



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-063: To authorize the special use of the property known as 707 North 31st Street for the purpose of four single-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: March 20, 2023

PETITIONER

Mark Baker – Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

707 North 31st Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 707 North 31st Street for the purpose of four single-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit which would allow for the construction of four single-family attached dwellings within an R-6 Single Family Attached Residential District. While single-family attached dwellings are a permitted use within the R-6, the proposed development does not meet current requirements for density, lot area, front yards, lot coverage, and off-street parking. A Special Use Permit is therefore required. The density of the proposed is approximately 4 units per .16 acres or 25 units per acre.

Staff finds that the proposed development is generally consistent with the land use recommendations of the Richmond 300 Master Plan. The proposed development would fall within the range of residential densities found on the block and the proposed site design, density, building materials, and architectural features are generally consistent with surrounding historic architecture.

Staff also finds that the proposed development supports Objective 15.1a which states, “Increase the number of Richmonders living in a development pattern that encourages density and reduces dependency on single-occupancy vehicles” The proposed units are located along a designated Major Mixed-Use Street which proposes higher densities that promote walkability.

Staff further finds that the proposed development would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area due to the availability of on-street parking.

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 Church Hill North neighborhood on 31st Street, between M and N Streets. The property is currently an improved 7,040 sq. ft. (.16 acre) parcel of land with a one-story, 1088 sq. ft. dwelling constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1981.

Proposed Use of the Property

The application is for two pairs of single-family attached dwellings.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Neighborhood Mixed-Use. This designation is defined as a "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."

Intensity: Building heights are generally two to four stories. Buildings taller than four stories may be found along major streets. 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. (p. 56)

The property is located on a designated Major Mixed-Use Street which carries the following characteristics:

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, through commercial and mixed-use areas
- Prioritize use and density-scaled sidewalks and crosswalks
- Require form elements, such as buildings to the street with parking in the rear, as well as building windows and entrances on the street
- Incorporate streetscape features, such as trees, benches, and trash receptacles
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Prioritize the curbside for walking, bicycling, transit, and short-term parking access and loading for local shops and restaurants. (p. 72)

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. 30-412.4(2)a. Density. The average density within a development site shall not exceed ten dwelling units per acre.

The proposed density is 25 units per acre.

Sec. 30-412.4(2)a. Lot Area. Single-family attached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 2,200 square feet in area...

The proposed lot areas are between 1,628 sq. ft. and 1,804 sq. ft.

Sec. 30-412.5(1)a. Front Yard. There shall be a front yard with a depth of not less than 15 feet.

The proposed front yards are 10 feet.

Sec. 30-412.6. Lot Coverage. Lot coverage in the R-6 single-family attached residential district shall not exceed 55 percent of the area of the lot.

The proposed lot coverage is 60 – 67 percent.

Sec. 30-710.1(2). Number of off-street parking spaces required for single-family attached dwellings is 1 per dwelling unit.

The proposed off-street parking spaces proposed is 0.

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

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as four single-family attached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans.
 - (b) All building materials, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans. Elevations for the dwellings shall be substantially in compliance with the elevations on sheet A.21 and sheet B.21 of the Plans, either or both, provided different siding colors are used for each dwelling unit.
 - (c) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed two stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
 - (d) All mechanical equipment, including heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units, serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
 - (e) Prior to the issuance of any building permit the Special Use, the establishment of up to four residential lots on the Property, substantially as shown on the plat entitled "Map Showing the Improvements on Lot 1, Block 'A', Section 4, 'East Payne Square' in the City of Richmond, VA.," prepared by Virginia Surveys, and dated July 27, 2022, a copy of which is attached to and made a part of this ordinance, shall be accomplished by obtaining the necessary approvals from the City and recording the appropriate plats and deeds among the land records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond.
- 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 three street trees, 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

The surrounding land uses include primarily residential with some institutional and commercial uses nearby.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$71,223 per year.* The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$21,367 per year, or \$1,781 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden. Based upon the median household income for the Richmond region, and the estimated pricing provided by the applicant, the proposed fee simple units are projected to be affordable to households making approximately 119% of the Area Median Income (AMI) affordability threshold**

When accounting for households by census tract for 707 North 31st Street, these units are projected to be 169% of the affordability threshold.***

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Regional)*

***(Virginia Housing, 2023., based upon 30-year term, 20% down payment, at 7% interest)*

****(U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Tract 209)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Church Hill Central Civic Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff received a letter from the Church Hill Central Civic Association which contained a list of concerns for the applicant. A letter of opposition was also received from a nearby resident.

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