

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Matt Jesick, Project Manager
JLS
Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director

DATE: November 22, 2019

SUBJECT: Public Hearing Report for:

- 06-11Q, George Washington University Campus Plan Modification;
- 06-12Q, George Washington University First Stage PUD Modification of Significance;
- 06-11R, Further Processing for Thurston Hall; and
- 01-17E, 1959 E Street, NW Modification of Significance.

I. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

George Washington University (GWU) seeks to renovate Thurston Hall, a residential dormitory on campus, and has submitted four applications in order to accomplish that objective. On September 23, 2019, the Commission set down 06-12Q and 01-17E for a public hearing, and determined that they would be heard simultaneously with the other applications not requiring setdown, 06-11Q and 06-11R.

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends approval of all four applications.

- The PUD Modifications of Significance, 06-12Q and 01-17E, and the campus plan modification, 06-11Q, which request temporary modifications of conditions of approval regarding the location of student housing, are not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan or the intent of the approved PUDs and campus plan, which seek to minimize impacts of the university on the surrounding community.
- The Further Processing application, 06-11R, would further the campus plan goal of accommodating students on campus. The site was identified in the plan as a location for student housing and the renovations Thurston Hall would result in its continued use as a location for first-year student housing. The proposed design calls for minimal changes to the exterior of the building. The application meets the special exception criteria for approval of a further processing contained in Subtitle X, Section 101.

OP also recommends approval of the associated zoning relief requested by the applicant for lot occupancy, penthouse setback and the mechanical equipment screen wall height. For a complete description of the zoning relief, please refer to Section IX of this report.

II. LOCATION, ZONE, USES AND PLAN DESIGNATIONS FOR RELEVANT BLDS.

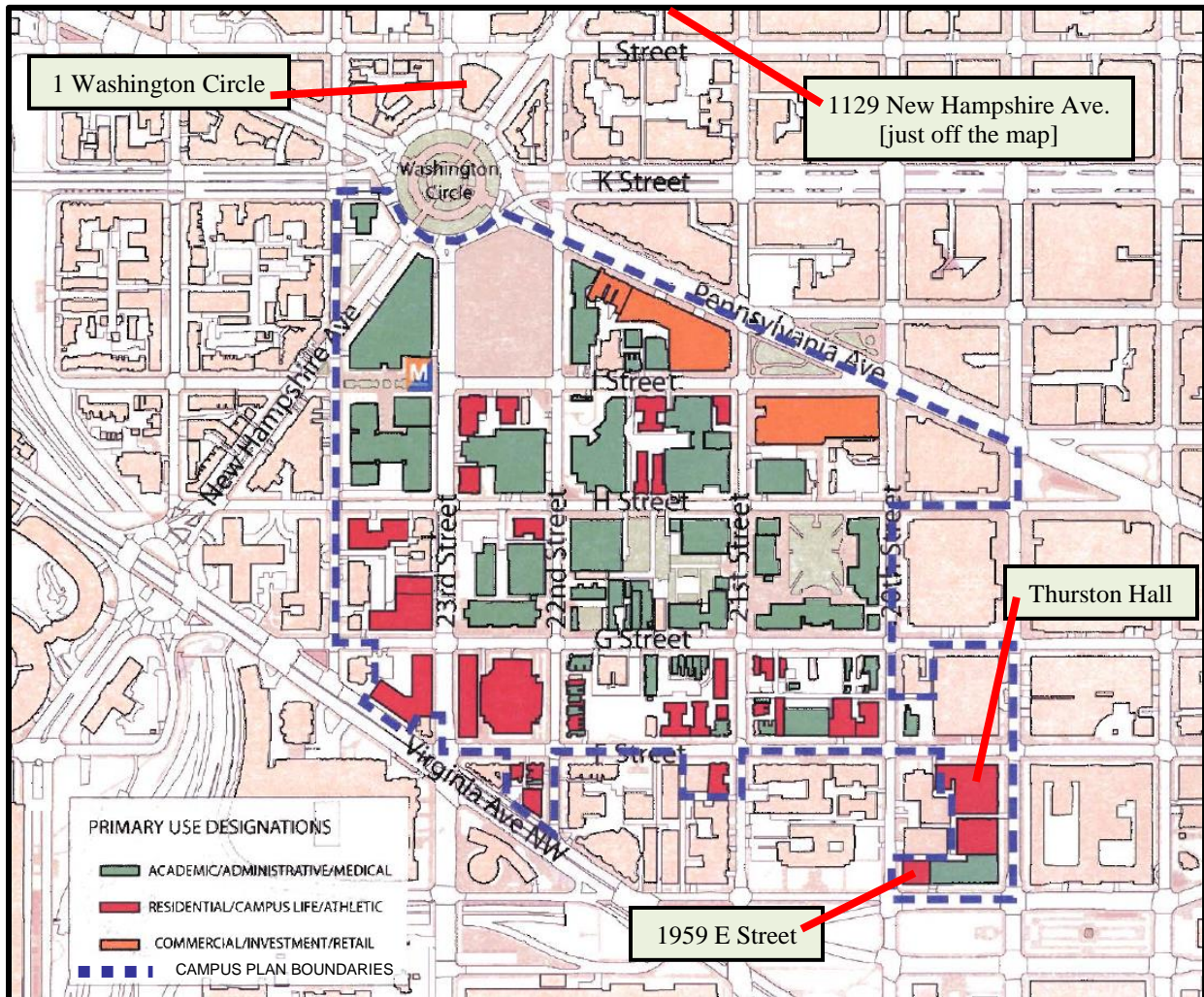
Building	Address	Square and Lot	Within Campus Plan Boundaries?	Present Use	Proposed Use During Renovation Period	Zone or PUD Zone	Comprehensive Plan Land Use Maps
Thurston Hall	1900 F Street	Square 122, Lot 825	Yes	Housing for 1,080 first-year students	Renovation	MU-2	GPM – Institutional FLUM – Institutional
1959 E Street	1959 E Street	Square 122, Lot 29 (portion)	Yes (subject to a PUD which pre-dates the campus plan PUD)	Housing for 189 juniors, seniors, graduate students, and students in honors programs	Housing for sophomores, juniors and seniors	MU-9 (PUD Zone)	GPM – Institutional FLUM – Institutional
1 Washington Circle	1 Washington Circle	Square 52, Lot 805	No	Hotel owned by GWU	Housing for 305 juniors and seniors, and maybe staff; restaurant and hotel conference facilities would continue operations	RA-5	GPM – Institutional FLUM – High Dens. Res.
The Aston	1129 New Hampshire Avenue	Square 72, Lot 7	No	Housing for 248 law and graduate students and staff	Housing for 238 juniors and seniors	RA-5	GPM – Institutional FLUM – High Dens. Res.

