed Use of the Property

A single-family attached dwelling with a dwelling unit within an accessory structure.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Neighborhood Mixed-Use, which is defined as, "Existing or new highly-walkable urban neighborhoods that are predominantly residential with a small, but critical, percentage of parcels providing retail, office, personal service, and institutional uses" (Richmond 300, p. 56, 2020).

Development Style: These areas feature a variety of building types that are close to one another and create a unified street wall. The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas vary depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Setbacks, plazas, and parks create a sense of place and community gathering areas. New developments on larger parcels continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity within the neighborhood and to adjacent neighborhoods. In historic neighborhoods, small-scale commercial uses exist today or should be allowed to reestablish. In new neighborhoods, small scale commercial buildings should be introduced.

Ground Floor: Regardless of use, buildings should engage the street with features such as street oriented façades with windows and door openings along street frontages. Appropriate setbacks, open space, front porches, elevated ground floors, and other features that provide a sense of privacy should be provided for residential uses.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveways are prohibited on Priority and Principal Street frontages. Vehicular access to parcels should use alleys wherever possible. Parking areas should be located to the rear of street-facing buildings.

Intensity: Building heights are generally two to four stories. Buildings taller than four stories may be found along major streets (see Street Typologies Map). Parcels are generally between 1,500 and 5,000 sq. ft.

Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), and open space.

Secondary Uses: Large multi-family buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District. The following conditions of the proposed development do not comply with the current zoning regulations:

Sec. 30-402.2(13) - Permitted accessory uses and structures.

One accessory dwelling unit located on the same lot as a single-family dwelling provided that:

- a. The accessory dwelling unit cannot exceed one-third of the floor area of the main single-family dwelling or 500 square feet, whichever is greater.

The total floor area of the Single-Family Attached Dwelling is 1,190 square feet, meaning a 500 square foot accessory dwelling unit (ADU) would be permitted. A 528 square foot ADU is proposed.

This special use permit would impose development conditions, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a dwelling unit within an accessory building to a single-family detached dwelling, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the accessory building shall not exceed two stories.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding land uses are primarily residential.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$109,400 per year.* The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$32,820 per year, or \$2,735 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden. Rental estimates are not yet available for this project.

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Regional)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Byrd Park Civic League. Staff has received no letters to date.

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