

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Joshua Mitchum, Development Review Specialist
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director, Development Review
DATE: October 17, 2025

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21374: Request for special exception relief to allow construction of a one-story covered deck addition to the rear of an existing dwelling in the R-2 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:

- **Rear Yard, D § 207.1** (20 ft. min. required, 23 ft. 11 in. existing; 15 ft. 2 in. proposed)

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	4401 Garrison Street NW
Applicants:	Laura Williams & Kevin Donohue c/o Alexandra Wilson
Legal Description:	Square 1581; Lot 0080
Ward / ANC:	Ward 3 / ANC 3E
Zone:	R-2, Low-Density Residential
Historic Districts:	N/A
Lot Characteristics:	The 3,776.5 square foot corner lot is rectangular in shape, and has 83 feet of frontage along Garrison Street NW, 45 feet of frontage along 44 th Street NW, and 45.5 feet of frontage along a 16-foot public alley in the rear yard.
Existing Development:	The lot is currently improved with a two-story with basement residential dwelling and patio.
Adjacent Properties:	The property is bounded to the north, south, east, and west by single-family residential dwellings in the R-2 Zone.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The surrounding neighborhood can be characterized as low-density, detached residential homes.
Proposed Development:	The Applicant is proposing to construct a covered and screened-in deck addition on top of the existing patio in the rear of the property.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

R-2 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Width D § 202 (302)	40 ft. min.	45.5 ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Area D § 202	4,000 sq. ft. min.	3,776.5 sq. ft.	No change	None requested (existing nonconformity)
Height D § 203	40 ft. max. 3 stories max.	Height not given 2 stories	No change	None requested
Front Setback D § 206	Consistent with block	8 ft. 10 in.	No change	None requested
Rear Yard D § 207	20 ft. min.	23 ft. 11 in.	15 ft. 2 in.	Special exception requested
Side Yard D § 207	8 ft. min.	<u>Left yard:</u> 7.9 ft. (8 ft.) <u>Right yard:</u> 15 ft. 4 in.	No change	None requested
Lot Occupancy D § 210	40% max. by right 70% max by sp. ex.	28.57%	34%	None requested
Pervious Surface D § 211	30% min.	47.86%	48.63%	None requested
Parking C § 701	1 space per principal dwelling min.	1 space	No change	None requested

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

The application is requesting special exception relief from the rear yard requirements of Subtitle D § 207.1.

5201.2 This section is not applicable to the subject application.

5201.3 This section is not applicable to the subject application.

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 special exception, if granted, should not unduly affect the light and air available to neighboring properties. The deck addition is proposed to use mesh screening, which would allow for light and air to flow through relatively unobstructed. Furthermore, the proposed deck addition would be screened by an existing privacy fence that runs along the northern property line of the subject property.

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

The special exception, if granted, should not unduly compromise the privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties. As the subject property is a corner lot, there are no adjacent properties to its west side, and the nearest property to the rear is across a 16-foot-wide public alley. The neighboring property to the north, 5104 44th Street NW, is screened by an existing privacy fence that runs along the property line.

(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 special exception, if granted, should not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, or pattern of houses along Garrison Street NW and the 16-foot-wide public alley in the rear of the subject property. The proposed deck addition has been designed to match the existing architecture of the existing dwelling through aesthetic choice such as the use of a peaked roof.

(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 architectural plans, color photographs, and elevations to sufficiently represent the relationship of the proposed deck addition to adjacent buildings and views from Garrison Street NW and the rear yard public alley.

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.

OP does not recommend special treatment for the subject application.

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 special exception, if granted, would not permit the introduction or expansion of a nonconforming use or lot occupancy beyond what is authorized in this section. The special exception relief being sought is for rear yard relief, and, if granted, would not compromise the ability of the subject property to continue its existing use as a single-family residential dwelling.

Subtitle X § 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 special exception would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and the R-2 Zone. The R-2 Zone is intended to “provide for areas predominately developed with semi-detached houses on moderately-sized lots that also contain some detached houses”. As stated above, the proposed deck addition would not compromise the subject property’s ability to remain as a single-family detached dwelling.

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

As stated above, the special exception should not adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and the R-2 Zone. The proposed deck addition would be screened by an existing privacy fence; its design is consistent with the architecture and aesthetics of the existing house as well as similar houses in the neighborhood.

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

Special conditions have not been specified for the subject application.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has indicated to OP that it has no objections to the subject application as presented.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

As of the date of this report, a report from ANC 3E has not been submitted into the record.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of the date of this report, two letters from the community in support of the subject application have been submitted into the record as Exhibit 16 and Exhibit 17.

Location Map:

