



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. No. 2023-350: To authorize the special use of the properties known as 1823, 1825, and 1827 West Cary Street for the purpose of up to eight single-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: December 4, 2023

PETITIONER

Mark Baker - Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

1823, 1825, and 1827 West Cary Street

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize eight (8) single-family attached dwellings within an R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential District. While the use is permitted, the property does not meet the current requirements for sections 30-413.5(2), 30-413.6(1), 30-413.6(2), and 30-413.7 regarding lot area, front yards, side yards, and lot coverage, respectively. A Special Use Permit is, therefore, required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed intensity aligns with the Master Plan recommendations for Community Mixed-Use land uses and is similar in density to many of the existing properties in the neighborhood, which are generally single-family attached dwellings on similarly sized lots.

Staff further finds that the proposal is consistent with Objective 4.1 to “Create and preserve high-quality, distinctive, and well-designed neighborhoods and nodes throughout the City” (Richmond 300, p. 100). The introduction of an inner courtyard that connects to Cary Street allows for residents and pedestrians to maintain eyes on the street.

Staff further finds that the new units will help in-fill a significantly underdeveloped portion of the 1800 block of West Cary Street, which is a designated Major Residential Street.

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 Cary Street between South Grandby Street and South Allen Avenue. The properties are vacant and, together, are a combined 11,517 square feet (.26 acre) in area.

Proposed Use of the Property

Up to eight single-family attached dwellings. The proposed density is 8 units per .26 acres, or 30 units per acre.

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." (p. 58)

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:

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 proposed units are to be located within a designated Micro Node, which are notable places within a neighborhood that generally provide goods and services to the immediate residents but may attract visitors. (p. 24)

The properties are located on a designated Major Residential Street. These streets:

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, as well as pedestrians and bicycles, through residential neighborhoods
- Prioritize for creating sidewalks and crosswalks
- Install street trees as a buffer between sidewalk and street
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Ensure low street speed by utilizing traffic calming measures

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential District. The proposed use does not meet the following sections of the zoning ordinance:

30-413.5(2) LOT AREA AND WIDTH

Single-family attached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 2,200 square feet in area.

Lot area range from 951 to 2,285 sq. ft.

30-413.6(1) FRONT YARDS

There shall be a front yard with a depth of not less than 15 feet.

Front yards are 10 ft.

30-413.6(2) SIDE YARDS

Dwelling uses and buildings accessory thereto shall have side yards of not less than three feet in width.

All units have at least one zero lot line as they are single-family attached dwellings.

30-413.7 LOT COVERAGE

Lot coverage shall not exceed 55 percent of the area of the lot.

Lot coverages are approximately 67 percent.

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to eight single-family attached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No less than eight off-street parking spaces shall be provided on the Property, to the rear of the dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- 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 eight residential lots and a common area, 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.
- 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.
- The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way, including the installation of three street trees, substantially as shown on the Plans, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works.

Affordability

Median Family Income Richmond region = \$109,400 per year.*

Affordability threshold = 30% of household income towards housing costs.

= \$32,820 per year

= \$2,735 per month

Est. price provided by Applicant: \$650,000

Est. monthly payment = \$3,459** = 126% of Median Family Income Richmond Region

**(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023)*

*** (Virginia Housing, assuming 7% interest, 20% down payment, 30-year term)*

Surrounding Area

All properties to the east and southeast are located primarily within the same R-7 Zone as the property in question, with properties to the north and northwest zoned UB Urban Business.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Fan District Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. To this date, staff has not received any letters or notifications of support or opposition for this application.

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