



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review ***Staff Report***

Ord. No. 2025-171: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1612 North 31st Street for the purpose of up to two two-family detached dwellings and up to two accessory dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions. (7th District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: August 19, 2025

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

1612 North 31st Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize the subdivision of a parcel to facilitate the construction of a pair of two-family dwelling with an accessory dwelling unit on both parcels. Two-family dwellings are not permitted uses in the R-5 Single-Family Residential district where the property is located. Accessory dwelling units are not permitted by-right on lots with two-family dwellings. The proposed subdivision creates two lots that do not conform to the lot feature requirements of the R-5 Single-Family Residential district. A special use permit is requested to facilitate this proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the requested uses are consistent with the City's Master Plan future land use designation of Neighborhood Mixed-Use. This future land use category identifies single-family houses and accessory dwelling units as appropriate primary uses.

Staff finds that the proposed dwellings maintain the character of the existing street, while still reflecting the recommendations of the City's Master Plan. Staff also finds the proposed dwelling units are consistent with the surrounding area, which contains a mix of residential uses, including single-family detached and multi-family dwellings.

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.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located on the northwest side of North 31st Street between Maxie Lane and North Rabza Boulevard. The property is 45 feet wide and is 6,078 square feet in area.

Proposed Use of the Property

Two two-family detached dwellings and two accessory dwelling units.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property for Neighborhood Mixed-Uses which consists of existing or new highly walkable urban neighborhoods that are primarily residential.

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 (see Street Typologies Map). Parcels are generally between 1,500 and 5,000 square feet.

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.

Zoning Administrations Comments

The proposal is to construct two abutting two-family detached dwellings, each with an accessory dwelling unit. Two-family dwellings are not permitted in the R-5 zoning district. ADUs are not permitted by-right on lots with two-family dwellings. For these reasons an SUP is required.

Ordinance Conditions

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to two two-family detached dwellings and up to two accessory dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed two stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- Vinyl siding shall not be permitted.
- 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 public

right-of- way.

- Prior to the issuance of any 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

The current zoning for this property is R-5 Single-Family Residential District. Adjacent properties to the north, south, and west are also located within this district. The area is generally single-family detached residential. The property across North 31st Street to the east contains properties governed by a Community Unit Plan authorized by Ord. No. 2015-5-30 which authorizes up to 300 dwelling units on the 21.76-acre site for a density of 14 units per acre. The resulting density of the proposal is six units upon .1395 acres or 43 units per acre.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Church Hill Central Civic Association and surrounding property owners. Staff has received no communication to date regarding the proposal.

Staff Contact: David Watson, Senior Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-1036