

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Philip Bradford, AICP, Case Manager
MBR
 Maxine Brown Roberts, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: September 11, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21492: Request for special exception relief to allow a third story and three-story plus cellar addition to an existing two-story plus cellar row dwelling and convert to a flat.

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following special exceptions:

- Subtitle E § 210.1, Lot Occupancy (60%, 70% by special exception required; 55% existing; 70% proposed) pursuant to Subtitle E § 5201 and Subtitle X § 901; and
- Subtitle E § 204.1, Roof Top or Upper Floor Elements (Removal or significant alterations) pursuant to Subtitle E § 204.4 and Subtitle X § 901.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	1625 6 th Street, NW
Applicant:	Chadi Mouawad represented by Adam Crain
Legal Description:	Square 0477, Lot 0806
Ward / ANC:	Ward 2; ANC 2G
Zone:	RF-1
Historic Districts	None
Lot Characteristics:	19.5 ft. wide by 93.38 ft. deep rectangular lot.
Existing Development:	Two-story with cellar, single unit, row dwelling.
Adjacent Properties:	Row dwellings, flats, and apartment buildings.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	Medium density residential adjacent to mixed use higher density development in the ARTS and MU zones one block north and west of the subject property.
Proposed Development:	Construction of a third story and three story plus cellar rear addition to an existing two-story plus cellar, single unit, row dwelling.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

RF-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief:
Density E § 201	2 principal units max.	1 dwelling unit.	2 dwelling units.	None requested
Lot Width E § 202	18 ft. min.	19.5 ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Area E § 202	1,800 sq. ft. min.	1,820 sq. ft.	No change	None requested
Height E § 203	35 ft. max.	24 ft.	35 ft.	None requested
Rooftop or Upper Floor Elements E § 204	No removal or alteration without special exception	Pitched roof	Additional floor and flat roof	Special Exception Requested
Front Yard E § 206	Within range of existing	0 ft.	No change	None requested
Rear Yard E § 207	20 ft. min.	37 ft.	25 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 special exception	55%	70%	Special Exception Requested

IV. OP ANALYSIS

Subtitle E § 210.1, Lot Occupancy pursuant to 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 is requesting special exception relief for lot occupancy as allowed by this section.

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 addition is within the matter-of-right height limit and meets the rear yard requirement, thus maintaining ample open space to not negatively impact adjacent properties. Further, the third story addition would be set back about 8 feet from the front of the existing façade of the dwelling and the neighboring dwellings to the south. It should be further noted that the adjacent residential building to the north is already three stories in height. Thus, adverse impacts to neighboring properties' light and area are not anticipated.

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

The privacy and use and enjoyment of neighboring properties should not be unduly compromised by the proposed addition. While the rear addition does contain windows facing the rear and side yards of the adjacent building to the south, the front and rear yards contain sufficient screening by the existing mature trees. While the neighboring apartment building to the north contains windows facing the subject property, no fenestration is proposed on that side of the subject building. Further, while windows will be located on the southern part of the addition, they will only be provided on a portion of the building that will be set back from the adjacent dwelling.

(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 third floor addition would be visible from 6th Street. However, it would be set-back from the front of the building and therefore reducing its visibility from the street. The existing conditions on 6th Street, NW, contain existing row dwellings, apartment buildings of varying heights, many with upper floor additions. The proposed third floor addition to the existing structure would therefore not intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses on this street 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.

The applicant has provided plans, photographs, elevations and renderings in Exhibits [2](#) and [18](#).

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 by OP.

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..

While the proposed addition would convert the existing row dwelling into a flat with 8 bedrooms in the lower unit and 7 bedrooms in the upper unit, subsequent Department of Buildings review will ensure each unit of the subject project meets the definition of ‘household,’ as defined in Subtitle B § 100 of the regulations. Minor modifications can be made to the interior layout at that stage if need be.

Special Exception from Upper Floor Architectural Elements – Subtitle E § 204.1, pursuant to E § 204.4

- 204.1 *Except for properties subject to review by the Historic Preservation Review Board or their designee, or the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, a roof top architectural element original to a principal building such as cornices, porch roofs, a turret, tower, or dormers, shall not be removed or significantly altered, including shifting its location, changing its shape, or increasing its height, elevation, or size; provided that:*
- (a) *For interior lots, not including through lots, the roof top architectural elements shall not include identified roof top architectural elements facing the structure’s rear lot line; and*
 - (b) *For all other lots, the roof top architectural elements shall include identified roof top architectural elements on all sides of the structure.*

While the cornice on the front façade would remain as part of the subject project, the applicant proposes altering the gable roof to accommodate the new third story. Relief to remove or alter architectural elements may be granted by the Board pursuant to E § 204.4, as evaluated below.

- 204.4 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant relief from the requirements of Subtitle E § 204.1 as a special exception pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9, and subject to the following conditions:*
- (a) *The proposed construction shall not have a substantially adverse effect on the use or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent dwelling or property, in particular:*
 - (1) *The light and air available to neighboring properties shall not be unduly affected;*
 - (2) *The privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties shall not be unduly compromised; and*
 - (3) *The proposed construction, 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;*

No other neighboring properties have gable roofs, and the front-facing cornice would remain in line with the neighboring row buildings to the south. The new third story would be set back from the façade of the existing dwelling similar to the apartment buildings to the north which are already 3 stories with flat roofs. Thus, removal of the gable roof would have no impact on the light, air or privacy available to neighboring properties. The proposed setback design of the third floor with the existing cornice would be harmonious to the existing character of the street. The new bays with the replicated cornice would match the architecture of the

buildings to the west. The proposed construction, therefore, should not substantially visually intrude upon the character of the block.

- (b) *In demonstrating compliance with paragraph (a), the applicant shall use graphical representations such as plans, photographs, or elevation and section drawings sufficient to represent the relationship of the proposed construction to adjacent buildings and views from public ways; and*

The application materials include plans, elevations, photos, and site plans.

- (c) *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 or nearby properties, or to maintain the general character of a block.*

OP recommends no special treatments.

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 RF zones are typically intended to accommodate row dwellings and accommodate two principal dwelling units. The purpose and intent of the RF-1 zone is as follows:

The purpose of the RF-1 zone is to provide for areas predominantly developed with residential row buildings on small lots within which no more than two (2) principal dwelling units are permitted.

The proposed rear and upper floor additions and conversion to a flat would be within the general purpose and intent of the zone.

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

As noted above, OP finds no aspect of the proposed development that would adversely affect any neighboring properties.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

As of the writing of this report no comments have been received from any District agencies.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

As of the writing of this report, no comments from ANC 2G have been submitted to the record.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of the writing of this report, no comments from any members of the community have been submitted to the record.

Attachment: Location Map

Figure 1: Location Map

