



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2024-014: To authorize the special use of the property known as 3618 Hawthorne Avenue for the purpose of a four-unit multifamily building and ~~[six, single-family, attached]~~ two duplex dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: November 3, 2025

PETITIONER

Mark Baker - Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

3618 Hawthorne Avenue

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for the construction of ~~[six, single-family attached]~~ two duplex dwellings upon an existing lot which is to be split into two parcels. The existing property is located within an R-1 Single-family Residential District and contains a four-unit multifamily building. ~~[Single-family attached]~~ duplex dwellings are not a permitted use within the district. Therefore, a Special Use Permit is required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed use aligns with the Master Plan recommendations for Residential land uses and is a recommended Secondary Use.

Staff finds that the proposed addresses West Laburnum Avenue which is a designated Great Street and a Major Residential Street. Staff has worked with the applicant to properly site buildings, incorporate new street trees, locate parking to the rear, and to focus on two-family dwellings that appear, architecturally, as single-family dwellings within, what is largely, a single-family neighborhood.

Staff also finds that the proposed is adjacent to an existing multifamily property within the R-48 Multifamily Residential District to the west. The proposed is an appropriate step down in density along West Laburnum Avenue.

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 with an amendment to change the proposal to two, duplex dwellings instead of six single-family attached dwellings.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Ginter Park neighborhood at the southwestern corner of the intersection of Laburnum Avenue and Hawthorne Ave. The property is currently a 28,492 square foot (0.7 acre) parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use is two, duplex dwellings. Including the existing four-unit building, the density of the proposed would be 8 units upon .7 acres of land or approximately 11 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Residential, which is defined as a "Neighborhood consisting primarily of single-family houses on large- or medium-sized lots more homogeneous in nature" (p. 54).

Development Style: Houses on medium-sized and large-sized lots in a largely auto-dependent environment. Homes are setback from the street. Future developments continue and/or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Future single-family housing, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small multi-family residential buildings are built to a scale and design that is consistent with existing buildings.

Ground Floor: Not applicable.

Mobility: Bicycle and pedestrian access are prioritized and accommodated. Low residential density means that it is not possible to provide frequent transit within these areas; however, frequent transit may be found at the edges of these areas within more intense future land use designations. Many homes have driveways and/or garages, which are located off an alley behind the home if an alley is present.

Intensity: Buildings are generally one to three stories. Lot sizes generally range up to 5,000 to 20,000+ sq. ft. Residential density of 2 to 10 housing units per acre.

Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Duplexes and small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), institutional, and cultural. Secondary uses may be found along major streets.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for the property is R-1, Residential (Single Family). Single-family attached are not a permitted principal use within the R-1

The special use permit would impose conditions on the property, including (proposed amendments noted below):

- The Special Use of the Property shall be of an existing, four-unit multifamily building and [six] two, newly constructed, ~~[single family, attached]~~ duplex dwellings with eleven [(11)] 13 off-street parking spaces, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of each of the properties shall not exceed two stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on The Plans, including cementitious siding for all newly constructed ~~[, single family attached]~~ dwellings.

- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- ~~[Prior to the issuance of a building permit for the Special Use, the establishment of up to seven residential lots, substantially as shown on the Plans, 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.]~~

Surrounding Area

Adjacent properties to the north, south, and east are within the same R-1 District. The property is adjacent to a large R-48 Multifamily Residential District zone to the west. The area is primarily residential properties.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and the Ginter Park Residents Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff has received letters of support and opposition, for this application.

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