

Applicant's Statement in Support of a Special Exception

1529 A ST NE

To: The Office of Zoning
Government of the District of Columbia
Suite 210 South
441 4th Street, NW Washington DC 20001

From: Paul A. Wilson, AIA, agent, on behalf of Applicants Christine Cheu and Brian Rowe,
1529 A Street NE, Washington, DC 20002

Date: October 23, 2025

Subject: BZA Special Exception Application and Request for Expedited Review, Cheu-Rowe Addition

1529 A St NE (Square 1070, Lot 54)

Christine Cheu and Brian Rowe, owners and occupants of 1529 A Street NE, hereby apply for a special exception, consistent with Subtitle E, § 210.1, pursuant to 11 DCMR Subtitle X, Chapter 9, and subject to Subtitle E, § 5201 to build a one-story rear addition and rear deck on an existing single-family row dwelling (the "Property") in the RF-1 zone.

The zoning relief requested is as follows:

Application of Christine Cheu and Brian Rowe, pursuant to 11 DCMR Subtitle X, Chapter 9, for a special exception under Subtitle E, § 5201 from the lot occupancy limitations set forth in Subtitle E, § 210.1, to construct a one-story rear addition and rear deck on an existing attached single-family dwelling in the RF-1 Zone at premises 1529 A Street NE (Square 1070, Lot 54).

1. Summary

The application qualifies for special exception relief under Subtitle E, § 5201.1 and Subtitle X, Chapter 9, because the lot occupancy will not exceed 70% in accordance with § 5201.1. The proposed rear yard will be at least 20 feet in accordance with Subtitle E, § 207.1. The addition will not have a substantially adverse effect on the use or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent dwelling or property and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.

The proposed addition will expand the basement level and be accessible only from the rear yard. The current dilapidated enclosed storage area and deck, which results in a current lot occupancy of 71.2%, will be demolished. When complete, the project will result in a *decrease* in the lot occupancy from 933.4 sf (or 72.1%) to 869.4 sf (or 66.3%).

Other than the requested relief, the proposal meets all remaining development standards for the RF-1 zone.

2. The Application Meets the Requirements for Special Exception

i. General Special Exception Requirements of Subtitle X, Chapter 9

The granting of the special exception will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps (Subtitle X, § 901.2(a)) and will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps (Subtitle X, § 901.2(b)). The proposed addition and deck comply with the rear yard (20') requirements of the RF-1 zone.

In addition, by satisfying the requirements of Subtitle E § 5201, the application also meets the general special exception requirements of Subtitle X, § 901.2. Accordingly, the proposed addition will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.

ii. Specific Special Exception Requirements of Subtitle E-5201

In reviewing applications for a special exception under the Zoning Regulations, the Board's discretion is limited to determining whether the proposed exception satisfies the relevant zoning requirements. If the prerequisites are satisfied, the Board ordinarily must grant the application.

Pursuant to Subtitle E, 5201.4, an applicant for special exception under this section shall demonstrate that the addition or accessory structure shall not have a substantially adverse effect on the use or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent Property or property, in particular:

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

1531 A St NE

1531 A St NE lies to east of the proposed addition at the Property. The neighboring property is improved with a nearly identical (mirror-image in plan) row dwelling, with a similar garage/storage and deck structure that extends 17 feet off the principal rear wall of the dwelling. 1531's garage/storage structure abuts the proposed addition at the Property. There will be no effect on light and air from the Property's proposed addition.

1527 A St NE

1527 A St NE lies to the west of the proposed addition at the Property. 1527 is improved with a similar row dwelling to that of the Property, with a recently constructed large third-floor and rear addition. The addition at 1527 A St extends 8.5' beyond the principal rear wall at the Property. 1527 and 1529 have abutting open courts that are each 4 feet wide. Due to the separation, any light and air impacts to 1531 are de minimis.

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

1531 A St NE

The Property and 1531 currently share abutting decks on top of similar garage/storage spaces and were built with identical materials. Wall report records indicate they were constructed in 1938 (1529 A St) and 1926 (1531 A St). There is currently no privacy screening between the abutting decks, therefore a smaller deck at the Property would not unduly compromise the privacy at 1531 A St NE.

1527 A St NE

As mentioned above, the rear portions of the structures at the Property and 1527 A St NE are separated by abutting open courts that total 8 feet in width. Due to this separation, and the fact that the new deck will be smaller than the existing configuration of the Property, the privacy of 1527 A St NE will not be unduly compromised.

(c) The addition or accessory structure, together with the original 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 subject street frontage.

The rear addition will not be visible from A St NE and will be visible solely from the alley. Additionally, the proposed addition will be constructed with high quality materials and will be appropriate in scale for the existing houses. As for the alley, the addition is in keeping with the character of similar additions, decks, garages, and the like.

Accordingly, the proposed addition will not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the subject alley frontage.

(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.

Plans, site plans, elevations, building sections, and photographs have been submitted to the record.

3. Conclusion

Along with this application, we have included the following items:

- a) Photos of the rear of the existing house and its surroundings.
- b) Plans, building sections, and elevation drawings of proposed addition, including a site plan showing the relationship of the proposed addition to adjacent buildings.
- c) Official Plat from the DC Office of the Surveyor.
- d) Shadow studies showing the increased shading may be submitted to the record at a later date if necessary.

In light of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully request approval of the requested Special Exception relief.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul A. Wilson, AIA".

Paul A. Wilson, AIA , on behalf the Applicants, Christine Cheu and Brian Rowe.