



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. No. 2022-194: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1207 Porter Street for the purpose of a dwelling unit within an accessory building to a single-family dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 5, 2022

PETITIONER

Samuel McDonald

LOCATION

1207 Porter Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1207 Porter Street for the purpose of a dwelling unit within an accessory building to a single-family dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant proposes to build a single-family detached dwelling, with a two-story garage to the rear of the subject property containing an accessory dwelling unit on the second floor. The subject property is located in the R-8 Urban Residential zoning district. Accessory dwelling units are not permitted uses in this zoning district. Therefore a Special Use Permit has been requested.

Staff finds the proposed special use permit would be consistent with the Richmond 300 Master Plan which recommends Neighborhood Mixed Uses for the property. Primary uses for this category are single-family houses, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, small multi-family buildings, and open space. Furthermore the proposal is also consistent with Objective 14.5 of the Master Plan which calls for allowing accessory dwelling units as by-right uses in all residential zones.

Staff further finds that the proposal would not pose an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking in the area due to the provision of off-street parking.

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 recommend approval of the Special Use Permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property is located on the west side of Porter Street near midblock between West 12th and West 13th Streets. Access to the rear of the property is provided via alley. The parcel is a vacant lot measuring 165 feet deep and 27 feet wide, for a total of 4,525 square feet.

Proposed Use of the Property

A dwelling unit within an accessory building to a single-family dwelling.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property and neighborhood as Neighborhood Mixed Use. This land use category is described 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.

Development Style: 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.

Ground Floor: 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.

Mobility: 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.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

Zoning Administration reviewed this request and recommended approval without comment.

If adopted, the Special Use Permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a dwelling unit within an accessory building to a single-family dwelling, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed two stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (c) All building materials, elevations, setbacks, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (d) No less than one off-street parking space shall be provided on the Property.
- (e) 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 block contains single- and two-family dwellings as well as a church. Properties to the west, north and east are located in the same R-8 District as the subject property. Properties to the south are located in the R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners, as well as the Manchester Alliance Association of the proposal. Staff has received letters of support from the Manchester Alliance, Christopher Blake, and Robin Miller.

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