



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2025-150: To authorize the special use of the property known as 3923 Grove Avenue for the purposes of a single-family detached dwelling and 16 single-family attached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: August 19, 2025

PETITIONER

Mark Baker - Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

3923 Grove Avenue

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize an existing single-family attached dwelling, as well as 16 newly constructed single-family attached dwellings within an R-5 Single-Family Residential District. Single-Family Attached dwellings are not a permitted use within the R-5 District. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed density aligns with the Master Plan recommendations for Secondary land uses and is similar to existing single-family and multi-family properties in the area. Staff also finds that the proposed density of 21 units per acre serves as an appropriate transition between the single-family dwellings to the east (generally 17 units per acre) and multifamily buildings to the west (generally 26 units per acre).

Staff finds that the proposed is located on Grove Avenue, which is a designated Major Residential Street. These streets are intended to carry a higher volume of pedestrians and vehicles. Staff finds that the proposal includes a creative site plan that increases the number of housing units without compromising on the overall pattern of develop by featuring single-family houses facing the street, alley loaded garages, and sidewalks.

Staff also finds that by preserving the existing historic building on-site, the proposal supports Objective 3.1 of the Richmond 300 Master Plan, which aims to “Preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures, neighborhoods, cemeteries, and landscapes that contribute to Richmond’s authenticity.” (p. 120)

Staff further finds that the proposed site design supports Objective 4.1o. to “Increase building permeability by requiring new buildings to have functioning entrances from the sidewalk and restricting blank walls at ground level.” The design of the new townhomes includes units facing a mews with rear alleys, as well as units that included entrances that address both Grove and Sterling Avenues. This design assists in creating a continuous façade pattern. (p. 126)

Staff finds that the proposal will provide new public right-of-way improvements, which helps achieve Objective 4.4b to “Strengthen the streetscape connections by installing pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, crosswalks, pathway, and trails where such infrastructure is missing.” (p. 130)

Staff recognizes that, while the City does not have a minimum off-street parking requirement, the applicant has taken additional efforts to evaluate the parking demand. In short, staff finds that the special use will not add to existing parking demand due to the proposed 32 off-street parking spaces and the estimated 17 additional on-street parking spaces found within the applicant’s submitted parking study.

Staff concludes that the proposed ordinance conditions substantially satisfy the safeguards established in the City Charter concerning the granting of Special Use Permits. 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 Mary Munford neighborhood on Grove Avenue between Reveille and Lafayette Streets. The property is currently a 34,830 sq. ft. (.8 acre) parcel of land, improved with an existing 2,684 sq. ft., single-family dwelling, constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1775.

Proposed Use of the Property

16 Single-Family Attached dwellings and a single-family detached dwelling. The proposed density of the parcel is 17 units upon .8 acres, or 21 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Residential, which is defined as which is defined as “Neighborhood consisting 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 buildings.

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.

Major Residential 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-5 Single-Family Residential. The proposed use is not permitted within the R-5 District. If approved, the special use permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be one single-family detached dwelling and 16 single-family attached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed the height as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping, 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.
- Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the Special Use, the establishment of up to seventeen residential lots, and one private easement, 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.

Surrounding Area

All adjacent and nearby properties are located within the same R-5 zone. The area is primarily single family residential, with some multifamily residential and institutional uses present in the vicinity.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Westhampton Citizens Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. All public comment received for this request is included in the agenda packet.

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