

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Joshua Mitchum, Development Review Specialist
MBR
Maxine Brown Roberts, Associate Director, Development Review

DATE: July 17, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 21466: Request for special exception to construct a one-story rear addition to an existing attached, two-story with cellar dwelling unit in the RF-1 Zone.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

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

- **Lot Occupancy, E § 210.1** (60% max. required, 65.5% existing; 68% proposed)

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	20 R Street NW
Applicant:	Caitlin Hartman c/o Bill Putnam of Putnam Architects
Legal Description:	Square 3101, Lot 0811
Ward / ANC:	Ward 5 / ANC 5E
Zone:	RF-1, Residential Row Homes
Historic Districts:	Bloomingdale Historic District
Lot Characteristics:	The 1,500 square foot lot is rectangular in shape and has 16.67 feet of frontage along R Street NW and abuts 20-foot-wide public alley to the rear
Existing Development:	The lot is currently improved with a two-story row dwelling, a ground floor deck and parking pad.
Adjacent Properties:	The subject property is bounded to the north, south and west by row houses in the RF-1 Zone, and to the east by institutional and mixed uses in the MU-4 Zone.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by two-and three-story row dwellings.
Proposed Development:	The Applicant is proposing to construct a one-story, screened porch on the rear of the existing building.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND RELIEF REQUESTED

RF-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Density E § 201	2 principal units max.	1 principal unit	No change	None requested
Lot Width (Row) E § 202	18 ft. min.	16.67 ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Area (Row) E § 202	1,800 sq. ft. min.	1,500 sq. ft.	No change	None requested (Existing nonconformity)
Height E § 203	35 ft. max. 3 stories max.	Not given	No change	None requested
Front Yard E § 206	Consistent with block face	Consistent with block face	No change	None requested
Rear Yard E § 207	20 ft. min.	25.66 ft.	22.7 ft.	None requested
Side Yard E § 208	None required, but 5 ft. min. if provided	0 ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Occupancy E § 210	60% max. 70% max. by Sp. Ex.	65.5%	68%	Special Exception requested
Parking C § 701	1 parking space per 2 dwelling units	1 space	No change	None requested

IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Subtitle E § 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 Applicant has requested special exception relief from the lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle E § 210.1. to increase the lot occupancy to 68%.

5201.2 Not applicable to the subject application.

5201.3 Not applicable to the subject 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 screened porch addition should not unduly affect the light and air available to neighboring properties. The proposed porch would not project past the rear walls of adjacent properties, and the porous nature of the proposed screening would cast only minor shadows on the adjacent houses so as to allow for adequate light and air for neighboring properties.

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

The proposed screened porch addition should not unduly compromise the privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties. The screened porch would allow for less views into the rear yards of the adjacent properties than the existing open deck and would not create any unique vantage points that would compromise their privacy.

(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 screened porch would not be visible from the street, and would not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the public alley. Furthermore, a number of neighboring properties have screened porches of similar size and design as the Applicant's proposal.

(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 plans, color photographs and a surveyor's plat as part of their application that sufficiently represents the relationship of the proposed screened porch to adjacent buildings and views 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.

OP does not recommend any special treatment in this case.

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 proposed addition of the screen porch would not introduce any nonconforming use or other development standard except for the increase in lot occupancy which is the subject of the requested special exception.

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, if granted, would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps. The purpose of the RF-1 Zone is to “provide for areas predominately developed with residential row buildings on small lots within with no more than two (2) principal dwelling units are permitted”. The proposed screened porch would not compromise the subject property’s ability to adhere to the RF-1 Zone’s purpose.

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

As stated earlier in this report, the special exception, if granted, would not adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and the RF-1 Zone. The proposal does not introduce or expand a nonconforming use, nor does it compromise the subject property’s ability to continue to function as a residential row dwelling use.

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

Special conditions have not been specified in the case of the subject application.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

As of the filing of this report, comments from other District agencies have not been received.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

As of the filing of this report, comments from ANC 5E have not been submitted.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

At Exhibits 12 and 16 are letters in support of the subject application from adjacent neighbors (18 R Street NW and 22 R Street NW).

Attachment: Location Map

Location Map

