

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Crystal Myers, Case Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: October 17, 2025

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21361- 1253 Morse St. NE: Relief request to construct a third story and rear addition plus cellar to a single dwelling semidetached rowhouse and convert it into a 4-unit apartment house in the RF-1 zone

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following special exception relief:

- Subtitle U § 320.2 - Conversions (4 units; 4 units proposed).
- Subtitle E § 207.5 – Rear Extension (10 ft max, 20 ft proposed).
- Special Exception: Subtitle E § 208.3 – Side Yard (5ft min, 3 ft. proposed)

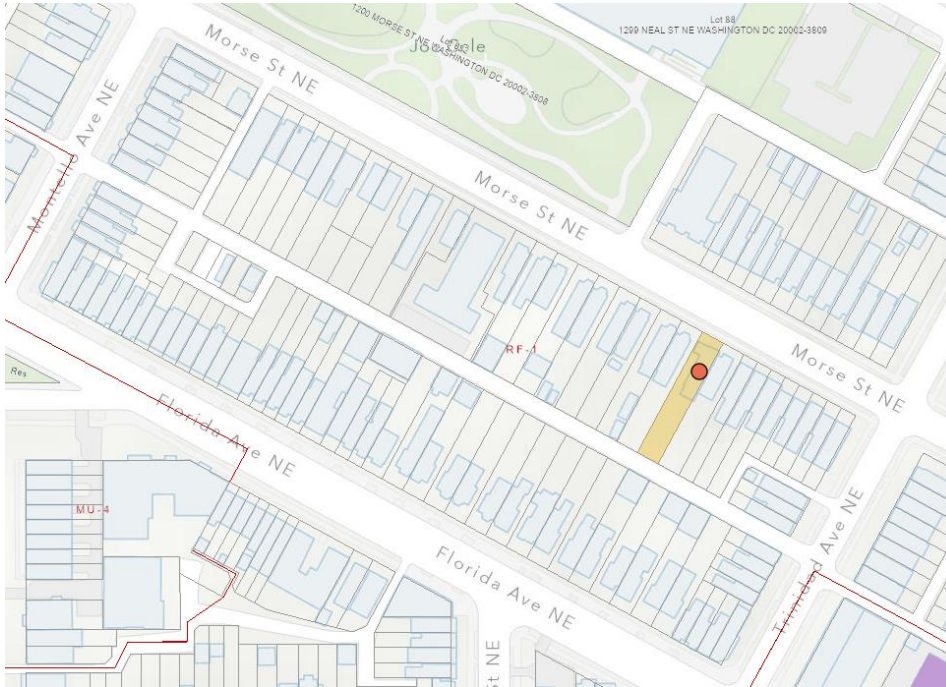
Subject to the following condition:

- The trash and recycling area must be enclosed with a privacy fence to minimize impacts to the neighboring property.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	1253 Morse St NE
Applicant	Moshood Olayinka
Legal Description	Square 4069, Lot 58
Ward / ANC	Ward 5, ANC 5D
Lot Characteristics	145.46 ft x 25ft. long rectangular lot with a 20ft public alley in the rear
Zoning	RF-1 – detached and semi-detached single-family dwellings.
Existing Development	Currently developed with a semi-detached structure in the RF-1 District.
Adjacent Properties	The building attaches to a row dwelling to the east and a row dwelling to the west. The building to the west 1251 Morse St NE was approved for a similar project (BZA 20906)
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of single-dwelling row and semi-detached homes. The neighborhood includes Wheatley Middle School, a recreation center, and a park.
Proposal	Expanding the existing semidetached rowhouse and converting it into a 4-unit apartment building with 1 IZ unit

