



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2021-325: To authorize the special use of the property known as 3415 A Floyd Avenue for the purpose of a two-family dwelling and two single-family detached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: December 6, 2021

PETITIONER

Dante DeCapri

LOCATION

3415-A Floyd Avenue

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 3415 A Floyd Avenue for the purpose of a two-family dwelling and two single-family detached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is to authorize the construction of a two-family dwelling and two single-family detached dwellings upon a lot that does not front a street within an R-6 Single Family Attached Residential District. Single- and two-family dwellings are permitted in the R-6 District. However, the proposed development is not permitted by Sections 30-610.1, 30-412.5(1)b, and 30-412.5(2)a, regarding public street frontage and access easements, side yards, and front yards for two-family attached dwellings, respectively, 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 Richmond 300 Master Plan pertaining to the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Category. The density, site design, height, and complementary nature of its architecture, all align well with the aforementioned Master Plan category, including the recommended Primary Uses of "Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), and open space." (p. 56)

Staff also finds that the proposed infill development is supported by Objective 1.3f which states "Implement housing strategies that increase housing at all income levels along corridors and at Nodes". The proposed development is located within the Carytown Node (p. 86) and would house additional residents to support the commercial activities within the node.

Staff further finds that the parking demand generated by the proposed development would be adequately offset by the provision of eleven off-street parking spaces on-site.

Staff finds that the proposed development is conditioned upon improving the existing, adjacent alleyways that serve all residents in the block, as recommended by Objective 9.3b which states “Encourage homeowners and developers to utilize and upgrade existing alleyways in their development site plans or create new alleyways as part of redevelopment efforts.” (p. 128)

Staff finds that the proposed development supports Objective 15.1a which states “Increase the number of Richmonders living in a development pattern that encourages density and reduces dependency on single-occupancy vehicles” The four proposed units are within walking distance to daily needs and services which offers greater opportunities for walkability and less automobile dependency. (p. 159)

Staff finds that the median density of all lots within the 3400 Block of Floyd Avenue is just over 21 units per acre whereas the density of the proposed is approximately 19 units per acre. Maximum densities of parcels within the block range from 20-49 units per acre.

Staff also finds that the proposed development supports Objective 16.4 which states “Increase green storm water infrastructure throughout the city, prioritizing areas with a high heat vulnerability index score.” The property is currently a significant portion of a largely asphalt parking lot without shade or vegetation. The application calls for the inclusion of 24 trees, as well as on-site rainwater cisterns and pervious pavers. (p. 165) The proposed also aligns with Objective 17.2f which states “Revise the Zoning Ordinance to increase the parking screening requirements and require a 10% tree canopy coverage of surface parking lots.” (p. 170)

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 Museum District neighborhood within the interior of a block that is bounded by Floyd Avenue to the north, Ellwood Avenue to the south, North Crenshaw Ave to the east and North Nansemond Street to the west. The property is currently a 9,270 sq. ft. (.213 acre) parcel of land, accessibly via public alleys, and is improved with an 800 sq. ft., one-story garage constructed in 1900.

Proposed Use of the Property

The application calls for the construction of two single-family detached dwellings and a two-family dwelling within and R-6 Single-Family Attached District, served by two courtyards and at least 11 off-street parking spaces. The density of the proposed development would be approximately 19 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a 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." 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 properties are located within a National/Regional Node. These Nodes are centers "...with significant cultural, entertainment, government, and business destinations as well as shopping, housing, and unique place-based attractions." (p. C-1)

Vision: The Carytown Node is a lively mixed-use neighborhood that is home to Richmond's premier shopping destination. The establishments in Carytown include an eclectic mix of local and national retail, dining, entertainment, and service uses anchored by the historic Byrd Theater to the east and multiple grocery stores to the west. The retail corridor is surrounded by diverse residential neighborhoods which include a variety housing stock. In 2037, Carytown will continue to be a successful, walkable, mixed-use destination. Additional residential units at a range of affordability levels can be developed through compatible infill development and developing 2 to 3 stories of residential above existing commercial structures. New development should be compatible with the existing historic structures, and efforts should be made to preserve the existing historic fabric. Though Carytown currently is a walkable Node, the movement of people not cars should be further prioritized by limiting vehicular access to Cary Street, whether

permanently or temporarily, while accommodating other modes of transportation. Pedestrian amenities including street trees and larger sidewalks should be included on Cary Street and into the surrounding residential communities. Opportunities to create new open space and improve existing spaces including the Grayland Tot Lot should be realized.