III. SUMMARY OF OP COMMENTS

OP has no comments and recommends approval of the applications.

IV. SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The renovation of Thurston Hall would result in the temporary relocation of students throughout the GWU campus as well as two properties close to campus. The vicinity map below, taken from the campus plan, identifies the locations of the four properties that would be primarily involved in the requested PUD modifications. Photos of the subject properties are on the next page.



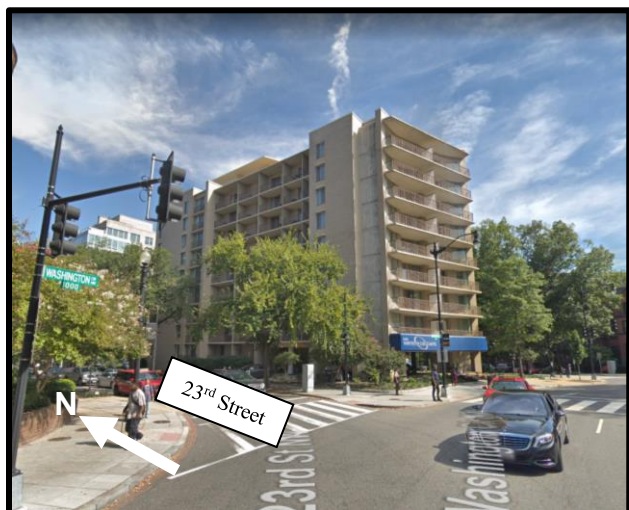
Excerpt from 2006 Campus Plan, with additional labels by OP



Thurston Hall



1959 E Street



1 Washington Circle



1129 New Hampshire

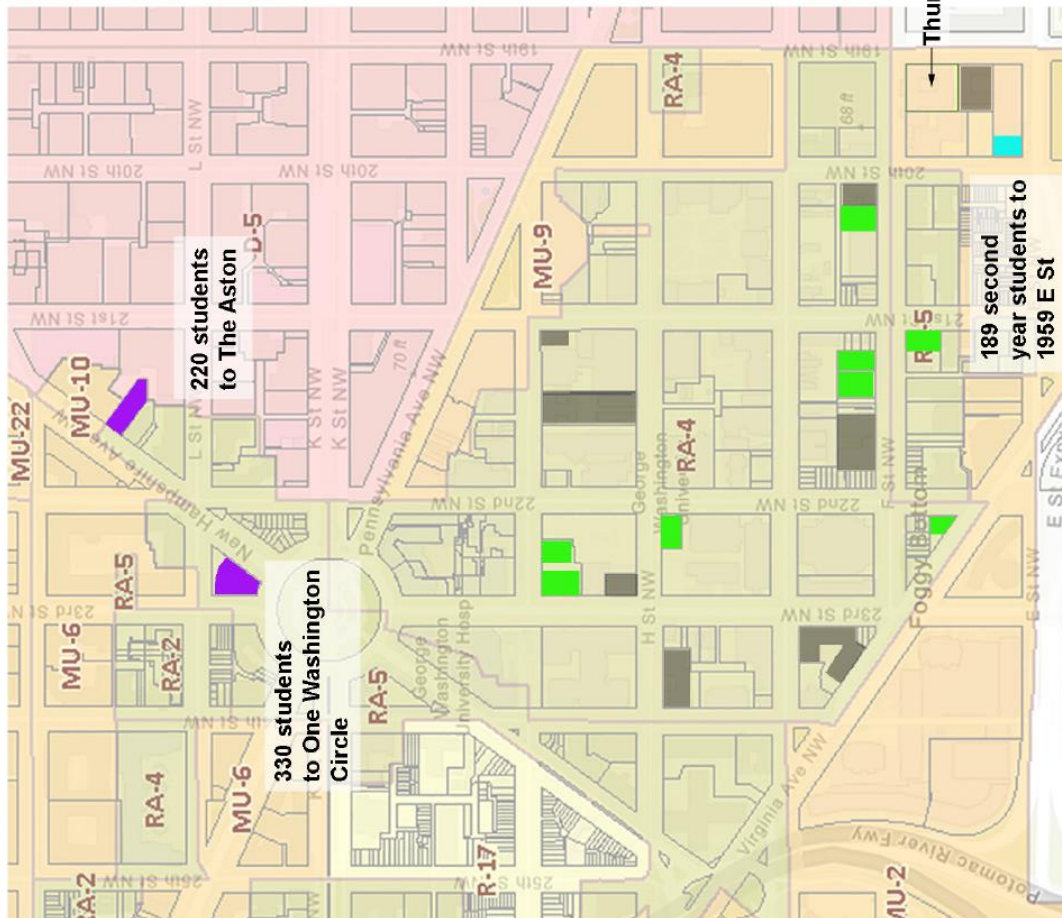
V. PUD MODIFICATIONS AND CAMPUS PLAN AMENDMENT DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

