

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Karen Thomas, Case Manager
MBR Maxine Brown Roberts, Associate Director Development Review, AICP

DATE: June 4, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21434 - request for special exception relief to allow two additional dwelling units at 314 Delafield Place, NW

I. RECOMMENDATION

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

- Subtitle U § 421 and Subtitle X § 901- Increase of dwelling units in RA-1 zone (four existing; six proposed);
- Subtitle F § 210.1 and F § 5201.1 (a) Lot Occupancy (40% max. permitted, 43% proposed).
- Subtitle C § 701.5 and C § 703.2 – Load increase to an apartment building without providing a required parking space.

The Applicant's original submission included requests for variance relief from the FAR and special exception relief from the minimum parking requirements, as identified in the Zoning Administrator's memo [at Exhibit 5](#). The Applicant subsequently revised the project to eliminate the need for FAR variance relief by relocating the proposed new units to the cellar rather than constructing the previously proposed third floor addition ([See Exhibit 25](#)). OP subsequently coordinated with the Department of Building (DOB) staff to obtain an updated BZA memo reflecting these changes included in the record at [Exhibit 28A](#).

The applicant should update the plans to show the location of on-site trash storage and screening.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	314 Delafield Place, N.W.
Applicant:	Maria Del Carmen Cabieses
Legal Description:	Square 3304, Lot 59
Ward / ANC:	4/ANC 4D05
Zone:	RA-1: provides for areas predominantly developed with low- to moderate-density development, including detached houses, row houses, and low-rise apartments.
Historic Districts	None
Lot Characteristics:	The lot is rectangular with no remarkable grade changes, abutting a fifteen-feet wide alley at the rear.

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Existing Development:	The property is developed with a two-story, brick, row, apartment dwelling with four units and without on-site parking.
Adjacent Properties:	The adjacent properties include attached homes similar in design to the subject property.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The surrounding neighborhood is improved with a mix of low- to medium-density residential developments comprising one-family row dwellings, some of which have undertaken renovations.
Proposed Development:	The Applicant seeks to add two units to the cellar of the building, along with a five-foot, two -story rear addition which increases its existing lot occupancy from 38% to 43%.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

RA-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed ¹	Relief:
Density F § 201.1	0.9	0.75	0.87	None required
Height F § 203	40 ft. max. 3 stories	23.5 ft./2 st.	23.5 ft./2 stories	None required
Lot Width F § 202	N/A	34 ft.	34 ft.	None required
Lot Area F § 202	N/A	3,196 sf	3,196 sf	None required
Rear Yard F § 207	20 ft. min.	24.6 ft.	28 ft.	None required
Side Yard F § 208	N/A	N/A	N/A	None required
Lot Occupancy F § 210	40% max.	38%	43 %	Relief requested
Increase in # Units U § 421	Special Exception	4	6	Relief requested
Parking C § 701.1 Residential, multiple dwelling units	1 per 3 dwelling units = 1	0	0	Relief requested

IV. ANALYSIS

Subtitle F 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 existing lot occupancy (38%) would be increased to 43%, not to exceed the maximum permitted 70% under special exception relief.

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 cellar addition would not materially affect the light or air available to neighboring properties because it is fully below grade and the building's footprint above grade is only expanded by a 5-foot, two-story addition. As a result, existing conditions related to shadow, access to air, and overall massing would be minimal and any seasonal shadowing on adjoining properties would be negligible.

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

The addition would introduce new window wells along the south (rear) and north (front) elevations to serve the cellar units. No decks are proposed, and the building footprint above grade would extend as a 5-foot, two-story rear addition. Because the property directly abuts structures on both the east and west sides, windows cannot be installed on those elevations, further ensuring that the project would not create new sightlines into adjoining properties. Therefore, privacy and views for neighboring properties should not be appreciably different from existing conditions.

(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

As viewed from the street frontage, the only perceptible change to the building's appearance would be the new railings associated with the front window wells. These elements are typical of cellar additions that provide light and air to below-grade units and would not materially alter the building's existing character. From the alley, the south elevation would present a vinyl-clad façade that is consistent with the materials and appearance of some surrounding rear elevations. Overall, the proposed renovation would not appreciably change the building's visual presence from either the public street or 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 the following:

Plans & Elevations- [Exhibit 25](#): Photos -[Exhibit 4](#). A surveyor's plat is included with the revised plans at Exhibit 25.

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 propose special design treatment for protection of nearby properties.

