
Department of Buildings Can Reduce Risks of Dangerous Construction

October 30, 2026

A report by the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor



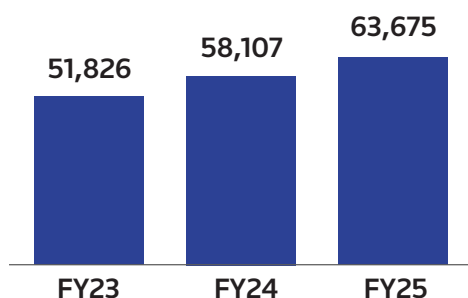
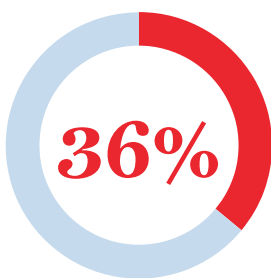
Department of Buildings Can Reduce Risks of Dangerous Construction

The District's Department of Buildings (DOB) regulates construction by enforcing the building code and regulations, primarily by issuing permits, inspecting ongoing and completed construction projects, and investigating complaints of illegal construction. Property owners may hire certified third-party plan reviewers and inspectors to review plans and conduct inspections and well over half of inspections in recent years were conducted by third-party agencies. As part of its oversight of the third-party program, DOB is required to approve property owners' Notice of Intent to use a third-party agency and to audit those agencies annually.

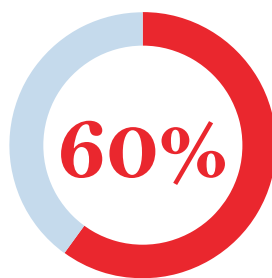
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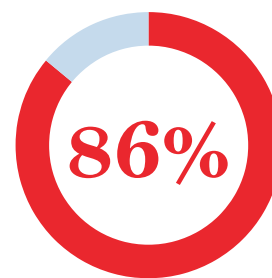
Department of Buildings Permits Issued



Nine of 25 (36%) permits at five of eight (63%) properties were missing required documents.



DOB did not approve the required NOIs for six of 10 permits (60%) for five of seven properties (71%).



DOB did not conduct 12 of 14 (86%) required annual audits of third-party agencies.



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Executive Summary

Why ODCA Did This Audit

ODCA conducted this discretionary audit to determine whether the Department of Buildings (DOB) effectively managed permitting, neighbor notification, and inspections for a judgmental sample of eight properties undergoing construction.

What ODCA Found

- DOB approved permits without obtaining all required application elements or construction plan documents, including neighbor notifications. This lapse reflects a lack of adherence to safeguards intended to ensure the safety and quality of new construction and to protect adjoining properties.
- DOB allowed an owner to act as a contractor, and therefore avoid the licensing requirement, on property that was not the owner's primary residence, potentially enabling an unlicensed individual to perform dangerous construction work on a property they may intend to rent or sell.
- DOB issued nine construction permits at six properties without ensuring that all special inspections requirements were met, resulting in insufficient oversight of safeguards intended for projects that warrant heightened scrutiny.
- DOB did not conduct the required annual oversight audits of each third-party agency at the sample properties, nor did it retain their most recent required re-certification packages.

What ODCA Recommends

1. DOB should create permit review checklists that include key groups of Building Code requirements, require all reviewers to use them during the permit review process, and require supervisory review of the process.
2. DOB should develop policies and procedures for how to conduct a permit review.
3. DOB should develop policies and procedures that require property owners to provide evidence that the property is their primary residence when requiring an exemption from the licensed contractor requirement.
4. DOB should revise the Special Inspections Policy Manual to state the requirements and timing of the pre-construction meeting clearly, including who is responsible, when it must occur, and how to verify it occurred timely and as required.
5. DOB should establish an annual audit schedule that requires completing and documenting audits for all approved third-party agencies on projects for which they are providing inspection services, in addition to continuing complaint-based audits.

Background

In Washington, D.C., continued housing shortages¹ and investments in new commercial projects have driven a robust construction sector that is reshaping both neighborhoods and skylines. The District of Columbia’s Department of Buildings (DOB) is the agency charged with regulating construction by enforcing the building code and regulations.² DOB primarily regulates construction by issuing permits, inspecting ongoing and completed construction projects, and investigating complaints of illegal construction. The demands on DOB are evident in the large and increasing volume of permits issued and construction inspections, both for routine and allegedly illegal construction, as seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Trends in DOB Permits and Inspections, FY 2023–FY 2025

	FY23	FY24	% change FY23 to FY24	FY25	% change FY24 to FY25
Permits issued ³	51,826	58,107	12.1%	63,675	9.6%
DOB construction inspections	23,286	28,236	21.3%	28,698	1.6%
Third-party construction inspections	60,825	57,458	-5.5%	45,263	-21.2%
DOB illegal construction inspections	5,508	5,501	-0.1%	6,186	12.5%

Source: FY 2023–2024 from DOB FY 2024 Performance Accountability Report (PAR), p.15; FY 2025 from DOB FY 2025 PAR, p. 10. Third-party inspections totals are from DOB.

In addition to the large number of construction inspections DOB conducts, the agency oversees third-party inspection agencies conducting inspections on its behalf,⁴ which, according to DOB, comprised 72% of all inspections in FY 2023, 67% in FY 2024, and 61% in FY 2025. A 2025 DOB article in the *Building Safety Journal* noted that the number of third-party inspection reports submitted through its Tertius site — an online platform where third-party agencies schedule, result, and submit third-party inspections to DOB — in FY 2024 represented an exponential increase since Tertius went live in 2021.⁵

1 GreaterGreaterWashington, How Bad is DC’s Housing Shortage? <https://ggwash.org/view/104128/how-bad-is-dcs-housing-shortage>, July 20, 2026.

2 The Department of Buildings Establishment Act of 2020, D.C. Law 23-269, effective from April 5, 2021. Codified at D.C. Code § 10-561.01 et seq.

3 Third-party agencies also conducted approximately 70 plan reviews each year in Figure 1; these are included in the totals of permits issued by DOB.

4 12A DCMR § 109.4.1.

5 Building Safety Journal, D.C.’s Third-Party Program: Meeting Demands While Providing Quality Management, Mayda V. Colon, <https://www.iccsafe.org/building-safety-journal/bsj-hits/d-c-s-third-party-program-meeting-demands-while-providing-quality-management/#>, August 20, 2025.

This audit focused on DOB’s responsibilities at the beginning of the construction process, including plan review and permit issuance, construction and illegal construction inspections, and DOB’s oversight of private third-party agencies that conduct plan reviews and inspections on its behalf.

Building permits: The first step in the construction process

District property owners who plan to build, renovate, or add on to their homes must obtain a permit from DOB before beginning most types of construction,⁶ including interior remodels, finished basements, changes in use or occupancy, and reconfiguration of interior layouts in commercial spaces.⁷ Some work — such as cabinet or counter updates and repair of existing fences — may not require a permit.⁸ DOB issues various types of permits, including demolition, raze, building, sheeting and shoring, fence, retaining wall, and others.⁹ DOB also issues trade permits such as electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and elevator permits to licensed technicians who perform or supervise the work.¹⁰

As part of the permitting process, the Construction Codes¹¹ and D.C.’s implementing rules in the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) require property owners to protect adjoining property owners from damage.¹² Owners must notify neighbors of construction that includes excavation, structural support work on adjoining properties (such as underpinning), load-bearing alterations, installation of protective measures, raze work within three feet of a neighboring lot line, or any proposed construction that would cause an adjacent property to fall out of compliance with chimney or snow-load requirements (for example, by increasing a building’s height).¹³ For the purposes of this audit, ODCA classified any construction requiring neighbor notification as ‘dangerous construction’ due to its potential impact on adjoining properties if required oversight elements are not in place and work is not done properly.

Construction inspections: Required throughout construction projects

Once a permit is approved and construction has begun, inspections are required at various phases of the project.¹⁴ These inspections allow construction to continue. Ultimately, DOB must provide a final sign off in the form of a final building inspection, deeming the construction to be code compliant.¹⁵ The type of project dictates the inspections required and includes inspections for footing and foundations, concrete

6 12A DCMR § 105.1.

7 In D.C., any residential building with three or more units is reviewed for a commercial permit. DOB, Commercial Permit Application, July 2025, p. 1.

8 Other construction not requiring a permit includes brick pointing, caulking, window screens and storm window installation, carpeting, tiling, countertops and replacement in-kind of these items, which has similar material, texture, and dimensions of the original. See <https://dob.dc.gov/page/get-permit> and 12A DCMR § 105.2.

9 12A DCMR § 105.1.

10 12A DCMR § 105.8.2

11 The District of Columbia Construction Codes, effective May 29, 2020, include the 2017 District of Columbia Building Code and the 2017 District of Columbia Residential Code, the administrative and enforcement provisions of which are implemented through Chapter 1 of the Building Code. The District of Columbia Construction Codes Supplement is codified in Title 12 of the DCMR and contains local D.C. amendments and modifications. The purpose of the Building Code is “to establish the minimum requirements to provide a reasonable level of safety, public health and general welfare through structural strength, *means of egress* facilities, stability, ... and safety to life and property from fire and other hazards attributed to the built environment ...” (12A DCMR § 101.2.4).

12 12A DCMR § 3307.

13 12A DCMR § 106.2.18.3.

14 12A DCMR § 109.

15 D.C. Code § 6–641.09.

slabs, wall checks, framing, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, elevator, and Certificate of Occupancy inspections required for most projects other than single-family dwellings to allow use of the building.¹⁶ Property owners may use DOB inspectors at no additional cost¹⁷ or pay to use third-party inspectors.¹⁸

DOB also conducts illegal construction inspections in response to complaints from the community, sister agencies, or when someone within DOB identifies issues requiring inspection.¹⁹ Illegal construction includes construction performed without a permit, or construction that deviates from an approved permit, which could result in non-code-compliant work that may pose safety risks.²⁰

DOB's third-party program

DOB certifies private third-party plan reviewers and inspectors, whom property owners may hire to review plans and conduct inspections on the agency's behalf.²¹ Projects involving components of construction that "upon failure, would cause significant harm," require special inspections, and third-party agencies must conduct all special inspections.²² DOB's Third-Party Program Procedural Manual and Special Inspections Policy Manual outline requirements for property owners, third-party agencies, and DOB oversight. DOB manages the third-party program through its Tertius marketplace.²³

Council of the District of Columbia actions to protect adjoining property and ensure safer construction

The D.C. Council has taken actions in recent years in an attempt to strengthen required qualifications for licensed contractors working in the District and bolster protections for property owners whose neighbors undertake dangerous construction.

The Council passed the General Contractor Licensing Amendment Act of 2024 to strengthen the licensing requirements for general contractors and create a Board of Construction Managers and General Contractors and to establish eligibility criteria for the licensure of contractors, among other actions, but the Act has not yet been funded and therefore has not gone into effect.²⁴

The Protecting Adjacent and Adjoining Property Owners from Construction Damage Amendment Act of 2022,²⁵ requires a property owner, contractor, or person applying for a construction permit to

16 12A DCMR § 109.3.

17 DOB inspections are included in the permit fees.

18 12A DCMR § 109.4.1.

19 D.C. Code § 42-3131.02 and DOB, Report Illegal Construction, <https://dob.dc.gov/node/1616601>.

20 Work performed outside of allowed hours (7 a.m. to 7 p.m. or on Sundays or public holidays) is also considered illegal construction, but these complaints were excluded from this audit as they are not directly safety-related. DOB, Report Illegal Construction, <https://dob.dc.gov/node/1616601>.

21 12A DCMR § 109.4.1.

22 12A DCMR § 109.4.1.1. These inspections include checking whether the soil is suitable, making and installing steel and cold-formed steel parts, certain concrete and masonry work, building and installing some types of wood structural elements, constructing pile and pier foundations, and applying spray-on fireproofing, among other things. DOB, Special Inspections Policy Manual; p. 5. <https://dob.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dob/Special-Inspection-Policy-Manual%2012.14.2023.pdf>.

23 DOB, Third-Party Program Procedural Manual; p. 33-34. https://dob.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dob/Third-Party_Program_Procedure_Manual%205.15.2023%20.pdf.

24 D.C. Law 25-0244, Effective from December 17, 2024.

25 D.C. Law 24-339, Effective from March 22, 2023.

demonstrate that their insurance will insure adjacent property owners against loss or damage arising from proposed construction work. Types of work covered by the law included demolition, excavation, razing, or sheeting and shoring. The Protecting Adjacent and Adjoining Property Owners from Construction Damage Amendment Act of 2024²⁶ updated the types of construction permits covered by the law to include addition, alteration, and repair when construction will be at the property line or on a party wall of the adjacent or adjoining property, or alteration and repair that will include underpinning. According to DOB, the regulations to implement this law are in the process of being created, with a First Notice of Proposed Rulemaking published in March 2024, and a Second Notice of Proposed Rulemaking currently being promulgated.

²⁶ D.C. Law 25-0243, Effective from December 17, 2024.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Objective

The audit's objective was to determine whether the Department of Buildings (DOB) effectively managed permitting, neighbor notification, and inspections for a judgmental sample of eight properties undergoing construction.

Scope

Our sample included eight properties, one from each ward of the District, that required neighbor notification and were either permitted or inspected between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2025.

Methodology

To conduct this audit, we:

- Reviewed the D.C. Building Code,²⁷ relevant regulations in DCMR and laws in the D.C. Code, and internal DOB policies related to construction permitting, inspections, third-party program oversight, and quality assurance.
- Analyzed DOB budgets, Performance Accountability Reports, performance plans, D.C. Council performance oversight information, and relevant Council committee reports.
- Reviewed advocates' reports and Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner concerns expressed in testimony, meeting minutes, and published statements.
- Interviewed advocates, adjoining property owners who experienced property damage from dangerous construction, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners and former commissioners who were familiar with dangerous construction issues in their neighborhoods, and Council staff familiar with DOB processes.
- Requested examples from all ANCs of properties requiring neighbor notification with safety concerns or neighboring property damage within the audit scope.
- Compiled a list of 57 properties for possible inclusion in the sample, using ANC submissions, testimony to Council, news reports, and research in Scout, DOB's online consolidated database providing permitting, inspection, and other information, to complete property profiles; used that list to create a judgmental sample of eight properties, one from each ward in the District. Because the sample is non-random, it cannot be extrapolated to represent the entire population of permit reviews.
- Interviewed DOB management and staff supervising and implementing the permit review process, DOB inspections, and DOB's third-party program.

