



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Matt Jesick, Development Review Specialist
MBR Maxine Brown-Roberts, Associate Director for Development Review

DATE: June 5, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA #21437 – 1155 Dahlia Street, NW – Request for relief to establish a fast food establishment

I. RECOMMENDATION

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

- K § 915.2(d) Fast Food Establishment, pursuant to X § 901 (Fast food use permitted by special exception).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Applicant	HDR Holdings, LLC represented by Venable LLP
Address and Legal Description	1155 Dahlia Street, NW; Square 2950, Lot 909
Ward / ANC	Ward 4, ANC 4A
Zone	WR-3 (Walter Reed Moderate to Medium Density Mixed Use)
Historic District / Resource	Walter Reed Army Medical Center Historic District
Lot Characteristics and Existing Development	The subject site is a vacant retail bay within an existing mixed use, 6-story, residential and retail building. The address of the building is 1155 Dahlia Street, NW, with Dahlia Street on the south side of the building. The exact location is at the northwest corner of the building, at the corner of 12 th Street and the public park and plaza that connects 12 th Street and Georgia Avenue.
Adjacent Properties and Neighborhood Character	The area around the proposed restaurant location is characterized by restaurants, cafés, retail uses, and the active public park and plaza. Nearby are a number of other similarly-sized mixed use buildings.
Proposal	Establish a fast food establishment.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND RELIEF REQUESTED

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	EXISTING	PROPOSED	RELIEF
Fast Food Establishment K § 915.2(d)	Fast food permitted by special exception	Vacant retail bay	Fast food establishment	Requested

IV. ANALYSIS

Special Exception for a Fast Food Establishment – Subtitle K § 915.2(d), pursuant to X § 901

The applicant requests special exception approval in order to establish a fast food establishment in the WR-3 zone. The relevant criteria are reviewed below.

*K § 915.2 The following uses shall be permitted as a special exception WR-2, WR-3, WR-4, and WR-5 zones if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment under Subtitle X, Chapter 9, subject to any applicable provisions of each section:
[...]*

(d) Food establishment and a fast food establishment that meets the definition of a food delivery services shall be permitted by special exception, subject to the following conditions:

(1) No part of a lot on which a fast food establishment or food delivery business is located shall be within twenty-five feet (25 ft.) of a residential zone, including WR-1, WR-7, and WR-8, unless separated therefrom by a street or alley;

The subject lot is separated from the RA-2 zone to the east by Georgia Avenue. There are no other residential zones adjacent to the lot.

(2) Any outdoor refuse dumpsters shall be housed in a three (3)-sided brick enclosure equal in height to the dumpster or six feet (6 ft.) high, whichever is greater, with the entrance to the enclosure including an opaque gate;

The dumpsters for this use will be housed inside the building.

(3) The use shall not include a drive-through;

The proposed use would not include a drive-through.

(4) There shall be no customer entrance in the side or rear of a building that faces an alley containing a zone boundary line for a residential zone;

The customer entrance would not face a zone boundary line.

(5) There shall be adequate facilities to allow deliveries to be made and trash to be collected without obstructing public rights-of-way or unreasonably obstructing parking spaces, aisles, or driveways on the site;

According to the application, the building has a dedicated entrance for commercial deliveries and

trash collection on Dahlia Street. The floorplan for the use seems to indicate a direct connection to the service hallway.

- (6) *The use shall be designed and operated so as not to become objectionable to neighboring properties because of noise, sounds, odors, lights, hours of operation; and*

The area around the proposed restaurant location is characterized by restaurants, cafés, retail uses, and an active public park and plaza. The proposed use would complement the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed hours of operation, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 AM, would be typical for an active retail area. According to Exhibit 8, Page 4, “There will be no impacts from the proposed Wonder restaurant on the residential properties within the building as all operations will occur inside and at the front of the restaurant location.”

- (7) *The use shall be located and designed so as to create no dangerous or other objectionable traffic conditions;*

The proposed use would continue the pattern of existing restaurant uses in the vicinity, that make use of street parking for customers and food delivery. The applicant states that most deliveries are expected to be made by bicycle (Ex. 8, p. 4), so should not impact parking or vehicular traffic in the vicinity. The loading and trash accommodations for the use would be the same as for other commercial tenants in the building and use common facilities within the building.

Subtitle X § 901.2

- 901.2 (a) *[Granting the special exception] Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;*

The special exception use is deemed to be a permissible use in this zone, as long as the application meets the specific special exception criteria. Given that this application successfully addresses the criteria of K § 915.2(d), granting the special exception would not impair the intent of the Regulations.

- 901.2(b) *[Granting the special exception] Will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;*

As addressed in the above analysis, the requested special exception for a fast food establishment should not unduly affect the use neighboring property. There should be no undue impacts regarding factors such as light, air, privacy, traffic or noise.

V. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The design of the building was reviewed for historic preservation design guidelines compliance; The use would not alter the design of the building.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

As of this writing there are no comments from other District agencies in the record.

VII. ANC COMMENTS

As of this writing there are no comments from the ANC in the record.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of this writing there are no comments from the community in the record.

IX. VICINITY MAP

