



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2026-155: To authorize the special use of the property known as 5 North Colonial Avenue Rear for the purpose of up to six attached garages, which may be rented to persons who reside outside of the same entire block as the Property, upon certain terms and conditions. (1st District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 7, 2026

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

5 North Colonial Avenue Rear

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize construction of a six-bay garage structure accessible by alley. The new garage structure will replace an existing garage building dating to the first half of the 20th century. The property is located within the R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District, in which garages are a permitted use. However, the applicant is proposing a new garage structure that exceeds the maximum permitted height limit of 12 feet and that will allow garage bays to be leasable to those who do not own or lease a principal dwelling unit on the block. Therefore, a Special Use Permit is requested to authorize this proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed use aligns with the Master Plan recommendations for Neighborhood Mixed Uses, in which garages are an appropriate use.

Staff conclude 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 recommend approval of the Special Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The 1,626 square foot property located within a block bounded by Floyd Avenue, N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard, Ellwood Avenue, and N Colonial Avenue. It currently contains a brick garage structure, which will be demolished as part of this proposal.

Proposed Use of Property

Six bay garage.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the 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 scale 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 multifamily buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

Zoning Administration provided the following comments:

Sec. 30-610.3. - Alley frontage for accessory buildings, structures or uses.

A permitted accessory building, structure or use may be located on a lot or portion thereof having frontage only on an improved public alley, provided that:

- (1) Such lot is situated within the same entire block as the permitted principal use.
- (2) No yards shall be required for such accessory structure.
- (3) There shall be no maximum lot coverage requirement.
- (4) The accessory building or structure shall not exceed 12 feet in height.
- (5) The accessory building may not contain a dwelling or lodging unit or short-term rental.

The proposal will allow those who do not reside in the same block to utilize the garage, and the height exceeds 12 feet. Therefore, an SUP is required. The plans show a large encroachment of the garages into the alley. If a portion of the alley is to be vacated, please show future property lines on plans. SUP will need to condition vacation of ROW prior to issuance of CO.

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to six attached garages, which may be rented to persons who reside outside of the same entire block as the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- 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.
- The special use permit granted by this ordinance is expressly conditioned on the adoption of and compliance with an ordinance closing to public use and travel a part of an alley in the block bounded by North Colonial Avenue, Floyd Avenue, North Arthur Ashe Boulevard, and Ellwood Avenue, substantially as shown on the Plans.

Surrounding Area

Adjacent properties are within the same R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District. The area is primarily residential properties.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Museum District Association and The Fan Area Business Alliance and adjacent property owners of this proposed special use. To date, two letters of support from the public regarding the proposal have been received.

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