

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Zoning Commission



ZONING COMMISSION FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ZONING COMMISSION ORDER NO. 20-08G
Z.C. Case No. 20-08G
Howard University
(Modification without Hearing to Howard University Central Campus Plan)
April 30, 2026

Pursuant to notice, at its April 30, 2026 public meeting, the Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia (“Commission”) considered the application (“Application”) of Howard University (“Applicant” or “University”) for a Modification without Hearing to the Howard University 2020-2030 Central Campus Plan (the “Campus Plan”), which was approved in Z.C. Order No. 20-08 (the “Original Order”), as modified by Z.C. Order Nos. 20-08A, 20-08B, 20-08C, 20-08D, 20-08E, and 20-08F, for Lot 15 in Square 3055 and Lot 801 in Square 3063, with street addresses of 511 Gresham Place, N.W., and 2455 4th Street, N.W. (collectively, the “Property”). The Commission reviewed the Application pursuant to the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure, which are codified in Subtitle Z of the Zoning Regulations (Title 11 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, to which all subsequent citations refer unless otherwise specified). For the reasons stated below, the Commission **APPROVES** the Application.

FINDINGS OF FACT

I. Background Information

PRIOR APPROVALS

1. Pursuant to Z.C. Order No. 20-08, effective April 8, 2022, the Commission approved the Campus Plan.
2. Pursuant to Z.C. Order Nos. 20-08A-20-08F, the Commission approved applications, including Campus Plan amendments and further processings and modifications, to allow varied construction projects and uses within the Howard University Central Campus.

PARTIES AND NOTICE

3. The following were automatically parties to the Original Order:
 - The Applicant; and
 - Advisory Neighborhood Commission (“ANC”) 1B and 1E, both “affected ANCs,” pursuant to Subtitle Z § 101.8.

4. The Applicant served the Application on March 2, 2026¹ on ANCs 1B and 1E as well as the D.C. Office of Planning (“OP”) as attested by the Certificate of Service submitted with the Application (Exhibit [“Ex.”] 2).

II. THE APPLICATION

5. On March 5, 2026, the Applicant filed the Application requesting a Modification without Hearing to the Campus Plan to allow certain personal care service uses within dormitories. Specifically, an approximately 354 square foot barber shop on the first floor of Drew Hall at 511 Gresham Place, N.W.; and an approximately 154 square foot hair salon on the first floor of Frazier Hall at 2455 4th Street, N.W. (Ex. 2).
6. The plans submitted by the Applicant (“Plans”) show the barber shop and the hair salon floor plans of the first floor of the respective dormitories (Ex. 4).
7. The Application states that the barber and salon uses are similar in nature to other service and amenity uses included in the dormitories on campus, and allowing these personal care services would further the University’s objective to provide students with the convenience of being on campus in housing intentionally designed to meet their needs. The Application notes that the barber shop and salon will offer specialized services popular in the African American community, will be a small square footage subordinate to the principal dormitory uses, and will be internal such that they will not pose any significant impacts inside or outside the dormitories. Further, they will provide economic opportunities for local small businesses and community members to gain barber/cosmetology experience (Ex. 2).
8. On March 25, 2025, the Applicant filed a supplemental statement clarifying that, after consultation with OP staff, the Application should more broadly permit personal care service uses, including hair styling and care services, as well as similar personal care services with the requirements that the uses be located in University dormitories on campus; that they exclusively serve Howard University students, faculty, and staff; and that their size not exceed three percent (3%) of the subject dormitory’s gross floor area (Ex. 6).

III. RESPONSES TO THE APPLICATION

9. OP submitted a report on March 30, 2026 (“OP Report”) recommending approval of the Application to allow personal care service uses that exclusively serve Howard University’s students, faculty, and staff in the University’s dormitories with the condition that the uses be limited to three percent of the subject dormitory’s gross floor area (Ex. 7). OP noted that the proposed barber shop and hair salon would be available exclusively for University students, faculty, and staff with access controlled through dormitory lobbies; would continue to conform to the approved Campus Plan; and would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan (*Id.*).

¹ The certificate of service is dated March 2, 2026; however, the Application was filed with the Office of Zoning on March 5, 2026.

10. By report dated March 25, 2026, and pursuant to vote taken at a regularly-scheduled and duly-noted public meeting on March 25, 2026, with a quorum present, ANC 1E voted unanimously to support the Application citing no issues and concerns (Ex. 8).
11. ANC 1B did not file a report in response to the Application.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Subtitle Z § 703.1 authorizes the Commission, in the interest of efficiency, to make modifications without a public hearing to approved contested case final orders and plans approved by such orders.
2. Z § 703.6 defines a “Modification without Hearing” as “a modification in which impact may be understood without witness testimony.”
3. Subtitle Z § 703.6 includes “a redesign or relocation of architectural elements and open spaces from the final design approved by the Commission” as an example of a Modification without Hearing.
4. The Commission concludes that the Application qualifies as a Modification without Hearing within the meaning of Subtitle Z § 703.6, as a request to modify the approved plans and therefore the modification can be granted without a public hearing pursuant to Subtitle Z § 703.1.
5. The Commission concludes that the Applicant satisfied the requirement of Subtitle Z § 703.10 to serve the Application on all parties to the original proceeding, in this case ANCs 1B and 1E; and OP, at the same time the Application was filed with the Office of Zoning.
6. The Commission concludes that all parties were allowed 30 days after the Application was filed and served on March 5, 2026, to file responses to the Application in accordance with Subtitle Z § 703.12; and the Application was filed at least 35 days prior to the public meeting at which the Application was considered by the Commission, in accordance with Subtitle Z § 703.13. The Application was filed on March 5, 2026, and considered April 30, 2026.
7. The Commission finds that the Application is consistent with the Campus Plan as previously approved because allowing personal care service uses within dormitories exclusively to serve University students, faculty, and staff is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property.