GWU requests amendments to conditions of two PUDs and the campus plan in order to facilitate the movement of students resulting from the renovation of Thurston Hall, a 1,080-bed dorm for first-year students. During the two-year renovation, the students that would have been housed in Thurston will instead be housed in other dorms on campus. Keeping first-year students on campus would be in conformance with the campus plan. However, the movement of first-year students would displace other students to residential locations where they are currently not permitted to live, per PUD/campus plan conditions. Some sophomores would live at 1959 E Street, NW, and some juniors and seniors would live at 1 Washington Circle and 1129 New Hampshire Avenue (The Aston). Law and graduate students currently at the Aston would find housing on the open market. OP requested that the applicant provide a map showing the exact dorms where students from Thurston Hall would be housed. Please see that image on the next page.

Temporary Relocation of Student Beds Thurston Hall 2020 – 2022

- Existing residence halls that will temporarily accommodate beds for first year students
- Existing residence hall limited to third and fourth year students that will temporarily accommodate beds for second year students
- New temporary residence halls limited to third and fourth year students
- Residence halls not impacted

1,080	Thurston Hall existing first year beds
-198	student beds accommodated in existing capacity
-550	student beds accommodated by relocation of third and fourth year beds
-200	200 enrollment reduction (over a two year duration)
-132	minus 132 additional study abroad participants or further enrollment reduction
0	total beds not accommodated



Thurston Hall

220 students to The Aston

330 students to One Washington Circle

189 second year students to 1959 E St

In order to accommodate the movement of students, the applicant requests that the following two conditions of **ZC #06-12** be modified with temporary conditions, only during the period of Thurston's renovation. The language of the conditions has been paraphrased:

Current Condition P-8(b) – No undergraduate students may be housed at The Aston (1129 New Hampshire, Ave.).

Temporary Condition 1 – Permit juniors and seniors to live in The Aston.

Current Condition C-6 – Provide on-campus beds for 70% of the full time undergraduate population up to 8,000 students, plus 1-to-1 beds for all students above 8,000.

Temporary Condition 2 – Provide, on-campus or in The Aston or in 1 Washington Circle, housing for 70% of the full time undergraduate population.

In addition, the applicant proposes a third temporary condition to clarify that the use of 1 Washington Circle for housing does not violate Condition P-1, which allows the university to use investment properties, but not for student housing:

Temporary Condition 3 – For the avoidance of doubt, the University's use of One Washington Circle for undergraduate housing as part of the Temporary Housing Plan does not violate Condition P-1 of the Campus Plan / PUD Order.

For application **#01-17** (Order #746-C) the applicant requests the temporary modification of one condition:

Current Condition 8 – Housing shall be restricted to juniors, seniors, graduate students and students enrolled in an honors program.

Temporary Condition 8 – Housing shall be restricted to sophomores as well as the other groups already permitted.

The head count of 1,080 students would be matched by the following accommodations, relocations and enrollment reductions:

198 existing surplus on-campus beds
+ 330 beds in One Washington Circle
+ 220 beds in The Aston
+ 200 fewer students through enrollment reductions in Fall 2019 and Fall 2020
+ 132 fewer students through either increased study abroad or additional enrollment reductions
<hr/>
= 1,080

Analysis

One intent of the campus-wide first stage PUD and the PUD for 1959 E Street was to allow the University to grow within the campus boundaries, but to minimize the University's impacts on and growth in the surrounding neighborhoods. Specifically, the University committed to house all freshmen and sophomores on campus (ZC #06-12, Condition C-7), and provide on-campus housing for a percentage of all undergraduates (ibid., Condition C-6). GWU also agreed to prohibit undergraduates from living in certain off-campus buildings, including 1129 New Hampshire Avenue (ibid., Condition P-8(b)). Sophomores are also prohibited from living at 1959 E Street (ZC Order #746-C, Condition 8).

