

# APPLICANT'S REPORT

*May 18, 2021*

*Special Use Permit Request  
506 Cheatwood Avenue, Richmond, Virginia  
Map Reference Number: N018-0455/019*

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Submitted to: **City of Richmond**  
Department of Planning and Development Review  
Land Use Administration  
900 East Broad Street, Suite 511  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Submitted by: **Baker Development Resources**  
1519 Summit Ave., Suite 102  
Richmond, Virginia 23230

## Introduction

The property owner is requesting a special use permit ("the SUP") for 506 Cheatwood Avenue ("the Property"). The SUP would authorize a lot split and the construction of one, single-family detached dwelling on the undeveloped eastern portion of the Property. As proposed, some of the features do not conform to the underlying zoning feature requirements applicable to the Property.

## Existing Conditions

### SITE DESCRIPTION AND EXISTING LAND USE

The Property is located on the north side of Cheatwood Avenue between Moss Side Avenue and Forest Lawn Cemetery. The Property is referenced by the City Assessor as tax parcel N018-0455/019. The Property is 75 feet wide by 115 feet in depth and contains approximately 8,625 square feet of lot area. The lot is improved by a two-story dwelling that was constructed circa 1925. The existing building generally occupies the western half of the Property while the eastern portion of the lot is unimproved. Access is provided by an east-west alley at the rear of the Property.



The properties in the vicinity primarily developed with single-family dwellings. The subject block includes single-family dwellings and the Mary M. Scott School elementary school. To the east of the Property lies a single-family dwelling and the Forest Lawn Cemetery, which lies outside the boundaries of the City of Richmond in Henrico County. Single-family dwellings in the vicinity

have been developed on lots ranging from 25 to 100 feet in width. Recent new single-family development within one block includes new dwellings on lots of comparable or smaller width and area to the proposed.

## **EXISTING ZONING**

The Property is zoned R-5 Single-Family Residential, which permits the proposed single-family detached dwelling use. The surrounding properties to the north, south, east, and west are also zoned R-5. The R-5 district requires a lot area of not less than 6,000 square feet and width of not less than 50 feet for single-family dwellings. The historic lot pattern in the area is based on the original Washington Park Subdivision, which included 25' wide lots. Many properties in the area consist of one or a combination of these original subdivision lots and, as a result, many are nonconforming with regard to some combination of lot area, lot width and yard requirements. Where vacant, many of these existing substandard existing lots in the vicinity can be developed by-right based on their history. This is evidenced by recent single-family construction on substandard sized lots as well as zoning confirmation letters on file with the Zoning Administration. Splitting the lot as proposed would be consistent with this development pattern. However, as the proposed development does not meet R-5 lot area and lot width requirements, a special use permit is required.

## **MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION**

The Richmond 300 Master Plan (the "Master Plan") suggests "Residential" for the Property. The Master Plan suggests this future land use designation allow for a variety of housing types that are consistent with the scale, density, and design of what exists in the vicinity. This designation also encourages that developments reinforce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Single-family dwellings are the contemplated primary use in the Residential future land use designation (p. 54).

In addition to the Property-specific guidance offered by the Vision and Core Concepts chapter, there are a number of other goals elsewhere within the Master Plan that support this request. In the High-Quality Places chapter, there are number of supporting objectives, such as (generally):

- Ensure that building materials are durable, sustainable, and create a lasting addition to the built environment, and provide maximum adaptability for environmental change, change of use, and efficiency.
- Allow and encourage a variety of architectural styles.
- Implement urban design and architecture strategies that maintain and enhance the unique character of Richmond's residential districts.

# **Proposal**

## **PURPOSE OF REQUEST**

The request would permit the division of the Property in order to permit the construction of one single-family detached dwelling on the unimproved eastern half of the Property. The Property consists of three parcels from the original Washington Park Subdivision making it quite large for

the vicinity. The western portion of the lot is developed with a two-story dwelling. The applicant would like to construct a single-family detached dwelling on the unimproved eastern side of the Property. The R-5 district does permit single-family dwellings; however, the required lot width and lot area for the existing and proposed dwellings cannot be met, therefore, a SUP is required in order to permit the proposed development.

In exchange for the SUP, the intent of this request is to ensure a high-quality, market rate home ownership opportunity that is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan while remaining compatible with the overall historic fabric of the neighborhood.

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

The proposed lot split would result in two lots, one occupied by the existing single-family dwelling and the other for the construction of a new single-family dwelling. The existing dwelling would be located on a lot that is 40'5" in width and which contains 4,655 square feet of lot area. The new dwelling would be located on a lot that is 34' 7" in width and which contains 3,973 square feet of lot area.

When complete, the proposed new dwelling would be two stories in height, contain approximately 1,584 square feet of finished floor area, and would include three bedrooms and two-and-one-half bathrooms. The dwelling would include an open kitchen and living area with modern and desirable features including a master bedroom complete with en suite master bath and walk-in closet. The exterior is designed to reflect the character of the neighborhood and includes architectural details existing in the vicinity including a mansard style roof and full-width front porch. The dwelling would be clad in high quality materials including cementitious siding. Off-street parking would be provided for both the existing and proposed dwelling at the rear of the Property, which would be accessed from the alley. Care was taken in the design and siting of the dwelling to ensure compatibility with other homes in the neighborhood and that all other zoning standards would be met.

## **Findings of Fact**

The following are factors indicated in Section 17.11 of the Charter and Section 114-1050.1 of the Zoning Ordinance relative to the approval of special use permits by City Council. The proposed special use permit will not:

- ***Be detrimental to the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community involved.***

The proposed SUP for high-quality infill construction will not impact the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the nearby neighborhoods.

- ***Tend to create congestion in streets, roads, alleys and other public ways and places in the area involved.***

The proposed SUP will not result in significant traffic impacts to nearby residential neighborhoods. The negligible traffic generation and the provision of off street parking spaces will prevent congestion on streets, roads, alleys or any other public right of way.

- ***Create hazards from fire, panic or other dangers.***

The property will be developed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the building code and in accordance with the requirements of Fire and Emergency Services. The City's codes applicable to this development are designed to eliminate such hazards.

- ***Tend to overcrowding of land and cause an undue concentration of population.***

The proposed SUP will not tend to over crowd the land or create an undue concentration of population. The proposed development is consistent with the historic lot pattern and existing densities in the vicinity.

- ***Adversely affect or interfere with public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, water supplies, sewage disposal, transportation or other public requirements, conveniences and improvements.***

The proposed SUP would not adversely affect the above referenced City services.

- ***Interfere with adequate light and air.***

The light and air available to the subject and adjacent properties will not be affected. The proposed building is of compatible massing and spacing to the existing in the vicinity. As a result, this request will not interfere with the provision of adequate light and air to the adjacent buildings.

## Summary

The applicant is enthusiastically seeking approval for the construction of a high quality, single-family dwelling on the Property. This proposal represents an ideal, small-scale urban infill development for this location. In exchange for the approval, the quality assurances conditioned through the SUP would guarantee the construction of a higher quality dwelling than might otherwise be developed. This would contribute to the overall vibrancy of the neighborhood through the provision of an appropriate urban form and use that is consistent with the historic development pattern of surrounding neighborhood and the goals set forth in the Richmond 300 Master Plan.