

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Karen Thomas, Case Manager
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: November 3, 2022

SUBJECT: BZA Case 20806 - Special Exception to construct a new apartment building with seven units in the RA-1 Zone at 1016 Rhode Island Avenue, NE

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

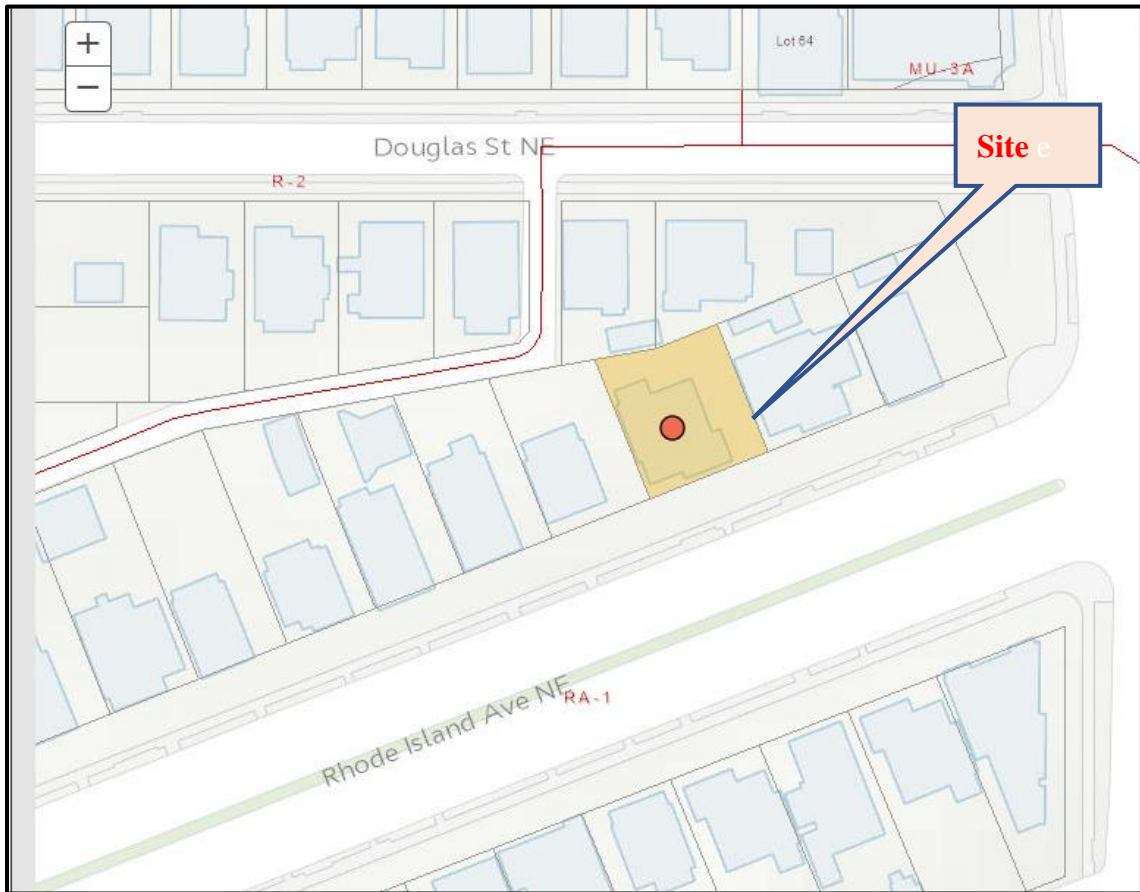
The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following special exception:

Subtitle U§ 401 pursuant to U§ 421.1 - New Residential Development

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	1016 Rhode Island Avenue NE
Applicant	Sullivan and Burros on behalf of GOJO Inc.
Legal Description	Square 3953; Lot 5
Ward, ANC	Ward 5; ANC 5B
Zone	RA-1, which allows an apartment building or expansion of an apartment building with special exception review.
Lot Characteristics	The irregularly shaped lot has an overall even grade abutting other properties to the rear, but without access to the rear alley. There is an existing curb cut off Rhode Island Avenue, which would be retained for the proposed development.
Existing Development	The lot is currently developed with a detached one-story residential building.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The neighborhood consists predominantly of detached single-story frame dwellings, of which many are vacant and undergoing redevelopment as small apartment buildings consistent with the RA-1 designation. The neighborhood is within a half-mile of the Rhode Island Metro Station.
Proposed Development	The proposal would raze an existing structure, and construct a new, detached, three-story with cellar, 7-unit apartment house.

III. LOCATION MAP



IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

Zone- RA-1	Regulation	Existing ¹	Proposed	Relief
Lot Width	N/A	60 ft.	60 ft.	None Required
Lot Area	N/A	3,982 sq. ft.	3,982 sq. ft.	None Required
Height § 303.1	40 ft. max	20 ft. 2stories	34 ft. 3 in. 3 stories	None Required
Floor Area Ratio F § 302	0.9 max.	Not provided	0.89	None Required
Lot Occupancy F § 304	40 % max.	Not provided	33%	None Required
Rear Yard F § 305	20 ft. min.	Not provided.	20 ft.	None Required
Side Yard F § 306	One, 8 ft. min.	Not provided	5 ft. and 16 ft.	None Required
Vehicle Parking C § 702.1	1 space	Not provided	2 spaces	None Required
New Residential Development U § 421.1	Special Exception Review	Single-family	7-unit apt. bldg..	Special Exception

¹ “Existing” and “Proposed” information provided by the applicant.