The proposed applications are not inconsistent with the intent of the approved PUDs and campus plan. The relocation of students would be temporary – only during the period when Thurston Hall is under renovation – and would be limited in numerical and geographic scope. Furthermore, the applicant has outlined a strategy to minimize any impacts that may occur from undergraduates living off-campus. Please refer to #06-12Q, Exhibit 1, pp. 8-10. Because of these factors, and because the proposals would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, OP can recommend approval of the PUD modifications and the campus plan amendment. For further Comprehensive Plan description, see Sections VII and VIII of this report.

VI. FURTHER PROCESSING DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

George Washington University proposes to renovate Thurston Hall, a dormitory for first-year students. The dorm currently has approximately 1,080 beds. Following the renovation, the building would house approximately 825 freshmen. One goal of the renovation is to have a facility that “will foster greater engagement and a sense of community among students” (Ex. 3, p. 1). In addition to renovating the actual living spaces, the project would create an open-air canopy over the central courtyard, to allow that space a greater degree of use for three seasons out of the year. Air flow and natural light would be provided by deconstructing three floors from the center of the south wall of the building. That void would be filled at the wall plane by brick recreating the exact fenestration at the 7th floor, and, at the 8th and 9th floors, metal fins echoing the fenestration pattern, but open to the atmosphere. The interior mass of the building would also be eroded in that location, creating step downs into the interior courtyard. See, for example, the building section at Sheet 22 of Exhibit 13F. The usability of the courtyard would be enhanced through landscaping, lighting, seating, repainting the existing red brick, and the protection provided by the canopy. At the penthouse level, the design proposes student gathering and function rooms, and at the basement a new student dining facility would be provided. The building would have 785 square feet of green roof and 2,850 square feet of solar panels. At the main entrance on F Street, the applicant would create additional seating areas, but maintain the overall landscaped berm around the building.

The floor area of the building would decrease from 190,430 sf to 186,789 sf, an FAR reduction from 6.89 to 6.77 for this lot. The zoning height would remain 86.5 feet.

Analysis

University or college use is permitted as a special exception as part of a campus plan. In addition to the campus plan application itself, reviews are required for individual buildings in “further processing” applications, which may be evaluated concurrently with campus plan amendments, if necessary. Subtitle X Section 101 of the Zoning Regulations provides standards for reviewing campus plan and further processing applications. OP’s analysis of the application against those criteria is below.

101.1 Education use by a college or university shall be permitted as a special exception subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission after its determination that the use meets the applicable standards and condition of this chapter.

George Washington University is an educational use with concomitant residential dormitory facilities. The proposed renovations to Thurston Hall would upgrade an important building for housing first-year students, bringing the facility up to modern standards and incorporating adjunct uses such as student dining, study and gathering spaces.

101.2 The uses shall be located so that they are not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, parking, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.

Thurston Hall was identified in the campus plan as a location for student housing, and it would continue that function in the future. One overall goal of the campus plan was to minimize impacts on adjacent neighborhoods, and by providing housing for first-year students on-campus, Thurston Hall would continue to contribute to that goal.

101.3 Any commercial use customarily incidental to a university use in an R, RF, or RA zone, or as an adjunct use to a university building, shall be subject to the following conditions:

- a) There shall be a demonstrated and necessary relationship between the use and the university functions;*
- b) The total floor area of all commercial uses, including basement or cellar space, shall occupy no more than ten percent (10%) of the gross floor area of the total campus plan floor area; and*
- c) The commercial use shall be located so that it will not become objectionable to non-university residential neighbors due to hours of operation, noise, parking, loading, lighting, trash, or other operational characteristics that are not customarily associated with a residential use.*

The existing residential use is not located in the R, RF or RA zones. The proposed renovations would not change the zoning of the site.

101.4 *The campus plan process shall not serve as a process to create general commercial activities or developments unrelated to the educational mission of the applicant or that would be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*

The proposal would not create general commercial activities on the campus unrelated to the mission of the university.

101.5 *The following development standards shall apply to the maximum total density of all buildings and structures on the campus in an R, RF, RA, or RC-1 zone:*

TABLE X § 101.5: MAXIMUM TOTAL DENSITY OF ALL BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Zone	Maximum Height (Feet)	Maximum Floor Area Ratio
All R and RF zones	50	1.8
RA-1, RA-2, RA-6, RA-7, RA-8, RC-1	50	1.8
RA-3, RA-4, RA-5, RA-9, RA-10	90	3.5

Thurston Hall is not located in an R, RF or RA zone. However, upon completion of the renovation, the zoning height of the building would not change from the existing 86.5 feet, and the FAR for residentially zoned portions of the campus would be 3.12, below the 3.69 permitted by the campus plan (Ex. 3, p. 19).

101.6 *Because of permissive increases as applicable to normal bulk requirements in the low-density zones regulated by this title, it is the intent of this subsection to prevent unreasonable campus expansion into improved low-density zones.*

The existing residential use is not located in a low-density zone. The proposed renovations would not change the zoning.

