



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-031: To authorize the special use of the property known as 823 China Street for the purpose of a two-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions. (5th District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 6, 2023

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

823 China Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 823 China Street, for the purpose of a two-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize a two-family dwelling within an R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential District. While the use is permitted the property does not meet the current lot area and width requirements for a two-family dwelling. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposal would be consistent with the recommendations of the City's Master Plan pertaining to the varied housing types within the Neighborhood Mixed-Use land use category including the varied lot sizes and tenure types.

Staff further finds that the proposal would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area due to the inclusion of off-street parking on the property as well as the location of the units, which have a walkability score of "90 and more" which, according to the City's Richmond 300 Plan, makes the site a "Very Walkable". This level of walkability offers alternatives to vehicles and, therefore, may reduce parking demand. (p.113)

Staff further finds that the proposed use would be consistent with the historic pattern of development in the area which is a mix of two-family, single-family attached, and detached dwellings.

Staff finds that the proposal provides opportunities for increasing the City's stock of affordable housing as recommended by the Plan's Objective 14.3 "Create 10,000 new affordable housing units for low- and very low-income households over the next 10 years". As the dwelling unit proposed is projected to be affordable to households that are below 80% of the Area Median Income, this application helps to achieve this objective.

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 Oregon Hill neighborhood on China Street South Cherry and South Laurel Streets. The property is currently a 3,484 sq. ft. (.08 acre) parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use of the property is a two-family detached dwelling.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject property for Neighborhood Mixed Use which is viewed as "...highly-walkable urban neighborhoods that are predominantly residential with a small, but critical, percentage of parcels providing retail, office, personal service, and institutional uses." 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. 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. 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. (p. 56)

The density of the proposed development is approximately 25 units per acre.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential District. The following zoning regulations are not being met by the proposal, warranting special use permit approval.

LOT AREA AND WIDTH

Sec. 30-413.5(3). Two-family detached and attached dwellings. Two-family detached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 4,400 square feet in area with a width of not less than 42 feet.

The proposed lot is approximately 3,600 sq. ft. with a width of 30 feet.

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

3(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be a two-family detached dwelling, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) No fewer than three (3) off-street parking spaces shall be required for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(c) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed two stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(d) All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

(e) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

(f) The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way, including the installation of one street tree, substantially as shown on the Plans,

(g) Facilities for the collection of refuse shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Director of Public Works. Such facilities shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from adjacent properties and public streets.

Surrounding Area

Surrounding properties are located in the same R-7 district as the property in question. Surrounding uses include a mix of single-family, two-family, and multi-family residential, and some commercial, mixed-use, and institutional land uses.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$71,223 per year. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$21,367 per year, or \$1,781 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden. Based upon the median household income for the Richmond region, and the estimated pricing provided by the applicant, the proposed units are projected to be affordable to households making between 123% to 140% of the Area Median Income (AMI) affordability threshold* Based upon the regional median income these units are projected to not be affordable.

Based upon the census tract for 823 China Street, these units are projected to be 103% of the affordability threshold.** In other words, the units may be affordable to half of households in the Oregon Hill neighborhood.

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Regional)*

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Tract)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified local residents, property owners, and the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association about this application. Staff has not received any letters of support or opposition.

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