Growth Potential: Medium – New development is limited to existing parking lots and the redeveloping of single-and two-story structures into taller structures. (p. C-15)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The subject property is located in the R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential district. The property currently consists of a one-story garage building and thirty-four (34) parking spaces. Ten (10) of those parking spaces are part of a deed of easement Instrument No. 1202279 and are required to be provided for the nonconforming office use located at 3415 Floyd Avenue as per Board of Zoning Appeals Case No. 23-12.

The R-6 district does not allow for more than two dwelling units to be constructed on an individual lot, and that every building erected and every use established shall be located on a lot having frontage on an improved public street or access thereto by means of a recorded permanent easement. A permitted accessory structure or use may be located on a lot or portion thereof having frontage only on an improved public alley when such lot is situated within the same entire block as the principal use. A Special Use Permit is required to be adopted by City Council to authorize this use.

The proposed development consists of demolition of the existing garage building on the property and the construction of two (2) single-family dwellings and one (1) two-family dwelling all on one individual lot of record.

HEIGHT: The proposal complies with R-6 building height requirement for main buildings.

PARKING: A total of four (4) dwelling units are proposed with nine (9) individual bedrooms. Eleven (11) on-site parking spaces are proposed. Either inside of garage or noted to be permeable pavers.

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

3(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a two-family dwelling and two single-family detached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans. The dwellings may be located on one parcel or, if a subdivision into three residential lots is 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, substantially as shown on sheet A0 of the Plans, using each of the lines labelled as “Imaginary Property Line,” on three parcels.

(b) At least 11 off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use of the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(c) All building materials, elevations and site improvements, including landscaping and fencing with a maximum height of eight feet, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans, subject to applicable regulations of the West of the Boulevard Design Overlay District, pursuant to sections 30-940 through 30-940.9 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.

(d) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed two stories, 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 Property shall not be eligible for any permit implementing the Special Use until the Owner has submitted written evidence to the Zoning Administrator that the Director of Public Works, the Chief of Police, and the Chief of Fire and Emergency Services have confirmed that alley access to the Property for all-weather travel by public and emergency vehicles is appropriate in accordance with applicable laws and regulations

(g) Prior to the issuance of any certificate of occupancy for the Special Use, the Owner shall submit a request to name the primary alley access to the Property in accordance with sections 8-7 through 8-10 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and such alley shall be named pursuant to sections 8-7 through 8-10 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.

4(a) All required final grading and drainage plans, together with all easements made necessary by such plans, must be approved by the Director of Public Utilities prior to the issuance of the building permit.

(b) Storm or surface water shall not be allowed to accumulate on the land. The Owner, at its sole cost and expense, shall provide and maintain at all times adequate facilities for the drainage of storm or surface water from the Property so as not to adversely affect or damage any other property or public streets and the use thereof.

(c) 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

All surrounding properties are located within the same R-6 Single Family Attached Residential District as the subject property. An R-O2 Residential Office District is located directly to the west of the block, as well as an R-48 Multifamily Residential District directly to the east of the block. The majority of properties within the block are single-family residential with some two- and multi-family residential and office land uses. A mix of residential, commercial, office, mixed-use and institutional land uses are present in the vicinity surrounding the block.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$68,529 per year. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$20,559 per year, or \$1,713 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden.* Based upon the affordability threshold, the median household income for the Richmond region, and the estimated price of the rental units provided by the applicant, the units are projected to be affordable to households making approximately 145% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

**(U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)*

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Museum District Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff has received letters of opposition from individuals and the Museum District Association, a petition of opposition for this application from nearby property owners including 65 signatures, and letters of support.

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