²⁷ The 2017 D.C. Building Code is one of the various codes, primarily published by the International Code Council as a set of comprehensive, coordinated building safety and fire codes adopted by 50 states and D.C., that were amended by the District and together make up the District of Columbia Construction Codes. The relevant sections of the D.C. Building Code referred to in this report, other than minor formatting changes, have been entirely integrated into the D.C. Municipal Regulations, and are referred to by their DCMR citation.

- Conducted site visits of DOB-permitted construction projects while a third-party agency was conducting construction inspections.
- Requested any code modifications related to the sample properties and DOB indicated there were none.
- Reviewed all third-party certification materials and all third-party audits and oversight investigations for 11 third-party agencies associated with seven sample properties.
- Assessed the internal controls of DOB's permit review process, inspections (including Illegal Construction and Certificate of Occupancy inspections), and third-party oversight, specifically the control activities implemented through policies to achieve objectives and respond to risks and monitoring to identify and remediate internal control deficiencies timely. (DOB did not conduct any construction inspections (other than trade permit inspections for electric, plumbing, elevators, etc.) for the eight properties in the sample during the audit scope).
- Reviewed documentation in four of DOB's internal systems (Accela, ArchivedProjectDox, ProjectDox, and Tertius)²⁸ to assess compliance with requirements in 12A DCMR Sections 105 and 106 for 25 permits associated with the eight sample properties.
- Analyzed illegal construction inspection complaints (not related to the time of day of construction) and resulting inspections downloaded from Accela for the sample properties to assess response times and complaints. Requested and analyzed all enforcement actions, including illegal constructions inspections, fines issued, paid, and filed with the Office of Administrative Hearings for the sample properties.

Analyzed permit review workflows downloaded from Archived ProjectDox and ProjectDox to assess permit review times.

Notably, we did not assess the quality of the plan reviews or the quality of the inspections done by DOB; instead, we reviewed whether required permit documentation was on file with DOB and whether inspections records followed requirements. Further, we did not review DOB's collection of permit fees based on the projected costs of permitted construction.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

²⁸ Accela is DOB's main database and supports the agency's operations workflows; ProjectDox (and its predecessor Archived ProjectDox) are online platforms for electronic plan submission and review. As previously noted, Tertius is an online platform where third-party agencies schedule, result, and submit third-party inspections to DOB.

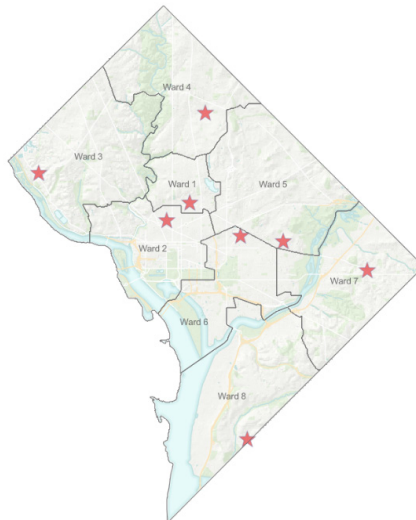
Audit Results

The following results are based on a review of DOB permitting and inspections for eight sample properties representing each ward in the District of Columbia (see Figures 2 and 3 below) and DOB’s oversight of the third-party agencies hired by the property owners to conduct inspections. See Appendix B for descriptive narratives of each property.

Figure 2: Properties Selected for Audit Sample

Address	Ward
1111-1113 V St. NW	1
1713 Q St. NW	2
5122 Cathedral Ave. NW	3
5229 5th St. NW	4
1012 17th Pl. NE	5
1165 3rd St. NE	6
4501 Blaine St. NE	7
621 Forrester St. SE	8

Figure 3: Map of Sample Properties



Source: Map created by ODCA using <https://dcgis.maps.arcgis.com/>.

DOB approved permits without obtaining all required application elements or construction plan documents, including neighbor notifications. This lapse reflects a lack of adherence to safeguards intended to ensure the safety and quality of new construction and to protect adjoining properties.

The DCMR requires:

- Permit applicants to submit required information to DOB before permit issuance, including the scope of work; existing and proposed use; proposed occupancy; the name and contact information of the applicant and the permit expeditor (if applicable), and the names and addresses of owners of adjoining premises; among other requirements.²⁹
- Permit applicants to submit certain construction documents with a permit application, including documents with adequate architectural and engineering details, means of egress, exterior wall envelope, and structural, fire, electrical, fuel gas, mechanical, and plumbing components; public sewer and water main plans; a DC Water Certificate of Approval where DC Water is requested to furnish new water or sewer service connections; verification of a registered design professional, licensed architect, and licensed engineering professional, as applicable; and a Statement of Special Inspections where special inspections and tests are necessary due to the complex nature of construction; among other requirements.³⁰
- Proof of neighbor notification for certain types of dangerous construction that may affect, or require access to, adjoining property, including evidence of written notice, posting, and delivery of the notice; evidence of an affidavit of maintenance of posting of the notice for 30 days; and if applicable, a response to a request for access to the adjoining premises.³¹

DOB issued nine permits at five properties without obtaining a copy of all the required elements, including documentation of required neighbor notification for dangerous construction. This represented nearly half (36%) of the permits reviewed for over half (63%) of the properties.

Specifically, DOB issued:

- Two permits at two properties without names and addresses of adjoining neighbors.
- One permit at one property without the applicant's name.
- Two permits at two properties without a compliant Statement of Special Inspections.
- One permit at one property without documentation of a D.C.-licensed professional engineer.
- Seven permits at three properties without obtaining a copy of all the required elements of neighbor notification.

²⁹ 12A DCMR § 105.3.2.

³⁰ 12A DCMR §§ 106.2; 106.3; 106.4.

³¹ 12A DCMR § 106.2.18.

See Figure 4 for specific provisions.

Figure 4: Missing Application and Neighbor Notification Elements

Property	Permit	Missing Element	D.C. Regulations
1111-1113 V St. NW	B2303360	Names and addresses of adjoining neighbors	12A § 105.3.2 (13)
		Neighbor Notification Required Posting	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.1
		Neighbor Notification Required Written Notice	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.2
		Neighbor Notification Evidence of Delivery of Written Notice	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.2.1
		Neighbor Notification Access to adjoining premises	12A § 106.2.18.4
		Statement of Special Inspections completed by the Registered Design Professional in Responsible Charge and including the name of the Special Inspections Engineer of Record and the testing and special inspections agency ³²	12A § 106.3
	R2200173	Neighbor Notification Required Posting	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.1
		Neighbor Notification Evidence of Delivery of Written Notice	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.2.1
		Neighbor Notification Posting Affidavit of Maintenance	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.3
	B2503953	Neighbor Notification Required Posting	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.1
		Neighbor Notification Required Written Notice	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.2
		Neighbor Notification Evidence of Delivery of Written Notice	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.2.1
		Neighbor Notification Posting Affidavit of Maintenance	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.3
1713 Q St. NW	B2210143	Neighbor Notification Access to adjoining premises ³³	12A § 106.2.18.4
	B2211486	Neighbor Notification Access to adjoining premises	12A § 106.2.18.4
5229 5th St. NW	B2404680	Statement of Special Inspections before permit issuance	12A § 106.3

³² A draft version lacking these elements was submitted before permit issuance. See additional information in Finding 3.

³³ For the relevant permits at 1713 Q St. NW, both neighbor notification letters requested access to the adjoining neighbor's property. DOB could not locate a record of the forms being returned, but noted the owner cited an underpinning exception for B2210143, and for permit B2211486, a letter from the structural engineer negated the need for access to neighboring property.

Property	Permit	Missing Element	D.C. Regulations
1012 17th Pl. NE	R2400015	Applicant's Name	12A § 105.3.2 (8)
		Names and addresses of adjoining neighbors	12A § 105.3.2 (13)
		Neighbor Notification Required Posting	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.1
		Neighbor Notification Required Written Notice	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.2
		Neighbor Notification Evidence of Delivery of Written Notice	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.2.1
		Neighbor Notification Posting Affidavit of Maintenance	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.3
	B2402083	Neighbor Notification Posting Affidavit of Maintenance Posting	12A § 106.2.18.3.1.3
4501 Blaine St. NE	SH2300031	Where engineering is involved, the corresponding permit documents shall be prepared by a professional engineer licensed to practice engineering in [DC]	12A § 106.4.2

Source: ODCA analysis of documents in DOB's Archived ProjectDox, ProjectDox, Tertius, and Accela systems.

A DOB official noted that due to the extensive number of Code provisions, reviewers are unable to conduct checks of all requirements and instead prioritize specific areas of importance. He acknowledged that the definition of what is "important" varies by reviewer. This official and another official confirmed that consistency among reviewers is a problem.

To assist with reviews, DOB has several permit review checklists, but DOB did not require their use, and reviewers did not consistently use them. See Appendix C for a sample permit review checklist.

Allowing reviewers to prioritize what is important in the Code rather than verifying all requirements increases the risk that reviewers will overlook some elements of the application. Each of these requirements is in the Building Code and DCMR. Although DOB staff may not think every requirement is significant on its own, inconsistent reviews, lack of quality assurance, and a pattern of lax oversight of the permit review process increases risks of unsafe construction and damage to neighboring properties, which may lead to accidents, death, and costly property damage for owners and neighbors.

Recommendations

1. DOB should create permit review checklists that include key groups of Building Code requirements, require all reviewers to use them during the permit review process, and require supervisory review of the process.
2. DOB should develop policies and procedures for how to conduct a permit review.

DOB allowed an owner to act as a contractor, and therefore avoid the licensing requirement, on property that was not the owner’s primary residence, potentially enabling an unlicensed individual to perform dangerous construction work on a property they may intend to rent or sell.

The DCMR requires a permit applicant to submit the “name and contact information” of “the D.C. licensed general contractor or construction manager (if known when the application is filed; if not ... no later than the scheduling of the first inspection.)”³⁴ In addition, DOB’s “Accela Issuance Process” Job Aid instructs permit reviewers to ensure the general contractor information was complete and accurate in Accela, DOB’s primary record maintenance system.

At one property reviewed, DOB did not ensure that seven approved permits had a licensed general contractor submitted by the time of permit issuance or by the date of the first inspection as required.

DOB did not require the permit applicant to submit a licensed general contractor because it followed an agency practice that allowed the owner to act as the general contractor for one- or two-family dwellings, thus exempting these dwellings from the general contractor requirements.

While the DCMR³⁵ defines general contractors and specifically excludes individuals performing work on their own primary residence, if that residence is a single-family dwelling, DOB exempted this single-family dwelling without confirming the property constituted the owner’s primary residence as required by the regulation.

By misapplying the exemption and allowing owners to act as general contractors for one- or two-family residences in which they do not live, DOB risks creating a loophole that allows owners who are not licensed contractors to perform dangerous construction on a property that may be rented or re-sold following the renovation. Ultimately, allowing owners to perform work without a licensed contractor when they may then sell the house to unwitting buyers increases the risks of accidents, unsafe construction, and damage to neighboring properties.

Recommendation

3. DOB should develop policies and procedures that require property owners to provide evidence that the property is their primary residence when requiring an exemption from the licensed contractor requirement.

DOB issued nine construction permits at six properties without ensuring that all special inspection requirements were met, resulting in insufficient oversight of safeguards intended for projects that warrant heightened scrutiny.

³⁴ 12A DCMR § 105.3.2(8.3).

³⁵ 17 DCMR § 3999.1.

The DCMR requires compliance with the DOB Special Inspections Policy Manual for types of construction that pose a higher risk of harm if not done properly.³⁶ The Manual requires property owners to submit a Statement of Special Inspections (SSI) at the time of plan submission. The SSI must be completed by the Registered Design Professional in Responsible Charge and include the name of the Special Inspections Engineer of Record and the testing and special inspections agency. The Manual also requires the Special Inspections Engineer of Record to schedule a pre-construction meeting; however, the criteria for when this meeting must occur are not consistent within the Manual.

One page of the Manual states it must occur “after the Statement of Special Inspections and the Schedule of Special Inspections are submitted and approved ...and prior to the issuance of a building permit *and/or any construction activities*.”³⁷ (Emphasis added) The following page of the Manual states, “Written minutes of the pre-construction meeting will be ... submitted ... *prior to the issuance of the permit*” (emphasis added) and the Manual prohibits permits from being issued without “a complete set of minutes having been submitted and accepted by DOB.”³⁸

Statement of special inspections

DOB issued two permits at two of the reviewed properties without requiring a compliant Statement of Special Inspections.

- Both permits contained a final Statement of Special Inspections that included all the relevant information, but both were dated after the permit was issued.
- One of the permits’ files contained a draft Statement of Special Inspections that was submitted timely, but the draft statement did not include the names of the Registered Design Professional in Responsible Charge, the Special Inspections Engineer of Record, or the special inspections agency.

Despite the requirement in DOB’s policy, its practice was to allow a draft Statement of Special Inspections before permit issuance, and then to allow the submitter to finalize the Statement of Special Inspections after the pre-construction meeting.

Accepting a Statement of Special Inspections that was not completed by the Registered Design Professional in Responsible Charge (as evidenced by a stamp with a professional license number), and which did not list the Special Inspections Engineer of Record or special inspection agency, increases the risk that these types of construction, which pose a higher risk of harm if not done properly, did not receive a Code-compliant special inspection.

Pre-construction meeting

DOB did not require meeting minutes demonstrating that pre-construction meetings took place prior to permit issuance for nine of 11 permits at six properties where they should have been required. Moreover, three of those nine permits lacked documentation to show the required meetings took place *before*

³⁶ 12A DCMR § 109.4.1.1.

³⁷ DOB, Special Inspections Policy Manual, May 15, 2023, p. 27, <https://dob.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dob/Special-Inspection-Policy-Manual%2012.14.2023.pdf>.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 28.

construction began. For two of these three permits, DOB did not approve the meeting minutes until two years after the meetings should have occurred.

DOB's Special Inspections Manual listed conflicting criteria as to when the pre-construction meeting should occur, stating both that it must take place before the permit is issued (if meeting minutes are to be submitted before issuance) and that it must take place before construction begins. This confusion was evident in DOB's own description of its policy, which stated that the pre-construction meeting may happen before or after permit issuance, but it must occur before the first special inspection. When asked why DOB was not following the policy, DOB stated its Special Inspections Manual was outdated.

In addition, DOB's process for ensuring the meeting minutes were submitted relied on the third-party agency to submit the pre-construction meeting minutes before special inspections occur. In the cases noted above, DOB's oversight process identified that the meeting minutes were missing two years after they should have been submitted and thus did not stop construction to require the permit holder and special inspectors to submit the proper documentation before moving forward.

If a pre-construction meeting does not occur, the contractor may not know how to implement necessary design issues that are not reflected in the plans, which could lead to safety risks. Without documentation, overseers cannot verify that the meeting took place. Conflicting criteria and agency practice as to when the meeting must occur and meeting minutes are submitted leads to confusion and may lead to third-party agencies not following DOB policies.

