



# CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**Ord. No. 2023-120:** To authorize the special use of the property known as 14 Granite Avenue for the purpose of a single-family detached dwelling with driveway access to the street, upon certain terms and conditions. (1<sup>st</sup> District)

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** May 1, 2023

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### **PETITIONER**

Lewis Little, Siwel Renovations LLC

### **LOCATION**

14 Granite Avenue

### **PURPOSE**

To authorize the special use of the property known as 14 Granite Avenue for the purpose of a single-family detached dwelling with driveway access to the street, upon certain terms and conditions.

### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The subject property is located in the R-4 Single-Family Residential District. The zoning ordinance prohibits driveway access from the street when alley access from the rear is available. The property contains an existing, nonconforming driveway and the proposal calls for expanding the driveway by adding a second access point. Therefore, a Special Use Permit is requested in order to expand and legitimize the existing driveway.

Staff finds that the proposed development would be consistent with the recommendations of the Richmond 300 master plan, which recommends Residential future land uses for the property and neighborhood. The proposal would be generally consistent with the historic pattern of development in the area. Many driveways that access the street are present in immediately adjacent properties as well as the larger neighborhood. Moreover, the proposed circular driveway would allow vehicles to access the street directly without backing into the right-of-way.

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 special 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.

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## FINDINGS OF FACT

### Site Description

The .308 acre subject property is located on the western side of Granite Avenue between Matoaka Road and Tuckahoe Avenue. The property is serviced by an alley that runs along the rear property line.

### Proposed Use of the Property

The request proposes to reconfigure an existing single-entrance driveway into a circular driveway with two entrances.

### Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property for Residential uses which consists primarily of single-family houses on large- or medium-sized lots more homogeneous in nature.

Development Style: Houses on medium-sized and large-sized lots in a largely auto-dependent environment. Homes are setback from the street. Future developments continue and/or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Future single-family housing, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small multi-family residential buildings are built to a scale and design that is consistent with existing building.

Ground Floor: Not applicable.

Mobility: Bicycle and pedestrian access are prioritized and accommodated. Low residential density means that it is not possible to provide frequent transit within these areas; however, frequent transit may be found at the edges of these areas within more intense future land use designations. Many homes have driveways and/or garages, which are located off an alley behind the home if an alley is present.

Intensity: Buildings are generally one to three stories. Lot sizes generally range up to 5,000 to 20,000+ sq. ft. Residential density of 2 to 10 housing units per acre.

Primary Uses: Single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Duplexes and small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), institutional, and cultural. Secondary uses may be found along major streets.

### Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

Zoning Administration provided the following comments:

*Zoning and Use: The property is located in the R-4 Single-Family Residential District. The current use as a single-family detached dwelling is permitted by-right. The applicant's report indicates that the proposal is to reconfigure the existing nonconforming driveway from a straight driveway to a circular driveway. This proposal adds a second driveway intersection to the street, which expands the nonconforming feature.*

*R-4 Feature Requirements: The property has alley access, and there is an existing driveway that intersects Granite Ave. Driveways are not permitted to intersect the street when alley access is available; the existing driveway is nonconforming. The proposal to reconfigure the existing driveway to a circular driveway would expand the nonconformity to intersect the street in two locations.*

Staff recommends the approval of the requested special use permit with the following conditions:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a single-family detached dwelling with driveway access to the street, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

**Surrounding Area**

The surrounding neighborhood is in the R-4 Single-Family District and contains single-family dwellings.

**Neighborhood Participation**

Staff notified area residents and property owners and the Westhampton Village Preservation Association. No comments in support or opposition have been received.

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