



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2022-193: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1117 West Leigh Street for the purpose of a two-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

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

PETITIONER

Edward Echeverry

LOCATION

1117 West Leigh Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1117 West Leigh Street for the purpose of a two-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize a residential use on the street level of a mixed-use building within an R-8 Urban Residential District. While the use is permitted the property does not meet the current lot area and width requirements for a two-family dwelling. A Special Use Permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposal would be consistent with the recommendations of the City's Master Plan pertaining to the varied housing types within the Neighborhood Mixed-Use land use category including the varied lot sizes and tenure types.

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 location of the units, which have a walkability score of "90 and more" which, according to the City's Richmond 300 Plan, makes the site a "Walker's paradise". This level of walkability offers alternatives to vehicles and, therefore, may reduce parking demand. (p.113) Mass transit is also available in the area.

Staff further finds that the proposed use would be consistent with the historic pattern of development in the area.

Staff finds that the proposal provides opportunities for increasing the City's stock of affordable housing as recommended by the Plan's Objective 14.3 "Create 10,000 new affordable housing

units for low- and very low-income households over the next 10 years”. As the dwelling unit proposed is projected to be affordable to households that are below 80% of the Area Median Income, this application helps to achieve this objective.

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 Carver neighborhood on West Leigh Street at the corner of West Leigh and North Harrison Streets. The property is currently a 1,116 sq. ft. (.03 acre) parcel of land.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed use of the property is a two-family detached dwelling.

Master Plan

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject property for Neighborhood Mixed Use which is viewed as “...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 multifamily buildings (10+units), retail/office/personal service, institutional, cultural, and government. (p. 56)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-8 Urban Residential District. The following zoning regulations are not being met by the proposal, warranting special use permit approval.

LOT AREA AND WIDTH

Sec. 30-413.14(3). Two-family detached and attached dwellings. Two-family detached dwellings and two-family attached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 3,400 square feet in area with a width of not less than 28 feet.

The proposed lot is approximately 1,116 sq. ft.

Development conditions will be imposed by the amended ordinance, including:

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

(b) No off-street parking shall be required for the Special Use.

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

(d) 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

Surrounding properties to the west, south, and east are located in the same R-8 District as the subject property. Properties to the north are located in the R-7 Residential District. Residential, commercial and institutional land uses are present in the vicinity.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$71,223 per year. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$21,367 per year, or \$1,781 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden.* Based upon the median household income for the Richmond region, and the estimated pricing provided by the applicant, the proposed rental units are projected to be affordable to households making between 64% to 70% of the Area Median Income (AMI) affordability threshold** These units are projected to be affordable.

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

Neighborhood Participation

The City notified area residents and property owners, and the Carver Area Civic Improvement League neighborhood association about this application. Staff has not received any letters of support or opposition from the Association or nearby residents.

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