



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2021-262: To authorize the special use of the property known as 116 South Laurel Street for the purpose of two two-family detached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

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

PETITIONER

Charley Smith, Oregon Properties LLC

LOCATION

116 S. Laurel Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 116 South Laurel Street for the purpose of two two-family detached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a special use permit to allow for the existing lot to be split into two lots with one two-family detached dwelling constructed on each new lot. The property is located in an R-7 Single- and Two- Family Urban Residential District. While the proposed use is permitted in the R-7 District, the lot area and lot width requirements are not met for two family detached dwellings with the proposal. Therefore, a special use permit is necessary to authorize the proposed two-family detached dwellings.

Staff finds that the proposed two-family dwelling use is consistent with the recommendations of Richmond 300. The property has a land use designation of Neighborhood Mixed-Use. The proposed two-family dwelling use is a primary use that is recommended for Neighborhood Mixed-Use. The portion of South Laurel Street that abuts the property is designated as a "Major Mixed-Use Street" on the Great Streets and Street Typologies Map. The proposed dwellings align with other existing buildings on the block, feature full-length front porches, and have a predominantly cementitious exterior with a brick veneer foundation wall below the front porch. Additionally, parking spaces are being provided for all four units, plus up to eight spaces are being made available for use by others in the neighborhood. A bike rack that accommodates up to six bikes is also being provided on-site.

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.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property consists of a 7,883 square foot (0.18 acre) parcel that is currently unimproved. The property is located in the Oregon Hill Neighborhood.

Proposed Use of the Property

Two two-family detached dwellings.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property as Neighborhood Mixed-Use. This land use category is described as 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: 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.

Mobility: Bicycle, pedestrian, 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: Buildings heights are generally two to four stories. Buildings taller than four stories may be found along major streets.

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 Property is adjacent to the VCU National/Regional node. These nodes are defined as centers "...with significant cultural, entertainment, government, and business destinations as well as shopping, housing, and unique place-based attractions."

The Property is categorized as a Major Mixed Use Street within the designated Great Streets typologies. Major Mixed Use Streets are intended to:

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, through commercial and mixed-use areas
- Prioritize use and density-scaled sidewalks and crosswalks
- Require form elements, such as buildings to the street with parking in the rear, as well as building windows and entrances on the street
- Incorporate streetscape features, such as trees, benches, and trash receptacles
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Prioritize the curbside for walking, bicycling, transit, and short-term parking access and loading for local shops and restaurants.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The property is located in an R-7 Single- and Two- Family Urban Residential District. While the proposed use is permitted in the R-7 District, the lot area and lot width requirements are not met for two-family detached dwellings with the proposal. Therefore, a special use permit is necessary to authorize the proposed two-family detached dwellings.

If adopted, the Special Use Permit would impose the following conditions on the properties:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as two two-family detached dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) No fewer than 12 parking spaces shall be provided on the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans. Four of the parking spaces shall be made available to only residents of the Property; the remaining eight parking spaces may be made available for lease to others. Six of the required 12 parking spaces may be captive spaces.
- (c) A bicycle rack to accommodate a minimum of six bicycles shall be provided on the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (d) All building materials and site improvements, including but not limited to building finishes and landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (e) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.
- (f) Prior to the issuance of any certificate of occupancy for the Special Use, the Property shall be subdivided into two lots, substantially as shown on the Plans, which shall be

accomplished by obtaining any necessary approvals from the City and recording the appropriate plats and deeds among the land records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond.

Affordability

The median household income for the Richmond region is currently \$68,529 per year. The affordability threshold is 30% of household income towards housing costs, which equates to \$20,559 per year, or \$1,713 per month, or less, to avoid a housing cost burden. The applicant intends to rent each three-bedroom unit at approximately \$1,950 per month.

Surrounding Area

The subject property and properties to the east, west, north and south are located within the R-7 Single- and Two-Family Urban Residential District. Properties just to the north fronting on West Cary Street are located within the B-3 General Business District.

A mix of single- and two- family dwellings are located to the west, east, north and south of the subject property. Commercial and multi-family uses are located within a block, fronting along West Cary Street.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners and the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association. Staff has received letters of support, a conditional letter of support, and a request for a continuance from the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association.

Staff Contact: Richard Saunders Senior Planner, Land Use Administration, 804-646-5648