Inconsistent reviews and lax oversight, particularly for documents related to special inspections which are required for more complex construction that poses a higher risk of harm if not done properly, increases risks of unsafe construction and damage to neighboring properties, possibly leading to accidents, death, or financial damage for residents and neighbors.

Recommendations

4. DOB should include in the recommended permit checklist that a compliant Statement of Special Inspections must be submitted by the owner before permit issuance.
5. DOB should revise the Special Inspections Policy Manual to state the requirements and timing of the pre-construction meeting clearly, including who is responsible, when it must occur, and how to verify it occurred timely and as required.

DOB did not follow its Quality Assurance/Quality Control policy, which prevented DOB from identifying weaknesses in its permit compliance and ultimately contributed to incomplete or inaccurate submissions.

DOB has a Quality Assurance (QA)/Quality Control (QC) policy³⁹ requiring:

- Supervisors to perform regularly scheduled QA reviews based on QA checklists for at least one permit application intake per month for each plan review coordinator, one set of plans each month for each plan reviewer, and one permit issuance per month for each contact representative.
- Supervisors to submit quarterly QA review forms to the Division Chief, and the Division Chief must send semi-annual summary reports to the Director and Deputy Director that describe QA review results, observed trends, and unresolved problems, and identify recommended improvement opportunities.
- The Director to then work with the Division Chiefs to develop action plans to improve technical and procedural conformance.

DOB indicated it did not complete any QA/QC reviews or semi-annual reports per its QA/QC policy.

DOB officials stated the agency did not conduct the required QA/QC reports due to resource constraints. Current practice is to conduct reviews that are problem-focused, not proactive. Further, staffing issues have prevented developing a QA/QC team; an official suggested they could do more on the plan review side with more resources. Staff noted that DOB had fewer managers now than they did when the policy was written six years ago, and a contract reviewer who previously helped with this function is no longer available.

By not following or updating its Quality Assurance/Quality Control policy, DOB management could not detect issues timely in plan reviews and then adjust workloads or increase training for certain staff as needed.

Recommendation

6. DOB should review its Quality Assurance SOPs to determine what actions are needed to ensure full compliance, revise the SOPs if necessary, and maintain clear completion targets, defined supervisory deadlines, and centralized tracking while aligning practice to the updated procedures.

DOB did not approve owners' Notice of Intent to Use a Third-Party Inspection Agency for regular inspections for six of 10 permits (60%) for five of seven properties (71%).

When approved by DOB, the DCMR authorizes the use of third-party agencies to perform inspections of permitted construction work and requires compliance with DOB's Third-Party Program Procedural Manual ("Manual").⁴⁰ The Manual requires DOB to approve an "executed Notice of Intent (NOI) to use a third-party agency" before work on a project commences. DOB must review, approve, or disapprove the owner's NOI to use a third-party agency within five (5) business days of submission. See Appendix D for a copy of the NOI form.

³⁹ The policy was effective on January 31, 2020, when now-DOB functions were administered by its predecessor agency, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs.

⁴⁰ 12A DCMR §109.4.1.

DOB did not approve NOIs required for use of a third-party agency for regular inspections for six of 10 permits (60%) attached to five of seven properties (71%) within five business days of submission.

DOB did not require owners to send a notice because, according to DOB, there was no mechanism to accept the NOI for regular inspections, unless DOB requested it during an audit investigation. When asked why DOB did not require owners to submit the NOI, DOB officials cited the significant increase in third-party inspection agencies, stating it was not practical to approve an NOI for every project and calling the Manual outdated.

If DOB is not performing oversight of third-party agencies, it may lead to property owners or third-party agencies not following DOB policies.

Recommendation

7. DOB should update the Third-Party Program Procedural Manual, including specifying how owners should submit the NOI to use third-party inspectors for regular inspections, and who at DOB will review and approve or disapprove NOIs, before permit holders can begin construction.

DOB did not conduct the required annual oversight audits of each third-party agency at the sample properties, nor did it retain their most recent required re-certification packages.

The DOB Third-Party Manual states that “each approved third-party inspections agency shall be audited annually by DOB on projects for which it is providing inspections services.” Further, the Manual requires DOB to review, approve, or disapprove all Third-Party Agency applications and re-certification packages.

DOB did not conduct an annual audit of third-party inspection agencies in 12 of 14 (86%) required instances when they provided inspections services at the sample properties.⁴¹ For the two third-party agencies that were audited, DOB did not send timely warning letters to both agencies, one eight months after the agency’s first violation and the second a year after the agency’s first oversight investigation.⁴²

DOB did not retain the most recent required compliant re-certification package for third-party inspection agencies in nine of 14 (64%) instances⁴³ when third-party inspectors were being used at the seven sample properties.⁴⁴

DOB conducted audits and oversight based on complaints, citing both a general lack of staff capacity to perform this function and a position of oversight inspector being vacant at the end of the audit

41 There are 11 third-party agencies involved; and two of them were hired by multiple sample property owners, leading to 14 cases.

42 When DOB sends a warning letter to inform the third-party agency of a violation, it considers the issue ‘abated’ and does not follow up to ensure the violation was fixed. DOB may escalate its discipline beyond a warning letter if violations are repeated or if a third-party did not use its Tertius system for submission of reports or payment for an inspection.

43 Each instance of a third-party agency inspecting a sample property is counted separately, as the same agencies working at multiple properties did so at different times, meaning a different re-certification was relevant.

44 Note: one of the nine had all requirements except the signed ethics statement.

scope. DOB did not retain 2024 re-certification information because enhancements to Tertius, the DOB application used to review re-certification documentation, led to the loss of the associated files.

Weak oversight of third-party agencies heightens the risk that the private entities are not performing their inspection responsibilities adequately, increasing the possibility that dangerous or unsafe construction will go undetected. A DOB inspector noted that more oversight of third-party inspectors would send the message that DOB is monitoring their work. By not retaining third-party re-certification applications, DOB may not be able to refer to documents if and when issues arise.

Recommendation

8. DOB should establish an annual audit schedule that requires completing and documenting audits for all approved third-party agencies on projects for which they are providing inspection services, in addition to continuing complaint-based audits.

DOB did not have a required document retention schedule to guide the management, retention, and disposition of documents.

The DCMR requires that “Agency heads shall establish controls over the maintenance and use of records”⁴⁵ The District’s Office of Public Records (OPR) implements this regulation by reviewing and approving agency document retention schedules. The DCMR⁴⁶ section implementing the DC Building Code requires the DOB Code Official to follow the District of Columbia Public Records Management Act of 1985.⁴⁷

DOB did not have a document retention schedule. DOB did not create a separate agency document retention schedule after its creation in 2022 when it was split from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA). DCRA submitted a retention policy to OPR, which included functions now managed by DOB, such as permitting and inspections but it did not specify a policy for records submitted to DOB for third-party agency certification.

Not having a document retention policy to guide the proper retention and disposition of records violated District law and increased the risk that the agency would dispose of documents it was required to retain. It also limited the agency’s ability to review potentially important documents and information needed for historical or operational purposes.

Recommendation

9. DOB should submit a document retention schedule in accordance with D.C. law and include third-party agency certification documentation.

⁴⁵ 1 DCMR §1503.1. These regulations implement the “District of Columbia Public Records Management Act of 1985,” as amended.

⁴⁶ 12A DCMR § 104.7.

⁴⁷ D.C. Law 6-19, Effective from September 5, 1985.

Conclusion

The District’s robust construction activity has resulted in a heavy and growing workload at DOB and increased reliance on private third-party agency inspections. As a result, DOB management of its responsibility for plan review and permit issuance, inspections, and third-party oversight to safeguard residents, workers, and visitors has become more difficult.

Our review of numerous permit requirements for eight sample properties revealed that, although DOB met many requirements, nearly half of the permits at more than half of the properties were missing required documentation. The number of missing items, especially missing neighbor notifications, along with DOB’s broad use of an exemption for owners using licensed contractors and lack of adherence to its own Quality Assurance/Quality Control policy, may indicate broader issues in DOB’s permit review process. We found gaps between DOB’s oversight policy for third-party inspection agencies and its actual practice.

According to the department director, the agency mantra is “safe, green, and moving,” with “safe” intentionally listed first.⁴⁸ We hope this analysis and resulting recommendations will help DOB strengthen its oversight over construction, ensure compliance with the laws, regulations, and policies, and reinforce the agency’s core commitment to safety.

48 ODCA interview with Director Hanlon on October 31, 2025.

Summary of Report Recommendations

Our audit identified nine recommendations that could improve operations at DOB.

Findings	Recommendations	Addresses (Ward)
DOB approved permits without obtaining all required application elements or construction plan documents, including neighbor notifications. This lapse reflects a lack of adherence to safeguards intended to ensure the safety and quality of new construction and to protect adjoining properties.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DOB should create permit review checklists that include key groups of Building Code requirements, require all reviewers to use them during the permit review process, and require supervisory review of the process. 2. DOB should develop policies and procedures for how to conduct a permit review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1111-1113 V St. NW (1) ■ 1713 Q St. NW (2) ■ 5229 5th St. NW (4) ■ 1012 17th Pl. NE (5) ■ 4501 Blaine St. NE (7)
DOB allowed an owner to act as a contractor, and therefore avoid the licensing requirement, on property that was not the owner's primary residence, potentially enabling an unlicensed individual to perform dangerous construction work on a property they may intend to rent or sell.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. DOB should develop policies and procedures that require property owners to provide evidence that the property is their primary residence when requiring an exemption from the licensed contractor requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1165 3rd St. NE (6)
DOB issued nine construction permits at six properties without ensuring that all special inspections requirements were met, resulting in insufficient oversight of safeguards intended for projects that warrant heightened scrutiny.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. DOB should include in the recommended permit checklist that a compliant Statement of Special Inspections must be submitted by the owner before permit issuance. 5. DOB should revise the Special Inspections Policy Manual to state the requirements and timing of the pre-construction meeting clearly, including who is responsible, when it must occur, and how to verify it occurred timely and as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1111-1113 V St. NW (1) ■ 1713 Q St. NW (2) ■ 5122 Cathedral Ave. NW (3) ■ 5229 5th St. NW (4) ■ 1012 17th Pl. NE (5) ■ 4501 Blaine St. NE (7)

Findings	Recommendations	Addresses (Ward)
DOB did not follow its Quality Assurance/Quality Control policy, which prevented DOB from identifying weaknesses in its permit compliance and ultimately contributed to incomplete or inaccurate submissions.	6. DOB should review its Quality Assurance SOPs to determine what actions are needed to ensure full compliance, revise the SOPs if necessary, and maintain clear completion targets, defined supervisory deadlines, and centralized tracking while aligning practice to the updated procedures.	n/a
DOB did not approve owners' Notice of Intent to Use a Third-Party Inspection Agency for regular inspections for six of 10 permits (60%) for five of seven properties (71%).	7. DOB should update the Third-Party Program Procedural Manual, including specifying how owners should submit the NOI to use third-party inspectors for regular inspections, and who at DOB will review and approve or disapprove NOIs, before permit holders can begin construction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1111-1113 V St. NW (1) ■ 5122 Cathedral Ave. NW (3) ■ 5229 5th St. NW (4) ■ 1012 17th Pl. NE (5) ■ 1165 3rd St. NE (6)
DOB did not conduct the required annual oversight audits of each third-party agency at the sample properties, nor did it retain their most recent required re-certification packages.	8. DOB should establish an annual audit schedule that requires completing and documenting audits for all approved third-party agencies on projects for which they are providing inspection services, in addition to continuing complaint-based audits.	<p>Audits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1713 Q St. NW (2) ■ 5122 Cathedral Ave. NW (3) ■ 5229 5th St. NW (4) ■ 1012 17th Pl. NE (5) ■ 1165 3rd St. NE (6) ■ 4501 Blaine St. NE (7) <p>Re-certification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1111/1113 V St. NW (1) ■ 5122 Cathedral Ave. NW (3) ■ 5229 5th St. NW (4) ■ 1012 17th Pl. NE (5) ■ 1165 3rd St. NE (6) ■ 4501 Blaine St. NE (7)
DOB did not have a required document retention schedule to guide the management, retention, and disposition of documents.	9. DOB should submit a document retention schedule in accordance with D.C. law that includes third-party agency certification documentation.	n/a

Agency Comments

On September 15, 2026, we sent a draft copy of this report to the Department of Buildings (DOB) for review and written comment. DOB requested an extension on responding to the draft and provided comments on October 15, 2026. Agency comments and Completed Recommendation Agreement Form are included here in their entirety.



October 14, 2026

Ms. Kathleen Patterson, District of Columbia Auditor
Office of the District of Columbia Auditor
1331 Pennsylvania Ave, NW Suite 800S
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Ms. Patterson:

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you and the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor (ODCA) team on the recent audit of our construction permitting and inspections processes. We appreciate you and your team's recognition of DOB's openness and collaboration during our exit interview. We received ODCA's draft report, "Department of Buildings Can Reduce Risks of Dangerous Construction" (Draft Report) and appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and additional context.

DOB understands that this audit was intended to cover "residential properties that were either permitted or inspected between October 2022 and September 2025." (ODCA Engagement Letter, Sept. 8, 2025.) DOB also understands that this performance audit was conducted "in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) [which] require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives." (Draft Report, p.7.) Yet the draft report indicates that the audit focused on what ODCA calls "a judgmental sample" of eight properties, one from each Ward. (Draft report, p.6.) This was no random sample. Rather, these eight properties were selected by whittling down a list of 57 properties compiled from "ANC submissions, testimony to Council, [and] news reports" and after interviewing "adjoining property owners who experienced property damage" among others. In other words, even before the audit began in earnest, it seems that a pre-ordained judgment was being baked into the "judgmental sample" selection process.

DOB issues over 60,000 permits each year with a staff of 27 plan reviewers, 29 contractor plan reviewers, and four plan review supervisors.¹ Though many permits may be issued without significant review, such as instant permits or trade permits, there are thousands that require full plan review resources. Thus, and especially given the goal of 30-day first cycle reviews, the District's permitting system necessarily relies on licensed design professionals, such as architects and engineers, to comply with their professional obligations and ensure compliance with the Construction Codes when submitting plans for review. *See* 12-A DCMR § 106. It also relies on licensed construction professionals, such as general contractors and tradespersons, to ensure that construction is done according to the approved plans and applicable standards. For the vast majority of projects, this results in code-compliant plans and construction.

