

# Government of the District of Columbia

## Department of Transportation



### d. Planning and Sustainability Division

#### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

**FROM:** Meredith Soniat *MS*  
Acting Associate Director

**DATE:** June 13, 2025

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case No. 21288 – 321 Rear Channing Street NE

---

#### APPLICATION

Shilja Nair and Vijayalakshmi Vellayan (jointly the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*, requests the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) grant a Special Exception from the alley lot use requirements of Subtitle U § 601.1(f) to construct a new single-family residence on an alley lot. The site is in the R-3 Zone at 321 Rear Channing Street NE (Square 3555, Lot 800) and is directly served by a 20-foot public alley.

#### RECOMMENDATION

The matter-of-right access requirements of 600.1(f) mandate that, to build a residential unit on an alley lot, the lot must have access to an improved public street through either a) an improved alley system 24 feet or more in width or b) through an improved alley system no less than 15 feet in width and within 300 linear feet of an improved public street. The alley system connecting the site to 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE is less than 300 linear feet but shrinks below 15 feet in width, requiring BZA approval to a residential use on site.

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application materials and has determined that the alley network is sufficient to accommodate the site’s access needs, and the proposed relief will not have adverse impacts on the District’s transportation network. DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application.

#### STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

DDOT’s lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of the public realm. If any portion of this or future projects at the property propose elements within District-owned right-of-

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
District of Columbia

way or the building restriction area, the Applicant is required to pursue a public space construction permit.

DDOT expects the adjacent public realm to meet all District standards. The Applicant should refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the [DCMR](#), the most recent version of DDOT's [Design and Engineering Manual](#), and the [Public Realm Design Manual](#) for public space regulations and design guidance. A permit application can be filed through the DDOT [Transportation Online Permitting System](#) (TOPS) website.

## **HERITAGE AND SPECIAL TREES**

According to the District's [Tree Size Estimator map](#), the property may have one (1) Special Tree either on-site or whose structural root zone extends onto the property. DDOT expects that the Applicant coordinate with the Ward 5 Arborist regarding the preservation and protection of this existing Special Trees and other nearby trees.

Special Trees are between 44 inches and 99.99 inches in circumference. Special Trees may be removed with a permit. However, if a Special Tree is designated to remain by DDOT's Urban Forestry Division, a Tree Protection Plan will be required.

MS:nh