101.7 *In calculating floor area ratio (FAR), the land area shall not include public streets and alleys, but may include interior private streets and alleys within the campus boundaries.*

The FAR calculation for the subject site is based only on the lot, which includes private alleys. The adjacent public streets were not included in the calculation.

- 101.8 *As a prerequisite to requesting a further processing for each college or university use, the applicant shall have submitted to the Zoning Commission for its approval a plan for developing the campus as a whole, showing the location, height, and bulk, where appropriate, of all present and proposed improvements including, but not limited to, the following:*
- a) *Buildings and parking and loading facilities;*
 - b) *Screening, signs, streets, and public utility facilities;*
 - c) *Athletic and other recreational facilities; and*
 - d) *A description of all activities conducted or to be conducted on the campus, and of the capacity of all present and proposed campus development.*

In 2007 the Commission approved cases 06-11 and 06-12, a combined campus plan and campus-wide first stage PUD. The merged applications set forth overall goals for the campus; identified the location of all current and future campus uses; identified locations, heights and floor area for future buildings; identified current and future parking facilities; and set enrollment limits and restrictions on the site of student housing. The current further processing application for Thurston Hall is made pursuant to the guidelines of the campus plan.

- 101.9 *The further processing of specific buildings, structures, and uses within an approved campus plan shall be processed as a special exception unless the campus plan approval was included in an order granting a first-stage planned unit development (PUD) for the campus, in which case the further processing shall be in the form of second-stage planned unit development applications filed consistent with the conditions of the approved campus plan/PUD.*

The present applications are appropriate for the proposed project and follow the conditions set forth in the approved campus plan. According to Conditions P-2 and P-14 of Order #06-11/06-12, only development projects resulting in a change of use or an increase in floor area require a second-stage PUD approval. In this case, therefore, the only necessary applications are the further processing for the design of Thurston Hall (06-11R), and the campus plan and PUD modifications (06-11Q and 06-12Q) and the modification to 1959 E Street (01-17E) in order to implement the temporary housing plan.

- 101.10 *Within a reasonable distance of the college or university campus, and subject to compliance with Subtitle X § 101.2, the Zoning Commission may also permit the interim use of land or improved property with any use that the Zoning Commission may determine is a proper college or university function. The land need not be included in the campus plan. When a major new building that has been proposed in a campus plan is instead moved off-campus, the previously designated site shall not be designated for, or devoted to, a different major new building unless the Zoning Commission has approved an amendment to the campus plan applicable to the site; provided, that for this purpose a major new building is defined as one specifically identified in the campus plan.*

The applicant is not proposing an interim use of property.

101.11 In reviewing and deciding a campus plan application or new building construction pursuant to a campus plan, the Zoning Commission shall consider, to the extent they are relevant, the policies of the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

As part of Zoning Commission cases #06-11/06-12, the Commission found that the overall campus plan was not inconsistent with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposal would further a number of policies from the Educational Facilities and Near Northwest elements, and would not be inconsistent with the land use maps of the Plan.

101.12 As an integral part of the application requesting approval of new building construction pursuant to a campus plan, the college or university shall certify and document that the proposed building or amendment is within the FAR limit for the campus as a whole, based upon the computation included in the most recently approved campus plan and the FARs of any other buildings constructed or demolished since the campus plan was approved.

According to page 19 of Exhibit 3, upon completion of the renovation the FAR for residentially zoned portions of the campus would be 3.12, below the 3.69 permitted by the campus plan.

101.13 Pursuant to Subtitle Z § 405.1, as soon as the application is accepted, the Office of Zoning shall refer the application to the Office of Planning, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Energy and Environment for review and written reports.

As of this writing the record contains no reports from other District agencies.

101.14 Approval of a campus plan shall be based on the determination by the Zoning Commission that the application will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps, and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property, in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps, subject to the special conditions specified in this section.

It is the intent of the Regulations that university uses should be compatible with their surroundings, especially in lower density residential zones. The proposed renovation would not result in increased building height, and in fact would decrease the FAR of the building and decrease the number of student beds. Given these facts, OP concludes that Thurston Hall would

continue to be consistent with the existing scale of buildings on the campus, and should have no detrimental impacts on nearby properties.

101.15 Small deviations from plans approved under further processing that are determined necessary by the Zoning Administrator for compliance with life, safety, or building codes, may be permitted without an amendment to a further processing provided the deviation does not result in an increase in gross floor area of more than four-hundred and fifty square feet (450 sq. ft.) and the addition shall only be used for purposes of ingress, egress, or handicap access.

OP does not anticipate that deviations from the plans for the building would be required, should the application be approved by the Commission.

101.16 A further processing of a campus building shall not be filed simultaneously with a full campus plan application. However, an amendment to an approved campus plan may be considered simultaneously with the further processing if determined necessary by the Zoning Commission.

Pursuant to this section, the applicant requests a campus plan amendment as well as a further processing.

VII. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

The applications would be consistent with policies from the Educational Facilities Element and the Near Northwest Area Element of the Comprehensive Plan, which encourage the university to house students on-campus and seek to maintain the quality of life in the residential neighborhoods surrounding the campus.