III. LOCATION MAP



IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

RF-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height E § 203	35 ft. max.	24.83 ft.	35 ft.	Complies
Lot Width E § 202	18 ft. min.	25 ft.	25 ft.	Complies
Lot Area E § 202	1,800 sq.ft. min.	3,633 sq.ft.	3,633 sq.ft.	Complies
Lot Occupancy E § 210	60 % max.	27%	45%	Complies
Rear Yard E§ 207	20 ft. min.	74.33 ft.	64.3 ft	Complies
Parking § 701	2 space min	0	2	Complies
Rear Extension E § 207.5	10 ft max.	Less than 10 feet	20 feet	Relief Requested
Side Yard E § 208	5 ft min	7.4 feet.	3	Relief Requested
Conversion to an apt. U § 320.2	900 sq.ft of lot area	1 unit	4 units	Relief Requested

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Special Exception Relief for Conversion

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 proposal generally satisfies the intent and purpose of the Regulations and Map, including the area requirements anticipated for conversions of residential structures within the RF-1 District.

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

The proposal should not unduly adversely affect the neighboring properties. It would be aligned with and similar in appearance to the adjacent house to the west at 1251 Morse St NE. As discussed further below, this proposal complies with the criteria in Subtitle E §5201.

Special Exception Relief pursuant to U § 320.2 Conversion of a residential building to an apartment house in the RF-1 District

320.2 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;*

Complies.

- (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 proposal is for 4 units and includes an IZ unit.

- (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 conversion proposes four units, and the property is 3,633 square feet which exceeds the 3,600 sq.ft. needed. Under the RF-1 conversion provisions, one unit would be required to be an IZ unit.

SPECIAL EXCEPTION for the Side Yard and Rear Extension

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 addition would be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the Regulations and Maps. The Regulations intend for building expansion to occur without unduly impacting the neighboring properties' light, air and privacy. As discussed more fully below in the Subtitle E §5201, the proposed addition would sufficiently comply with this.

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

As discussed under the criteria of Subtitle E §5201, the proposed addition should not unduly adversely affect the use of neighboring property, including to the available light, air and existing privacy.

Subtitle E Chapter 5201 ADDITION TO A BUILDING OR ACCESSORY STRUCTURE

5201.1 For an addition to a principal residential building 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 up to a maximum of seventy percent (70%) for all new and existing structures on the lot;*
- (b) Yards, including alley centerline setback;*
- (c) Courts; and*
- (d) Pervious surface.*

The proposal requires relief for the rear wall extending 20 ft past the neighboring building and for the side yard.

5201.2 & 5201.3 not relevant to this application

5201.4 An applicant for special exception under this section shall demonstrate that the proposed addition, new building or accessory structure shall not have a substantially adverse effect

on the use or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent dwelling or property, in particular:

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

The addition should not unduly impact the light and air of the building to the west at 1251 Morse St NE. The proposed rear is designed to align with the rear wall of this neighboring building. The neighboring 1251 Morse St NE building was recently expanded to a size similar to what is proposed in this project.

The neighboring building on the east side, 1255 Morse St. NE should also not be unduly impacted. This neighboring building does not have windows facing the subject property so the addition would not unduly impact the light and air to their windows. In regard to this neighbor's rear yard, there is a large tree that substantially shades their yard during the months when it has leaves.

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

Privacy and the use of enjoyment of neighboring properties should not be adversely affected. The addition would not have any windows or openings along the side facing the house at 1255 Morse St. NE. On the other side, the neighbor at 1251 Morse St. NE does not have windows facing the subject property.

(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 addition with the original building should not substantially visually intrude upon the character of the street and alley. The Applicant intends to paint the addition a similar gray color as the building at 1251 Morse St. NE. Though it would not replicate the appearance of other houses along this street, it would look similar to the adjacent building at 1251 Morse St. NE.

(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 provided the required documents to the record.

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 proposed apartment building is a permitted special exception residential use in the RF-1 district, and the lot satisfies the minimum lot area requirement.

VI. AGENCY COMMENTS

At this time, no other agencies have submitted comments to the record.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

At the writing of this report, ANC comments have not been filed to the record.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

There is a [party status request in opposition](#) at Exhibit 21 and a [party status request in support](#) at Exhibit 22. There are also [letters in support](#) at Exhibit 20.