


## MEMORANDUM

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

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

**DATE:** July 18, 2025

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case 21330: Area Variance request to permit retention of a recently constructed detached rear carport with roof deck serving the existing three-story principal dwelling unit.

### I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **denial** of the following area variance pursuant to Subtitle X § 1002:

- Lot Occupancy Requirements E § 210.1 (60 % required by right, 70% max. by special exception, 61% prior to carport addition; 77% existing and proposed)

### II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	1818 15 <sup>th</sup> Street, NW
Applicant:	Sullivan & Barros LLP, for Paul Pike, owner.
Legal Description:	Square 0191, Lot 0063
Ward / ANC:	Ward 2; ANC 2B
Zone:	RF-1/DC, low to moderate density residential within the Dupont Circle area
Historic Districts	Greater U Street Historic District
Lot Characteristics:	Rectangular lot 17 ft. in width and a depth of approximately 100 ft. abutting a 10 ft. public alley at the rear.
Existing Development:	Three story row dwelling.
Adjacent Properties:	The property is adjacent to other single unit row dwellings and flats.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	Moderate density residential with row dwellings, flats, and multi-family housing, with mixed use development in the ARTS-3 zone one block east of the subject property.
Proposed Development:	Retention of a recently constructed carport with roof deck at rear of property.

### III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

RF-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief:
Lot Width E § 202	18 ft. min.	17 ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Area E § 202	1,800 sq. ft. min.	1,700 sq.ft.	No change	None requested
Height E § 203	35 ft. max.	23 ft.	23 ft.	None requested
Lot Occupancy E § 210	60% max. 70% by sp. ex.	61% (prior to carport addition)	77%	<b>Variance Requested</b>
Parking C § 701	1 space	1 space	No change	None requested

### IV. OP ANALYSIS

#### **Variance from Lot Occupancy – Subtitle E §, pursuant to X § 1000**

Section E § 210.1 states that the maximum lot occupancy on a lot used for an attached dwelling is 60%, and 70% is permitted by a special exception pursuant to E § 5201. In this case the property was at 61% lot occupancy prior to the carport construction, and the accessory carport and deck increases that to 77%. The applicant therefore requests an area variance from lot occupancy. The Board is authorized to grant variances pursuant to X § 1000. The application must meet the three-part variance test, which is analyzed below.

- i. *Extraordinary or Exceptional Situation or Condition Resulting in Peculiar and Exceptional Practical Difficulties To the Property Owner*
  - a. *Extraordinary or Exceptional Situation*

The applicant has not made a sufficient case that there is an exceptional condition associated with the subject property. The lot is slightly smaller than the minimum lot size and lot width required for the zone, but is identical to adjacent lots within the square and exceeds several lots within the square and adjacent squares. Therefore, OP does not find the lot exceptionally small.

In the Applicant's Statement in [Exhibit 8](#), the applicant cites the configuration of the subject property in relation to the adjacent properties rear yards and roof deck as an exceptional situation, citing that the parking area is adjacent to the neighbors roof deck with occasional debris falling from the deck and damaging the vehicles of the applicant. However, many properties within the neighborhood and other row home neighborhoods across the District have similar configurations where side yards adjoin the rear yards of adjacent properties.

The applicant also provides photographs of the carport and deck in [Exhibit 5](#). OP conducted a site visit of the property on June 18, 2025, and observances from the alley of the completed deck and carport appeared to differ from the photos provided in this exhibit. The final appearance, based on the OP site visit, appears to be more consistent with the photographs provided in [Exhibit 21B](#), submitted by the neighboring property owner in opposition of the variance request, although OP did not view the subject deck or carport from private property. The information cited by the applicant does not appear to address an exceptional condition unique to the property that could support a variance argument.

*b. Exceptional Practical Difficulties*

Because OP did not find an exceptional condition affecting the property, there can be no practical difficulty arising from an exceptional condition. The inability to construct a conforming carport with a roof deck does not constitute an exceptional practical difficulty. Usable outdoor space, which the BZA has noted is not a requirement of zoning, could be achieved with an on-grade patio, and the applicant could investigate other means to secure the vehicle that could have been achieved as a matter of right, or by the minimum necessary to resolve the issue.

*ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good*

The applicant's burden of proof states that the carport and deck do not "adversely affect light, air, and privacy of neighboring properties" and "the structure will not introduce new shadows, massing, or obstruction beyond what is already present." Based on the site visit, however, it appears that the carport blocks several windows of the adjacent property impacting light, air and privacy. The trellis and black tarp may also obstruct the neighboring property from using this window as a potential means of egress.

*iii. No Substantial Impairment to the Intent, Purpose, and Integrity of the Zoning Regulations*

One intent of the regulations is to govern the massing and bulk of buildings on a site. In the RF-1/DC zone, lot occupancy regulations limit the overall mass of buildings and accessory structures on the lot to 60% maximum, with up to 70% by special exception. The applicant requests a lot occupancy of 77% to retain the carport without adequately demonstrating an exceptional condition leading to a practical difficulty. Furthermore, the deck has already been built without building permits, or Historic Preservation Review Board approval as required due to its location in the Greater U Street Historic District and is now seeking zoning relief after completion. Following the required review procedures could have allowed the applicant to address concerns that may have mitigated some of the negative impacts of the construction.

## **V. OTHER OP COMMENTS**

Based on discussions between OP and Historic Preservation Office staff regarding this case, OP has informed the applicant that they must obtain HPRB approval for the structure due to the property being located within the Greater U Street Historic District.

## **VI. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES**

At the writing of this report, there are no comments in the record from any District Agencies.

## **VII. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION**

At [Exhibit 27](#), is a report from ANC 2B stating they do not support the variance.

## **VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

At Exhibit [17](#), [18](#), [19](#), and [20](#) are letters in support of the application. At [Exhibit 21/22](#) is a letter in opposition and request for party status, which has been granted.

Attachment: Location Map

Figure 1: Location Map

