District of Columbia
Office of Planning

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

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

DATE: October 16, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 21504: Request for special exception relief to construct a one-story, rear addition to a semi-detached, two-story with cellar dwelling unit in the R-3/GT Zone.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

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

- **Rear Yard (Rear Extension), D § 207.5** (10 feet beyond neighboring rear wall allowed; 0 ft. existing; 11.9 ft. proposed); and
- **Lot Occupancy, D § 210.1** (40% max. allowed; 33.5% existing; 46.7% proposed).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	3414 O Street, NW
Applicants:	Robert F. Dobbs Jr., represented by Goulston & Storres
Legal Description:	Square 1228, Lot 0814
Ward / ANC:	Ward 2 / ANC 2E
Zone:	R-3/GT, Georgetown Residential House
Historic Districts:	Georgetown Historic District
Lot Characteristics:	The 1,570 square-foot lot is rectangular in shape and has 21.50 feet of frontage along O Street NW.
Existing Development:	The property is currently improved with a two-story rowhouse with cellar.
Adjacent Properties:	The property is bounded to the north, south, east, and west by attached and semidetached residential uses in the R-3/GT Zone.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by attached and semidetached rowhomes.
Proposed Development:	The Applicant is proposing to construct a one-story with a roof deck, rear addition to the existing building.

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III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND RELIEF REQUESTED

R-3/GT Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Width D § 202	30 ft. min.	21.4 ft.	No change	Existing nonconformity
Lot Area D § 202	3,000 sq. ft. min.	1,570 sq. ft.	No change	Existing nonconformity
Height D § 1101	35 or 40 ft. max. 3 stories max.	23.5 ft.	No change	None requested
Front Setback D § 206	Consistent with blockface	Consistent with blockface	No change	None requested
Rear Yard D § 207	20 ft. min.	43.4 ft.	31.6 ft.	None requested
Rear Yard (Rear Extension) E § 207	**10 ft. beyond neighboring rear wall max.**	**0 ft.**	**11.9 ft.**	**Special Exception requested**
Side Yard (Semidetached) D § 1104.2	5 ft. min. 3 ft. min. for existing non-conformity	3.4 ft.	No change	Existing nonconformity
Lot Occupancy D § 210	**40% max. by-right 50% max by Sp. Ex.**	**33.5%**	**46.7%**	**Special Exception requested**
Pervious Surface D § 211	20% min.	49.2%	23.6%	None requested
Parking C § 701	1 space per dwelling unit min.	1 space	No change	None requested

IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING 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	

The Applicant has requested relief from the lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle D § 210.1.

(b) ***Yards,*** *including alley centerline setback; and*

The Applicant has requested relief from the rear yard extension requirements of Subtitle D § 207.5.

(c) Pervious surface.

5201.2 Inapplicable to the subject application.

5201.3 Inapplicable to the subject 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 proposed addition should not unduly affect the light and air available to neighboring properties. The addition (and the roof of the addition) would be approximately as tall as the existing privacy fence, which should mitigate potential impacts to light and air. While the Applicant has not provided a shadow study as part of the application, it is not anticipated that the rear wall extension of the proposed addition would cast undue shadows beyond that of by-right construction.

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

The proposed addition should not unduly compromise the privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties. The proposed addition would be nearly completely screened by an existing privacy fence separating the subject property and the adjoining property at 3412 O Street, NW.

Furthermore, while the Applicant has proposed a rear deck on top of the proposed addition, it should neither create nor exacerbate privacy issues, as a similar vantage point already existed with the rear façade French doors.

(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 addition should not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along O Street NW. As mentioned earlier in the report, the addition would not be seen from O Street NW and would be partially screened by an existing privacy fence. There is no alley to the rear.

(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 graphical representations such as plans, color photographs, and elevation drawings that sufficiently represent the relationship of the proposed addition 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 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 Applicant has not requested relief that would permit the expansion or introduction of a nonconforming use, lot occupancy beyond what is authorized in this section, height, or a number of stories.

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 exceptions, if granted, would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of Zoning Regulations and the R-3/GT Zone. The Zoning Regulations note that the purposes of the R-3/GT Zone include:

> "*Limit permitted ground coverage of new and expanded buildings and other construction to encourage a general neighborhood compatibility between the siting of new or expanded buildings and the existing neighborhood".*

The Applicant's proposal to construct a one-story addition to the existing dwelling

can reasonably be considered in adherence to this purpose. Both the lot occupancy and rear yard extension relief would be modest in nature while ensuring that the resulting structure remains generally compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

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

As shown earlier in this report, the special exceptions, if granted, should not adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.

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

Special conditions have not been specified for the subject application.

V. COMMENTS FROM OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

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

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

At Exhibit 19 is a report from ANC 2E recommending approval of the subject application.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of the filing of this report, comments from the community have not been submitted to the record.

Attachment: Location Map

Location Map

