

March 2nd, 2026

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT  
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**Applicant:** Station 4 Properties LLC

**Property Address:** 4654 Hillside Rd SE, Washington, DC, 20019

**Zoning District:** R-2

**Relief Sought:** The Applicant seeks a use variance pursuant to Subtitle U §201.1 and X §1000.1

**STATEMENT OF THE APPLICANT**

The Applicant respectfully requests a use variance pursuant to Subtitle U §201.1 and X §1000.1, to permit a modest increase in residential intensity by allowing one additional dwelling unit entirely within the existing structure of a long-established two-unit flat.

The subject property is located in an R-2 zone. The property functions harmoniously as a two-unit flat without adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood. The Applicant proposes a minimal increase in the number of units from (2) units to (3) units by converting the existing, vacant basement space into an additional dwelling. This modest internal adjustment preserves the building's existing exterior appearance, height, and bulk, and therefore will not alter the character of the neighborhood or set any undesirable precedent.

This proposal also provides additional affordable housing opportunities for Section 8 DCHA voucher holders, making reasonable use of an existing residential structure while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

Strict application of the R-2 zoning regulations prevents reasonable use of the property's existing residential space, creating a practical difficulty unique to this property. Granting this variance would allow the applicant to make functional use of the basement while maintaining the property's long-standing residential use.

The Applicant emphasizes that this request is highly fact-specific and tied to the unique regulatory and physical characteristics of the property. The proposed internal adjustment will not negatively impact neighbors, traffic, or parking.

For these reasons, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Board grant the requested use variance to allow the conversion of the existing two-unit flat into a three-unit flat.

## **OUR UNDERSTANDING TO ADDRESS 3 POINTS OF A “BURDEN OF PROOF”:**

1. *The physical characteristics of the property creates exceptional and undue hardship for the owner in using the property consistent with the Zoning Regulations.*

### **Exceptional Conditions Affecting the Property (§1002.1(a))**

- The property is improved with an existing 2-story plus basement structure built in 1942. The property was originally constructed as a four-unit building, as were many others, both adjoining this lot and in the neighborhood. This is documented in the 1969 Certificate of Occupancy. It was later converted to a two-unit flat pursuant to BZA Case #16647 in 2001.
- The exceptional condition arises from the combination of the existing buildings structure, and the pre-zoning-era layout. The property already has multiple kitchens, plumbing stacks, and separate entrances, demonstrating that the structure is uniquely suited for more than one dwelling unit and would be inefficient to alter.
- The basement has a separate access and adequate ceiling height. The building’s existing design can support three modest units safely and efficiently, whereas limiting it to one or two units would leave portions of the structure unused or wasted.
- There are several other buildings within the same block that contain four and six residential units, while maintaining the consistent semi-detached architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Unnecessary Hardship Resulting from Strict Application (§1002.1(b))**

- Reconfiguration of the interior to achieve strict compliance is impracticable. Achieving full compliance would require substantial structural demolition, displacement of existing tenants, and significant financial burden to the property owner.
  - To maintain this building with only two units would result in financial hardships for the owner with regards of the buildings value.
  - Granting this relief allows the property owner to make much needed renovations economically feasible, generating additional revenue to support necessary building updates and the maintenance of the structure.
2. *Granting the application will not be of substantial detriment to the public good (§1002.1(c))*
- Prior to the purchase of this building, this was not being used as a single family home, but as a 2 unit apartment building. Therefore the current levels of noise, traffic, lightning, etc will not be affected by the granting of this application. With the addition of 2 parking spaces, the traffic will be improved by providing more off-street parking options for the residents.

- The proposed addition of a basement apartment will not alter appearance, height, or massing of the existing structure. Our proposal won't visually or functionally change the neighborhood. The project is entirely internal, and will not adversely impact light, air, or privacy of adjoining properties.
  - The additional unit will contribute to the District's affordable housing supply while maintaining the semi-detached house character of the surrounding neighborhood. By making use of existing basement space to create a modest, well-designed dwelling, the project improves housing quality and preserves the family-friendly appearance consistent with nearby homes.
  - Granting the variance to permit the establishment of a three-unit apartment building should not result in detrimental impacts to the public good in this case. The building appears to have been originally constructed for four units, so the variance would allow the establishment of a lesser density than the original use of the property. The surrounding neighborhood has a mix of residential types, but small apartment buildings are prevalent, including on all sides of the subject property.
3. ***Granting the application will not be inconsistent with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map.***

In this case, the apartment building is existing, pre-dates current zoning, and there are many other multi-family buildings, typically with four units, in the immediate area. As such, the proposal would not substantially impair the intent of that down-zoning.

Therefore, the proposed use variance:

- Keeps the building's residential character. The use variance will not introduce commercial or incompatible activity; rather, it very modestly increases residential capacity within an existing structure.
- Does not significantly alter density. The requested relief is limited in scope and does not undermine the R-2 district's intent to preserve moderate-density, family-oriented housing.
- Represents a modest reuse of the existing structure, making practical use of underutilized space while avoiding demolition or vacancy.
- Supports housing preservation and adaptive reuse, providing an additional dwelling unit consistent with District planning objectives and neighborhood character.

**CONCLUSION**

For the reasons set forth above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the request for a Use Variance from Subtitle U §201.1 and X §1000.1. The application satisfies each element of the variance test and will not be detrimental to the public good or the integrity of the Zoning Plan.

Granting the requested variance will allow the property to be used safely, efficiently, and in a manner consistent with its historic use, while providing additional housing opportunities that support the District's affordable housing objectives.

Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Board of Zoning Adjustment grant the relief requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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JOSE LOPEZ  
STATION 4 PROPERTIES LLC