



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. No. 2023-118: To authorize the special use of the property known as 310 West 31st Street for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 19 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions. (5th District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 1, 2023

PETITIONER

Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

310 West 31st Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 310 West 31st Street for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 19 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property is located in the R-5 Single-Family Residential District where multi-family dwellings are not permitted uses. The proposal calls for the conversion of an existing structure to contain 19 multi-family dwelling units. Therefore, a Special Use Permit is required.

The Property is improved with a 3-story original masonry building that was built in 1923 and includes several expansions. The building contains 18,576 square feet of finished floor area and was utilized as an adult home. The building has since been vacant for a number of years and is currently boarded up. The proposed conversion to 19 dwelling units will rehabilitate and preserve the structure.

Staff finds that the proposed development is generally consistent with the recommendations of the Richmond 300 master plan recommendation for Residential uses for the property where small mixed-use buildings are a secondary use.

Objective 6.1 in the Equitable Transportation Chapter of the Master Plan calls for increasing the number of residents and jobs along enhanced transit corridors. Semmes Avenue and Forest Hill Avenue, both located one block from the Property are designated as Major Residential Streets by the Richmond 300 Master Plan. Furthermore, there is a high frequency bus stop that is approximately a five-minute walk-distance from the subject property.

Staff finds that the proposed use would not cause an undue burden on the availability of on-street parking due to the provision of parking on-site and proximity to transit.

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 special 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.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The .852 acre subject property fronts the length of West 31st Street between McDonough Street to the north and Porter Street to the south. The property has alley access along the western property line. The property is improved with a three-story, 18,576 square foot building built in 1923 with subsequent additions and is deemed to be in poor condition for its age.

Proposed Use of the Property

The request proposes to renovate and convert the existing structure for use as a 19-unit multi-family development.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property for Residential uses which consists 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 building.

Ground Floor: Not applicable.

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.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

Zoning Administration provided the following comments:

Zoning requirements not met: Use - Multifamily is not allowed by-right in the R-5 zoning district; Front yard - 25' required, 17.93' provided; Lot coverage - 35% lot (12,995.9 sf) max, 39.8% lot (14,780.11 sf) provided; Height - 35' max, 35.385' provided (height measured from elevations, but not provided by architect). Zoning Comments: Lot size

requirements are met, but the requirements are specifically for single-family; there are no multifamily lot size requirements for R-5.

Staff recommends the approval of the requested special use permit, with the following conditions:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a multifamily dwelling containing up to 19 dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) All building materials, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (c) No less than 20 off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use.
- (d) Long-term parking for no less than seven bicycles and short-term parking for no less than ten bicycles 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 properties in the surrounding neighborhood contain single-family dwellings.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners and the Woodland Heights Civic Association. No comments in support or opposition have been received.

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 90% of the Area Median Income (AMI) affordability threshold* Based upon the regional median income these units are projected to not be affordable. Based upon the census tract for 310 West 31st Street, these units are projected to be 103% of the affordability threshold.**

*(U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Regional)

** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Tract)

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