

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Karen Thomas, Development Review Specialist
MBR
Maxine Brown Roberts, Associate Director, Development Review

DATE: September 11, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21500: Request for special exception relief to allow a one-story rear addition at 3812 Garrison Street, N.W.

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:

- Rear Yard, D §207.1 (25 feet min. required, 31 feet existing; 10 feet proposed).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	3812 Garrison Street, NW
Applicants:	1927 Property Heritage Trust
Legal Description:	Square 1851, Lot 26
Ward / ANC:	Ward 3/ ANC 3E
Zone:	R-1B: typical of areas intended to provide for predominantly developed neighborhoods with detached houses on moderately sized lots. (D§ 101.5)
Historic Districts:	N/A
Lot Characteristics:	The lot is a large interior lot (5,196 square feet) of regular dimensions fronting on Garrison Street and abutting a 16-foot wide alley at the rear.
Existing Development:	The property is developed with a two-story, detached, single-family home with a rear accessory structure.
Adjacent Properties:	Adjacent properties are similarly developed with detached, single-family homes typical of the R-1B zone.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The neighborhood is characteristic of low-density, single family detached homes on large lots all within the R-1B district.

Proposed Development:	The Applicant proposes to construct a one-story screened porch at the rear of the home. The rear yard would be reduced, however, and the existing one-story garage is located within the required rear yard. Accordingly, the Zoning Administrator determined that special exception relief pursuant to Subtitle D-5201 from the rear yard requirements of Subtitle D § 207.1 is required. (Exhibit 4).
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III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

(Provided by Applicant at [Exhibit 4](#) and DC Surveyor's Plat at [Exhibit 2](#))

R-1B Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Area D § 202.1	5,000 sf min.	5,196 sf	No Change	None required
Lot Width D § 202.3	50 ft. min.	60 ft.	No Change	None required
Height D § 203.2	40 ft. max.	Not provided	No change	None required
Rear Yard D § 207	25 ft. min.	31 ft.	21.8 ft.	Relief required
Side Yard D § 208	8 ft. min.	7 ft (west) 8 ft.(east)	No Change	None required
Lot Occupancy D § 210	40% max. (MOR) 50% max. (Sp. Ex.)	33%.	38 %	None required
Parking C § 701	1 space min.	0 provided	No change	None required

IV. OP ANALYSIS

Subtitle D § 5201 ADDITION TO A BUILDING OR ACCESSORY STRUCTURE

5201.1 For an addition to a principal residential building with one (1) principal dwelling unit 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 subject to the following table:

TABLE D § 5201.1(a): MAXIMUM PERMITTED LOT OCCUPANCY BY SPECIAL EXCEPTION

Zones	Type of Structure	Maximum Percentage of Lot Occupancy (%)
All R-3 zones except R-3/GT	All Structures	70
R-3/GT	Row	
R-3/GT	Detached Semi-detached	50
All other R zones	All Structures	

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

The project requires relief from the rear yard requirement, as the proposed enclosed porch would extend 10 feet into the required rear yard, reducing the existing 31 feet measurement to 21.8 feet, where 25 feet minimum is required. The existing garage (19.5 feet in length) is located within the required rear yard.

5201.2 & 5201.3 not relevant to this application

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 screened porch would extend ten feet from the existing rear wall, as shown on the Architectural Plans and Elevations at [Exhibit 6](#), Sheet 2. The addition is located closest to the western neighbor at 3818 Garrison Street NW, separated by a seven-foot side yard per the Plat at [Exhibit 2](#). The porch would project slightly beyond the western neighbor's rear façade, but both properties already benefit from mature vegetation that provides substantial shading as can be shown in provided photos at [Exhibit 5](#), which clearly depicts the relationship of the proposed addition's location in relation to the neighbor. These existing conditions, combined with the porch's modest height and depth, would result in minimal additional shadowing and no appreciable loss of light or air between the subject property and the neighbor to the west.

Further, due to porch's location light and air to the eastern neighbor at 3808 Garrison Street NW would be least affected.

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

The proposed screened porch would be located within the same side-yard relationship as the existing dwelling and would not reduce the eight-foot separation to the eastern neighbor at 3808 Garrison Street NW or the western neighbor at 3818 Garrison Street NW. As shown in the photos at [Exhibit 5](#) both side yards contain opaque fencing and established shrubbery that already limit views between properties. The porch's screening would minimize visibility into adjacent rear yards, maintaining privacy conditions. As a result, the project would not introduce new sightlines or diminish the privacy of neighboring properties.

- (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 addition would be obscured for the most part by the existing accessory garage structure so it would be barely imperceptible from the alley, and it would not be visible from the Garrison Street frontage. The proposed addition, therefore, should not visually

intrude on the character and scale of homes as viewed from the alley or street frontage. Adjacent neighbors have submitted their support at [Exhibit 13](#).

- (d) *In demonstrating compliance with paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this subsection, the applicant shall use graphical representations such as existing and proposed plans, elevations and section drawings, as well as photographs including ones demonstrating the overall streetscape pattern and character, sufficient to represent the relationship of the proposed addition, new building, or accessory structure to adjacent buildings and views from public ways.*

The Applicant included the required submissions at Exhibit 2 (Surveyor's Plat); Exhibit 5 (Color Photos); and Exhibit 6 (Architectural Plans and Elevations).

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 additional treatment for protection of adjacent 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 a residential use.

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 screened porch would allow the property to continue functioning as a one-family residence consistent with the R-1B zone, which is intended to maintain low-density residential character and protect the established pattern of detached homes, yards, and open space. Although relief from the rear yard requirement is required, the porch's scale and placement remain compatible with the neighborhood's development pattern and do not alter the property's residential use or its conformity with the zone's overall intent. The project maintains the low-density character envisioned for R-1B neighborhoods and is therefore 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 discussed under Section 5201, the uses of neighboring property would not be adversely affected, and both adjacent neighbors and those across the alley have indicated their support to the record at [Exhibits 13](#) and 17.

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

Special conditions are not specified in this title.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

At the writing of this report, other District agencies' comments were not included in the record.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

The ANC 3E's comments were not included to date.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The adjacent neighbors at 3818 Garrison Street, N.W. and 3808 Garrison Street, N.W. have submitted their letters in support at [Exhibit 13](#). In addition, neighbors across the alley at 3811 Fessenden Street, N.W. and 3817 Fessenden Street, N.W. also submitted letters in support at [Exhibit 17](#).

Attachment: Location Map

Location Map:

