

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment  
**FROM:** Maxine Brown-Roberts, Project Manager  
*JL* Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review  
**DATE:** July 21, 2015  
**SUBJECT:** BZA Case 19045, 6812 Laurel Street, NW

**I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION**

Wayne Lin (Applicant ) submitted an application seeking an area variance to construct a rear addition to the single family home at 6812 Laurel Street, NW in the R-1-B zone that does not meet the requirement of § 404.2, Rear Yard. The application was subsequently amended to request special exception review pursuant to § 223 to allow the construction of a rear addition that does not meet the following requirements:

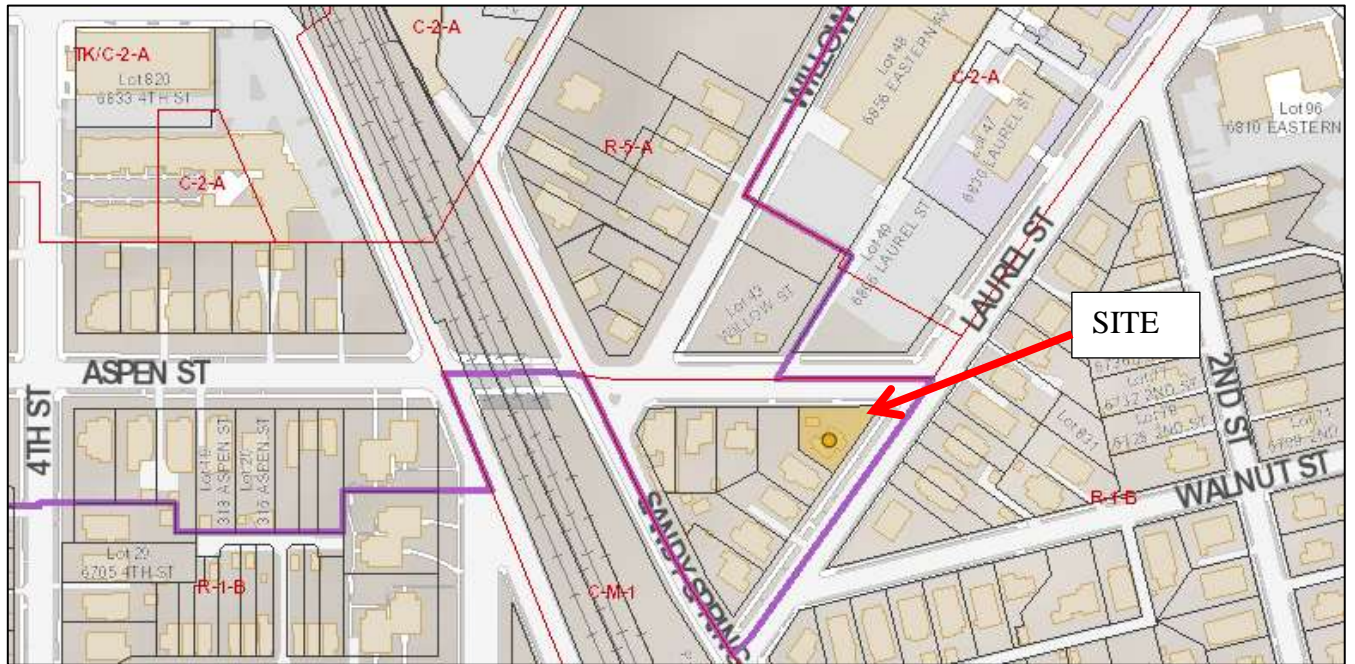
- § 404.1, Rear Yard (25 feet required, 18.6 feet proposed); and
- § 2001.3, Expansion of a non-conforming rear yard.

Office of Planning (OP) recommends approval of the requested special exceptions.

