



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-285: To authorize the special use of the property known as 4400 Warwick Road for the purpose of an accessory garage, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: October 16, 2023

PETITIONER

Elizabeth Flores, property owner

LOCATION

4400 Warwick Road

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 4400 Warwick Road for the purpose of an accessory garage, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit which would allow for the retroactive approval of an accessory garage that does not meet side setback requirements within an R-4 Single-Family Residential zoning district and the requirement that an accessory garage be smaller in footprint than a primary structure. A Special Use Permit is, therefore, required.

Staff finds that the development of the property is generally consistent with the recommendations of the Richmond 300 master plan, which designates the property for Residential land use. Within this designation, a garage that is accessory to a single-family detached dwelling is an appropriate use. While the Master Plan does state within the description for Residential land use that "Many homes have driveways and/or garages, which are located off an alley behind the home if an alley is present" (p. 54), it does not provide specific recommendations regarding setbacks for those garages.

Staff finds that the proposal would be generally consistent with other examples of development in the area in terms of setback and lot coverage. Staff notes that during the time period that this portion of the City was developed, dwellings were constructed with smaller footprints than present day. If the property had a dwelling constructed more recently, the proposed garage would likely meet zoning requirements that accessory buildings not be larger than the primary structure in building footprint.

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 use would not create hazards from fire, panic or other dangers in the area involved.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Hickory Hill neighborhood on Warwick Road, between Elmore Lane and Rucker Lane. The property is currently an improved 11,400 sq. ft. (0.262 acre) parcel of land with a one-story, 860 SF dwelling constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1950.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit which would allow for the retroactive approval of an accessory garage that does not meet setback requirements within an R-4 Single-Family Residential zoning district and the requirement that an accessory garage be smaller in footprint than a primary structure. A Special Use Permit is, therefore, required.

Master Plan

The Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject property as Residential, which consists of 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 buildings.

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 reviewed this request and recommended approval with the following comments:

An SUP is required as the proposed accessory building cannot meet the zoning district requirements. No building accessory to a single-family or two-family dwelling shall exceed 20 feet in height, nor shall the building area of all accessory buildings on any lot devoted to single-family or two-family dwelling use exceed the building area of the main building on the lot. The proposed accessory building has a building area (1350 SF) greater than the building area of the main house (860 SF). The R-4 requires side yards of not less than six feet in width. Five feet (5') is proposed. Please note, the SUP request is only for the proposed accessory building. Any future accessory building area in excess of what is approved would require an amendment.

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

- a) The Special Use of the Property shall be an accessory garage, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- b) All mechanical equipment serving the Special Use shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- c) The side and rear setback for the Special Use shall be a minimum 5 feet.

Surrounding Area

The subject property is located within the R-4 Single-Family Residential. Adjacent properties are zoned the same R-4 zone. Surrounding land uses include residential.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners. A Civic Association is not recorded for this area. Staff has not received any public comment to date.

Staff Contact: Ray Roakes, Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-5467