Educational Facilities Element

Policy EDU-3.3.2: Balancing University Growth and Neighborhood Needs

Encourage the growth and development of local colleges and universities in a manner that recognizes the role these institutions play in contributing to the District's character, culture, economy, and is also consistent with and supports community improvement and neighborhood conservation objectives. Discourage university actions that would adversely affect the character or quality of life in surrounding residential areas.

Policy EDU-3.3.3: Campus Plan Requirements

Continue to require campus plans for colleges and universities located in residential and mixed use zone districts. These plans should be prepared by the institutions themselves, subject to District review and approval, and should address issues raised by the surrounding communities. Each campus plan should include provisions that ensure that

the institution is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other similar conditions.

Policy EDU-3.3.4: Student Housing

Encourage the provision of on-campus student housing in order to reduce college and university impacts on the housing stock in adjacent neighborhoods. Consider measures to address the demand for student housing generated by non-District institutions with local branches.

Near Northwest Area Element

Policy NNW-1.1.8: Student Housing

Support and promote efforts by the area's universities to develop on-campus dormitories in order to reduce pressure on housing in nearby neighborhoods.

Plan text, page 21-29

The objectives for land use decisions in the Foggy Bottom/West End area are to conserve and enhance the existing residential neighborhood, maintain and improve existing parkland, and balance the needs of local residents with the needs of the university to carry out its academic mission. Efforts should continue to retain the residential balance of the area, ensure adherence to the Campus Plan, and proactively address neighborhood and university concerns.

Policy NNW-2.5.1: GWU/Foggy Bottom Coordination

Encourage continued efforts to improve communication and coordination between George Washington University (GWU) and the Foggy Bottom and West End communities. Campus Plans for the university must demonstrate how the campus can manage its academic mission within its current boundaries and enrollment. These efforts must ensure protection of the residential character of Foggy Bottom.

Policy NNW-2.5.2: Student Housing and Parking Issues

Support efforts by George Washington University to place students in residential facilities within the campus boundaries or at the Mount Vernon campus to alleviate pressure on the housing stock in Foggy Bottom/West End and to develop transportation demand management programs and facilities that reduce parking problems on residential streets in the campus area.

VIII. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE MAPS

The entire GWU campus, as well as the two off-campus properties in question, are shown on the Comprehensive Plan's Generalized Policy Map as suitable for Institutional uses. The Future Land Use Map also designates the two on-campus buildings for Institutional uses and designates the two off-campus buildings for High Density Residential uses. The proposed use of the buildings for housing would not be inconsistent with these designations.

IX. ZONING RELIEF

In conjunction with the Further Processing application, the applicant has requested the following zoning relief. OP's analysis is below and recommends approval of the requested relief.

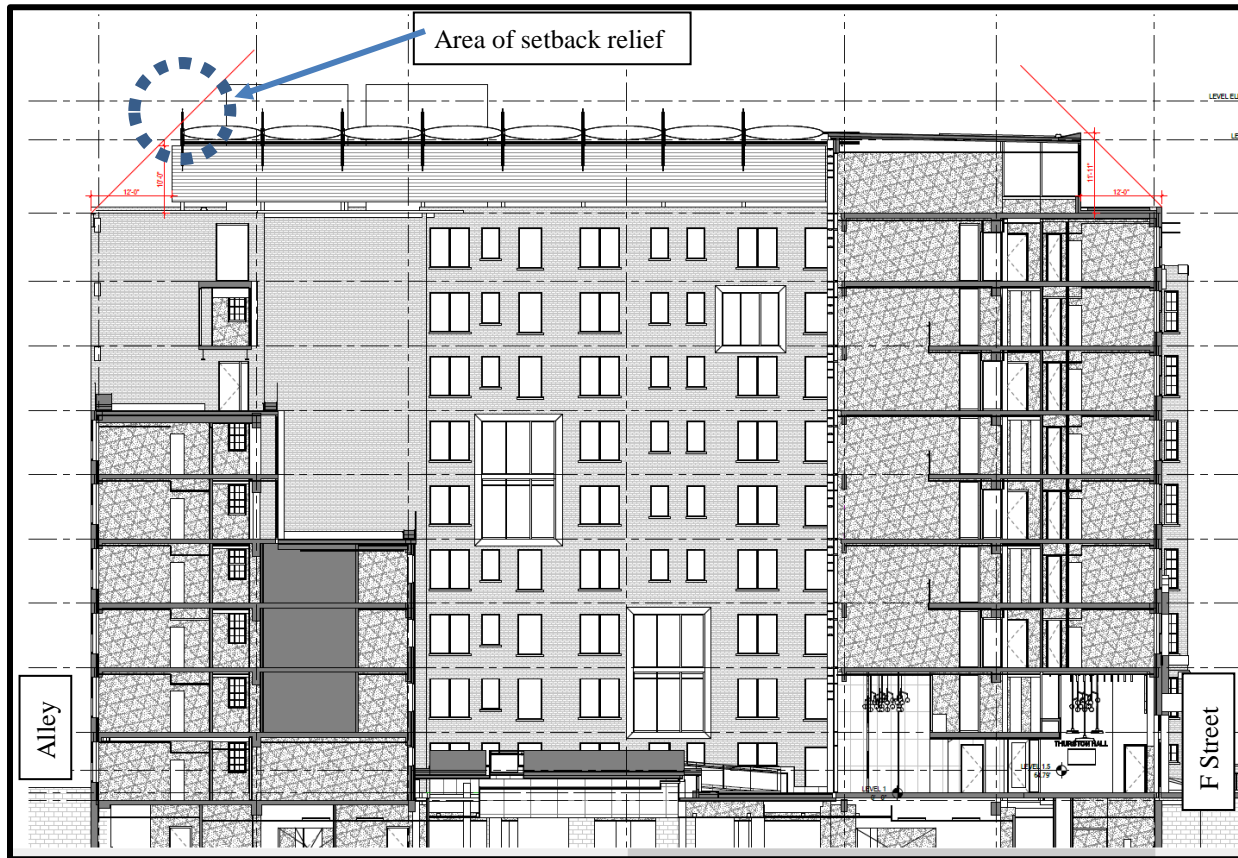
1. Lot Occupancy (G § 304, relief pursuant to G § 1200, 73.4% existing, 80% permitted, 84% proposed);
2. Penthouse Setback – Canopy Supportive Structure (C § 1502.1(b), relief pursuant to C § 1504, 1-to-1 setback required, less than 1-to-1 provided for the support structure of the canopy at the south side of the building);
3. Mechanical Equipment Screen Wall Height (C §§ 1500.8 and 1500.9; relief pursuant to C § 1504; Screen walls must match height of the mechanical equipment; Cooling towers to exceed height of surrounding screen wall).

