



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review

Staff Report

Ord. No. 2022-126: To authorize the special use of the property known as 300 West Leigh Street for the purpose of a two-family attached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 16, 2022

PETITIONER

Mark Baker – Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

300 West Leigh Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 300 West Leigh Street for the purpose of a two-family attached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for the purpose of a two-family attached dwelling, with off-street parking, within an R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential zoning districts. The proposed use does not meet the current zoning requirements within sections 30-412.4(3), 30-412.6, 30-412.5(2)b, 30-412.5(2)c, 30-710.1(3), concerning lot area and width, lot coverage, side yards, rear yards, and off-street parking, respectively. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposed use will not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking due to the inclusion of one off-street parking space, the property's location to nearby services, as well as mass transit options in the immediate area.

Staff also finds that the proposed use aligns with Objective 6.1 which states "Increase the number of residents and jobs at Nodes and along enhanced transit corridors in a land development pattern that prioritizes multi-modal transportation options." The proposed use offers increased housing opportunities within a designated Priority Growth Node. (p. 109)

Staff further finds that the proposed use aligns with Objective 14.5 which states "Encourage more housing types throughout the city and greater density along enhanced transit corridors and at Nodes by amending the Zoning Ordinance." The proposed two-family dwelling is within walking distance to the Arts District, Pulse Bus Rapid Transit Station. (p. 152)

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 amendment 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 consists of a 3,100 sq. ft. (.07 acre) parcel of land. The property is located in the Jackson Ward neighborhood, as well as, the Jackson Ward City Old and Historic District. The property is improved with a two story, 3,198 sq. ft., single-family attached dwelling constructed in 1900.

Proposed Use of the Property

Two-family attached dwelling. The density of the proposed two-family attached dwelling would be approximately 29 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 multi-family buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government. (p. 56)

The property is located on a designated Great Street with a street typology of "Major Mixed-Use Street" which...

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, through commercial and mixed-use areas
- Prioritize use and density-scaled sidewalks and crosswalks
- Require form elements, such as buildings to the street with parking in the rear, as well as building windows and entrances on the street
- Incorporate streetscape features, such as trees, benches, and trash receptacles
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Prioritize the curbside for walking, bicycling, transit, and short-term parking access and loading for local shops and restaurants (p. 72)

The property is also located within the Jackson Ward Region/National, Priority Growth Node. The vision for this node includes the following:

Jackson Ward has retained historic buildings and plays a leading role in supporting Black cultural and economic vitality. Jackson Ward continues to be a residential neighborhood with non-residential uses scattered throughout at corners and along major roads—such as 1st Street, 2nd Street, and Marshall Street. New infill developments incorporate high-quality architecture and complement the character of historic buildings. Jackson Ward is better connected to the rest of Downtown with the conversion of one-way streets to two-way, greenways, transit, a new park, and bridges connecting Jackson Ward to North Jackson Ward over the highway. Decking over the highway will reunite the two sides of Jackson Ward that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the highway. (p. 30)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for the property in question is R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential. The City’s Zoning Administration reviewed the application and provided the following comments:

Sec. 30-412.1 - Zoning and Use:

Two-family attached dwellings are a permitted principal use in the R-6 zoning district.

Sec. 30-412.4(3) - Two-family attached and detached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 6,000 square feet in area with a width of not less than 50 feet.

Proposed lot area: 3,100 square feet. Proposed lot width: 25’.

30-412.5b - Side yard. There shall be side yards of not less than three feet in width except where buildings are attached.

Proposed side yard: 2.77’ and 0.29’.

30-412.5c - Rear yard. There shall be a rear yard with a depth of not less than five feet.

Proposed rear yard: 4.4’.

Sec. 30-412.6 - Lot coverage. Lot coverage in the R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District shall not exceed 55 percent of the area of the lot.

Lot coverage proposed: 67.8%.

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

(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a two-family attached dwelling, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) No less than one off-street parking space shall be provided for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(c) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed two stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(d) All elevations and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans. The building siding material shall consist of brick masonry.

(e) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

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.

Surrounding Area

Adjacent properties are located within the R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential with R-53 Multifamily Residential directly north and adjacent to the property.

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 pricing information provided by the applicant the units will equate to approximately 93% of, or just below, the area median income affordability threshold.*

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

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents, property owners, and the Historic Jackson Ward Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff has not received any letters of support or opposition for this application.

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