“GREAT WEIGHT” TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF OP

8. The Commission is required to give “great weight” to the recommendation of OP pursuant to § 5 of the Office of Zoning Independence Act of 1990, effective September 20, 1990 (D.C. Law 8-163; D.C. Official Code § 6-623.04 (2018 Repl.) and Subtitle Z § 405.9))

(*Metropole Condo. Ass'n v. D.C. Bd. of Zoning Adjustment*, 141 A.3d 1079, 1087 (D.C. 2016)).

9. The Commission finds OP's recommendation to approve the Application persuasive and concurs in that judgment. The Commission agrees with OP's proposed condition of approval that personal care service uses be limited to three percent (3%) of the subject dormitory's gross floor area, to which the University agreed.

"GREAT WEIGHT" TO THE WRITTEN REPORT OF THE ANC

10. The Commission must give "great weight" to the issues and concerns raised in a written report of the affected ANC that was approved by the full ANC at a properly noticed meeting that was open to the public pursuant to § 13(d) of the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions Act of 1975, effective March 26, 1976 (D.C. Law 1-21; D.C. Official Code § 1-309.10(d) (2012 Repl.)) and Subtitle Z § 406.2. To satisfy the great weight requirement, the Commission must articulate with particularity and precision the reasons why an affected ANC does or does not offer persuasive advice under the circumstances (*Metropole Condo. Ass'n v. D.C. Bd. of Zoning Adjustment*, 141 A.3d 1079, 1087 (D.C. 2016)). The District of Columbia Court of Appeals has interpreted the phrase "issues and concerns" to "encompass only legally relevant issues and concerns." (*Wheeler v. District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment*, 395 A.2d 85, 91 n.10 (1978) (citation omitted)).
11. The Commission finds ANC 1E's recommendation to approve the Application persuasive and concurs in that judgment. As noted, ANC 1B did not file a response to the Application.

DECISION

In consideration of the case record and the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law herein, the Commission concludes that the Applicant has satisfied its burden of proof and therefore **APPROVES** the Application's request for a Modification without Hearing to the Campus Plan approved in Z.C. Order No. 20-08 to allow personal care service uses in dormitories on campus, including a barber shop on the first floor of Drew Hall and a hair salon on the first floor of Frazier Hall as shown on the Plans at Ex. 4 in the record of Z.C. Case No. 20-08G, subject to the following conditions:

- Personal care service uses shall exclusively serve Howard University students, faculty, and staff; and shall be limited in size to three percent of the subject dormitory's gross floor area.

All other conditions of Z.C. Order No. 20-08, as modified by Z. C. Order Nos. 20-08A, 20-08B, 20-08C, 20-08D, 20-08E, and 20-08F shall remain unchanged and in effect.

FINAL ACTION

VOTE (April 30, 2026): 4-0-1

(Anthony J. Hood, Tammy Stidham, Robert E. Miller, and Gwen Wright to approve; Joseph S. Imamura not present, not voting).

In accordance with the provisions of Subtitle Z, Section 604.9, this Order No. 20-08G shall become final and effective upon publication in the *District of Columbia Register*; that is, on August 7, 2026.

BY THE ORDER OF THE D.C. ZONING COMMISSION

A majority of the Commission members approved the issuance of this Order.



ANTHONY J. HOOD
CHAIRMAN
ZONING COMMISSION



SARA A. BARDIN
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF ZONING

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE D.C. HUMAN RIGHTS ACT OF 1977, AS AMENDED, D.C. OFFICIAL CODE § 2-1401.01 ET SEQ. (ACT), THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED: RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, AGE, MARITAL STATUS, PERSONAL APPEARANCE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION, FAMILIAL STATUS, FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES, MATRICULATION, POLITICAL AFFILIATION, GENETIC INFORMATION, DISABILITY, SOURCE OF INCOME, OR PLACE OF RESIDENCE OR BUSINESS. SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A FORM OF SEX DISCRIMINATION WHICH IS PROHIBITED BY THE ACT. IN ADDITION, HARASSMENT BASED ON ANY OF THE ABOVE PROTECTED CATEGORIES IS PROHIBITED BY THE ACT. DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION OF THE ACT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. VIOLATORS WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.