

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT**



**BZA Application No. 21194  
Karen Marsh  
1837 Vernon Street, NW (Square 2555, Lot 36)**

**HEARING DATE:** April 2, 2025<sup>1</sup>

**DECISION DATE:** April 2, 2025

**SUMMARY ORDER**

**RELIEF REQUESTED.** The application requests the following relief in order to construct a rear staircase enclosure and create a second dwelling unit to convert an existing, attached, four-story principal dwelling unit into a residential flat in the RA-2 zone:

- Special Exception from the rear yard requirements of Subtitle F § 207.1, pursuant to Subtitle F § 5201 and Subtitle X § 901.2. (*15 ft. minimum required; 10 ft. 2 inches existing; 2 ft. proposed*)
- Area Variance from the floor area ratio requirements of Subtitle F § 201.1, pursuant to Subtitle X § 1002 (*1.8 maximum FAR permitted; 2.2 existing; 2.23 proposed*)
- Area Variance from the lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle F § 210.1, pursuant to Subtitle X § 1002 (*60% maximum permitted; 84.19% existing; 87.7% proposed*)

The zoning relief requested in this case was self-certified. (Exhibit 41A (Final Updated).)<sup>2</sup>

**PARTIES.** The parties to this case were the Applicant and Advisory Neighborhood Commission ("ANC") 1C, the "affected ANC" pursuant to Subtitle Y §§ 101.8 and 403.5(b) of the Zoning Regulations (Title 11 of the DCMR, Zoning Regulations of 2016, to which all references are made unless otherwise specified).

**NOTICE OF THE APPLICATION AND PUBLIC HEARING.** The Board of Zoning Adjustment (the "Board") referred the application to the appropriate agencies and provided proper and timely notice of the public hearing in accordance with Subtitle Y § 402.1.

**ANC REPORT.** ANC 1C submitted two reports to the record:

---

<sup>1</sup> The application was originally scheduled for hearing on November 13, 2024, and was postponed twice at the Applicant's request. The application was re-noticed to reflect the amended relief. (Exhibits 32, 33.)

<sup>2</sup> The application was amended to add the two area variances – from the rear yard requirements of Subtitle F § 207.1 and from the floor area ratio requirements of Subtitle F § 201.1.

- The first ANC report, dated October 28, 2024, indicated that at a regularly scheduled, properly noticed public meeting on October 9, 2024, at which a quorum was present, the ANC voted to support the application. (Exhibit 18A.)
- The final ANC report, dated March 7, 2025, indicated that at a regularly scheduled, properly noticed public meeting on March 5, 2025, at which a quorum was present, the ANC voted to support the amended application. (Exhibit 37.)

The ANC raised no issues or concerns in either report.

**OFFICE OF PLANNING (“OP”) REPORT.** OP submitted two reports to the record:

- The original OP report, dated January 17, 2025 noted the applicant’s need to work with the Zoning Administrator’s office and OP to clarify the relief. OP indicated that it was unable to make a recommendation at that time. (Exhibit 24.)
- The supplemental OP report, dated March 20, 2025, recommended approval of the application as amended. (Exhibit 39.)

**DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (“DDOT”) REPORT.** DDOT did not submit a report to the record for this application.

**PERSONS IN SUPPORT.** The Board received two letters from neighbors in support of the application. (Exhibits 44 and 46.)

**CONCLUSIONS**

Pursuant to Subtitle Y § 604.3, the order of the Board may be in summary form where granting an application when there was no party in opposition. As a summary order, it does not constitute binding legal precedent on the Board and shall not be considered by the Board in evaluating future applications.

Based upon the record before the Board, and having given great weight to the appropriate reports and recommendations filed in this case, the Board concludes that the Applicant has met the burden of proof that the requested special exception and variance relief can be granted because:

- It is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Map;
- It will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property;
- Pursuant to Subtitle X § 901.2(c), the relief satisfies the specified conditions for special exception relief;
- There exists an exceptional or extraordinary situation or condition related to the property;
- The exceptional condition creates a practical difficulty, in the case of an area variance, or an undue hardship, in the case of a use variance, in complying with the Zoning Regulations;
- The relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good; and
- The relief can be granted without substantially impairing the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zone plan as embodied in the Zoning Regulations and Map.

