



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. No. 2020-268: To authorize the special use of the property known as 406 Rear West Franklin Street for the purpose of a two-unit tourist home within an existing structure, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: January 4, 2021

PETITIONER

VCU Carriage House LLC

LOCATION

406 Rear West Franklin Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 406 Rear West Franklin Street for the purpose of a two-unit tourist home within an existing structure, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The request is to authorize the conversion of a two-family detached dwelling into a two unit tourist home. Tourist homes are permitted uses in the RO-3 Residential Office District. However, as proposed, the tourist homes are not able to meet all feature requirements of the zoning district. Therefore a special use permit is required.

Staff finds that the proposed use would be consistent with the mix of uses in the area and the land use recommendation of the Master Plan.

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 is consistent with other uses in the community 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 subject property is 40 feet in width and contains 6,213 square feet. Improvements to the property are a three-story building that fronts West Franklin Street, between North Henry and North Monroe Streets, and a two-story carriage house fronting the alley. It is the carriage house that is the subject of this special use request.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed development will consist of a two-unit tourist home.

Master Plan

The Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use category for the subject property as Downtown Mixed-Use. It is described as the central business district of the Richmond region and features high density development with office buildings, residential buildings, and a mix of complementary uses, including regional destinations in a highly-walkable urban environment.

Primary uses for this designation are retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, institutional, government, and open space. The plan also recommends that parking requirements are substantially less in these areas than other areas of the City and are largely eliminated.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The property is located in the RO-3 Residential Office District, wherein tourist homes are a permitted principal use, provided that access to the units is provided exclusively from within the building. The existing structure provides exterior access to the dwelling units.

Zoning Administration provided the following comments:

Please be advised of the following zoning regulations that are not being met by the proposal, warranting special use permit approval:

- ZONING AND USE: Tourist homes and short-term rentals are both permitted by-right in the RO-3 district. The tourist home units, however, do not meet the criteria specified in the definition of tourist home (Sec. 30-1220.122), nor do they meet the conditions for short-term rentals in Sec. 30-697.1 of the zoning ordinance.
- PARKING: 1 per guestroom. Parking requirement is requested to be waived. (Sec. 30-710.1(a)7a)

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If approved, the special use permit ordinance would impose conditions on the property, including:

(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a two-unit tourist home within an existing structure, with up to two bedrooms per unit, which units may be accessible from the exterior of the building, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) No units within the tourist home shall be rented to more than two adult persons per bedroom at any given time.

(c) Off-street parking shall not be required for the Special Use.

(d) The Owner shall ensure that the Zoning Administrator is furnished with contact information for the operator of the Special Use.

(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 to the east, west, and south of the subject property are located within the same RO-3 Residential Office zoning district. Adjacent and surrounding properties to the north are located in the B-4 Central Business District. Within the area of the subject property, properties to the east and west are occupied by professional offices. Other uses in the vicinity include residential, office, cultural, and hospitality uses.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners, and the Downtown Neighborhood Association of the proposal. No comments of support or opposition have been received.

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