



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2026-104: To authorize the special use of a portion of the property known as 1117 West Franklin Street for the purpose of up to two single-family detached dwellings and two dwelling units within an accessory structure, upon certain terms and conditions. (2nd District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 19, 2026

PETITIONER

Mark Baker - Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

1117 West Franklin Street

PURPOSE

The applicant proposes to renovate and convert two existing institutional buildings into single-family detached dwellings. In addition, each parcel will include a new garage topped by an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). Although the proposed residential uses are permitted within the R-6 Single-Family Attached zoning district, several lot feature requirements cannot be satisfied. A special use permit is required to authorize this request.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds the proposed use to be well aligned with the goals for the Neighborhood Mixed-Use land use category within the master plan. Characteristics found within the application that align with Neighborhood Mixed-Use include maintaining the existing street grid, rear parking, and appropriate building height. Additionally, single-family dwellings and institutional uses are both appropriate uses in this land use category.

Staff concludes that the proposed ordinance conditions substantially satisfy the safeguards established in the City Charter concerning the granting of Special Use Permits.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The .927-acre property located midblock on the southern side of West Franklin Street between Birch Street and Boyd Street in The Fan District neighborhood, as well as the West Franklin Street Old and Historic District.

Proposed Use

Under the proposed special use, the property will be subdivided into two lots, each containing one structure. These structures will be renovated from their current institutional use into single-family detached dwellings. One new accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is proposed for each lot.

Master Plan

The City's 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."

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 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. 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.

Ordinance Conditions

Conditions

The special use permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to two single-family detached dwellings and two dwelling units within an accessory structure, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans, subject to the applicable regulations of Chapter 30, Article IX, Division 4 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.
- 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 adjoining public right-of-way.
- Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the Special Use, the establishment of no more than two 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

The current zoning for this property is R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District. Adjacent properties are also located within this district. The neighborhood contains institutional uses and single-family homes.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified residents and the Fan District Association and the Fan Area Business Alliance of the proposed Special Use Permit amendment. Staff has not received any letters of support or opposition to date.

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