



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-137: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1700 West Cary Street for the purpose of one two-family detached dwelling and three two-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 15, 2023

PETITIONER

Mark Baker – Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

1700 West Cary Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1700 West Cary Street, for the purpose of a two-family detached dwelling and three two-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize a two-family detached dwelling, and three two-family attached dwellings, which use, among other things, is not currently allowed by section 30-413.2, regarding permitted principal uses, of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended. 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 development style and features within the Community Mixed-Use land use category including the density, building height, and primary uses. The proposed is consistent with the pattern of development in the area which contains several single-family attached, two-family, multifamily, and small-scale developments on nearby properties.

Staff also finds that the proposal would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area due to the current availability of on-street parking in the area.

Staff further finds that the proposed housing units are located on a designated Great Street within the Major Mixed-Use Street typology. The proposed site design aligns with the typology by bringing buildings to the street and increasing the density of residents which supports nearby commercial areas along West Cary and West Main Streets.

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 Fan neighborhood on the corner of West Cary and South Vine Streets. The property is currently a 6,432 square foot (.15 acre) vacant parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant is proposing a Special Use Permit which would authorize a two-family detached dwelling and three two-family attached dwellings.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Community Mixed-Use which is defined 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 build-to-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.

The density of the proposed development, overall, is approximately 53 units per acre.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for the subject parcel is R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential Zoning District. The following sections of within the City's current zoning ordinance are not met by the application.

Section 30-413.2: Permitted principal uses.

Single-family attached dwellings are not a permitted principal use.

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be one two-family detached dwelling, and three, two-family attached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No off-street parking shall be required for the Special Use.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All facilities for the storage of eight (8) bicycles 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.
- 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

Nearby properties are primarily zoned R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential. However, the block directly to the west of the property is zoned R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential. A mix of single-, and multi-family residential, and small, neighborhood scaled commercial and institutional uses are also present in the vicinity. The property is in close proximity to Virginia Commonwealth University and Interstate 195.

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 a maximum of \$21,367 per year, or \$1,781 per month, 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 rental units are projected to be affordable to households making between 119% of the Area Median Income (AMI) affordability threshold**

Based upon census tract 209, for which 1402 North 32nd Street is located, these units are projected to be 169% of the affordability threshold.*** In other words, the units may not be affordable to well over half of households in the census tract.

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

*** (Virginia Housing, 2023., based upon 30-year term, 20% down payment, at 7% interest)*

**** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Tract 209)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Uptown Civic Association, of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff has received a letter of no opposition for this application from the Association.

Staff Contact: Jonathan Brown, Senior Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-5734