

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment  
**FROM:** *KT* Shepard Beamon, Development Review Specialist  
**DATE:** January 30, 2026  
**SUBJECT:** BZA Case 21422: Request for special exception relief to construct a rear deck and addition to an existing row dwelling in the RF-1 zone.

**I. RECOMMENDATION**

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

- E § 210.1 Lot Occupancy (60% required (70% by special exception); 71.2% existing; 66.3% proposed).

**II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

Address:	1529 A Street NE
Applicant:	Paul Wilson for Christine Cheu and Brian Rowe
Legal Description:	Square 1070, Lot 54
Ward / ANC:	Ward 7; ANC 7D
Zone:	RF-1
Historic Districts	None
Lot Characteristics:	Rectangular lot measuring 1,310.4 sq. ft. with a 10 ft. wide public alley in the rear.
Existing Development:	One-family, two-story row dwelling with cellar.
Adjacent Properties:	Row dwellings.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The surrounding area is primarily developed with one-family row and semi-detached residential buildings.
Proposed Development:	The applicant is requesting relief to demolish existing attached rear storage space and construct new cellar-level addition (storage) and rear deck to an attached principal dwelling unit.

**III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED**

<b>RF-1 Zone</b>	<b>Regulation</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Relief:</b>
Lot Width E § 202	18 ft. min.	17 ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Area E § 202	1,800 sq. ft. min.	1,310.4 sq. ft.	No change	None requested
Height E § 203	35 ft. max.	23.6 ft.	No change	None requested
Rear Yard E § 207	20 ft. min.	13.7 ft.	20.1 ft.	None requested
Side Yard E § 208	None required, 5 ft. min. if provided	N/A	N/A	None requested
Lot Occupancy E § 210	60% max. 70% by special exception	71.2%	66.3%	<b>Special Exception Requested</b>
Parking C § 701	1 space required	None	1 space	None requested

**IV. OP ANALYSIS**

**Subtitle E Chapter 5201 SPECIAL EXCEPTION REVIEW STANDARDS**

*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 applicant has requested special exception relief from the maximum lot occupancy requirement of the RF-1 zone.

*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 proposed rear deck requires relief from the maximum matter-of-right 60% lot

occupancy requirement to allow less than the maximum lot occupancy by special exception. The proposed deck off the main level of the house should not have an undue impact on light or air for the neighboring properties, as the structure would be uncovered and unenclosed, and should not cast significant shadows or block airflow. The enclosed space beneath the deck is at the cellar level and should not impact on light or air to adjoining properties.

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

The proposed uncovered rear deck addition should not result in views onto neighboring properties. The deck would not extend beyond the rear wall of the adjacent property to the east. The proposal should not have a significantly greater impact on the neighbor's privacy than what is currently constructed.

- (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 deck would not be visible from the street but would be visible from the rear alley. Decks above enclosed spaces are common in the area and vary in size and materials. The applicant proposes replacing an existing deck with a new deck and enclosure; however, the new construction would be smaller than the existing to allow parking. The proposed deck would be set back far enough from the rear property line to meet the rear yard requirement and would be designed and constructed to not significantly alter the character or appearance of the neighborhood when viewed from the alley.

- (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 construction to adjacent properties.

- 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 requested relief would not result in a nonconforming structure that would exceed the maximum lot occupancy, height or number of stories 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. The principal building would continue to be a single-family dwelling. The proposed deck would continue to be accessed from the main level of the home, and the applicant proposes reducing the deck to size to meet the rear yard and parking requirements. The proposed deck and enclosure reduce the existing lot occupancy and would not exceed the maximum lot occupancy allowed by special exception.

(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 proposed deck should not have adverse impacts on the adjacent properties. The proposed addition should not significantly impact light, airflow, privacy or use of the neighboring properties.

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

No special conditions are recommended for this application.

## **V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES**

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) submitted its recommendation of approval to OP via email on 1/23/2026.

There is a letter in support from Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS) at [Exhibit 18](#).

## **VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION**

ANC 7D has not submitted comments to the record at the writing of this report.

## **VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

At the writing of this report, there are no community comments in the record.

### Location Map