**II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

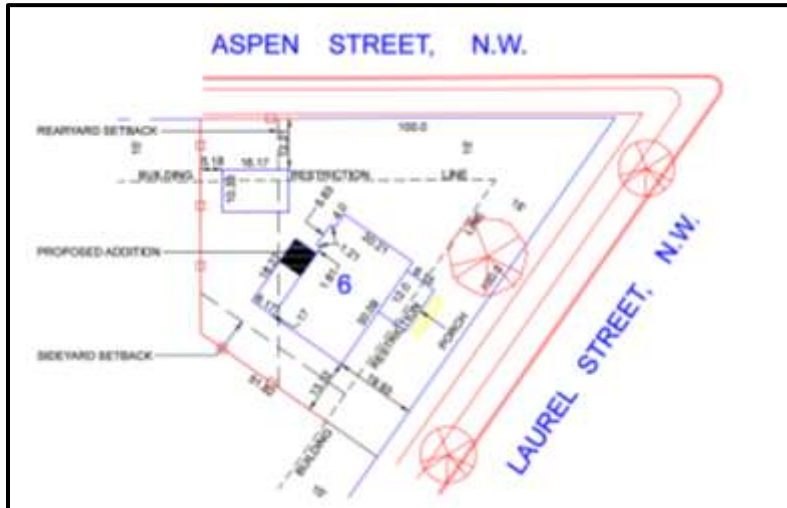
Address	6812 Laurel Street, NW
Legal Description	Square 3360, Lot 6
Ward/ANC	4. 4B
Lot Characteristics	The property is nearly rectangular in shape and has an area of 5,182 square feet. The property has 15 foot building restriction lines along Laurel Street, NW (southeastern property line) and along Aspen Street, NW (northern property line).
Zoning	R-1-B – one family detached dwellings.
Existing Development	Two-story, single family, detached dwelling.
Historic District	Takoma Park
Adjacent and Surrounding Properties	Properties to the east, west and south of the site are developed with single-family, detached dwellings. To the north is a parking lot, Strayer University and the Washington Theological Union.

### Site Location



**III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION IN BRIEF**

The Applicant is renovating the existing house and plans a 42 square foot addition at the rear of the house to accommodate a half bathroom on the first floor and a full bathroom on the basement level. The lot occupancy would be increased by 1% and at 19% is below the 40% maximum allowed. The rear portion of the house has a rear yard of 18.6 feet which is less than the 25 feet minimum required. The addition would be in line with the existing rear portion of the building and retain the 18.6 feet rear yard.



**IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF**

R-1-B	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Width § 401	30 ft. min.	100 ft.	100 ft.	None required
Lot Area § 401	3,000 sq. ft. min.	5,182 sq. ft.	5,182 sq. ft.	None required
Lot Occupancy § 403	40% max.	18%	19%	None required
Rear Yard § 404	25 ft. min.	18.6 ft.	18.6 ft.	Required - Expanding a nonconformity
Side Yard § 405	8 ft. min.	13.3 (existing)	13.3 ft.	None required

**V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS**

**223 ZONING RELIEF FOR ADDITIONS TO ONE-FAMILY DWELLINGS OR FLATS (R-1) AND FOR NEW OR ENLARGED ACCESSORY STRUCTURES**

*223.1 An addition to a one-family dwelling or flat, in those Residence districts where a flat is permitted, or a new or enlarged accessory structure on the same lot as a one-family dwelling or flat, shall be permitted even though the addition or accessory structure does not comply with all of the requirements of §§ 401, 403, 404, 405, 406, and 2001.3 shall be permitted as a special exception if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment under § 3104, subject to the provisions of this section.*

Single family dwellings are a permitted use in the R-1-B zone. The Applicant is requesting special exception review under § 223 for § 404, Rear Yard and § 2001.3, Expanding a non-conforming rear side yard.

223.2 *The addition 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 addition would be similar to the existing rear portion of the building and due to its location and size would not cast any shadows onto the adjacent residences or properties.

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

The location of the addition would not result in views that would unduly compromise the privacy of the residential properties to the east, west or south of the property. The addition would allow views across Aspen Street into the parking lot but would not compromise the use of the parking lot.

(c) *The addition or accessory structure, together with the original 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 subject street frontage; and*

The proposed addition would be visible from Aspen Street but not from Laurel Street. However, the small 42 square foot addition would not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale and pattern of houses along the street as it would be incorporated into the existing addition and be the same color and height above grade. The proposed addition has been reviewed by Historic Preservation Staff and has been deemed compatible to the historic district.

(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 drawings, including a site plan, elevations and photographs, which sufficiently represent the relationship of the proposed addition to adjacent buildings and views from Aspen Street.

223.3 *The lot occupancy of all new and existing structures on the lot shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) in the R-1 and R-2 Districts or seventy percent (70%) in the R-3, R-4, and R-5 Districts.*

The lot occupancy would be increased from 18% to 19% which is below the 40% maximum permitted as a matter-of-right and 50% maximum permitted within the R-1-B district with the approval of a special exception.

223.4 *The Board 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.*

The Office of Planning has no recommendations for special treatments for this application. The proposed addition has been reviewed by Historic Preservation Staff and has been deemed compatible to the historic district.

223.5 *This section may not be used to permit the introduction or expansion of a nonconforming use as a special exception.*

The house would continue to be used as a single family residence.

## **VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

The property is within ANC-4B which reviewed and voted to recommend approval of the requested special exceptions at their June 22, 2015 meeting (Exhibit 29). There are also a number of letters of support which have been placed in the record.