Lot Occupancy

The existing lot occupancy of 73.4% would be increased only through the construction of the canopy over the internal courtyard; The structure of the overall building would not be increased in size. The special exception can be granted if the relief would be in harmony with the intent of the MU zone and the Regulations and would not adversely affect neighboring property. In this case, the canopy would increase the utility of the interior courtyard space for the students who live in the building. Because the footprint of the building would not expand, there would be no impacts from the technical increase in lot occupancy. At the roof level, the canopy would be similar in size and massing to a potential penthouse on a building that did not have a courtyard. It should not be highly visible from the ground or from adjacent buildings.

Penthouse Setback – Canopy Supportive Structure and Cooling Tower Screening Walls

The structure supporting the canopy would not meet the required one-to-one setback from the south building wall. Please refer to the image below, which was excerpted from Case #06-11R, Exhibit 13F1, Sheet 5.

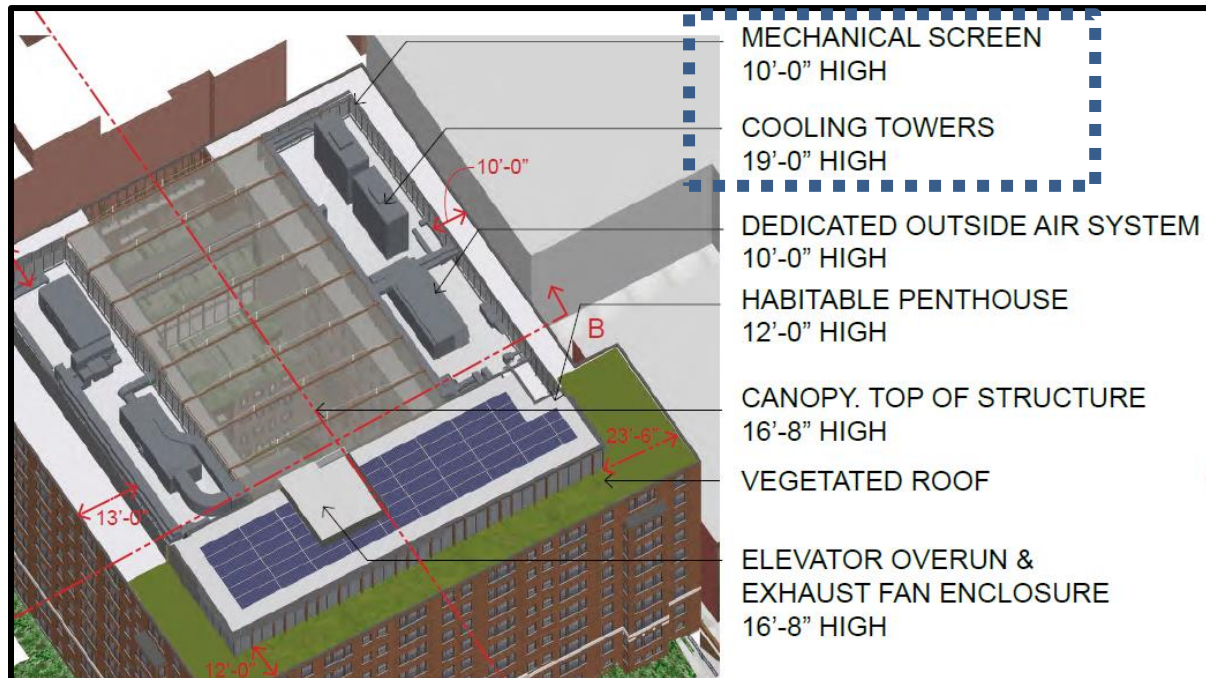


Also, the cooling towers, to be located on the southwest part of the building, would be 19 feet tall. The towers themselves meet the one-to-one setback requirement, but 19 foot tall screening walls, which must allow for air flow around the towers, would not meet the setback. The applicant has instead proposed to surround the towers with 10-foot tall screen walls, the same height as those walls screening other mechanical equipment on the roof. The 10-foot walls would meet the setback requirement, but because they would not be the same height as the cooling towers, the applicant has requested relief from C §§ 1500.8 and 1500.9. The text of those sections is below. For a rendering of the towers and the screen wall, see the image on the next page, excerpted from Case #06-11R, Exhibit 13F1, Sheet 5.

