



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

ORD. 2025-081: To authorize the special use of the property known as 2618 Rear West Main Street for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to four dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions. (2nd District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 6, 2025

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

2618 Rear West Main Street

SUMMARY

The applicant of the property, which is situated in R-7 Single and Two-Family Urban Residential District, is proposing the construction of a four-unit multifamily dwelling that would face the rear alley of 2618 West Main Street. This use does not meet the zoning requirements of permitted principal uses, yard setbacks, lot area coverage, and public street frontage and access easements. Therefore, a special use permit is required.

RECOMMENDATION

The proposed dwelling units are compatible with both the existing neighborhood form and future land use of this area, which is Community Mixed Use. The properties in the neighborhood are a mix of single-family, two-family, multifamily, and mixed-use. Retail, office space, and restaurants surround the subject property as well. Community Mixed-Use encourages medium density that is highly walkable.

Staff also finds that the proposed infill development is supported by Objective 1.3f which states "Implement housing strategies that increase housing at all income levels along corridors and at Nodes". The proposed development is located within the Carytown Node (p. 86) and would house additional residents to support the commercial activities within the node.

Staff 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 four proposed units are within walking distance to daily needs and services which offers greater opportunities for walkability and less automobile dependency. (p. 159)

Staff concludes that the proposed ordinance conditions substantially satisfy the safeguards established in the City Charter concerning the granting of Special Use Permits. 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 in the center of a block surrounded by Robinson St to the east, W Main St to the south, N Mulberry to the West, and Floyd Ave to the north. The property is in the Fan Area neighborhood.

Proposed Use of the Property

Multifamily dwelling containing up to four dwelling units with alley frontage.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject area as Community Mixed-Use which is defined as a "cluster of medium-density, walkable commercial and residential uses that provide neighborhood services to nearby residential communities and sometimes feature regional attractions" (Richmond 300, p. 84).

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.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-7 Single and Two-Family Residential District. The proposed use does not meet the underlying zoning district's requirements.

Additional conditions will be imposed by the amended ordinance, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily dwelling containing up to four dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No off-street parking shall be required for the Special Use.
- The height of the Special Use shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping and walkways, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- No fence or landscape wall shall be permitted within five feet of any public right-of-way, except substantially as shown on the Plans. No fences on the Property shall exceed six and one-half feet in height.
- Lighting levels along the alley rights-of-way shall meet the requirements of the City of Richmond Street Light Policy and “Section II_02, Street Light and Electric Distribution Design Standards,” prepared by the City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities and dated January 2022. The Owner, at its sole cost and expense, shall provide any further lighting necessary to meet the requirements of the City of Richmond Street Light Policy and the Street Light and Electric Distribution Design Standards along the full length of the alley right-of-way serving the Property, prior to issuance of any Certificate of Occupancy.

Surrounding Area

The property is within the R-7 zoning district but is surrounded by a mix of zones such as UB Urban Business District, R-48 Multifamily Residential District, and R-6 Single-Family Attached District. The general make-up of properties is primarily mixed use and residential.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and the associated civic organizations: Fan Area Business Alliance, Robinson Street Association, Fan District Association, and The Uptown Association. All public comment that has been received for this request has been included in the agenda packet.

Staff Contact: Madison Wilson, 804-646-7436, madison.wilson@rva.gov