



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2025-012: To authorize the special use of the property known as 3401 Decatur Street for the purpose of two single-family detached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 4, 2025

PETITIONER

Nathan Janocka

LOCATION

3401 Decatur Street, Richmond, VA 23224

SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to allow for a division of a parcel to build a single-family detached home. The lot does not meet lot area and width requirements. Therefore, an SUP is required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposal is consistent with the City's Master Plan pertaining to the Community Mixed-Use land use category, in which single-family dwellings are considered appropriate secondary uses.

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 Broad Rock neighborhood on the corner of Decatur Street and East 34th Street.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant seeks to divide the property into two lots to allow for the new construction of one single-family detached home on the new lot.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Community Mixed Use. This designation is described as a cluster of medium-density, walkable commercial and residential uses that provide neighborhood services to nearby residential communities and sometimes feature regional attractions.

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 buildto 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-5 Single-Family Residential. The following zoning regulations are not being met by the proposal, warranting special use permit approval.

Sec. 30-410.4. - Lot area and width

Single-family dwellings in the R-5 Single-Family Residential District shall be located on lots of not less than 6,000 square feet in area with a width of not less than 50 feet (see Article VI, Division 3 of this chapter).

The proposed lot split would create lots smaller than 6,000 square feet.

Sec.30-410.5(1) – Yards

There shall be a front yard with a depth of not less than 25 feet (see Article VI, Division 4 of this chapter).

The proposed and existing home have a front-yard setback of less than 25 feet.

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as two single-family detached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use 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.
- 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 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

Adjacent properties are also R-5. The area is generally single-family residential, with primarily single-story homes and some two-story homes.

Neighborhood Participation

The parcel is not located within or near a civic organization. Notices were sent to nearby residents.

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