


## **MEMORANDUM**

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

**FROM:** Philip Bradford, AICP, Case Manager  
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

**DATE:** June 4, 2025

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case 21299: Request for special exception relief pursuant to allow the conversion of an existing principal dwelling unit to a 3-unit apartment house.

### **I. RECOMMENDATION**

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following special exception pursuant to Subtitle U § 301.2 and Subtitle X § 901:

- U § 301.2 (Conversion to more than 2 units in an RF-1 Zone)

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

Address:	3121 Warder Street NW
Applicant:	Carballo Architecture, on behalf of 3121 Warder Street LLC, owner
Legal Description:	Square 3049, Lot 0047
Ward / ANC:	Ward 1; ANC 1E
Zone:	RF-1
Lot Characteristics:	Rectangular lot approximately 16 ft. wide by 185 ft. deep with a 15 ft. wide public alley at the rear.
Existing Development:	Two-story with basement principal dwelling unit.
Adjacent Properties:	Single unit row dwellings.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	Moderate density residential.
Proposed Development:	Matter of right additions to construct a third story addition and three-story rear addition plus basement including the conversion to a three-unit apartment house.

### **III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED**

RF-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief:
Conversion to apartment house U § 320.2	3 or more units by sp.ex. with 900 sq. ft. of lot area per unit	1 unit	3 units (1,028 sq.ft. lot area /unit)	Sp. Ex. Relief Requested

RF-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief:
Lot Width E § 202	18 ft. min.	16.7 ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Area E § 202	1,800 sq. ft. min.	3,084 sq.ft.	No change	None requested
Height E § 203	35 ft. max.	24.3 ft.	35 ft.	None requested
Rear Yard E § 207	20 ft. min.	135 ft.	78.1ft.	None requested
Lot Occupancy E § 210	60% max.	27%	45%	None requested
Parking C § 701	1 required	None	1 provided	None requested

#### IV. OP ANALYSIS

The applicant is proposing to construct by-right additions of a third story and rear addition with cellar, as well as to convert the existing semi-detached dwelling to a 3-unit apartment house in the RF-1 zone. The purpose of the RF-1 zone is to “*provide for areas developed primarily with residential row buildings, but within which there have been limited conversions of dwellings or other buildings into more than two (2) principal dwelling units.*” (Subtitle E § 101.1).

Conversion of an existing single-family house to a flat is allowed as a matter-of-right. The conversion to more than two units is allowable by special exception pursuant to Subtitle U § 301.2.

#### **Subtitle C Section 320 SPECIAL EXCEPTION USES (RF)**

*The conversion of an existing residential building existing on the lot prior to May 12, 1958, to an apartment house, or the renovation or expansion of an existing apartment house deemed a conforming use pursuant to Subtitle U § 301.4 that increases the number of units, shall be permitted in any of the RF-1 zones if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as a special exception pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9, and subject to the following conditions:*

- (a) *The building to be converted or expanded is in existence on the property at the time the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs accepts as complete the building permit application for the conversion or expansion;*

OP analysis indicates that the subject property was created through a subdivision in 1911 and the existing building was constructed in 1948.

- (b) *The fourth (4th) dwelling unit and every additional even number dwelling unit thereafter shall be subject to the requirements of Subtitle C, Chapter 10, Inclusionary Zoning, including the set aside requirement set forth at Subtitle C § 1003.10; and*

The proposed conversion would only include three dwelling units; therefore, this provision is not applicable.

- (c) There shall be a minimum of nine hundred square feet (900 sq. ft.) of land area per each existing and new dwelling unit.*

The lot that is the subject of this application measures approximately 3,083 sq. ft. of area. This allows for 1,028 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit proposed by the applicant.

#### **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 conversion would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations. The purpose and intent of the RF zone specifically envisions “limited conversions of dwellings” into multi-family flats, subject to the criteria described elsewhere in this report.

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

The use of neighboring property should not be adversely affected by approval if the requested special exception relief. As stated elsewhere in this report, the proposed development is within the conditions permitting the conversion of an existing residential building to an apartment house.

#### **V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES**

DDOT contacted OP stating no objection to the approval of this application. No other District agencies have submitted comment to the record.

#### **VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION**

At Exhibit 21, is a report from ANC 1E in support of the application.

#### **VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

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

Figure 1: Location Map