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 property would continue to be used as an apartment building as permitted in the zone.

5201.7 *Where an application requests relief from the alley centerline setback requirements under this section, the Office of Zoning shall refer the application to the following agencies for their review and recommendations, to be filed in the case record within the forty- (40) day period established by Subtitle A § 211:*

(a) District Department of Transportation (DDOT);

(b) Department of Public Works (DPW);

(c) Metropolitan Police Department (MPD);

(d) Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS);

(e) DC Water (WASA); and

(f) If a historic district or historic landmark is involved, the Historic Preservation Office (HPO).

This is not applicable as relief from the alley centerline setback is not requested or required.

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 increase in lot occupancy would remain in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations because it meets the applicable special exception criteria and results in minimal impacts on adjoining properties, as discussed above. The additional units are fully below grade, the building's massing is within the permitted density and maintains the established character of the block.

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

The proposed cellar addition is designed to minimize impacts on neighboring properties. It would not affect access to light or air, and the existing building will remain within the height and FAR parameters permitted under the RA-1 zone. Privacy impacts are also unlikely, as the building's footprint would only extend five feet beyond the adjacent rear walls and no new

sightlines into neighboring properties would be created.

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

The conditions were satisfied as discussed prior.

Subtitle U § 421 NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS (RA-1)

421.1 In any of the RA-1 zones, all new residential developments, except those comprising all one-family detached and semi-detached dwellings, shall be reviewed by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as special exceptions pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9, in accordance with the standards and requirements in this section.

The application proposes to add two units to an existing four-unit multifamily development, for a total of six units.

421.2 The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the relevant District of Columbia agencies for comment and recommendation as to the adequacy of the following:

(a) Existing and planned area schools to accommodate the numbers of students that can be expected to reside in the project; and

The application was referred to the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) at [Exhibit 19](#). While comments were not received, the 2023 DC Public Education Master Facilities Plan, published March 2024, presents the following utilization data for the public schools within DCPS's assigned boundary for the site:

- Barnard Elementary – 78% utilization
- MacFarland Middle – 73% utilization
- Roosevelt High – 81% utilization

The target utilization range for DCPS neighborhood or citywide schools is 80-95%, which accommodates year-to-year fluctuations in student enrollment while ensuring optimal class sizes and amenities for students. The assigned elementary and middle schools are below capacity, and the high school is within the anticipated range.

OP is satisfied that the addition of two units should not over burden school capacity of the assigned schools for the subject property.

(b) Public streets, recreation, and other services to accommodate the residents that can be expected to reside in the project.

The application was also referred to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) for review and recommendation. DDOT informed OP by email on 5/27/2026 that they supported the original request for parking relief for one parking space, without further discussion.

With respect to recreation, the application was referred to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) for comments at Exhibit 19. At the writing of this report comments were not received. However, OP notes that there are two circle parks (Grant Circle Park and Sherman Circle Park) within walking distance, as well as Rock Creek Cemetery, all of which provide passive recreation for the immediate community. There are also several school fields in the immediate neighborhood which are open to public use.

421.3 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the Office of Planning for comment and recommendation on the site plan, arrangement of buildings and structures, and provisions of light, air, parking, recreation, landscaping, and grading as they relate to the surrounding neighborhood, and the relationship of the proposed project to public plans and projects.*

With respect to light and air, OP refers to the analysis provided under **Subtitle F § 5201** and **Subtitle X § 901**, which evaluated the project's impacts on adjoining properties. As discussed in those sections, the proposed addition would not result in significant adverse effects on light, air, or privacy for neighboring properties.

Regarding parking, DDOT has indicated that it has **no objection** to parking relief as discussed below.

No significant grading or landscaping changes are proposed. All excavation would occur below grade to accommodate the cellar units, and the existing footprint above-grade would expand no more than five feet.

Submitted site plans to date at Exhibit 25 do not clearly identify the location of on-site trash storage. The plans should be updated to show where trash bins will be stored and how they will be screened.

421.4 *In addition to other filing requirements, the developer shall submit to the Board of Zoning Adjustment with the application a site plan and set of typical floor plans and elevations, grading plan (existing and final), landscaping plan, and plans for all new rights-of-way and easements.*

The Applicant's revised plans at the writing of this report are included in the record at [Exhibit 25](#).

