

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment  
**FROM:** Joshua Mitchum, Case Manager  
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director, Development Review  
**DATE:** March 25, 2025

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case 21266: Request for special exception relief to convert an existing 1 ½-story detached accessory building into a 2-story accessory building in the rear yard of an existing 2-story detached residential dwelling in the R-1B Zone.

### **I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION**

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following special exception pursuant to Subtitle D § 5201:

- D § 5003.1 Maximum Building Area (30% or 450 square feet max. allowed, 781.6 square feet proposed)

### **II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

Address	1111 Buchanan Street NW
Applicant(s)	Julia Howell & Marco Davis c/o Greg Upwall
Legal Description	Square 2920; Lot 0016
Ward, ANC	Ward 4; ANC 4E
Zone	R-1B, Low Density Residential
Lot Characteristics	The 6,110.4 square foot lot is rectangular in shape and has 40 feet of frontage along Buchanan Street NW, and 40 feet of frontage along a 15-foot-wide public alley.
Existing Development	The lot is currently improved with a 2-story detached residential dwelling with a basement, front porch, and rear deck. Furthermore, there is an existing 1-story rear yard accessory structure.
Adjacent Properties	The property is bounded to the north by single-family, detached residential dwellings, to the south across Buchanan Street NW by single-family row houses, to the east by single-family detached residential dwellings, and to the west by single-family detached residential dwellings.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by similar single-family detached homes and attached row homes.
Proposed Development	The Applicant is proposing to renovate the existing accessory structure by adding a new story to create an accessory apartment.

### III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

R-1B Zone (Accessory Structure)	Regulation	Existing	Proposed <sup>1</sup>	Relief
Lot Area D § 202.1	5,000 sq. ft.	6,110 sq. ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Width D § 202.1	50 ft. min.	40 ft.	No change	None requested (Existing non- conformity)
Rear Yard D § 207.1	25 ft. min.	75 ft.	48 ft.	None requested
Height D § 5002.1	2 stories max. 22 ft. max.	1 story, 15 ft.11 in	2 stories 22 ft.	None requested
Maximum Building Area D § 5003	The greater of 30% of the required rear yard or 450 square feet max.	781.6 sq. ft. (one story)	781.6 sq. ft. (two story)	<b>Special Exception relief requested</b>

### IV. OP ANALYSIS

#### Subtitle D § 5201.4 SPECIAL EXCEPTION RELIEF FROM CERTAIN DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

*5201.4 An application for special exception relief under this section shall demonstrate that the proposed addition, new principal building, or accessory structure shall not have a substantially adverse effect on the use or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent dwelling or property, specifically:*

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

The special exception, if granted, should not result in an addition that would unduly affect the light and air available to neighboring properties. The proposed second story accessory building addition would still be within the permitted height of accessory structures in the R-1B Zone (2-story maximum), and would be located at the rear of the lot, along the alley. It should not cast intrusive shadows that would affect adjacent properties, as the structure abuts a 15-foot-wide public alley to the north.

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

The proposed addition should not unduly compromise the privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties. The proposed addition does not feature windows on walls that would face directly into a neighboring property. In addition, the application proposes an infill of an existing window on a wall that would face into a neighboring property.

- (c) *The proposed addition or accessory structure, together with the original building, or*

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided in applicant submissions and in the ZA memo at Exhibit 5.

*the new principal building, as viewed from the street, alley, and other public way, shall not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the street or alley frontage; and*

The proposed addition that would be allowed by this special exception should not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the property's street or alley frontage. No changes to the existing building footprint are being proposed, and the second story addition would have the property still being within the maximum height regulations of the R-1B Zone.

Furthermore, the subject accessory structure would retain most of its existing brick façade. The characteristics of surrounding homes in the area have similar brick and vinyl facades, and the proposed renovation appears to be in line with the character, scale, and pattern of the surrounding neighborhood.

- (d) *In demonstrating compliance with paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this subsection, the applicant shall use graphical representations such as plans, photographs, or elevation and section drawings sufficient to represent the relationship of the proposed addition, new building, or accessory structure to adjacent buildings and views from public ways.*

The Applicant has submitted graphical representations such as plans, photographs and elevations (Exhibits 4 and 17) that adequately represent the relationship of the proposed addition to adjacent buildings and views from public ways.

#### **Subtitle X Section 901 SPECIAL EXCEPTION REVIEW STANDARDS**

*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;*

The special exception relief would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the R-1B Zone. The proposed addition should not change the principal structure's current use a single-family residential dwelling, but would house an accessory apartment use, which is permitted by right in the R-1B Zone. As such, it would not result in a level of development on the lot that would be inconsistent with the bulk, height or use anticipated by the zone.

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

As stated above, the proposed addition is within the maximum building height for structures in the R-1B Zone. Furthermore, the proposed future use as an accessory apartment is a by-right use in the zone.

- (c) *Subject in specific cases to the special conditions specified in this title.*

The proposed future use of the addition as an accessory apartment is a by-right use pursuant to the special conditions specified in Subtitle U § 253.8.

## V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

In an email dated March 14, 2025, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) indicated no objections to the approval of the subject application.

## VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

At Exhibit 22 is a memo from ANC 4E in support of this request.

## VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of the date of this report, no community comments have been submitted into the record.

### Location Map