For a handful of projects, this is not the case, and DOB acknowledges that fact. More needs to be done to address bad actors who abuse the process—both licensed and unlicensed—and hold them accountable. While DOB cannot prevent owners from hiring bad actors or problematic permit

¹ For zoning compliance review, DOB has nine zoning reviewers, seven contractor zoning reviewers, and one plan review supervisor.

expeditors, DOB continues to work with the licensing boards, the Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection, and the Office of the Attorney General to enforce the Construction Codes and the standards to which licensed professionals must abide by.

DOB also continues the hard, unnoticed work of recruiting skilled individuals to fill our plan reviewer ranks, conducting training, improving our processes, and strengthening our internal controls and oversight to ensure all construction in the District is performed safely and in compliance with the Construction Codes. While we appreciate ODCA's recognition of DOB's positives in the exit interview, we know that our work must continue.

DOB's comments on the Draft Report's Figure 4 and the nine recommendations are below.

Figure 4: *DOB issued 10 permits at five properties without obtaining a copy of all the required elements, including documentation of required neighbor notification for dangerous construction. This represented nearly half (40%) of the permits reviewed for over half (63%) of the properties. Specifically, DOB issued:*

- *Two permits at two properties without names and addresses of adjoining neighbors.*
- *One permit at one property without the applicant's name.*
- *Two permits at two properties without a compliant Statement of Special Inspections.*
- *One permit at one property without a DC Water Certificate of Approval.*
- *One permit at one property without documentation of a D.C.-licensed professional engineer.*
- *Seven permits at three properties without obtaining a copy of all the required elements of neighbor notification.*

See Figure 4 for specific provisions.

DOB Response: In Figure 4 of the Draft Report (p.10), ODCA lists allegedly missing application and neighbor notification elements. DOB disagrees with much of what is listed in Figure 4.

First, the code official is authorized under 12A DCMR § 105.3.2 and § 106.1 to accept and process permit applications without some or all of the otherwise required submittal documents and to modify the required form and content of them. The permits listed in Figure 4 span a four-year period from 2021 through 2025. Over that time, the agency's processes and forms have changed significantly, not to mention the agency split that created DOB and its sister agency.

Second, several documents claimed to be missing were located in DOB systems, even though ODCA had access to such systems. (See 1111 V St NW neighbor notification forms; 4501 Blaine St NE DC Water Certificate of Approval.) Other documents are missing because they were not required. For example, based on the permit applicant's plans, access to an adjoining property was not required for both permits for 1713 Q St NW. As another example, there is no Statement of Special Inspections for 5229 5th St NW because special inspections are not required for Use Group - R-3, unless specified by a reviewer.

Recommendation 1: *DOB should create permit review checklists that include all Building Code requirements, require all reviewers to use them during the permit review process, and require supervisory review upon completion.*

DOB Response: This recommendation is somewhat surprising given that DOB already provided seven checklists in response to the ODCA November 3, 2025 Document Request:

1. DOB Building/Structural Checklist
2. DOB Accessibility Checklist
3. DOB Mechanical Fuel Gas Checklist
4. DOB Electrical Checklist
5. DOB Plumbing Checklist
6. DOB Fire Checklist
7. Residential Plan Review Checklist

To the extent that ODCA suggests that DOB create checklists that include every single Building Code provision, DOB disagrees.

DOB reviews plans for compliance with the Construction Codes, of which the Building Code is only one component. *See* DCMR Titles 12-A through 12-L. The entirety of the Construction Codes comprises hundreds of pages and thousands of provisions. Stacked up, the code books measure over a foot and a half tall. Given that it is not feasible to review each permit application against the thousands of Construction Code provisions that exist, DOB utilizes permit review checklists to help permit reviewers focus on critical elements as part of their review.

As mentioned above, DOB reviews thousands of permit applications every year with a staff of 27 plan reviewers, 29 contractor plan reviewers, and four plan review supervisors. Accordingly, supervisory review for every permit is not feasible. Instead, supervisors manage their teams and provide feedback to plan reviewers through a variety of methods, including by pulling a sample of permit applications for review. To provide more consistency across the plan review team, DOB is working on an SOP for the use of checklists and sampling.

Recommendation 2: *DOB should develop policies and procedures for how to conduct a permit review.*

DOB Response: To the extent that this recommendation suggests that DOB does not have policies and procedures for how to conduct a permit review, DOB disagrees.

DOB trains its plan reviewers on how to conduct a plan review through shadowing more experienced plan reviewers, memoranda of direction, checklists, and feedback from supervisors. As noted above, there are thousands of provisions in the Construction Codes, and the District relies on licensed design professionals, such as architects and engineers, to submit plans that comply with the Construction Codes. *See* 12-A DCMR § 106.

Over time, DOB has made efforts to bring more structure to its plan review program through the development of checklists, but it requires a careful balance. Plan review requires not only careful

review of the details but also being able to see the project holistically. A narrow focus on prescribed checklists likewise narrows a plan reviewer's ability to complete a comprehensive review.

DOB has also taken multiple steps to strengthen and formalize permit review processes, including creating and continuing to refine procedures covering various complexities of permit scopes, including neighbor notification and major structural construction. For example, in February 2026, DOB issued internal instruction and guidance to staff for permits involving underpinning and major structural work. This included establishing an underpinning review task in the agency's permit review platform, creating an underpinning guidance document and underpinning checklist, and holding staff training sessions.

Recommendation 3: *DOB should develop policies and procedures that require property owners to provide evidence that the property is their primary residence when requiring an exemption from the licensed contractor requirement.*

DOB Response: DOB will develop a process to confirm an owner's primary residence if the owner seeks an exemption from the licensed general contractor requirement.

Recommendation 4: *DOB should include in the recommended permit checklist that a compliant Statement of Special Inspections must be submitted by the owner before permit issuance.*

DOB Response: DOB will incorporate a compliant Statement of Special Inspections into its current checklist.

Recommendation 5: *DOB should revise the Special Inspections Policy Manual to state the requirements and timing of the pre-construction meeting clearly, including who is responsible, when it must occur, and how to verify it occurred timely and as required.*

DOB Response: DOB is updating the Special Inspections Manual to clarify that the pre-construction meeting must be held and approved by DOB before any construction or special inspection activities begin.

Recommendation 6: *DOB should review its Quality Assurance standard operating procedures (SOPs) to determine what actions are needed to ensure full compliance, revise the SOPs if necessary, and maintain clear completion targets, defined supervisory deadlines, and centralized tracking while aligning practice to the updated procedures.*

DOB Response: DOB is evaluating the Quality Assurance SOPs and will be incorporating more Quality Assurance reviews by management enabled by the additional management support hired within the last fiscal year.

Recommendation 7: *DOB should update the Third-Party Program Procedural Manual, including specifying how owners should submit the NOI to use third-party inspectors for regular inspections,*

and who at DOB will review and approve or disapprove NOIs, before permit holders can begin construction.

DOB Response: Effective September 2026, DOB implemented a new digital Notice of Intent process requiring authorization to use a Third-Party Agency before any Regulatory Code or Special Inspection construction can occur. The Third-Party Program Procedural Manual is being updated to reflect this new process.

Recommendation 8: *DOB should establish an annual audit schedule that requires completing and documenting audits for all approved third-party agencies on projects for which they are providing inspection services, in addition to continuing complaint-based audits.*

DOB Response: In February 2026, DOB implemented an electronic certification and recertification process through Tertius, DOB's construction inspections management platform, which includes document retention of prior submittals. Certification is already one of the Third-Party Program's annual audit processes.

The Third-Party Program Procedural Manual outlines additional auditing standards for third-party agencies, including a quarterly internal self-audit performed by each agency, and an enhanced audit process is being incorporated into the Manual in Section VII, DOB Oversight of Third-Party Agencies.

Recommendation 9: *DOB should submit a document retention schedule in accordance with D.C. law and include third-party agency certification documentation.*

DOB Response: DOB is in the process of finalizing the agency's document retention schedule. DOB anticipates submitting the proposed retention schedule to the D.C. Archivist for review and approval in the first quarter of FY27.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Report. If you have any questions, please contact Monique Bocock, Senior Counsel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian J. Hanlon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" being the most prominent part.

Brian J. Hanlon, AIA LEED AP
Director

Enclosures



NEIGHBOR NOTIFICATION FORM AND EVIDENCE OF NOTIFICATION SAFEGUARDS DURING CONSTRUCTION

DATE:	07/13/2022	PERMIT NUMBER:	R2200173
ADDRESS OF PROPOSED WORK:	1113 V Street NW, Washington DC 20009		

OWNER/PERMIT APPLICANT INFORMATION:

NAME:	1111 V STREET LLC
ADDRESS:	1113 V Street NW Washington DC 20009
PHONE:	917-495-1074
EMAIL:	primerealtybiz@gmail.com

ADJOINING OWNER INFORMATION:

NAME:	1111 V Street LLC
ADDRESS:	1111 V Street NW Washington DC 20009
PHONE:	917-495-1074
EMAIL:	primerealtybiz@gmail.com

CONTRACTOR INFORMATION:

NAME:	Prime Realty LLC	PHONE:	917-495-1074
LICENSE NUMBER:	410521000144	EMAIL:	primerealtybiz@gmail.com

Section §3307.1 of the 2017 District of Columbia Building Code, 12-A DCMR (the "Building Code") requires adjoining public and private property to be protected from damage during construction, alteration, repair, demolition or raze of a premises at the expense of the person causing the work. Protection must be provided for lots, and for all elements of a building or other structure, including, but not limited to, footings, foundations, party walls, chimneys, skylights, and roofs. Provisions shall be made to control water runoff and erosion during construction, demolition or raze activities.

Proper underpinning of existing adjoining or party walls which require underpinning must be provided in accordance with applicable sections of the Building Code.

Under Sections §3307.2 and §3307.3 of the Building Code, notification of the adjoining property owner is required for certain types of construction activities. A copy of Section §3307 of the Building Code is available online on the DCRA website at: <https://dcra.dc.gov/page/dc-construction-codes> or through the International Code Council at: <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IBC2015/chapter-33-safeguards-during-construction>.

I am the owner of the property and/or the authorized agent of the owner identified above which adjoins your property. I am proposing to carry out work, as identified in the permit number above which requires all adjoining property owners to be notified and provided with applicable plans and permit documents. I have determined that the following specific measures need to be undertaken to protect the adjoining premises and the listed permit documents are developed and designed accordingly:

Please indicate whether access to the adjoining property is required and list the specific measure that are being proposed. You may find more details in Section §1062.18.4.

Access required for protection of adjoining properties:	Yes	☒	No
Access required for protection of adjoining properties:	Yes	☒	No

Note: If access is denied by the adjoining property owner, then the owner/permit applicant to provide instructions not to access the adjoining property in the drawings and permit documents.

ADDITIONAL TOOL FOR VIEWING PLANS AND PERMIT DOCUMENTS

With this notice of a permit application, adjoining property owners may view and download the plans and permit documents associated with the project. To increase access and reduce the time required for review, plans and construction documents will be available in eRecords, DCRA's online electronic records management system, the next business day after they are uploaded by the owner/permit applicant. eRecords is available at: <https://dcra.dc.gov/node/1473011>. Plans and permit documents submitted at the time of permit application will be available online for up to 60 days after permit issuance.

To view documents associated with a permit application in eRecords, visit <https://dcra.dc.gov/node/1473011>, and:

1. From the list of available searches, select "Neighbor Notification,"
2. Enter either the permit number from this Neighbor Notification Form, or the address of the property associated with the project; and
3. Select the available documents to download for review.

You may also visit dcra.dc.gov and select "View Permit Records Online (eRecords)" from the Resources section on the homepage.

EVIDENCE OF NOTIFICATION

As part of permit application process and as required by DC Code Section §106.2.18.3.1.1, I, the owner/permit applicant will provide evidence of notification, consisting of the following:

1. A Notice of Filing of a permit application shall be posted for a continuous period at least 30 calendar days from the date of evidence of posting notification, including the 30 days period prior to issuance of the permit. The notice will be posted in a Neighbor Notification Form provided by DCRA. The notice will be posted at the main entrance of the premises identified above. If the notice is destroyed, damaged, or removed during the posting period, it will be replaced promptly. Both the Neighbor Notification Form and Affidavit of Maintenance will be required to be uploaded in eRecords with the documents supporting the permit application.
2. Evidence of the delivery of written notice as prescribed in Section §106.2.18.3.1.2.
3. An Affidavit of Maintenance providing sworn.

As required, Neighbor Notification Forms, photographic evidence of posting, and Affidavits of Maintenance will be required to be uploaded with the documents supporting the permit application in ProjectDox, DCRA's permitting and plan review platform by the owner/permit applicant.

As the owner of premise for which a permit application has been submitted or for which I will be applying, I certify that all information submitted including that through eRecords is accurate for the above stated property address and/or permit application. If any technical objections are submitted by the adjoining property owners, I will be responsible to resolve it with the adjoining property owners and DCRA by submitting a detailed resolution report in one package prepared by the design professional with supporting documents like drawings, reports, design calculations, etc.

Signature:  Date: 7/15/2022
Name of Owner: Ritesh Matta

I here with certify that the work protection plans including drawings, details, sections, reports, and other applicable notes for above stated address and permit application based on the scope of work are prepared to comply with the District of Columbia Municipal Regulation 2017 DCMR 12A:

Name of Design Professional: Gregory Kearley

Signature of Design Professional: _____

Date: _____

Stamp of Design Professional

Note: Any change in construction documents and supporting documents after issuance of permit meeting the requirements of section §106.2.18, will require submission of a revised neighbor notification form for the new permit. It is required to provide all pages of neighbor notification form to the owner of adjoining premises with accurate information. It is requested to refer to Guideline -Neighbor Notification Program and guidelines for underpinning work and Construction Codes Administrative Bulletin CC2015-01.

RESPONSE FROM ADJOINING PROPERTY OWNER

INFORMATION TO THE OWNER OF ADJOINING PROPERTY

As the adjoining property owner, you will have 30 days from the date of receipt of Neighbor Notification Form and applicable plans, project drawings and supporting documents to submit technical objections as per applicable DC Code Section §3307 besides submission of technical objections during the permit review process and during construction. Owner/permit applicants will be responsible to resolve technical objections by providing a detailed response, if applicable, with the revised permit documents.

The objection shall include: 1) technical support for your conclusions that the work authorized by the permit will not protect your premises from structural damage, (2) any proposed changes to the work plan that you assert are necessary to protect your premises from structural damage, (3) reasons for not having protection to the properties based on the scope of work and types of permits, and (4) supporting documents like drawings, sections, elevation etc., for explanation of technical objections. Neighbors shall submit technical objections to the permit applicant with a copy sent to DCRA at the address and/or email address listed below:

Deputy Chief Building Official
Department of Regulatory and Consumer Affairs
1100 4th Street, SW, Third Floor
Washington, DC 20024

Email Address: technicalobjections-DCRA@dc.gov
(Please include in the subject line: address of property, permit number, and address of neighbor undertaking the project)

Any request for access to your property, in order to install any protective work, is governed by Section §106.2.18.4, except where a limited or temporary right of access to the adjoining premises is expressly granted in Sections §3307.2.2. or §3307.4.1 for the specific protective work required.

