District of Columbia
Office of Planning

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: November 23, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21546 - Request for special exception relief to permit a rear addition at 4638 Ellicott Street, NW in the R-1B Zone.

I. RECOMMENDATION

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

- Rear yard requirements of Subtitle D § 207.1 (25 ft. required, 25 ft. existing; 11 ft. 9 in. proposed)
- Lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle D § 210.1 (40% required, 40% existing, 49% proposed)

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	4638 Ellicott Street, NW
Applicant:	Arjun and Erin Joshi, represented by Sullivan and Barros
Legal Description:	Square 1545, Lot 60
Ward / ANC:	Ward 3/ANC 3E
Zone:	R-1B
Historic Districts	N/A
Lot Characteristics:	The subject corner lot is located on the corner of 47th and Ellicott Streets, NW. The lot is undersized for its zone at 3,250 sq. ft. in area where the minimum lot size in the R-1B zone is 5,000 sq. ft. and has remained unchanged since its original subdivision in 1935.
Existing Development:	The subject property is developed with a 2-story, brick and cement board sided single-unit, detached dwelling with a rear deck in the approximate location of the proposed addition in the southeastern portion of the lot. It should be noted that the existing rear deck is not calculated as part of lot occupancy pursuant to Subtitle B § 312.4 (g) nor the rear yard pursuant to Subtitle B § 318.

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Adjacent Properties:	Single-unit detached dwellings surround the subject property on all sides. It should be noted that the adjacent Lot 819 to the rear is located on a 6,000 sq. ft. lot, where the dwelling is located on the southern half of the lot, leaving a large side yard between the neighboring house and the subject property. A mature tree and fencing separates that subject property from the neighboring Lot 61.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The surrounding blocks are also developed with single-unit detached dwellings throughout on varying sized lots on land also zoned R-1B.
Proposed Development:	The applicant proposes to construct a 2-story rear addition at the southeastern corner of the dwelling in the approximate location of the existing open deck located 11 ft. 9 in. from the rear lot line where the required rear yard is 25 ft. and at 49% lot occupancy where the maximum lot occupancy is 40%. The addition would contain a 2-story cement board sided annex to the main dwelling located 18 ft. 5 in. from the rear lot line and a 1-story solarium to its rear.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

R-1B Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Area D § 202.1	5,000 sq. ft. min.	3,250 sq. ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Width D § 202.1	50 ft. min.	50 ft.	No change	None requested
Height D § 203.2	40 ft. max.	28 ft.	No change	None requested
Rear Yard D § 207.1	**25 ft. min.**	**25 ft.**	**11 ft. 9in**	**Special Exception Requested**
Side Yard D § 208.2	8 ft. min.	8 ft. (east) 0 ft. (west)	No change	None requested
Lot Occupancy D § 210	**40% max.**	**40%**	**49%**	**Special Exception Requested**
Parking C § 701	1 space min.	1 space	No change	None requested

IV. ANALYSIS

Subtitle D Chapter 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 applicant proposes to construct a rear addition 11 ft. 9 in. from the rear lot line and at 49% lot occupancy. Standards (a) and (b) are applicable.

5201.2 Not relevant to this application

5201.3 Not relevant to this 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 dwelling on the neighboring property to the rear (Lot 819) is set back approximately 30 feet from the side lot line adjacent to the subject property. Even with the proposed rear addition, the subject dwelling and the neighboring dwelling would remain separated by more than 40 feet. Given this substantial distance between the structures, the proposed addition is not expected to unduly affect the light and air available to the dwelling on Lot 819.

In addition, the portion of the addition extending furthest into the required rear yard consists of a transparent, one-story solarium. The proposed two-story portion of the addition would be located 18 feet 5 inches from the rear lot line, while the side yard adjacent to Lot 61 would remain compliant. As a result, any additional shadowing or obstruction of light and air on adjacent properties would be minimal and would not rise to the level of an undue adverse impact. Therefore, the proposed addition is not expected to have a substantially adverse effect on the light and air available to neighboring properties. This standard is met.

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

While the solarium is transparent in nature, the one story portion of the addition continues to meet the 8-foot required side setback from Lot 61; while only a four-foot fence currently separates the rear yards, the placement of the structure should not prevent the installation of a taller fence and/or plantings should future privacy concerns arise. Also, only transom-like windows are proposed on the east elevation of the addition, which appears to reasonably mitigate direct views from the second story of the addition onto Lot 61.

(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

No rear alley is present adjacent to this lot. While the subject property is a corner lot, the addition will be located about 20 feet from the western lot line adjacent to 47th Street with about an additional 10 feet of parking from the sidewalk where existing plantings would also soften the view. The cement board siding proposed would also be similar to portions of the existing façade. As such, this proposal should not be visually intrusive along the street. This standard is met.

(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 provided plans, photographs, and elevations to sufficiently represent the relationship of the proposed addition 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 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 subject property would continue to be used as a single-family dwelling, as permitted in the R-1B zone.

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 applicant proposes to construct an addition that would expand the living space of the single-unit dwelling. The enlargement would not create more density than otherwise permitted in the zone, nor establish any nonpermitted use. 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 proposed rear addition complies with the special exception standards. The addition is reasonably scaled with expansive separations between the 47th Street right of way and the dwelling on Lot 819. While closer to Lot 61, the step-down design of the addition and the lack of intruding fenestration should reasonably mitigate adverse impacts on Lot 61. This standard is met.

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

The subject application has adequately addressed the criteria for special exception review outlined in Subtitle D § 5201 above.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

No comments from other District agencies have been supplied to the record at the publication of this report.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

A resolution of support from ANC 3E is supplied to the record as Exhibit 18.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Letters of support from the adjacent Lot 61 and Lot 819 are provided at Exhibits 14 and 15, respectively.

Location Map

