

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission
JLS
FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director
DATE: September 13, 2019
SUBJECT: **Setdown Report** for ZC #06-12Q, George Washington University First Stage PUD Modification of Significance; and
Setdown Report for #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. The list of applications is below.

- 06-11Q – Campus Plan Modification – *no setdown required*
- 06-12Q – First Stage PUD [campus-wide PUD] Modification of Significance – *setdown required*
- 01-17E – 1959 E Street, NW Modification of Significance – *setdown required*
- 06-11R – Further Processing for Thurston Hall – *no setdown required*

Two of the applications are Modifications of Significance to existing PUDs and therefore require setdown. The other two are campus plan applications, and therefore do not require setdown. This report provides the setdown analysis for both 06-12Q and 01-17E. Both applications request temporary modifications of conditions of their approvals in order to facilitate student housing during the period in which Thurston Hall is under renovation. During the period of renovation, first-year housing from Thurston Hall would be accommodated in other dorms on campus, which would in-turn cause some second-year students to be housed at 1959 E Street, and some junior and senior beds to be moved to off-campus locations at 1 Washington Circle and 1129 New Hampshire Avenue (The Aston). All first- and second-year students would continue to be housed on campus, per the requirements of the campus plan. Conditions of both PUDs would need to be amended to allow the rearrangement of housing. The proposal is generally not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan or the intent of the approved PUDs. The Office of Planning (OP), therefore, recommends that the applications be set down for a public hearing.

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

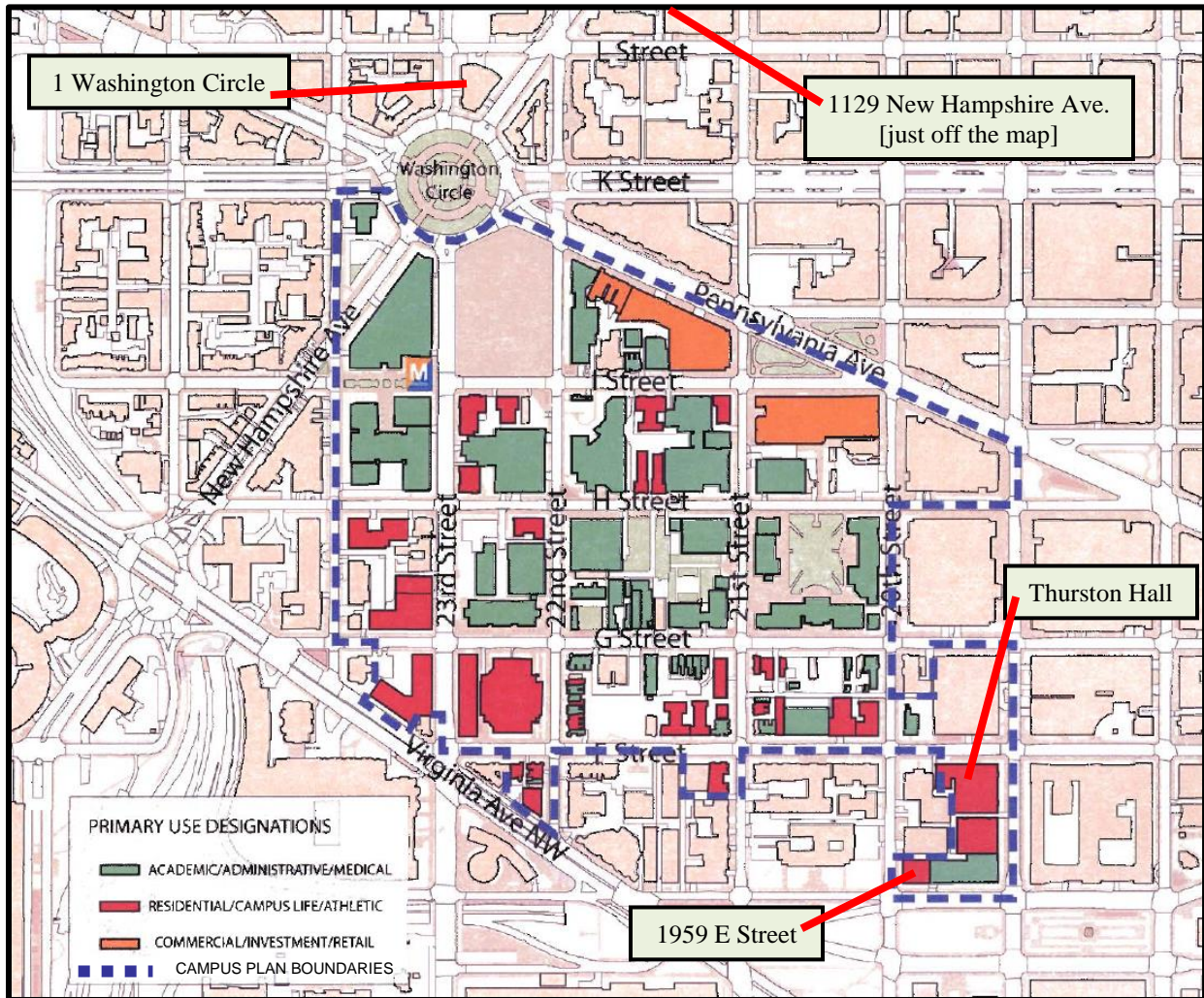
Building	Address	Square and Lot	Within Campus Plan Boundaries?	Present Use	Proposed Use During Renovation Period	Zone or PUD Zone	Comprehensive Plan Land Use Maps
Thurston Hall	1900 F Street	Square 122, Lot 825	Yes	Housing for 1,080 first-year students	Renovation	MU-2	GPM – Institutional FLUM – Institutional
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 at this time and supports setdown of the applications.