A limited access right under Section §3307.2.2 of the DC Code is expressly granted:

1. Where a party wall requires underpinning as a result of the proposed work;
2. Where the underpinning can be provided by the owner undertaking the work from said owner's premises, even if the footing extends onto the adjoining owner's premises to provide overall strength to the party wall;
3. Where extension of the footing is required to stabilize and support the adjoining owner's building or structure, and to avoid unreasonable delay in excavation and development of the permitted project; and
4. The owner undertaking the work has provided notice to the owner of the adjoining premises in accordance with Section §106.2.18 where required.
5. Protective work to adjoining properties.

I hereby confirm that I received plans and project documents from DCRA's eRecords online electronic records management system or received _____ (number of drawings) project drawings and _____ (number of documents) other supporting documents with this Neighbor Notification Form from the owner/permit applicant: ☒ Yes ☐ No

I do not have technical objections (please sign): _____
I will be submitting technical objections: Yes ☐ No ☒

I hereby grant the access to evaluate the preexisting conditions before construction, to evaluate structural system of my house and to install necessary protective measures to my property: ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes with Conditions

Conditions/Other Notes: _____

If access is denied, I understand that I will be responsible for making my own property safe, without delay, so as not to impede or materially delay the proposed construction. If access is required for construction work on my property, then the owner/permit applicant shall discuss and explain in the impact on my property.

Signature of Adjoining Owner: *R. T. SAMATHIA* Date: 7/15/2022

Address of Adjoining Neighbor: 1111 V St NW, Washington DC 20009

Email Address: primerealtybiz@gmail.com Phone Number: 917-495-1074

Signature of Design Professional: _____ Date: 7/15/2022

Note: It is required to provide all pages of this Neighbor Notification Form to the adjoining property owners with all accurate information. As per Administrative bulletin CC2015-02, a notification letter will be provided by the applicant to adjoining property owners prior to start of construction work. Permit applicant shall not fill any information on the Response From Adjoining Property Owner form.



NEIGHBOR NOTIFICATION FORM AND EVIDENCE OF NOTIFICATION SAFEGUARDS DURING CONSTRUCTION

DATE:	07/13/2022	PERMIT NUMBER:	R2200173
ADDRESS OF PROPOSED WORK:	1113 V Street NW, Washington DC 20009		

OWNER/PERMIT APPLICANT INFORMATION:

NAME:	1111 V STREET LLC
ADDRESS:	1113 V Street NW Washington DC 20009
PHONE:	917-495-1074
EMAIL:	primerealtybiz@gmail.com

ADJOINING OWNER INFORMATION:

NAME:	1111 V Street LLC
ADDRESS:	1111 V Street NW Washington DC 20009
PHONE:	917-495-1074
EMAIL:	primerealtybiz@gmail.com

CONTRACTOR INFORMATION:

NAME:	Prime Realty LLC	PHONE:	917-495-1074
LICENSE NUMBER:	410521000144	EMAIL:	primerealtybiz@gmail.com

Section §3307.1 of the 2017 District of Columbia Building Code, 12-A DCMR (the "Building Code") requires adjoining public and private property to be protected from damage during construction, alteration, repair, demolition or raze of a premises at the expense of the person causing the work. Protection must be provided for lots, and for all elements of a building or other structure, including, but not limited to, footings, foundations, party walls, chimneys, skylights, and roofs. Provisions shall be made to control water runoff and erosion during construction, demolition or raze activities.

Proper underpinning of existing adjoining or party walls which require underpinning must be provided in accordance with applicable sections of the Building Code.

Under Sections §3307.2 and §3307.3 of the Building Code, notification of the adjoining property owner is required for certain types of construction activities. A copy of Section §3307 of the Building Code is available online on the DCRA website at: <https://dcra.dc.gov/page/dc-construction-codes> or through the International Code Council at: <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IBC2015/chapter-33-safeguards-during-construction>.

I am the owner of the property and/or the authorized agent of the owner identified above which adjoins your property. I am proposing to carry out work, as identified in the permit number above which requires all adjoining property owners to be notified and provided with applicable plans and permit documents. I have determined that the following specific measures need to be undertaken to protect the adjoining premises and the listed permit documents are developed and designed accordingly:

Please indicate whether access to the adjoining property is required and list the specific measure that are being proposed. You may find more details in Section §1062.18.4.

Access required for protection of adjoining properties:	Yes	☒	No
Access required for protection of adjoining properties:	Yes	☒	No

Note: If access is denied by the adjoining property owner, then the owner/permit applicant to provide instructions not to access the adjoining property in the drawings and permit documents.

ADDITIONAL TOOL FOR VIEWING PLANS AND PERMIT DOCUMENTS

With this notice of a permit application, adjoining property owners may view and download the plans and permit documents associated with the project. To increase access and reduce the time required for review, plans and construction documents will be available in eRecords, DCRA's online electronic records management system, the next business day after they are uploaded by the owner/permit applicant. eRecords is available at: <https://dcra.dc.gov/node/1473011>. Plans and permit documents submitted at the time of permit application will be available online for up to 60 days after permit issuance.

To view documents associated with a permit application in eRecords, visit <https://dcra.dc.gov/node/1473011>, and:

1. From the list of available searches, select "Neighbor Notification,"
2. Enter either the permit number from this Neighbor Notification Form, or the address of the property associated with the project; and
3. Select the available documents to download for review.

You may also visit dcra.dc.gov and select "View Permit Records Online (eRecords)" from the Resources section on the homepage.

EVIDENCE OF NOTIFICATION

As part of permit application process and as required by DC Code Section §106.2.18.3.1.1, I, the owner/permit applicant will provide evidence of notification, consisting of the following:

1. A Notice of Filing of a permit application shall be posted for a continuous period at least 30 calendar days from the date of evidence of posting notification, including the 30 days period prior to issuance of the permit. The notice will be posted in a Neighbor Notification Form provided by DCRA. The notice will be posted at the main entrance of the premises identified above. If the notice is destroyed, damaged, or removed during the posting period, it will be replaced promptly. Both the Neighbor Notification Form and Affidavit of Maintenance will be required to be uploaded in eRecords with the documents supporting the permit application.
2. Evidence of the delivery of written notice as prescribed in Section §106.2.18.3.1.2.
3. An Affidavit of Maintenance providing sworn.

As required, Neighbor Notification Forms, photographic evidence of posting, and Affidavits of Maintenance will be required to be uploaded with the documents supporting the permit application in ProjectDox, DCRA's permitting and plan review platform by the owner/permit applicant.

As the owner of premise for which a permit application has been submitted or for which I will be applying, I certify that all information submitted including that through eRecords is accurate for the above stated property address and/or permit application. If any technical objections are submitted by the adjoining property owners, I will be responsible to resolve it with the adjoining property owners and DCRA by submitting a detailed resolution report in one package prepared by the design professional with supporting documents like drawings, reports, design calculations, etc.

Signature: RITESH MATTIA Date: 7/15/2022
Name of Owner: Ritesh Matta

I here with certify that the work protection plans including drawings, details, sections, reports, and other applicable notes for above stated address and permit application based on the scope of work are prepared to comply with the District of Columbia Municipal Regulation 2017 DCMR 12A:

Name of Design Professional: Gregory Kearley
Signature of Design Professional: [Signature]
Date: 19 July 2022



Stamp of Design Professional

Note: Any change in construction documents and supporting documents after issuance of permit meeting the requirements of section §106.2.18, will require submission of a revised neighbor notification form for the new permit. It is required to provide all pages of neighbor notification form to the owner of adjoining premises with accurate information. It is requested to refer to Guideline -Neighbor Notification Program and guidelines for underpinning work and Construction Codes Administrative Bulletin CC2015-01.

RESPONSE FROM ADJOINING PROPERTY OWNER

INFORMATION TO THE OWNER OF ADJOINING PROPERTY

As the adjoining property owner, you will have 30 days from the date of receipt of Neighbor Notification Form and applicable plans, project drawings and supporting documents to submit technical objections as per applicable DC Code Section §3307 besides submission of technical objections during the permit review process and during construction. Owner/permit applicants will be responsible to resolve technical objections by providing a detailed response, if applicable, with the revised permit documents.

The objection shall include: 1) technical support for your conclusions that the work authorized by the permit will not protect your premises from structural damage, (2) any proposed changes to the work plan that you assert are necessary to protect your premises from structural damage, (3) reasons for not having protection to the properties based on the scope of work and types of permits, and (4) supporting documents like drawings, sections, elevation etc., for explanation of technical objections. Neighbors shall submit technical objections to the permit applicant with a copy sent to DCRA at the address and/or email address listed below:

Deputy Chief Building Official
Department of Regulatory and Consumer Affairs
1100 4th Street, SW, Third Floor
Washington, DC 20024

Email Address: technicalobjections-DCRA@dc.gov
(Please include in the subject line: address of property, permit number, and address of neighbor undertaking the project)

Any request for access to your property, in order to install any protective work, is governed by Section §106.2.18.4, except where a limited or temporary right of access to the adjoining premises is expressly granted in Sections §3307.2.2. or §3307.4.1 for the specific protective work required.

A limited access right under Section §3307.2.2 of the DC Code is expressly granted:

1. Where a party wall requires underpinning as a result of the proposed work;
2. Where the underpinning can be provided by the owner undertaking the work from said owner's premises, even if the footing extends onto the adjoining owner's premises to provide overall strength to the party wall;
3. Where extension of the footing is required to stabilize and support the adjoining owner's building or structure, and to avoid unreasonable delay in excavation and development of the permitted project; and
4. The owner undertaking the work has provided notice to the owner of the adjoining premises in accordance with Section §106.2.18 where required.
5. Protective work to adjoining properties.

I hereby confirm that I received plans and project documents from DCRA's eRecords online electronic records management system or received _____ (number of drawings) project drawings and _____ (number of documents) other supporting documents with this Neighbor Notification Form from the owner/permit applicant: ☒ Yes ☐ No

I do not have technical objections (please sign): _____
I will be submitting technical objections: Yes ☐ No ☒

I hereby grant the access to evaluate the preexisting conditions before construction, to evaluate structural system of my house and to install necessary protective measures to my property: ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes with Conditions

Conditions/Other Notes: _____

If access is denied, I understand that I will be responsible for making my own property safe, without delay, so as not to impede or materially delay the proposed construction. If access is required for construction work on my property, then the owner/permit applicant shall discuss and explain the impact on my property.

Signature of Adjoining Owner: _____ Date: 7/15/2022

Address of Adjoining Neighbor: 1111 V St NW, Washington DC 20009

Email Address: primerealtybiz@gmail.com Phone Number: 917-495-1074

Signature of Design Professional: _____ Date: 7/15/2022

Note: It is required to provide all pages of this Neighbor Notification Form to the adjoining property owners with all accurate information. As per Administrative bulletin CC2015-02, a notification letter will be provided by the applicant to adjoining property owners prior to start of construction work. Permit applicant shall not fill any information on the Response From Adjoining Property Owner form.

DC Department of Buildings
AFFIDAVIT OF MAINTENANCE

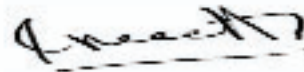
DATE	5/29/23	PERMIT NUMBER	B2303360
ADDRESS OF PROPOSED WORK	1111 V street NW, Washington DC 20009		
OWNER INFORMATION			
NAME	1111 V Street LLC		
ADDRESS	41649 WHITE YARROW CT ASHBURN VA 20148		
PHONE	917-495-1074		
EMAIL	RITESHMATTAGMAIL.COM		

I, the property owner/permit applicant identified above, in accordance with 12A D.C.M.R. § 106.2.18.3.1.3, hereby states that a Notice of Filing of a Building Permit Application that complies with the requirements set forth in 12A D.C.M.R. § 106.2.18.3.1.1 will be posted on the premises at the address of proposed work listed above and will be continuously maintained for the requisite 30-day period of time as prescribed in 12A D.C.M.R. § 106.2.18.3.1.1(1). Furthermore, I understand that the permit application(s) associated with my project will not be issued without the submission of evidence of notification as required by 12A D.C.M.R. § 106.2.18.3.1.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed by (Owner of Property/Permit Applicant): Ritesh Matta

Date: 5/30/23



NOTARIZATION REQUIRED

District of Columbia

Signed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me on (date) 5/30/23

by (affiant) Ritesh Matta



(Signature of notarial officer)

(Title of office)

09/30/2026

My commission expires:

(Seal)



DC Water has reviewed the permit application and has confirmed that all requirements have been met and all fees have been paid. The Payment of FEES, which include the estimated inspections cost, are a material term of his certificate and obligates the applicant to pay the actual construction inspection costs. The applicant is responsible for inspection costs that exceed the fee and shall be refunded fees in excess of the inspection costs.

This certificate is hereby issued to the recipient listed below.

Certificate #: 22-310910 - Water & Sewer Avail Cert

Location: 4501 Blaine St NE

Square/Lot: Issued Date / By: 16-Jun-22 / Michael Chen

Description: Water and Sewer Availability Certificate for 22-50658

Work to be performed for this project:

1. Inspect 15" storm sewer point up sewer tap (connection to existing sewer manhole) at southeast corner of the intersection of Blaine ST NE and 45th ST NE.
2. Inspect installation of new 6" fire service connection (8" x 6" tee connection to existing 8" water main) in 45th ST NE
3. Inspect installation of new 4" domestic connection (8" x 4" tee connection to existing 8" water main) in 45th ST NE
4. Inspection of pre-cast concrete vault for new 3" domestic meter vault.
5. Deposit for domestic water meter installation (performed by DC Water) 3" domestic water meter.
6. Inspect new sewer manhole (>10 < or = 20 vft) on the existing 10" sanitary sewer main in 45th ST NE.
7. Inspect 8" point up sewer tap (connection to proposed sewer manhole on the existing 10" sanitary sewer main) in 45th ST NE
8. Inspect 18" point up sewer tap (connection to existing sewer manhole) in 45th ST NE
9. Water & Sewer "As-Built Drawings" fee (non-reimbursable).

