

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Michael Jurkovic, AICP, Development Review Specialist *mej*
DATE: February 13, 2026
SUBJECT: BZA Case 21413: Request for special exception relief pursuant to allow a rear addition at 654 L Street NE.

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval with condition** of the following special exception pursuant to Subtitle E § 5201 and Subtitle X § 901:

- E § 207.5, Rear Additions (10 ft. max. from adjacent rear wall allowed, 0 ft. existing; 18 ft. proposed); and
- E § 210.1, Lot Occupancy (60% max. allowed, 64% existing; 70% proposed)

OP recommends the following condition:

1. The garage shall be removed prior to or in coordination with the building permit for the addition in association with relief granted under BZA Order No. 21413.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	654 L Street NE
Applicant:	Jennifer Fowler on behalf of Melissa Lim & Joel Patterson
Legal Description:	Square 855; Lot 197
Ward / ANC:	Ward 6; ANC 6C
Zone:	RF-1, low to moderate density residential
Historic Districts	N/A
Lot Characteristics:	Rectangular Interior lot measuring 16.67 ft. x 90 ft. with a 10 ft. public alleyway to the rear.
Existing Development:	Single Family Row Building
Adjacent Properties:	Residential Row Buildings
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	Low to Moderate Density Residential Neighborhood
Proposed Development:	Single Family Row building rear addition and demolition of existing accessory building.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

RF-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed¹	Relief:
Density E § 201	2 principal units max.	1 unit	No Change	None Requested
Lot Width E § 202	18 ft. min.	16.58 ft.	No Change	None Requested
Lot Area E § 202	1,800 sq. ft. min.	1,500 sq. ft.	No Change	None Requested
Height E § 203	35 ft. max.	27.0 ft.	35 ft.	None Requested
Rear Yard E § 207.1	20 ft. min.	45.5 ft.	27.5 ft.	None Requested
Rear Yard: Extension Past Adjoining Rear Wall (10-foot rule) E § 207.5	10 ft. max	0.0 ft.	18.0 ft.	Relief Requested
Lot Occupancy E § 210	60% max.; 70% by Special Exception	64%	70.0%	Relief Requested

IV. OP ANALYSIS

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 requested relief to the maximum rear addition into the rear yard is allowed through special exception.

5201.2 & 5201.3 not relevant to this application

5201.4 An applicant for special exception under this section shall demonstrate that the proposed

¹ Provided by the applicant

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 proposal would increase the height of the building to the maximum permitted in the RF-1 zone with an addition containing a partial third story but will remove the existing garage to adhere to the maximum lot occupancy allowed by special exception. Given this and the orientation of the existing houses at the square, the addition is unlikely to have an undue impact on the availability to light to neighboring properties.

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

The addition would be within the matter-of-right height permitted in the RF-1 zone and no windows are proposed on the shared wall elevations. Therefore, the addition should not have an impact on the neighbors' privacy of use, or enjoyment, any more than the existing structure or one which could be accomplished by right.

(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 would be partially visible from Morton Place NE as well as from the public alley. However, the addition would be no more visible than the portion of the structure it would add to, and should not intrude on the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the street and alleyway.

(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 plans, photographs, and elevations to sufficiently represent the relationship of the proposed addition from public ways.

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 addition would otherwise comply with the RF-1 development standards. The requested lot occupancy of 70% is allowed by special exception in the RF-1 zone.

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 would be consistent with the intent of the RF-1 zone requirements in both use and scale. The project would serve to increase the livable space within the existing single-family dwelling. Moreover, the requested 70% lot occupancy is within what is allowed through special exception.

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

Approval of the requested special exceptions should not adversely affect the use of neighboring properties. The addition otherwise complies with the development requirements of the RF-1 zone and would be consistent with the character of other properties within the square.

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

The form of relief is within the allowed criteria of E § 5201, provided above.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

DDOT has informed OP that they have no objection to the relief requested.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

As of the writing of this report, there is no report from ANC 6C in the record.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Three letters in support are in the record including from both the adjoining neighbors.

Figure 1: Location Map

