

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment for the District of Columbia
FROM: Philip Y. A. Isaiah, Development Review Specialist
 MBR
 Maxine Brown-Roberts, Associate Director, Development Review
DATE: July 17, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21468: Request for special exception relief to permit an accessory building (shed larger than 50 sq. ft.) in a rear yard within the alley centerline setback.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following special exception pursuant to Subtitle D § 5201 and Subtitle X § 901.2:

- The alley centerline rear yard requirements of Subtitle D § 5004.1(a)
 (7.5 feet required; N/A existing; 5 feet proposed)

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	5020 Belt Road, NW
Applicants:	Kevin Alonzo and Jane Luxner
Legal Description:	Square 1756, Lot 0844
Ward / ANC:	Ward 3 / ANC 3E
Zone:	R-1B, Low Density Residential
Historic Districts:	N/A
Lot Characteristics:	The 2,086 square foot irregularly-shaped interior lot is located on Belt Road NW between Fessenden and Garrison Streets NW. Two 10-foot alleys adjoin the lot along the southern side lot line and the rear lot lines.
Existing Development:	The property is developed with a two-story, brick sided, single family detached dwelling. The rear yard is enclosed by a board-on-board fence with no vehicular access from the alley. A mature tree is located approximately 15 feet from the rear lot line.
Adjacent Properties:	All adjacent properties also contain single family, detached dwellings also zoned R-1B. Many of the properties also contain detached buildings in the rear yards.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The surrounding neighborhood contains larger single family detached and semi-detached dwellings on various sized parcels.

Proposed Development:	The applicant proposes to construct a detached accessory building (shed) in the rear yard of the subject property along the furthestmost rear lot line, 5.0 feet from the alley centerline where the required setback is 7.5 feet. The proposed shed would be 10 feet by 10 feet and 9.6 feet in height. The proposed shed would be used for residential storage.
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III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

R-1B Zone (Accessory Structures)	Regulation	Existing	Proposed¹	Relief
Height D § 5002.1	22 ft. max.	N/A	9.6 ft.	None requested
Maximum Building Area D § 5003.1	30% of the required rear yard, or 450 sq. ft. – whichever is greater.	N/A	100 sq. ft.	None requested
Lot Width D § 202	50 ft. min.	26.8 ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Area D § 202	5,000 sq. ft. min.	2,806 sq. ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Occupancy D § 210	40% max.	28.3%	36.8%	None requested
Pervious Surface D § 211	50% min.	67.5%	64%	None requested
Accessory Building Setback from the Alley Centerline D § 5004.1 (a)	7.5 feet min.	N/A	5.0 feet	Special exception requested

¹As provided by the Zoning Administrator (ex. 14)

IV. OP ANALYSIS

While Subtitle D § 5004.1 of the Zoning Regulations exempts sheds from the setback and rear yard lot occupancy standards, a shed as defined in the Zoning Regulations must be no larger than 50 sq. ft. in area to apply, thus necessitating the special exception for this 100 sq. ft. shed.

Subtitle D § 5201.2 ADDITION TO A BUILDING OR ACCESSORY STRUCTURE

5201.1 - Not Applicable

5201.2 For a new or enlarged accessory structure to a residential building with only one (1) principal dwelling unit on a non-alley lot, 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*
- (b) Maximum building area of an accessory building;*

- (c) *Yards, including alley centerline setback; and*
- (d) *Pervious surface.*

The applicant requests to construct an accessory building in the rear yard, 5.0 feet from the alley center line where the required setback is 7.5 feet. Standard (c) is applicable.

5201.3 – Not Applicable.

5201.4 An application for special exception relief under this section shall demonstrate that the proposed addition, new principal building, or accessory structure shall not have a substantially adverse effect on the use or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent dwelling or property, specifically:

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

The proposed shed would be 9.6 feet in height where the neighboring lots contain 2 story dwellings. The accessory structure does not appear to rise to a height that would cast shadows on the neighboring properties to negatively impact their light and air.

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

The accessory building would be located along the rear lot line adjacent to an approximately 6 foot high board on board fence that already separates the alley from the subject property. The permitted location for the shed on this legally undersized lot contains a mature tree which may require removal to comply with the setback requirements, meaning that the granting of this special exception would allow the tree to remain unaltered. As such, no undue compromise to neighboring properties would result from the subject proposal.

- (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 shed would be 9.6 feet high while the fence along the alley is six feet high. Therefore, only a small portion of the subject shed would be visible from the alley above the fencing. The shed would be clearly subordinate to the dwelling and nearby properties also contain rear yard accessory structures. As such, the proposal is harmonious in character and scale with the existing pattern of houses on this street and therefore meets this standard.

- (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 submitted plans, photographs, and elevation drawings that sufficiently represent the relationship of the proposed accessory structure to adjacent buildings and views from public rights-of-way.

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 any special treatment.

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 shed would serve as an accessory structure to the single-family detached dwelling, a permitted use in the R-1B zone.

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 proposed shed would be clearly subordinate in form and serve as an accessory storage use to a single-family, detached dwelling. This setback relief is requested to avoid altering or removing an existing mature tree, which is within the intent of the Regulations. This standard is met.

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

The placement of the shed would not create adverse impacts to those traversing the alley and would allow the shed in a location that would preserve the existing tree in the rear yard. This standard is met.

- (c) Will meet such special conditions as may be specified in this title.*

The shed meets all other applicable standards for accessory buildings in R districts as contained in Subtitle D Chapter 50 of the Zoning Regulations.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

While no comments from other District agencies have been supplied to the record at this report's publication, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has notified OP of no objection to the subject application.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

No comments from ANC 3E have been supplied to the record at this report's publication.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The applicant has supplied statements from neighboring properties as Exhibit 8 of the record form

various neighbors. This Exhibit contains a letter from the owner of the adjacent Lot 845 having no objection to the subject application. The Exhibit also contains letters of support from the owner of Lot 36 and letters of non-objection from Lots 66, 37, and 38.

Location Map:

