

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment  
**FROM:** Shepard Beamon, Development Review Specialist  
 JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review  
**DATE:** July 18, 2025

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case 21336 Request for special exception relief from the uniform roof height requirements to permit east and west expansions of existing penthouse habitable space within the White House vicinity at 1750 New York Avenue NW.

### **I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION**

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

- Penthouse Habitable Space, Subtitle C § 1501.1(e), pursuant to Subtitle X § 901.2 (penthouse habitable space is not permitted on any building within a defined area near the White House; habitable penthouse proposed); and
- Penthouse Habitable Space, Subtitle C § 1503.4(a) - Walls enclosing a penthouse or rooftop structure, including screening around uncovered mechanical equipment, shall have walls enclosing a penthouse habitable space of a single, uniform height. Existing: 16 ft. 2.5 in. (Habitable) or 20.6 ft. (Mech. (nonconforming)); Proposed: 13 ft. 9 in. (West addition), 13 ft. 2 in. (East addition)

### **II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

Address	1750 New York Avenue NW
Applicant	Goulston & Storrs for United Unions, Inc.
Legal Description	Square 171, Lot 33
Ward, ANC	Ward 2 / ANC 2A
Zone	D-2
Lot Characteristics	The irregularly shaped corner lot has frontage on 18 <sup>th</sup> Street NW to the west, New York Avenue NW to the north, and E Street NW to the south.
Existing Development	The property is improved with an 8-story office building with ground-floor restaurant and café.
Adjacent Properties & Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Mainly office buildings and the White House and grounds are one block further east.
Proposed Development	The applicant proposes to expand the existing habitable penthouse space for conference and amenity space.

### III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

D-2 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Density (FAR) I § 509	3.5 Non-Residential; 6.0 Residential (7.2 w/ IZ)	5.29	No change	None requested
Height I § 510	90 ft. max. (100 ft. max. w/ IZ)	89 ft.	No change	None requested
Height I § 510	20 ft./1 story max. penthouse	16.2 ft. (Habitable); 20.6 ft. (Mechanical – existing nonconforming)	13 ft. 9 in. (West addition), 13 ft. 2 in. (East addition)	None requested
Lot Occupancy I § 202	100% max.	71%	No change	None requested
Rear Yard I § 205	2.5 in. per foot of height (20 ft.)	45 ft.	No change	None requested
Penthouse Habitable Space C § 1501.1(e)	Penthouse habitable space is not permitted on any building within specified area proximate to the White House without a special exception.	Penthouse related to office use	approx. 509 sq. ft. of additional penthouse amenity space related to office use	<b>Relief requested</b>
Penthouse Height C § 1503.4(a)	Walls enclosing penthouse habitable space shall be of a single, uniform height	16.2 ft.	13 ft. 9 in. (West addition), 13 ft. 2 in. (East addition)	<b>Relief requested</b>

### IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

#### A. Special Exception Relief from Subtitle C § 1501.1(e), Penthouse Habitable Space and C § 1503.4(a) enclosing walls of unequal height

*i. Is the special exception in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps?*

The existing office building was constructed in 1972. The subject penthouse has existed on the building prior to the penthouse zoning text amendment (08-06) that requires a special exception for habitable penthouse use in the White House vicinity. The office building is a conforming use in the D-2 zone, and the proposed conference and associated amenity space in the penthouse would further the intent of the amendments to the penthouse regulations to allow habitable space.

The intent of the special exception requirement at this location is to provide for a review of potential security concerns in the area around the White House. The applicant has received an email indicating no security concerns from the United States Secret Service in [Exhibit 14](#). Furthermore, the proposed expansions would have a 14-foot setback from

the roof's edge, which meets the minimum penthouse setback requirement of an equal distance from the façade wall.

According to the applicant, the proposed penthouse additions are set at lower heights in response to requests from the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) to reduce visual impact. Although the proposed heights of the penthouse expansions are not uniform with the existing penthouse height, they will be lower than the maximum height allowed for penthouses.

*ii. Would the special exception appear to tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property?*

The proposed penthouse expansions should not adversely affect the use of neighboring properties. The additional habitable penthouse area would face east, towards the adjacent building, and west, towards Rawlins Park. The applicant has indicated that the proposed addition would comply with the penthouse development standards, including height and setbacks, which should minimize views from the street. As previously mentioned, the proposed additions should pose any security threats or concerns.

**B. Housing Linkage**

Pursuant to Subtitle C Chapter 15, the additional penthouse space would be subject to a Housing Production Trust Fund contribution, to be determined at the time of permit applications, and the applicant will adhere to as stated in their application.

**V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES**

By email to OP, DDOT has indicated no objection to this application. No comments from other district agencies were received at the time this report was filed to the record.

**VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION**

As of the date of this report, ANC 2A has not provided comments to the record.

**VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS TO DATE**

No comments from the community had been added to the record at the time this report was filed.

**VIII. U.S. SECRET SERVICE COMMENTS**

At Exhibit 14 is an email from the USSS White House Branch indicating no issues or security with the proposed work.

### Location Map