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 RA-1 zone is intended to accommodate low- to moderate-density residential development, including low-rise apartment buildings, which may be approved by special exception. The Applicant's proposal involves an expansion of the existing apartment building without major above-grade additions beyond the five feet proposed. Therefore, the building's height, bulk, and form would remain consistent with the character anticipated for the zone. Because the project maintains the established scale of development and satisfies the applicable special exception criteria, the request is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.

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

Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps; and

As addressed in the above analysis, the requested special exception would not appear to adversely affect the use neighboring property

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

The conditions of U § 421 were satisfied as discussed prior.

Special Exception -Vehicle Parking Requirements – Subtitle C § 701.5 pursuant to C § 703.2

The applicant seeks relief from the total number of vehicular parking spaces, to provide 1 space as required. Currently, there are no on-site parking spaces.

703.2 The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant a full or partial reduction in the number of required parking spaces, as a special exception pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9, and subject to the applicant's demonstration to the Board's satisfaction of at least one (1) of the following:

- (a) *Due to the physical constraints of the property, the required parking spaces cannot be provided either on the lot or within six hundred feet (600 ft.) of the lot in accordance with Subtitle C § 701.8;*

OP agrees that the location of the existing structure on the lot would create inadequate parking on the lot for a single space, or within six hundred feet of the lot.

- (b) *The use or structure is particularly well served by mass transit, shared vehicle, or bicycle facilities;*

The subject property is within a mile of a Metro station and is well served by bus service within walking distance of New Hampshire Avenue to the east and Kansas Avenue to the west.

- (c) *Land use or transportation characteristics of the neighborhood minimize the need for required parking spaces;*

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) concluded that the transportation characteristic of the neighborhood, including the site's proximity to transit and the walkability of the neighborhood would minimize the need for on-site parking spaces. ([Exhibit 27](#))

- (d) *Amount of traffic congestion existing or which the parking for the building or structure would reasonably be expected to create in the neighborhood;*

DDOT's determination stated that since the relief requested is fewer than four spaces, it can be concluded that relief from one required space would not reasonably be anticipated to increase traffic congestion in the neighborhood.

- (e) *The nature of the use or structure or the number of residents, employees, guests, customers, or clients who would reasonably be expected to use the proposed building or structure at one*

time would generate demand for less parking than the minimum parking standards;

The nature of the building is residential and that use and pattern is not anticipated to change beyond what currently exists.

- (f) *All or a significant proportion of dwelling units are dedicated as affordable housing units;*

There is no affordability or IZ requirement due to the additional two units.

- (g) *Quantity of existing public, commercial, or private parking, other than on-street parking, on the property or in the neighborhood, that can reasonably be expected to be available when the building or structure is in use;*

DDOT's memo at [Exhibit 27](#) states that Delafield Place and nearby streets of Decatur Street, 3rd Street, and 4th Street are currently unrestricted on both sides. Parking can be reasonably expected to be available.

- (h) *The property does not have access to an open public alley, resulting in the only means by which a motor vehicle could access the lot is from an improved public street and either:*

(1) A curb cut permit for the property has been denied by the Public Space Committee; or

(2) Any driveway that could access an improved public street from the property would violate any regulation of this chapter, of the parking provisions of any other subtitle in the Zoning Regulations, or of Chapters 6 or 11 of Title 24 DCMR; N/A

- (i) *The presence of healthy and mature canopy trees on or directly adjacent to the property; or*

- (j) *The nature or location of an Historic Resource precludes the provision of the number of parking spaces required by this chapter; or providing the required number of parking spaces would result in significant architectural or structural difficulty in maintaining the integrity and appearance of the Historic Resource. N/A*

The requested relief satisfies requirement (b) and (c) and OP would support the relief of one parking space to allow for access to the trash receptacles, as well as the provision of a number of trash receptacles for a 6-unit building.

General Special Exception Criteria – Subtitle X § 901.2

- 901.2 (a) *Granting the special exception: Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;*

Based on the conclusions of DDOT's recommendation (Exhibit 27), granting the requested relief should not impair the intent of the Regulations. The statement concludes that the surrounding transit and options should be sufficient to meet the transportation demands of future residents.

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

As addressed in the above analysis, the requested special exception should not unduly affect the use of neighboring property. There should not be undue traffic impacts or impacts to the operations of public spaces such as the alley.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) informed OP by email (05/27/2026) that there were no concerns with the application.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

The ANC 4D's recommendation is not included in the record at the writing of this report.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Community comments were not included in the record at the writing of this report.

Figure 1: Location and Zoning Map