Recipient: The Residences at Benning Road LLC

Recipient's Address: 231 UPSHUR ST NW

WASHINGTON DC 20011

Recipient's Telephone #:

Recipient's e-Mail Address: pagar@commun-et.com>

D.C. Water and Sewer Authority
Certificate of Approval

Please Notify The Appropriate DC Water Departments for Pre-Construction Meetings and Inspection Request:

- a) Construction Inspection Section at 202-787-4024.
- b) Water Services at 202-612-3400 or 3600.
- c) Sewer Services at 202-264-3824 or 3829.

Written Request for Refunds are required and shall be made within 2 years of the date of:

- a) Project completion, discontinuance or abandonment; or
- b) DCRA permit application abandonment [180 days], or permit revocation, abandonment or expiration; or
- c) the last activity on the account, whichever is earlier

Please make refund requests to DC Water at:

DC Water Permit Operations
1100 4th St SW, 3rd Floor, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20024

Failure to make timely request for a refund shall result in forfeiture of unexpended funds. Please call 202-646-8600 if you need more information.

Recommendation Agreement and Action Form

Recommendation Agreement and Action Form
Department of Buildings Can Reduce Risks of Dangerous Construction

Recommendation 1	
DOB should create permit review checklists that include all Building Code requirements, require all reviewers to use them during the permit review process, and require supervisory review upon completion.	
Agency Response to Recommendation:	☐ Agree ☐ Agree in Part ☒ Do not Agree
Will you take, or have you taken, corrective action?	☐ Yes ☒ No
Planned Corrective Action(s):	DOB already has permit review checklists, which were provided to ODCA in response to the November 3, 2025 Document Request. For further explanation, see October 14, 2026 DOB Response to Draft Report.
Target Date or Date Implemented:	N/A

Recommendation 2	
DOB should develop policies and procedures for how to conduct a permit review.	
Agency Response to Recommendation:	☐ Agree ☐ Agree in Part ☒ Do not Agree
Will you take, or have you taken, corrective action?	☐ Yes ☒ No
Planned Corrective Action(s):	DOB trains its plan reviewers on how to conduct a permit review through multiple methods. For further explanation, see October 14, 2026 DOB Response to Draft Report.
Target Date or Date Implemented:	N/A

Recommendation 3	
DOB should develop policies and procedures that require property owners to provide evidence that the property is their primary residence when requiring an exemption from the licensed contractor requirement.	
Agency Response to Recommendation:	☐ Agree ☒ Agree in Part ☐ Do not Agree
Will you take, or have you taken, corrective action?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Planned Corrective Action(s):	DOB will develop a process to confirm an owner's primary residence if the owner seeks an exemption from the licensed general contractor requirement.
Target Date or Date Implemented:	TBD; this may require a change to DOB's technological systems.

Recommendation 4	
DOB should include in the recommended permit checklist that a compliant Statement of Special Inspections must be submitted by the owner before permit issuance.	
Agency Response to Recommendation:	☒ Agree ☐ Agree in Part ☐ Do not Agree
Will you take, or have you taken, corrective action?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Planned Corrective Action(s):	DOB will incorporate a compliant Statement of Special Inspections into its current checklist.
Target Date or Date Implemented:	TBD

Recommendation 5	
DOB should revise the Special Inspections Policy Manual to state the requirements and timing of the pre-construction meeting clearly, including who is responsible, when it must occur, and how to verify it occurred timely and as required.	
Agency Response to Recommendation:	☐ Agree ☒ Agree in Part ☐ Do not Agree
Will you take, or have you taken, corrective action?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Planned Corrective Action(s):	DOB will update the Special Inspections Manual to clarify that the pre-construction meeting must be held and approved by DOB before any construction or special inspection activities begin.
Target Date or Date Implemented:	FY 2027, 1st Quarter

Recommendation 6	
DOB should review its Quality Assurance SOPs to determine what actions are needed to ensure full compliance, revise the SOPs if necessary, and maintain clear completion targets, defined supervisory deadlines, and centralized tracking while aligning practice to the updated procedures.	
Agency Response to Recommendation:	☐ Agree ☒ Agree in Part ☐ Do not Agree
Will you take, or have you taken, corrective action?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Planned Corrective Action(s):	DOB is evaluating the Quality Assurance SOPs and will be incorporating more Quality Assurance reviews by management enabled by the additional management support hired within the last fiscal year.
Target Date or Date Implemented:	TBD

Recommendation 7	
DOB should update the Third-Party Program Procedural Manual, including specifying how owners should submit the NOI to use third-party inspectors for regular inspections, and who at DOB will review and approve or disapprove NOIs, before permit holders can begin construction.	
Agency Response to Recommendation:	☐ Agree ☒ Agree in Part ☐ Do not Agree
Will you take, or have you taken, corrective action?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Planned Corrective Action(s):	Effective September 2026, DOB implemented a new digital Notice of Intent process requiring authorization to use a Third-Party Agency before any Regulatory Code or Special Inspection construction can occur. The Third-Party Program Procedural Manual is being updated to reflect this new process.
Target Date or Date Implemented:	September 2026

Recommendation 8	
DOB should establish an annual audit schedule that requires completing and documenting audits for all approved third-party agencies on projects for which they are providing inspection services, in addition to continuing complaint-based audits.	
Agency Response to Recommendation:	☐ Agree ☒ Agree in Part ☐ Do not Agree
Will you take, or have you taken, corrective action?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Planned Corrective Action(s):	<p>In February 2026, DOB implemented an electronic certification and recertification process through Tertius, DOB's construction inspections management platform, which includes document retention of prior submittals. Certification is already one of the Third-Party Program's annual audit processes.</p> <p>The Third-Party Program Procedural Manual outlines additional auditing standards for third-party agencies, including a quarterly internal self-audit performed by each agency, and an enhanced audit process is being incorporated into the Manual in Section VII, DOB Oversight of Third-Party Agencies.</p>
Target Date or Date Implemented:	February 2026; FY 2027, 1st Quarter

Recommendation 9	
DOB should submit a document retention schedule in accordance with D.C. law that includes third-party agency certification documentation.	
Agency Response to Recommendation:	☒ Agree ☐ Agree in Part ☐ Do not Agree
Will you take, or have you taken, corrective action?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Planned Corrective Action(s):	DOB is in the process of finalizing the agency's document retention schedule. DOB anticipates submitting the proposed retention schedule to the D.C. Archivist for review and approval in the first quarter of FY27.
Target Date or Date Implemented:	FY 2027, 1st Quarter

ODCA Response to Agency Comments

ODCA appreciates DOB's response to our draft report and its concurrence with most of our recommendations. We are encouraged that DOB has implemented or plans to implement many of them.

In response to DOB's comments, we made two revisions: we removed a document previously listed in Figure 4 and amended Recommendation 1. Both changes are described below.

DOB asserts that our judgmental sample – focused on properties where adjoining property owners experienced property damage or neighbor notification was required – suggests a “pre-ordained judgment was being baked into the ‘judgmental sample’ process.” We disagree. The Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (the Yellow Book) does not require random sampling and directs that non-random or targeted sampling be fully described. The Yellow Book requires auditors to “describe the scope of the work performed and any limitations, including issues that would be relevant to likely users, so that report users can reasonably interpret the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in the report without being misled.”⁴⁹ The audit report described how our sample was selected and did not make any claims that the results of our limited sample could be projected to the larger population. We modified the methodology description to make this clearer.

Audit standards require auditors to determine root causes for identified issues, and this process revealed “causes” that applied widely across DOB's permit review and third-party oversight processes and was not limited solely to issues specific to the sample properties. These process-wide deficiencies allowed us to propose broader recommendations aimed at strengthening DOB's permit review and third-party oversight processes. Even a limited sample can support findings of systemic weaknesses. Thus, in ODCA's professional judgment, the limited sample provided sufficient appropriate evidence to meet the Yellow Book's requirement that auditors “address the audit objectives and support the findings and conclusions to the extent that would persuade a knowledgeable person that findings are reasonable.”⁵⁰

DOB states that its significant workload requires it to rely on licensed design professionals to comply with laws and regulations and licensed construction professionals to ensure construction is done according to approved plans and applicable standards. While most projects may be code-compliant under this system, DOB acknowledges that some are not. This fact underlies the purpose of our audit. We recognize that permitting, inspections, and construction processes rely on a multi-faceted set of requirements, actors, and institutions to comply with a variety of obligations, regulations, and laws, and we are also aware that bad actors may abuse the processes. Our audit focused on reviewing DOB's role in the process and on opportunities to reduce the number of projects with noncompliant plans before construction occurs. It focused as well on reviewing DOB's oversight of third-party inspection agencies that inspect many construction projects in the District to mitigate the risk of harm to District residents and visitors and damage to District properties.

49 Yellow Book, 9.12.

50 Yellow Book, 8.92.

In its disagreement with the contents of Figure 4, DOB cites 12A DCMR § 105.3.2 and § 106.1 as authorizing the Code Official, “to accept permit applications without some or all of the otherwise required documents.” The provisions of § 105.3.2 state, “Unless otherwise specified by the code *official*” (emphasis in original) before listing code requirements. The files listed in Figure 4 did not include any specification by the code official. Accepting an interpretation that a code official can waive requirements without language that states that would effectively make the requirements optional for DOB to enforce and would eliminate accountability for enforcement.

Likewise, Section 106.1 authorizes the code official to require “additional documents” but also grants the following exception: “Where the code *official* deems that the nature of the work applied for is such that review of submittal documents is not necessary to confirm compliance with the Construction Codes, the code *official* is authorized to accept and process a permit application without some or all of the otherwise required submittal documents, or to modify the form and content of any otherwise required submittal document, provided, that this exception does not apply where the Construction Codes require submittal documents to be prepared by a *registered design professional*.” ODCA submits that, for projects involving dangerous construction, confirming code compliance is inherently necessary.

With respect to the missing neighbor notification documents which comprise most of the items in Figure 4, DCMR 12A § 106.2.18 clearly defines when notification should occur and how it must occur. The files contain no evidence that DOB affirmatively and knowingly granted an exemption to requirements.

ODCA agrees with DOB regarding one document identified in Figure 4. Although the DC Water Certificate of Approval was not in the expected folder, DOB provided evidence that it existed in another folder due to a system glitch. We removed this item from Figure 4 and updated the related text accordingly.

Below are ODCA responses for the other specific cases DOB mentions in Figure 4:

- Neither of the two neighbor notification attachments (one was duplicated) that DOB states ODCA claimed to be missing were listed as missing in Figure 4. The missing documents listed are different required neighbor notification forms that were not found in the files or provided by DOB.
- DOB notes access to an adjoining property was not required for 1713 Q St. NW, and as such, we provided a footnote in Figure 4 describing this situation. We included this information in Figure 4 because the neighbor notification letters requested access to the adjoining neighbor’s property. Although DOB later noted the plans did not require this access, there was no documentation in the file to confirm this.
- DOB noted that there is no Statement of Special Inspections for 5229 5th St. NW because it was not required for Use Group R-3. As we noted, a Statement of Special Inspections was present in this file, but it was not submitted before permit issuance as required by 12A § 106.3 and the Special Inspections Policy Manual.

In its disagreement with Recommendation 1, DOB notes it is not feasible to include the thousands of Construction Code provisions in a single checklist, and that DOB uses checklists to help reviewers focus on critical elements. ODCA’s draft noted that we received multiple checklists from DOB and we included the Building/Structural Review checklist in an Appendix as an example of a DOB checklist. DOB officials told us, however, that the agency did not require the checklists to be used and that reviewers did not use

them consistently. The aim of our recommendation was for DOB, at a minimum, to formalize this process by deciding which checklist(s) to use, requiring them to be completed, and requiring supervisor review to ensure they were used. We revised Recommendation 1 to replace the word “all” before “requirements” with “key groups of” and revised “supervisory review upon completion” to “supervisory review of the process.” ODCA commends DOB for working on standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the use of checklists and supervisor sampling.

Appendices

Appendix A

Glossary

Glossary

Accela — DOB’s main database that supports the agency’s operations workflows

ANC — Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner

CorpOnline — An online system for corporate registration filings housed by DLCP (now called BOSS)

D.C. Building Code — The 2017 D.C. Building Code is one of the various codes, primarily published by the International Code Council as a set of comprehensive, coordinated building safety and fire codes adopted by 50 states and D.C., that were amended by the District and together make up the District of Columbia Construction Codes. The relevant sections of the D.C. Building Code referred to in this report, other than minor formatting changes, have been entirely integrated into the D.C. Municipal Regulations, and are referred to by their DCMR citation.

DCMR — D.C. Municipal Regulations

DCRA — Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (former agency that was split into DOB and DLCP in 2022)

DLCP — Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection (DLCP and DOB functions were previously jointly administered by DCRA)

DOB — Department of Buildings

LLC — Limited Liability Company

NOI — Notice of Intent

OA — Office of Administrative Hearings

ProjectDox — An online platform for electronic plan submission and review (Archived ProjectDox was its predecessor)

QA/QC — Quality Assurance/Quality Control

Scout — DOB’s online consolidated database providing permitting, inspection, and other information

Special Inspections — Required for projects involving components of construction that “upon failure, would cause significant harm”

SSI — Statement of Special Inspections

SWO — Stop Work Order

Tertius — An online platform where third-party agencies schedule, result, and submit third-party inspections to DOB

Appendix B

Property Narratives

Ward 1

1111-1113 V STREET NW

On July 15, 2022, the owner of two rowhouses at 1111 and 1113 V St. NW applied to raze both buildings, and a raze permit for each lot was approved on August 18, 2023.⁵¹ While waiting for the raze permit approvals, the owner submitted a building permit application to construct a five-story, multi-family residential building with six units on both lots on January 26, 2023. The building permit review included seven DOB review cycles across 12 disciplines;⁵² during which the applicant required extended periods to revise the plans before returning them to DOB.⁵³ DOB approved building permit B2303360 on June 24, 2024.⁵⁴

Figure 5: Photo of 1111–1113 V Street NW, September 12, 2024



Source: Inspection photo taken by a third-party inspector on September 12, 2024.

The demolition plans submitted under building permit B2303360 appeared to incorporate concerns raised by the neighboring 1115 V St. owner. During the fifth review cycle for the building permit, a DOB reviewer noted that a permit authorizing structural changes to the 1115 V St. roof would be required before issuing the building permit for 1113 V St., however, no such permit for 1115 V St. was present in the

⁵¹ Permits R2200173 and R2200174.

⁵² Mechanical, Fire, Energy, Plumbing, Electrical, Green, DC Water, District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) SE-SW (soil erosion-stormwater), DOEE GAR (Green Area Ratio), Structural, and Zoning Review.

⁵³ DOB management noted this number of cycles is not typical and may indicate that the applicant did not understand the requirements or the reviewers' comments. DOB met its Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for reviews of each cycle for this permit application.

