



## CITY OF RICHMOND

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

**Ord. No. 2016-043:** To authorize the special use of the properties known as 1401 West Leigh Street, 1405 West Leigh Street, and 1400 Catherine Street for the purpose of permitting up to 11 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** March 21, 2016

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#### **PETITIONER**

Doug Kleffner - Johannas Design Group

#### **LOCATION**

1401 West Leigh Street  
1405 West Leigh Street  
1400 Catherine Street

#### **PURPOSE**

To authorize the special use of the properties known as 1401 West Leigh Street, 1405 West Leigh Street, and 1400 Catherine Street for the purpose of permitting up to 11 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The subject property consists of a 0.123 acre (5,358 SF) parcel (1401 West Leigh Street) improved with a multi-family dwelling, a 0.135 acre (5,881 SF) parcel (1405 West Leigh Street) improved with a two-family dwelling, and a 0.144 acre (6,273 SF) parcel (1400 Catherine Street) partially improved with an unscreened parking area. In total, the subject property encompasses a total of approximately 0.4 acres (17,512 SF) of land located at the intersection of West Leigh, Kinney, and Catherine Streets, in the Carver neighborhood of the Near West planning district.

The subject property is zoned within the R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential District, a zoning district that does not allow the number of dwelling units proposed. A special use permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the use and scale of the proposed development is consistent with the recommendations of the Master Plan. Though the proposed density of the development exceeds the density recommended by the Master Plan, it is below the density of existing multi-unit developments within the vicinity, which range from 32 to 121 units per acre.

Staff further finds that the proposed development, which would redevelop an underutilized parcel and contribute to the rehabilitation of historic structures, would not pose an undue burden on the neighborhood's on-street parking capacity and would provide improvements for the existing right-of-way.

Staff further finds that with the conditions of the ordinance, the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of special use permits, are met. Staff therefore recommends approval of the proposed special use permit.

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## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **Site Description**

The subject property consists of a 0.123 acre (5,358 SF) parcel (1401 West Leigh Street) improved with a multi-family dwelling, a 0.135 acre (5,881 SF) parcel (1405 West Leigh Street) improved with a two-family dwelling, and a 0.144 acre (6,273 SF) parcel (1400 Catherine Street) partially improved with an unscreened parking area. In total, the subject property encompasses a total of approximately 0.4 acres (17,512 SF) of land located at the intersection of West Leigh, Kinney, and Catherine Streets, in the Carver neighborhood of the Near West planning district.

### **Proposed Use of the Property**

The special use permit would authorize a total of 11 dwelling units on the subject property: two units at 1405 West Leigh Street (existing two-family dwelling), five units at 1401 West Leigh Street (four within existing multi-family dwelling unit, one new dwelling in vacant carriage house), and four units at 1400 Catherine Street (two-story new construction row houses). The overall density of the development proposal is approximately 28 units per acre.

### **Master Plan**

The City of Richmond's Master Plan recommends Single-family (Medium Density) land uses for the property. The Master Plan defines the primary uses for this category as single-family and two-family detached and attached dwellings at densities of 8 to 20 units per acre, and includes residential support uses such as schools, places of worship, and neighborhood parks, among others (p. 133).

The Master Plan also states "infill development of like density, scale, and use is appropriate" (p. 230) as a guiding land use principle for the Near West planning district. More specifically for the Carver neighborhood, the Plan States, "recent changes have seen the departure of much of the traditional manufacturing and commercial base in favor of a greater institutional presence by Virginia Commonwealth University. While Carver will continue to be an urban residential neighborhood, with non-residential uses along its edges, specific limitations on these other uses will need to be determined. Carver should remain primarily a single-family neighborhood, with some multi-family uses in appropriate locations. Any new development or redevelopment of existing structures that results in additional multi-family residential units in the Carver neighborhood must provide sufficient off-street parking to accommodate the increase in housing units" (p. 234).

### **Zoning & Ordinance Conditions**

The subject property is zoned within the R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential District, a zoning district that does not allow the number of dwelling units proposed. A special use permit is therefore required.

Conditions of the special use permit ordinance include:

Use limited to 11 dwelling units, substantially as shown on the Plans. (The Owner may establish up to four single-family attached residential lots at 1400 Catherine Street).

No fewer than 11 on-site parking spaces shall be provided, which shall be accessed via an existing private alley in common and proposed access easement. Access to adjacent dwellings at 1403 West Leigh Street and 1403½ West Leigh Street shall not be prevented.

The property shall be landscaped and all mechanical equipment serving the property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way. Facilities for the collection of refuse shall also be screened.

Any signage shall follow the requirements of the R-7 district.

All building materials, material colors, and site improvements shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

Right-of-way improvements, including street tree installation and improvements to a portion of Catherine Street and a portion of the sidewalk along Kinney Street shall also be performed.

### **Surrounding Area**

All adjacent properties are located within the same R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential District zoning district as the subject property. Properties within the R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential, R-53 Multi-Family, and M-1 Light Industrial Districts are also present in the area. A mix of residential (single-, two-, and multi-family), commercial, institutional, industrial, mixed-use, and public-open space land uses are present in the area.

### **Neighborhood Participation**

A letter of support was received from the Carver Area Civic Improvement League and Councilman Charles R. Samuels.

**Staff Contact:** Matthew J. Ebinger, AICP, (804) 646-6308