**DECISION**

Based on the case record and the testimony at the hearing, the Board concludes that the applicant has satisfied the burden of proof for the requested relief:

- Special Exception from the rear yard requirements of Subtitle F § 207.1, pursuant to Subtitle F § 5201 and Subtitle X § 901.2. (*15 ft. minimum required; 10 ft. 2 inches existing; 2 ft. proposed*)
- Area Variance from the floor area ratio requirements of Subtitle F § 201.1, pursuant to Subtitle X § 1002 (*1.8 maximum FAR permitted; 2.2 existing; 2.23 proposed*)
- Area Variance from the lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle F § 210.1, pursuant to Subtitle X § 1002 (*60% maximum permitted; 84.19% existing; 87.7% proposed*)


Accordingly, it is **ORDERED** that the application is **GRANTED** consistent with the revised plans shown in Exhibit 27 of the record, as required under Subtitle Y §§ 604.9 and 604.10.

**VOTE: 4-0-1** (Frederick L. Hill, Carl H. Blake, Chrishaun S. Smith, and Gwen Marcus Wright to APPROVE; one Board seat vacant)

**BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT**

A majority of the Board members approved the issuance of this order.

**ATTESTED BY:**

  
**SARA A. BARDIN**  
**Director, Office of Zoning**

**FINAL DATE OF ORDER:** April 8, 2025

PURSUANT TO 11 DCMR SUBTITLE Y § 604.11, NO ORDER OF THE BOARD SHALL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL TEN (10) DAYS AFTER IT BECOMES FINAL PURSUANT TO SUBTITLE Y § 604.7.

PURSUANT TO 11 DCMR SUBTITLE Y § 702.1, THIS ORDER SHALL NOT BE VALID FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS, UNLESS, WITHIN SUCH TWO-YEAR PERIOD, AN APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING PERMIT FOR THE ERECTION OR ALTERATION APPROVED IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SECURING A BUILDING PERMIT, OR A REQUEST FOR A TIME EXTENSION PURSUANT TO SUBTITLE Y § 705 IS FILED PRIOR TO THE EXPIRATION OF THE TWO-YEAR PERIOD AND THE REQUEST IS GRANTED. PURSUANT TO SUBTITLE Y § 703.14, NO OTHER ACTION, INCLUDING THE FILING OR GRANTING OF AN APPLICATION

**BZA ORDER NO. 21194**  
**PAGE NO. 4**

FOR A MODIFICATION PURSUANT TO SUBTITLE Y §§ 703 OR 704, SHALL TOLL OR EXTEND THE TIME PERIOD.

PURSUANT TO 11 DCMR SUBTITLE Y § 604, APPROVAL OF AN APPLICATION SHALL INCLUDE APPROVAL OF THE PLANS SUBMITTED WITH THE APPLICATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BUILDING OR STRUCTURE (OR ADDITION THERETO) OR THE RENOVATION OR ALTERATION OF AN EXISTING BUILDING OR STRUCTURE. AN APPLICANT SHALL CARRY OUT THE CONSTRUCTION, RENOVATION, OR ALTERATION ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PLANS APPROVED BY THE BOARD AS THE SAME MAY BE AMENDED AND/OR MODIFIED FROM TIME TO TIME BY THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE D.C. HUMAN RIGHTS ACT OF 1977, AS AMENDED, D.C. OFFICIAL CODE § 2-1401.01 ET SEQ. (ACT), THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED: RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, AGE, MARITAL STATUS, PERSONAL APPEARANCE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION, FAMILIAL STATUS, FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES, MATRICULATION, POLITICAL AFFILIATION, GENETIC INFORMATION, DISABILITY, SOURCE OF INCOME, OR PLACE OF RESIDENCE OR BUSINESS. SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A FORM OF SEX DISCRIMINATION WHICH IS PROHIBITED BY THE ACT. IN ADDITION, HARASSMENT BASED ON ANY OF THE ABOVE PROTECTED CATEGORIES IS PROHIBITED BY THE ACT. DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION OF THE ACT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. VIOLATORS WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.