⁵⁴ Most statements in the narratives are from DOB's Accela, ProjectDox (or its archived version), or Tertius systems.

system to show this requirement had been met prior to DOB issuing the 1113 V St. permit. Only one of five neighbor notification requirements was on file for building permit B2303360. Similarly, the raze permit for 1113 V included only one of four required neighbor notification documents; 1111 V St. was adjacent to an alley on one side and 1113 V on the other.

Figure 6: Proposed Plans at 1111-1113 V Street NW

1111 V Street Development

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PERMIT OPERATIONS DIVISION

THE FIRE PROTECTION PLANS ARE APPROVED AS NOTED.
FINAL INSTALLATION APPROVAL SUBJECT TO FIELD
INSPECTION. DUMPSTER DEPOSIT BRACKS DRAWINGS FOR

OWNER
Prime Realty LLC
411649 White-Yarrow Court
Ashburn, VA 20148

ARCHITECT
Inscape Studio
926 N Street, NW REAR
Washington, DC 20001
202.332.7222

STRUCTURAL
BEL ENGINEERING, LLC
4542 Beech Road
Temple Hills, MD 20748
703.975.9447

MEP
BTM Engineers
4712 Babbling Brook Drive
Orney, MD 20832

LANDSCAPE
CGLA Landscape Architecture
1025 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036

☐ Fire Alarm System
☒ Sprinkler System
☐ Standpipe System
☐ Heat & Cool (Exhausting System)
☐ Fuel Storage System
☐ Capacity Permit
☐ Elevator System
☐ Smoke Control System
☐ Other

Signature: [Signature] Date: 9/30/2024
Fire Protection Engineering



Source: “A0000 – COVER SHEET” downloaded from DOB’s Archived ProjectDox, Approved Drawings.

Building permit B2303360 required ‘special inspections,’ which must occur when failures during construction activities could result in significant harm. When special inspections are involved, the permit applicant must submit a completed Statement of Special Inspections (SSI) and meeting minutes to confirm that a pre-construction meeting was held before the permit can be issued.⁵⁵ In this case, DOB approved the building permit despite the SSI being incomplete – lacking the required names of the Registered Design Professional in Responsible Charge, the Special Inspections Engineer of Record, and the special inspections agency – and despite the pre-construction meeting not being held. The owner later submitted a compliant SSI after permit issuance, and a pre-construction meeting was held more than two months after the permit was issued.⁵⁶

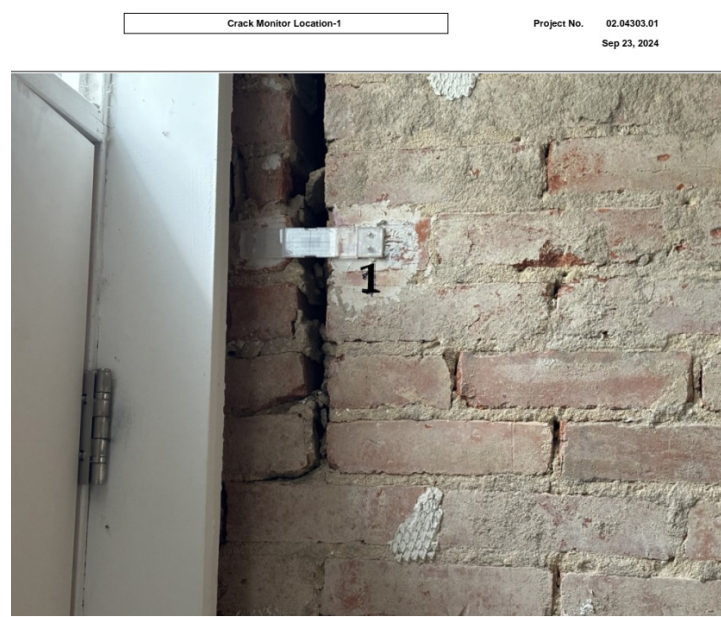
The property owner hired third-party agency DMY Capitol, LLC (“DMY”) to conduct both regular and special inspections for building permit B2303360, and for another building permit issued later and discussed below. DOB had on file a Notice of Intent (NOI) to use third-party agency DMY for both regular and special inspections related to permit B2303360, but it only had an NOI for DMY to conduct special inspections for the second building permit, B2503953, and not a separate form for regular inspections.

⁵⁵ Special Inspections Policy Manual, p. 28.

⁵⁶ Permit issued June 24, 2024; pre-construction meeting held September 3, 2024. See additional information in Finding 3.

Once construction began, DMY conducted seven special inspections at the site between September 12, 2024, and December 16, 2024. The first of those inspections, occurring on September 12, 2024, found and documented structural cracks on the party wall between 1113 V St. and 1115 V St. During a second inspection on September 23, 2024, six crack monitoring devices were installed. A third inspection on November 8, 2024, checked concrete, steel, rebar, and excavation. A fourth inspection on November 25, 2024, also checked concrete, steel, rebar, and excavation and documented a 1 mm shift at one of the cracks being monitored. The fifth, sixth and seventh inspections, conducted on December 4th, 9th, and 16th, respectively, reported similar checks as previous inspections and that the crack gauges had not moved.

Figure 7: Photo of 1111 V Street NW Interior, September 23, 2024



Source: Inspection photo taken by a third-party inspector on September 23, 2024.

On December 23, 2024, a wall collapsed during construction, and a construction worker was killed.⁵⁷ Following the incident, on February 28, 2025, the owner applied for a new permit⁵⁸ to revise the plans to support the structures temporarily during construction to avoid collapse. DOB issued the permit B2503953, even though a Stop Work Order (SWO) was in place for illegal construction/working without a permit. The permit included Limited Work Authority to allow specific work to proceed under DOB supervision so the agency could monitor the sequence of work in each phase of this permit.

DOB's After-Action Report produced after the accident did not find fault with the content or results of third-party agency DMY's special inspections.⁵⁹ That said, after the accident, DOB issued an

⁵⁷ DOB After-Action Report V St. Collapse, June 25, 2025, <https://dob.dc.gov/publication/1111-v-street-nw/>, p.1.

⁵⁸ Permit B2503953 was issued on July 1, 2025.

⁵⁹ DOB, After-Action Report V St. Collapse, p. 3.

Administrative Bulletin to third-party special inspection agencies, reiterating the importance of monitoring and verifying construction sequencing. Further, following an internal audit, DOB issued a warning letter to DMY on June 3, 2025, for neither following DOB requirements nor submitting its inspections reports timely.

Figure 8: Rear View of 1113 V Street NW Construction Site



Source: A DC Homeowners Coalition, “A Response to the DC Department of Building’s (DOB) After Action Report for the 1113 V Street NW Collapse and Fatality,” p. 2.

External parties filed eleven illegal construction complaints after DOB issued the original building permit; four of these were filed before the accident on December 23, 2024, and the other seven were filed on or after the accident. DOB also conducted 50 inspections of the site after the accident.⁶⁰ The owner owed fines/abatement fees after the accident and prior to the issuance of permit B2503953.⁶¹ As of May 28, 2026, fines totaling \$44,300 had been issued and \$34,351 of those fines were unpaid and filed with the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH).⁶²

An inspection report on the federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) website shows 11 violations were issued on May 21, 2025, to subcontractor, An Concrete & Much More LLC at the construction site. The case is marked as open and the current penalty is listed as \$41,000.⁶³

In testimony to the Council on January 30, 2026, the neighboring 1115 V St. property owner noted that he had “installed every safeguard possible to protect my property,” but had concerns about the “legal and permitted construction conducted negligently” that caused his property damage. He stated, “I have been dismayed by how little DC government can do to assist property owners when all the licenses and permits are in place. . .”⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Three of these 50 inspections resulted in “no access.”

⁶¹ According to an internal DOB document received during the audit; the owner emailed DOB about the fines.

⁶² According to DOB enforcement data received during the audit.

⁶³ OSHA web site, accessed on July 28, 2026, at: https://www.osha.gov/ords/imis/establishment.inspection_detail?id=1795381.015.

⁶⁴ Testimony of Samer Bitar at the Committee of the Whole hearing of the Department of Buildings on the topic of Illegal Construction on January 30, 2026, <https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Hearings/hearings/2063>, p. 1.

Ward 2

1713 Q STREET NW

The owner applied to renovate a single-family row house located in the Dupont Circle Historic District to produce three condominium units and add a fourth story to the building. The work included a permit for underpinning, which DOB approved on December 13, 2022,⁶⁵ and a building permit that DOB approved on March 7, 2023.^{66,67}

Figure 9: Photos of 1713 Q Street NW taken by DOB Inspector at Certificate of Occupancy Inspection on February 18, 2025 (left is front view; right is rear view)



Source: Photos downloaded from Accela.

The owner hired third-party agencies Rox Engineering and Trust Inspections to perform inspections. NOIs to use third-party agencies were on file with DOB for both agencies, with one for special inspections.

There were seven illegal construction complaints resulting in seven inspections at this property. Neighbor complaints included unprotected excavation, heavy construction equipment damaging the concrete parking pad of the rear alley neighbors, and permits being removed before work was complete. DOB

⁶⁵ Permit B2210143.

⁶⁶ Permit B2211486.

⁶⁷ Two other permits, B2401334 and B2500354, were needed to fix construction that did not meet historic preservation standards, but these were not in the scope of the audit as they were not safety related.

inspectors' notes indicated they found no violations in response to the complaints at the time of the inspections.

In one complaint, a neighbor alleged the roof deck construction violated the Building Code because it was too close to a historic chimney and the owner wanted to maintain its potential use in the future even though it was capped at the time. A DOB inspector found the construction not in violation because the chimney was capped and not in use. A year later, a different unit within DOB conducted an oversight investigation of the third-party inspection agency at this property and issued a warning to the agency because it failed to note that the addition did not extend the neighbor's chimney to code-required height. When asked what would happen if new construction rendered a neighbor's chimney out of compliance, DOB noted that the neighbor seeking to uncap and use their chimney in the future would need to obtain a permit to do so.

The property received a conditional Certificate of Occupancy permit on April 24, 2025, and a permanent Certificate of Occupancy permit on June 4, 2025, and the required final report of special inspections and inspection photos were on file.⁶⁸ Additional permitted work continued after the scope of this audit.⁶⁹

Ward 3

5122 CATHEDRAL AVENUE NW

On January 23, 2023, the owner applied for a permit to add a garage on the front, and a rear accessory apartment to an existing single-family home with three levels over a cellar. The work included a separate sheeting and shoring permit applied for on February 17, 2023. DOB approved the first building permit (B2303238) on March 1, 2023, even though the planned driveway width appeared to have exceeded zoning allowances. On April 13, 2023, the owner applied for a revised building permit to reduce the demolition involved and narrow the driveway, and permit B2305686 was approved on June 12, 2023. Zoning comments on the permit revision specified that both the portion of the exterior wall being maintained, which would determine whether a zoning change was needed, and the driveway, now met zoning standards.

Another building permit containing additional details about the work to be completed was applied for on September 27, 2023. This application also noted that existing portions of the original structure would remain, so the property would not require a raze permit.⁷⁰

On October 3, 2023, the owner submitted a cancellation form for the two building permits issued thus far citing "request[s] by DOB." In response to ODCA inquiries about this, DOB noted it had "identified several concerns with the submitted revision plans (e.g., rear yard, side yard, pervious surface being non-compliant) and issued a notice to revoke [the permits] on September 27, 2023," and that the owner "voluntarily surrendered the permits" prior to a Board of Zoning Adjustments hearing on October 4, 2023. DOB officials did not respond to questions about whether someone should have caught these zoning issues in the original permit review.

⁶⁸ A conditional certificate of occupancy may be issued for part of the building before completion of all work covered by the permit.

⁶⁹ Permit B2601553.

⁷⁰ This application was later approved as permit B2310998.

Figure 10: Photo from Plans Submitted to DOB for 5122 Cathedral Avenue NW



Source: "0001 COVER SHEET" downloaded from Archived ProjectDox, Approved Drawings.

The revised construction plans, submitted September 27, 2023, required multiple rounds of zoning comments from DOB. In 2024, DOB issued another permit for the revised plans (B2310998) which the owner again cancelled, giving "Permit revoked by DOB" as the reason for cancellation. On April 28, 2025, the owner submitted a new set of scaled-back and revised plans that DOB approved as permit B2408898.

The owner hired three third-party agencies to conduct inspections, FMC & Associates, Precise Engineering, and Building Code Inspectors. The owner submitted an NOI to use a third-party special inspections agency for both FMC & Associates and Precise Engineering, but no NOI for third-party agency Building Code Inspectors was on file.

Complainants submitted multiple illegal construction complaints related to dangerous construction at this site, leading to 26 inspections. In 10 of those inspections, the inspectors were unable to access the site and issued a "no access" determination. Of the remaining inspections, 11 resulted in "no violation" or the inspector deeming construction "in compliance," one concluded the site was "not in compliance," one required "management review," and three resulted in SWOs. Several neighbors complained about work being performed while an SWO was in place and that fences on various sides of the property were falling due to construction. The owner received fines of \$28,293 for two of the violations, which DOB filed with the Office of Administrative Hearings, but they were marked as unpaid as of May 28, 2026.

Ward 4

5229 5TH STREET NW

On March 21, 2024, the property owner of 5229 5th St. NW applied for a permit to, among other items, construct a third-floor addition and renovate an existing single-family house. The work would also involve underpinning. On September 16, 2024, DOB issued permit B2404680. The permit was issued without the required SSI. A compliant SSI, dated October 9, 2024, was filed several weeks after DOB issued the

permit.

Figure 11: 5229 5th Street NW Before Construction and After Construction



Source: (L) Photo from “A101 Existing & Proposed Site Plans” downloaded from Archived ProjectDox, Approved Drawings; (R) Photo from Google Maps dated September 2025.

The owner hired two third-party agencies to conduct inspections: Geotech-Environmental Solutions (G-ES) and CamJap Inspections. The owner submitted an NOI to use G-ES as a third-party special inspections agency, but no NOI for CamJap was on file.

One illegal construction complaint about drainage from the construction site leaking into the neighbor’s basement prompted two inspections at this property. Before submitting a complaint to DOB, the neighbor said they made repeated attempts to contact the developer. No violation was issued, but the inspector spoke with the contractor about corrective actions and follow-up notes confirmed the repairs were completed.

Ward 5

1012 17TH PLACE NE

The owner applied for a raze permit on November 15, 2023, and for a building permit on December 15, 2023, to construct a new, three-story plus penthouse, eight-unit residential building.

Figure 12: 1012 17th Place NE Before Construction and Photo from Plans Submitted to DOB



Source: (L) photo from Google Maps, dated July 2022; (R) “A000 COVER PAGE” downloaded from Archived ProjectDox, Approved Drawings.