1500.8 When consisting solely of mechanical equipment, the equipment shall be enclosed fully as prescribed in Subtitle C §§ 1500.6 and 1500.7 except that louvers may be provided. A roof over a cooling tower need not be provided when the tower is located at or totally below the top of enclosing walls.

1500.9 Enclosing walls of the penthouse shall be of equal, uniform height as measured from roof level, except that:
(a) Enclosing walls of penthouse habitable space may be of a single different height than walls enclosing penthouse mechanical space;

- (b) For a penthouse containing no habitable space, enclosing walls of penthouse mechanical space shall be of a single uniform height except walls enclosing an elevator overrun may be of a separate uniform height; and
- (c) Required screening walls around uncovered mechanical equipment may be of a single, different uniform height.



Special exception relief can be granted to penthouse requirements, subject to the following considerations of Subtitle C § 1504.1, which are discussed below.

- (a) *The strict application of the requirements of this chapter would result in construction that is unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly, or unreasonable, or is inconsistent with building codes;*

Strict application of the requirements could be interpreted to require a screen wall of 19 feet in height around all mechanical equipment at the penthouse level. Providing a single height for penthouse screening, that conceals all equipment except for the top portions of the cooling towers, would be more reasonable and would better meet the intent of this chapter by minimizing overall visibility. Regarding the penthouse structure, its slight intrusion into the 1-to-1 setback area would not be readily noticeable, especially given its location facing a private alley at the rear of the building. Based on the rendering at Sheet 44 of Exhibit 13F, it would appear that from the ground the canopy structure would not be visible at all. The location of the canopy, close to the south wall but still meeting the 1-to-1 setback for the canopy itself, would allow for maximum protection from the elements for the central courtyard, providing for the courtyard's use in three seasons out of the year.

(b) The relief requested would result in a better design of the roof structure without appearing to be an extension of the building wall;

The lower height of the screen walls would result in an overall less visible rooftop structure. The canopy support structure would slightly intrude into the 1-to-1 setback area, but would not be highly visible, if at all, from most vantage points. Neither the screen walls nor the canopy structure would appear to be extensions of the building wall.

(c) The relief requested would result in a roof structure that is visually less intrusive;

Providing a single height for penthouse screening, that conceals all equipment except for the top portions of the cooling towers, would minimize overall visibility by providing a single 10-foot tall screen wall, rather than a 19-foot tall screen wall. The slight intrusion of the canopy structure into the 1-to-1 setback area should have no material impact in the degree of visibility of the roof structure.

(d) Operating difficulties such as meeting D.C. Construction Code, Title 12 DCMR requirements for roof access and stairwell separation or elevator stack location to achieve reasonable efficiencies in lower floors; size of building lot; or other conditions relating to the building or surrounding area make full compliance unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly or unreasonable;

The cooling towers require adequate air circulation space around them and providing 19-foot tall walls that provide air circulation would result in an intrusion into the 1-to-1 setback at the southwest corner of the building. The proposed 10 foot walls meet the setback requirement and match the height of the other rooftop screening walls. The location of the cooling towers themselves are limited to the periphery of the site given the design of the building with a large central courtyard.

The location of the canopy is governed by the desire to provide a useable, protected courtyard below. The design of the canopy itself has been pulled back from the south property line following feedback from the Commission of Fine Arts; The supporting structure, however, would still slightly intrude beyond the setback plane.

(e) Every effort has been made for the housing for mechanical equipment, stairway, and elevator penthouses to be in compliance with the required setbacks; and

The cooling towers themselves would meet the required setbacks. 19-foot tall walls around the cooling towers, however, would not meet the setbacks. The 10-foot walls both meet the setback and provide some amount of screening for the equipment.

(f) The intent and purpose of this chapter and this title shall not be materially impaired by the structure, and the light and air of adjacent buildings shall not be affected adversely.

The intent and purpose of this chapter would not be materially impaired by the proposed structures. The lower screening walls would further the goal of less visibility for rooftop structures, and the very small incursion by the canopy structure into the setback area would not be noticeable by viewers from the ground or in adjacent buildings.

X. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The design of Thurston Hall has been reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). The HPRB's comments resulted in the present design, with a particular focus on the treatment of the new opening on the south side of the building. The HPRB and staff also commented on the interior design of the courtyard walls and fenestration and the appearance of public space and the main entrance. The design has been revised to respond to the HPRB's feedback. The Board also had no objection to the design of the canopy.

JS/mrj