IV. SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

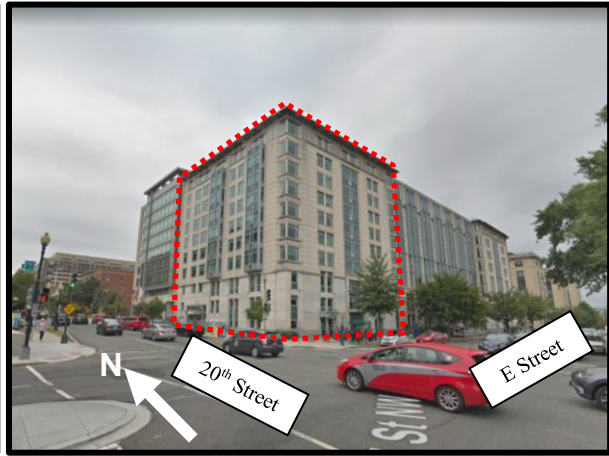
The renovation of Thurston Hall would result in the temporary relocation of students throughout the GWU campus as well as two properties close to campus. The vicinity map below, taken from the campus plan, identifies the locations of the four properties that would be primarily involved in the requested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

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1 Washington Circle

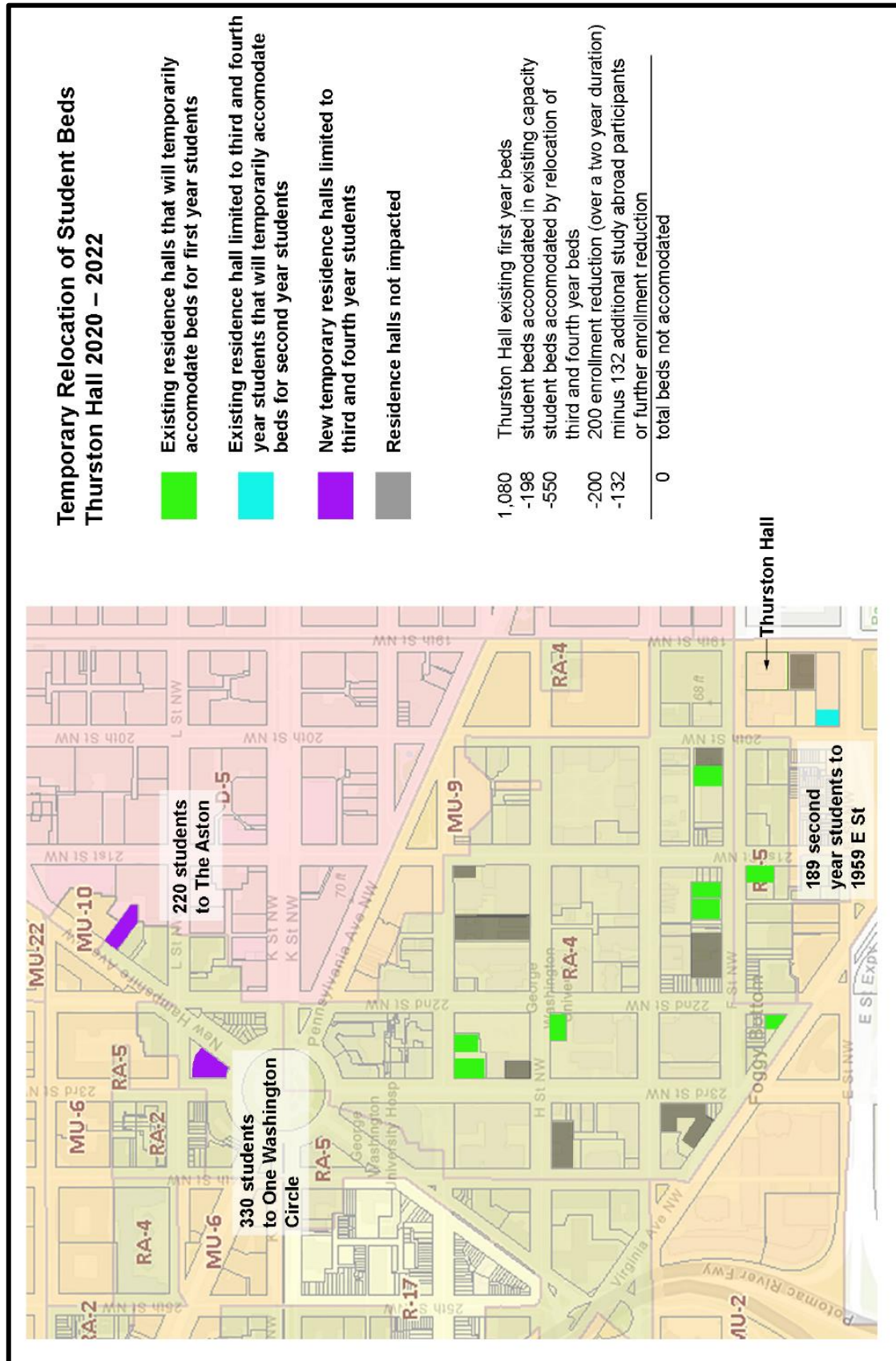


1129 New Hampshire

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V. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

GWU requests amendments to conditions of two PUDs 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 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 provided a map showing the exact dorms where students from Thurston Hall would be housed. Please see that image on the next page.



The numbers in this graphic are reflective of the University's latest discussions with the neighborhood and may not exactly match other numbers in this report, which are based on information contained in the record.

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
+ 305 beds in One Washington Circle
+ 238 beds in The Aston
+ 200 fewer students through enrollment reductions in Fall 2019 and Fall 2020
+ 139 fewer students through either increased study abroad or additional enrollment reductions
<hr/>
= 1,080

VI. 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.

VII. 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.

VIII. GWU CAMPUS-WIDE FIRST STAGE PUD AND 1959 E STREET PUD

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 non-inconsistent with the intent of the approved PUDs. 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.

IX. ZONING AND PUD FLEXIBILITY

The applications do not propose any changes to the exterior of the subject buildings, and no zoning flexibility is required.