

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Philip Bradford, AICP, Development Review Specialist
 JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: April 30, 2025

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21281: Request for special exception relief to allow a detached accessory building (garage) in the rear yard of an existing detached two-story with basement principal dwelling unit 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 and Subtitle X § 901:

- Lot Occupancy, D § 210 (40% max., 25% existing; 42.3% proposed); and
- Accessory Building Area, D § 5003 (450 sq. ft. max., 202 sq. ft. existing; 517.5 sq. ft. proposed)
- Accessory Building Rear Yard, D § 5004 (Not permitted within required rear yard, existing within required rear yard; proposed within required rear yard)

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	4525 River Road, NW
Applicants	Christine Kelly authorized agent, on behalf of Matthew Littleton and Christine Rocchio, owners.
Legal Description	Square 1574, Lot 0018
Ward, ANC	Ward 3; ANC 3E
Zone	R-1B, low density residential
Lot Characteristics	Rectangular lot approximately 40 ft. wide by 100 ft. in length abutting a 16ft. public alley.
Existing Development	Two story plus basement principal dwelling unit with detached accessory garage building in the rear of the property.
Adjacent Properties	Detached single unit dwellings.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Low density single unit detached dwellings in the R-1B and R-2 zone with moderate density mixed use properties two blocks east with MU zoning along Wisconsin Ave NW.
Proposed Development	Demolition of existing detached rear garage building and replacement with larger detached rear garage.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

R Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Width D § 202 (302)	50 ft. min.	38.52 ft.	No change	None required
Lot Area D § 202	5,000 sq.ft. min.	3,984 sq.ft.	No change	None required
Accessory Building Height D § 5002	22 ft. max. 2 stories	1 story	17 ft. 1 story	None required
Rear Yard D § 207	25 ft. min.	33.6 ft.	19 ft.	None required
Lot Occupancy D § 210	40% by right 50% by sp.ex.	25%	42.3%	Special exception relief requested
Pervious Surface D § 211	50% min.	62%.	50.3%	None required
Parking C § 701	1 min.	1	1	None required
Accessory Building Max. Building Area D § 5003	450 sq ft. max.	202.2	517.5	Special exception relief requested
Accessory Building Rear Yard D § 5004	Not permitted in required rear yard	Partially within required rear yard	Partially within required rear yard	Special exception relief requested

IV. OP ANALYSIS

Subtitle D § 5201 ADDITION TO A BUILDING OR ACCESSORY STRUCTURE

5201.1 For an addition to a principal residential building with one (1) principal dwelling unit on a non-alley lot or for a new principal residential building on a substandard non-alley record lot as described by Subtitle C § 301.1, the Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant relief from the following development standards of this subtitle as a special exception, subject to the provisions of this section and the general special exception criteria at Subtitle X, Chapter 9:

(a) Lot occupancy subject to the following table:

TABLE D § 5201.1(a): MAXIMUM PERMITTED LOT OCCUPANCY BY SPECIAL EXCEPTION

Zones	Type of Structure	Maximum Percentage of Lot Occupancy (%)
All R-3 zones except R-3/GT	All Structures	70
R-3/GT	Row	
R-3/GT	Detached Semi-detached	50
All other R zones	All Structures	

- (b) *Yards, including alley centerline setback; and*
- (c) *Pervious surface.*

5201.2 For a new or enlarged accessory structure to a residential building with only one (1) principal dwelling unit on a non-alley lot, the Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant relief from the following development standards as a special exception, subject to the provisions of this section and the general special exception criteria at Subtitle X, Chapter 9:

- (a) *Lot occupancy as limited in Table D § 5201.1(a);*
- (b) ***Maximum building area of an accessory building;***
- (c) ***Yards, including alley centerline setback; and***
- (d) *Pervious surface.*

5201.3 not applicable

The request is for lot occupancy, accessory building rear yard, and accessory building size 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 proposed detached accessory garage structure should not impact light and air available to adjacent properties. There is an existing smaller detached accessory garage structure in the same general location. While the new garage is larger, it is set back from the adjacent properties and the height is well below the maximum permitted for an accessory structure in the R-1B zone.

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

Privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties should not be unduly compromised by the proposed detached accessory garage structure. The neighboring properties have fenced yards providing privacy, the garage contains windows but as it is intended for parked cars views from the garage to adjacent especially a single-story building should not be an issue.

- (c) *The proposed addition or accessory structure, together with the original building, or 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 accessory structure is designed to look cohesive with the existing principal dwelling unit and has similar architectural features as the existing older garage building which is proposed for replacement. When viewed from the alley, the new accessory garage structure is consistent with the character, scale, and pattern of other accessory buildings along the alley frontage.

- (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 or accessory structure to adjacent buildings and views from public ways.*

The applicant has provided plans, photographs, and elevations to sufficiently represent the relationship of the proposed accessory structure to adjacent buildings and views from public ways.

5201.5 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 and nearby properties.

No special treatment is recommended.

5201.6 This section shall not be used to permit the introduction or expansion of a nonconforming use, lot occupancy beyond what is authorized in this section, height, or number of stories as a special exception.

The applicant is requesting special exception relief to increase the lot occupancy, accessory building maximum building area, and accessory building rear yard as permitted by special exception.

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 proposed accessory garage would be consistent with the purpose and intent of the R-1B zone, which is to provide for detached houses on moderately sized lots. The request is consistent with all other development standards and the lot occupancy is proposed within the range allowed by special exception.

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

As noted above, the requested relief should not unduly or adversely affect the use of neighboring properties, as it would be otherwise in conformance with the development standards and intent of the R-1B zone.

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

The form of relief is within the allowed criteria of D § 5201, provided above.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

DDOT advised OP that they have reviewed the application and have no objection to approval. At the writing of this report, no comments have been submitted to the record from any other District agency.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

At Exhibit 31 is a resolution from ANC 3E in support of the application.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

At the writing of this report, no comments from the community have been filed to the record.

Location Map:

