

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Ron Barron, Case Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: September 5, 2024

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21158: Request for special exception relief allow a three-story with cellar rear addition to an existing, attached, three-story with cellar, principal dwelling unit at 629 South Carolina Avenue, SE.

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following special exception pursuant to Subtitle E § 5202 and Subtitle X § 901:

- Subtitle E § 203.2, Height requirements (35 ft. max., 32.4 ft. existing; 36.2 ft. proposed)

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	629 South Carolina Avenue, SE
Applicant:	629 SC, LLC
Legal Description:	Square 876, Lot 14
Ward / ANC:	Ward 6 / ANC 6B
Zone:	RF-1
Historic Districts	Capitol Hill Historic District
Lot Characteristics:	Regularly shaped lot with 1,701 sq. ft. of lot area, rear and front lot lines of 17.7 ft. and side lot lines of 92.2 ft.
Existing Development:	The Property is improved with a three-story with cellar single-family row dwelling.
Adjacent Properties:	Directly abutting the Property to the west at 627 South Carolina Avenue, SE, is a single-family row house. Abutting the Property to the east at 631 South Carolina Avenue, SE is a single-family row house. Abutting the Property to the south is 632 E Street, SE, a single-family row dwelling. Abutting the Property to the north is South Carolina Avenue, SE.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The neighborhood is characterized by moderate-density residential, primarily attached single family rowhouses.
Proposed Development:	Rear addition to an existing single-family residence.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

RF-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed ¹	Relief:
Density E § 201	2 principal units max.	1 Unit	1 unit	None requested
Lot Width E § 202	18 ft. min.	N/A	No Change	None requested
Lot Area E § 202	1,800 sq. ft. min.	N/A	No Change	None requested
Height E § 203	35 ft. max.; 40 ft. by sp.ex.	32.4 ft.	36.2 ft.	Sp. Ex. Relief requested
Rear Yard E § 207	20 ft. min.	48.2 ft.	36.2 ft.	None requested
Side Yard E § 208	None required, but 5 ft. min. if provided	N/A	No Change	None requested
Lot Occupancy E § 210	60% max.	43 %	59.8%	None requested
Parking C § 701	N/A	N/A	N/A	None requested

IV. OP ANALYSIS

The applicant proposes a rear addition to an existing single-family attached rowhome. The proposal meets all the requirements for a matter of right build except for height. While the proposed construction would not alter the façade facing South Carolina Ave. SE, it would create a new flat roofline extending to the rear from the ridge point of the existing roof. This creates a new roof measuring point pursuant to Subtitle B § 308.3, which would result in a building height of 36.2 ft., or 1.2 ft. above the maximum allowable building height for an RF-1 zone. Relief from this requirement is allowable by special exception pursuant to Subtitle E § 5202 and Subtitle X § 901.

5202 SPECIAL EXCEPTION CRITERIA BUILDING HEIGHT

5203.1 The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant as a special exception under Subtitle X, Chapter 9, and subject to the conditions of this subsection, a maximum building height of up to forty feet (40 ft.) for a principal residential building and any additions thereto located on a non-alley lot subject to the following conditions:

Approval of the requested special exception will not be inconsistent with this section. The height of the proposed addition would be 36.2 ft. The maximum allowed by special exception is 40 ft.

- (a) *The proposed construction shall not have a substantially adverse effect on the use or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent dwelling or property:*
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- (b) *In demonstrating compliance with paragraph (a), the applicant shall use graphical representations such as plans, photographs, or elevation and section drawings sufficient to represent the relationship of the proposed construction's height to adjacent buildings and views from public ways;*

The applicant has provided building drawings and photographs, including ones from public ways, at Exhibits 5 and 6, as graphical representations of the proposal.

and

- (1) *The light and air available to neighboring properties shall not be unduly affected;*

Light and air are unlikely to be unduly affected by approval of the requested special exception. The proposed addition would extend 7 ft. past the neighbor to the east and 10 ft. from the rear wall of the neighbor to the west. While the addition would be taller than the roofline of the property to the west, the shadows cast would be unlikely to be unduly greater than what is cast currently, or what could be constructed as a matter of right. Further, the applicant has reached out to this property owner and received a letter of support which is at [Ex. 14](#) in the record.

- (2) *The privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties shall not be unduly compromised; and*

The privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties should not be unduly compromised by the requested special exception. While the addition would be taller and extend further into the rear yard than both the nearest neighbors, the plans in the record show new windows would be limited to the rear wall. This would limit the any new views from the proposed addition.

- (c) *The Board of Zoning Adjustment may require special treatment in the way of design, screening, exterior or interior lighting, building materials, or other features for the protection of adjacent or nearby properties, or to maintain the general character of a block.*

OP does not recommend any special treatment for the requested special exception.

Subtitle X Section 901 SPECIAL EXCEPTION REVIEW STANDARDS

901.1 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment will evaluate and either approve or deny a special exception application according to the standards of this section.*

901.2 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment is authorized under § 8 of the Zoning Act, D.C. Official Code § 6-641.07(g)(2), to grant special exceptions, as provided in this title, where, in the judgment of the Board of Zoning Adjustment, the special exceptions:*

- (a) *Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;*

Approval of the requested special exception would not be inconsistent with this section. The subject property is currently being used as a single family residency. Approval of the special exception will

not alter that use. Single-family residential attached row homes are a matter of right use in the RF-1 zone.

- (b) *Will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;*

Approval of the requested special exception would not be inconsistent with the intent of the zone. The requested special exception height relief is within the height anticipated zone provided the potential impacts of light, air and privacy of use on the adjacent properties would not be undue, as is the case with this proposal. The relief would not result in an addition that is inconsistent with the building bulk as anticipated by this zone.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

HPRB reviewed and approved the proposed addition.

DDOT reviewed the proposed special exception and stated no objection to approval of the requested special exception.

No other District Agencies have submitted comments to the record as of this writing.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

ANC 6B submitted a report at [Ex. 22](#) in support of approval.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Three letters in support of the application have been submitted to the record at Exhibits [14](#), [15](#) and [16](#).

Attachment: Location Map

Figure 1: Location Map

