



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2021-362: To authorize the special use of the property known as 4508 Grove Avenue for the purpose of up to seven single-family attached dwellings with off-street parking and one common area, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: January 18, 2021

PETITIONER

Keith Stanley, Sekiv Solutions, and Will Payne, 510 Architects

LOCATION

4508 Grove Avenue

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 4508 Grove Avenue for the purpose of up to seven single-family attached dwellings with off-street parking and one common area, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The proposal would allow for seven (7) single-family attached dwelling units with off-street parking and common area within an R-53 Multifamily Residential District. The proposed townhouse development does not meet certain feature requirements within the R-53 District, including sections 30-418.4(a), concerning lot area and width, 30-418.5, concerning yards, 30-418.6:1, concerning lot coverage, and 30-418.8(3), concerning building height. 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 Residential land use designation and the Major Residential Street designation of Grove Avenue.

Staff finds that single-family attached dwellings are a permitted use within the R-53 district. Moreover, based on the size of the subject property, four to seven dwelling units would be permitted on the subject property per the underlying zoning of the property.

Staff finds that the proposed development would fall within the range of residential densities found on the block. The proposed height of three stories (which includes a step back at the upper floor) is consistent with the existing three-story multifamily dwellings on the block. The proposed building materials are generally consistent with surrounding architecture.

Staff finds that the proposed redevelopment is supported by Objective 1.3f which states "Implement housing strategies that increase housing at all income levels along corridors and at Nodes".

Staff also 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 proposed units are located along existing bus transit.

Staff further finds that the proposed development would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area due to the provision of parking spaces on the property.

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 Colonial Place neighborhood on Grove Avenue, between Westmoreland Street and Commonwealth Avenue. The property is 9,750 sq. ft. (.22 acre) in lot area and is improved with a one-story office building that is proposed to be demolished in order to accommodate the development.

Proposed Use of the Property

The application is for seven (7) single-family attached dwelling units with off-street parking and common area. The density of the proposed development would be approximately 32 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Residential. This designation is defined as a “Neighborhood consisting primarily of single-family houses on large- or medium-sized lots more homogeneous in nature.”

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. 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. (p. 54)

The property fronts on Grove Avenue, which is designated by the master plan as a major residential street.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-53 (Multifamily Residential). The City's zoning administration has submitted the following comments:

Please be advised that the following conditions of the proposed development do not comply with the current zoning regulations:

Sec. 30-418.4. LOT AREA AND WIDTH:

In the R-53 zoning district, single-family attached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 2,200 square feet in area. Lot width shall be not less than 18 feet, except that the width of any lot at the end of a series of attached units shall be not less than 21 feet. The proposed dwelling units have lot areas of approximately 748 square feet and lot widths of 17 feet.

Sec. 30-418.5. YARDS:

There shall be a front yard with a depth of not less than 15 feet. There shall be side yards of not less than three feet in width except where buildings are attached. There shall be a rear yard with a depth of not less than five feet. The yard requirements are not met due to the lot configurations.

Sec. 30-418.6:1. LOT COVERAGE:

Maximum lot coverage in the R-53 multifamily residential district shall not exceed 60 percent of the area of the lot for uses other than multifamily dwellings. The building footprints encompass each proposed lot.

Sec. 30-418.8. HEIGHT:

No building or structure in the R-53 multifamily residential district shall exceed 35 feet in height on lots of less than two acres. The SUP requests a maximum building height of forty feet (40') for the proposed dwellings.

Sec. 30-610.2. FRONTAGE FOR ATTACHED DWELLINGS:

Individual lots within an attached dwelling development may front on private streets or common courts where the development site considered in its entirety has frontage on a public street and when the means of access to each lot is approved by the Director of public works, the chief of police and the chief of fire and emergency services and when appropriate easements, agreements or covenants approved as to form by the city attorney provide for permanent public access and continued maintenance. Lots 5, 6 and 7 do not have access from a public or private street. These properties only have access through the existing public alley.

This special use permit is conditioned on the following special terms and conditions:

3(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as seven single-family attached dwellings with off-street parking and one common area, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) No fewer than seven off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(c) All building materials, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

(d) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed three 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) Prior to the issuance of any certificate of occupancy for the Special Use, the establishment of up to seven residential lots and one common area, substantially as shown on the Plans, shall be accomplished by obtaining subdivision 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.

4(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.

(e) The Owner shall make improvements within the right-of-way, including repairs to sidewalk along Grove Avenue, substantially as shown on the Plans, which improvements may be completed in one or more phases as approved by the Director of Public Works.

Surrounding Area

All properties on the block fronting Grove Avenue are within the R-53 Multifamily Residential District. Surrounding properties are within the R-5 Single-Family Residential District.

The surrounding land uses include primarily multi-family and single-family residential uses, with some commercial, office and institutional uses nearby. Mary Mumford Elementary School is directly across from the subject property to the South. Residential densities on the block range from 16 to 81 units per acre.

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.* The applicant intends to sell the townhouses at market rate.

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

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, the Westhampton Civic Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff has not received any correspondence regarding the application.

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