



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-090: To authorize the special use of the property known as 708 China Street for the purpose of a two-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: June 5, 2023

PETITIONER

Mark Baker – Baker Development Resources

LOCATION

708 China Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 708 China 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 two-family detached dwelling. The proposed use, among other things, is not currently allowed by the City's current zoning regulations Section 30-413.2 through 30-413.5, including required lot area and width. 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 two-family dwellings, which are listed as an appropriate primary use.

Staff also finds that the proposed use would be consistent with the historic pattern of development in the area, which is primarily two-story, single- and two-family dwellings with front porches and modest yards.

Staff further finds that the proposed use will not place a burden on the availability of on-street parking as the proposal includes three (3) off-street parking spaces.

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.

The applicant has provided updated plans, showing 1) a hip roof over the porch 2) four columns on the front porch instead of three, 3) the front door moved slightly to the left to align with the right window, and 4) Permeable surface being used for the parking area.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit request with an amendment to incorporate the updated plans.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Oregon Hill neighborhood on China Street between South Pine and South Laurel Streets. The property is currently a 3,480 sq. ft. (.08 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 a future land use for the subject property as Neighborhood Mixed Use, which is defined as neighborhoods "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.

The density of the proposed development is approximately 2 units upon .08 acres or 25 units per acre.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-7 (Single and Two Family Urban Residential District). The following zoning regulations are not being met by the proposal, warranting special use permit approval.

Lot Area and Lot Width

Sec. 30-413.5(3). Two-family detached dwellings shall be located on lots of not less than 4,400 square feet in area with a width of not less than 42 feet.

The lot has an area of 3,480 square feet with a width of 29 ft.

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

- The Special Use of the Property shall be a two-family detached dwelling, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- No fewer than three (3) off-street parking spaces shall be provided for the Special Use, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building materials, elevations, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- On-site storage for bicycles shall be provided, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- 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 are located in the same R-7 district as the properties in question. Single- and two-family residential are the dominant land-uses in the vicinity, with some institutional and small, neighborhood commercial uses within the neighborhood.

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 123% to 140% 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 823 China Street, these units are projected to be 103% of the affordability threshold.** In other words, the units may be affordable to half of households in the Oregon Hill neighborhood.

*(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)

Neighborhood Participation

The City notified the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Civic Association about this application. The Civic Association has submitted a Letter of Opposition for this request. Staff has received several letters and phone calls expressing opposition from nearby residents. A letter of support has also been received.

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