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Special Exception Analysis for New Residential Development in the RA-1 zone

Subtitle X § 901- General Special Exception Relief

Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;

The proposal would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the RA-1 zoning regulations, which provides for low- to moderate-density multiple dwelling buildings. This special exception would facilitate the addition of a new multi-unit building with seven units, as anticipated in this zone.

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

The proposal should not have any undue adverse effect on the use of neighboring properties. The subject property is in the vicinity of similarly scaled multiple dwelling buildings and the height and scale of the proposed would not exceed the required yard, bulk and height requirements for the zone. The new building should not cast undue shadows or create privacy issues or enjoyment of use to neighbors' properties. An immediate neighbor, #1018 has submitted a letter in support at Exhibit 20. The property would be screened with privacy fence at the rear and there is no alley access. Other neighbors have submitted letters in support noted [later in the report](#).

Special Exception Relief from Subtitle U § 421

Subtitle U§ 421 New Residential Developments (RA-1 and RA-6)

421.1 In the RA-1 and RA-6 zones, all new residential developments, except those comprising all one-family detached and semi-detached dwellings, shall be reviewed by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as special exceptions under Subtitle X, in accordance with the standards and requirements in this section.

421.2 The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the relevant District of Columbia agencies for comment and recommendation as to the adequacy of the following:

(a) Existing and planned area schools to accommodate the numbers of students that can be expected to reside in the project; and

The application was sent to the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) at Exhibit 15. To date, comments have not been submitted to the record, but OP notes that according to the [DCPS website](#), the area's schools' utilization rates for grade schools during 2021-2022 are as follows:

- Noyes Elementary School- 69 %
- Brookland Middle School- 52%
- Dunbar High School- 36%

(b) Public streets, recreation, and other services to accommodate the residents that can be expected to reside in the project.

The application was forwarded to the Department of Recreation and to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) for comments (Exhibits 15). DDOT will submit their comments to the record separately.

The site is approximately 3 blocks south of the Noyes Park and within walking distance of the Brentwood Recreation Center across Rhode Island Avenue, southeast from the site. It appears that there is access to adequate recreation in the area.

421.3 The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the Office of Planning for comment and recommendation on the site plan, arrangement of buildings and structures, and provisions of light, air, parking, recreation, landscaping, and grading as they relate to the surrounding neighborhood, and the relationship of the proposed project to public plans and projects.

Site Plan

The building's front yard and vehicle entrance would be via Rhode Island Avenue, as there is no alley access. Two parking spaces would be provided in the rear yard, and the trash bin area would be located below the stairway from view and secured. The building would be sited similar to the existing structure, with respect to existing side yards, rear yard and orientation.

Individual unit entrances to existing and proposed units would be from within the building via an interior stairway for units on the second floor and third floor levels. The rear of the property would be secured by fencing lined with shrubbery. Entrances would be oriented toward the front of the building, including entrance doors facing the Rhode Island Avenue frontage. The building's materials would be like other small apartment structures in the area, including Hardie panels above a brick base. The materials are shown as part of [Exhibit 27A2 Sheets BE-001 and 002](#).

Light and Air

Light and air to neighboring properties are not anticipated to be adversely impacted as the required side yards would be provided. Window wells at the front and rear would be provided to allow light and air into the lowest units.

Parking

Two parking spaces would be provided at the rear of the property and would be accessed via an existing curb cut at Rhode Island Avenue. The property does not have access to the alley system. The Applicant has indicated that the DDOT has agreed to the existing curb cut since no changes would be made. The property is located a block and a half east of the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) which provides quick access to the trail for residents, and it is also located on a major bus route with several lines and connectors at the Metro station.

Recreation

On-site recreation space would not be provided, and there would be no roof top common area. However, as referenced previously, the property is located less than a mile, equidistant between two recreation centers and other area green space.

Landscaping

According to the Landscaping Plan ([Exhibit 11](#)) the project would include 925 square feet of landscaped area, which would satisfy the required 0.4 GAR score. Landscaping would consist of lawn grass and shrubbery planted in portions along the front, rear and west side property line. The

driveway access to the parking would be to the east and would be a concrete driveway. OP has encouraged the Applicant to work with the District Department of the Environment (DOEE) to consider the provision of a pervious surface for some or all of the driveway, as well as a green roof or solar roof if feasible. DOEE provided comments via email to the Applicant, who has indicated a willingness to work with DOEE to capitalize on the best option for the roof.

Relationship to Public Plans/Projects

No relief is needed from the development standards, and the building would provide seven new residential units that should not unduly impact the light and air of the adjacent properties. OP has no objection to the overall site plan and orientation of this building.

421.4 In addition to other filing requirements, the developer shall submit to the Board of Zoning Adjustment with the application a site plan and set of typical floor plans and elevations, grading plan (existing and final), landscaping plan, and plans for all new rights-of-way and easements.

The required plans, including the architectural plans and elevations and the landscaping plans are included in the record (Exhibit 14).

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

As of the writing of this report, no other District agency comments have been provided.

VII. ANC COMMENTS

ANC 5B had not submitted comments to the record at the writing of this report.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

There are three letters in support at the writing of this report, at Exhibits 18, 19 and an immediate neighbor at 1018 Rhode Island Avenue NE at Exhibit 20 and #1009 and 1011 at Exhibits 21,22.