DOB issued raze permit R2400015 on August 6, 2024, without the neighbor notification requirements having been fulfilled, and without the applicant’s name listed. DOB issued building permit B2402083 on August 13, 2024. Due to the number of review cycles, DOB called a “mandatory meeting” with the ownership and design team to discuss the quality of the electrical, energy, and mechanical drawings. After this meeting, it approved the review of all building code disciplines for the permit. DOB issued the building permit despite the application including an unlicensed geotechnical engineer of record⁷¹ and despite the application lacking a required affidavit of maintenance that neighbor notification occurred.

The owner hired two third-party agencies to conduct inspections, FMC & Associates and Choice Inspections. The owner submitted an NOI to use a third-party special inspections agency, FMC & Associates, but no NOI for Choice Inspections was on file.

Ward 6

1165 3RD STREET NE

On February 21, 2023, the property owner applied for a permit for “Foundation walls for future addition and new retaining walls along side [sic] property lines,” as well as permits for a separate retaining wall and a fence.

⁷¹ The third-party geotechnical engineer of record was not found to be licensed in DLCP’s Occupational and Professional Licensing search portal at: <https://govservices.dcra.dc.gov/oplaportal>.

DOB issued fence permit F2300298 on May 12, 2023, building permit B2303955 on May 19, 2023, and retaining wall permit RW2300093 on May 22, 2023.

Figure 13: Photos of 1165 3rd Street in May 2023 and June 17, 2025



Source: (L) Photo from Google Maps, dated May 2023; (R) DOB Illegal Construction Inspection photo on June 17, 2025, downloaded from Accela.

While waiting for the approval of the initial permits, on April 5, 2023, the owner applied for a building permit to construct a “Three story rear addition with new third floor addition and roof deck over existing house. Interior renovation all levels.” DOB issued permit B2305412 for that request on August 28, 2023.

During the audit scope, DOB approved multiple other permits for this property. DOB exempted all seven permits from a requirement to have a licensed contractor listed even though the property was not the owner’s primary residence. Further, a contractor and the accompanying contractor’s LLC name listed on other permit documents in the application packages for six of the permits were listed in DLCP’s Scout as inactive, and “Referred to Enforcement” at the time of permit issuance, as well as “Revoked” in the DLCP CorpOnline corporate registry prior to that time.

The owner hired two third-party agencies to conduct inspections, FMC & Associates and Choice Inspections. No NOI to use a third-party inspections agency was on file for either agency.

Illegal construction complainants alleged a history of negligence on the part of the owner, and several complaints about this property describe an owner who completed work beyond the scope of approved

permits and who violated Stop Work Orders by continuing to conduct unlawful work. For example, the owner had to revise the original fence permit at one time because he constructed beyond the original permitted plans. As of May 28, 2026, the property owner owed \$34,513 in fines, \$32,077 of which had been filed with OAH.⁷²

DOB issued a Stop Work Order on December 11, 2025, for illegal construction. At the time that ODCA's fieldwork was concluded, the most recent activity on this property documented in Accela was an illegal construction inspection of the fence conducted on July 29, 2026, during which the inspector found that the concern with the rear gate was a District Department of Transportation issue and that no illegal construction violations regarding the fence were present.⁷³

Ward 7

4501 BLAINE STREET NE

DOB issued Building permit B2111467 on December 16, 2022, for construction of The Residences At Benning Road, a six-story, 156-unit affordable assisted living facility. This permit was issued despite pre-construction meeting minutes — which must be approved by DOB before permit issuance for projects requiring special inspections — not being approved until February 25, 2025, more than two years after DOB issued the permit.⁷⁴ As this project was a large commercial project, it included many drawings, inspections, and various other permits (electrical, elevator, etc.).

⁷² According to DOB enforcement data received during the audit.

⁷³ DOB's Accela system.

⁷⁴ DOB's Third-Party Program enforced violation of this and various other requirements by removing the associated third-party agency from the Third-Party Program in February of 2025 (the third-party agency appealed and was conditionally reinstated in October of 2025).

Figure 14: Photo of 4501 Blaine Street NE Taken by DOB Inspector at Certificate of Occupancy Inspection on August 19, 2025.



Source: Downloaded from Accela.

On May 22, 2023, DOB issued permit R2200004 to raze a bank building on this property. On May 31, 2023, it issued permit SH2300031 for sheeting and shoring plans related to the initial building permit even though the drawings and SSI listed an engineer with an inactive license,⁷⁵ and pre-construction meeting minutes for this permit had not been approved. The meeting minutes were finally approved on March 27, 2025, nearly two years after DOB issued the permit.

The owner hired third-party agencies Schnabel Engineering and Lourenco Consultants to conduct inspections for SH2300031 and B2111467. The owner submitted NOIs to use the third-party agencies with the pre-construction meeting minutes for each permit, although both were submitted approximately two years after permit issuance.

One safety-related illegal construction complaint was filed during our scope, and the inspector's notes advised that the complainant should obtain a property survey to confirm encroachment on their property. No other inspection notes were present. A document in the shoring permit file, however, indicates that this neighbor and the property owner later entered into an agreement detailing that the owner of the construction site would provide clean-up, landscaping, and fencing at the neighbor's property post-construction, at no cost to the neighbor. Enforcement activity consisted mainly of a small number of violations due to work occurring before authorized hours. The property owner paid \$2,436 in fines issued by DOB and filed with OAH.

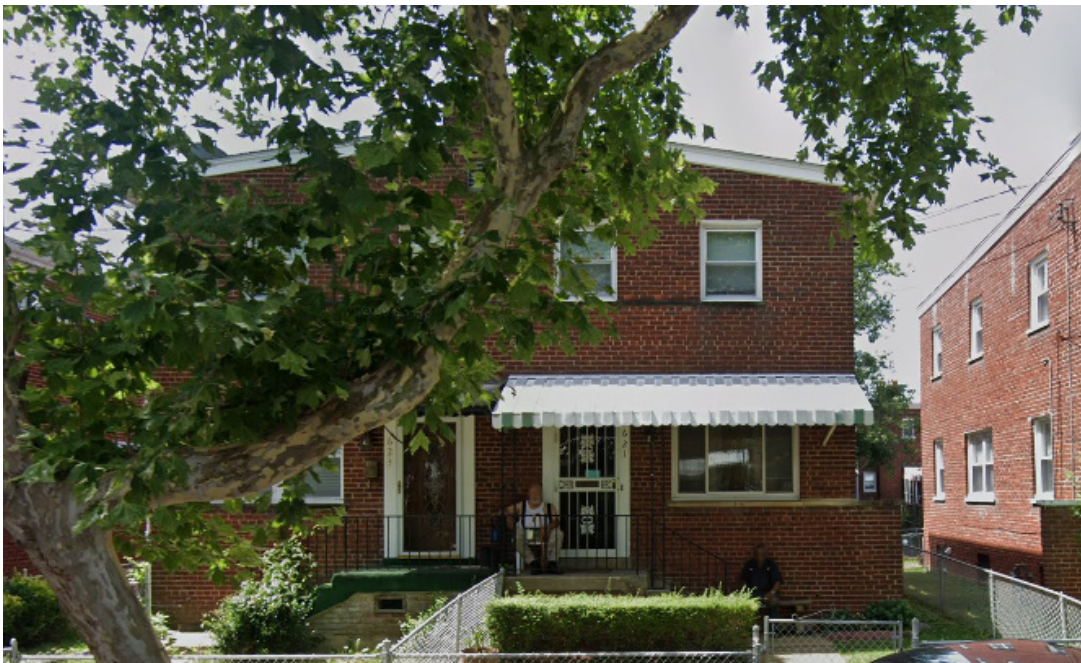
⁷⁵ Per a search in DLCP's Occupational Licensing Search portal at: <https://govservices.dcra.dc.gov/oplaportal>.

Ward 8

621 FORRESTER STREET SE

The property owner applied on April 28, 2025, for a building permit to remodel the first floor and remove two walls to create an open floor concept, gut the kitchen and an upstairs bathroom, and create a finished basement with a new full bathroom and office in an attached single-family residence. DOB approved the permit on July 11, 2025. The applicant completed all required neighbor notification forms, and no issues were found during the permit review or early construction process. No third-party inspections agencies were associated with the property during the audit scope, nor did any DOB inspections take place within the audit scope. Further, there were no illegal construction complaints about this property within the audit scope.

Figure 15: Photo of 621 Forrester Street SE



Source: Photo from Google Maps, dated June 2019.

Appendix C

Sample DOB Permit Review Checklist



BUILDING CODE PERMIT #:

DCMR 12A REVIEWER:

DCMR 12D 12E REVIEW DATE:

Numerals indicated in parenthesis are applicable code sections of the 2017 DCMR District of Columbia Municipal Regulations which modify the International Building Codes 2015. This record references commonly code sections and does not reference all code provisions.

Scope of Work _____

Owner _____ Address _____ Telephone _____

Arch/Eng _____ Address _____ Telephone _____

Building Use _____ Type of Occupancy _____ Height _____ Area _____ Sprinkler System _____

Neighbor Notifications ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Special Inspections ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Code Modification _____

BUILDING CODE				
ADMINISTRATION	YES	NO	N/A	DOB
1. Permit Submission	☐	☐	☐	☐
a. Completeness of Scope of Work (105.3.2 item 2)	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Completeness of Application form (105.3.2)	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Completeness of construction documents (106.1, 106.2)	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Signed, sealed, and dated construction documents (106.4)	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Plat and Plat Information (106.2.15 & 106.2.15.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Protection of Adjoining Premises / Neighbor Notification and Proof of Service (106.2.18, 3307)	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Neighbor Technical Objection Resolved (112.7, 112.7.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Statement of Special Inspections (106.3)	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Verify Cost of Construction and Permit fee (108.3)	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Mandatory Meeting after 3rd review cycle	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Apply re-review fee for all reviews above 3rd Review Cycle	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Flood Elevation Level and compliance with Administrative Bulletin CC 2016-02	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. For openings Covenant Required (120.1.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Alternative Materials and methods (104.11)	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Partial Demolition Permit (3303.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Raze Permit Required (105.4.4)	☐	☐	☐	☐
q. Work encroaching into neighboring Property (such as Underpinning) (106.2.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
r. Certificate of Occupancy (110)	☐	☐	☐	☐
s. Partial Permit – Foundation to Grade (105.4.7)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
BUILDING	YES	NO	N/A	DOB
1. Use and Occupancy Classification Type of Construction Building Area and Height	☐	☐	☐	☐



BUILDING CODE PERMIT #:

DCMR 12A REVIEWER:

DCMR 12D 12E REVIEW DATE:

2. Type Of Construction	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Building Area and Height	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Automatic Sprinkler System NFPA 13 (903.3.1.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Automatic Sprinkler System NFPA 13R (903.3.1.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Automatic Sprinkler System NFPA 13D (903.3.1.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Separated Occupancies (508.4, T508.4)	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Accessory Occupancies (508.2)	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Mezzanine (505, 505.2.1, 505.2.2, 505.2.3, 505.3)	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. High Rise Buildings (403)	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Covered Mall and Open Mall Buildings (402)	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Atriums (404)	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Separated Occupancies (508.4, T508.4)	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Accessory Occupancies (508.2)	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Other Special use and Occupancy (406-424)	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Group I-2 (407)	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Group I-3 (408)	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Live and Work Units (419)	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Groups I-1, R-1, R-2, R-3 (420)	☐	☐	☐	☐
FIRE PROTECTION	YES	NO	N/A	DOB
18. Combustibility of Exterior walls, Interior Elements and Roof (602.2, 602.3, 602.4, 602.5, 603)	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Building Elements (T601)				
a. Structural Frames (704)	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Interior Bearing walls	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Floor Construction (711)	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Roof Construction (711)	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Fire Resistance Rating	☐	☐	☐	☐

BUILDING CODE PERMIT #:

DCMR 12A REVIEWER:

DCMR 12D 12E REVIEW DATE:

21. Fire Barriers (707) a. Shaft Enclosure (707.3.1) b. Exit and Exit access Stairways/Ramp (707.3.2, 1022.1), (707.3.4, 1009.3.1.2) c. Horizontal Exits (707.3.5, 1025.1) d. Exit Passageway (707.3.4, 1023.3) e. Atriums (707.3.6, 404.6) f. Incidental Uses (707.3.7, T706.4) g. Control Areas (707.3.8, 414.2)	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
h. Separated Occupancies (703.3.9, T707.3.10) i. Construction (707.2, 707.5-707.10) j. Exterior walls (707.4 but 1021, 1023.7, 1027.6)	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐
22. Combustibility of Exterior walls, Interior Elements and Roof (602.2, 602.3, 602.4, 602.5, 603)	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. Structural Frames (704) 23.1. Interior Bearing walls 23.2. Floor Construction (711) 23.3. Roof Construction (711)	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐
24. Exterior walls (705)	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. Exterior Walls-Opening (705.8-705.8.7, 705.8) Based on Fire Separation Distance	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. Exterior walls Protection (705.8.2) (716.5-716.6)	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. Openings on Exterior walls with covenant based on distance between two buildings (705.8.7.1-705.8.7.4)	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. Smoke Development (803.1.1, 803.1.2, 803.9, 803.9)	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. Flame Spread (803.1.1,803.1.2,803.11, T803.11)	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. Combustible Materials (805)	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. Fire Walls (706)	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. Party Walls (706.1.1) (T706.4)	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. Fire Partitions (708)	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. Smoke Barriers (709)	☐	☐	☐	☐



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35. Smoke Partitions (710)	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. Penetrations (714)	☐	☐	☐	☐
37. Fire Resistant Joint Systems (715)	☐	☐	☐	☐
38. Opening Protectives (716)	☐	☐	☐	☐
39. Concealed Spaces (718)	☐	☐	☐	☐
40. Thermal and Sound Insulating Materials (720, 807)	☐	☐	☐	☐
MEANS OF EGRESS AND ACCESSIBILITY				
	YES	NO	N/A	DOB
41. Occupant Load (1004.1.2) (T1004.1.2)	☐	☐	☐	☐
42. Occupant Load Placard (1004.3)	☐	☐	☐	☐
43. Capacity of Egress Components (1005.3.1, 1005.3.2)	☐	☐	☐	☐
44. Number of Exits (1006.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
45. Means of Egress Design requirement (1003.2-1003.7)	☐	☐	☐	☐
46. Encroachment (1005.7)	☐	☐	☐	☐
47. Illumination (1008)	☐	☐	☐	☐
48. Exit Signs (1013)	☐	☐	☐	☐
49. Accessible Means of egress (1009)	☐	☐	☐	☐
50. Doors (1010.1-1010.1.3)	☐	☐	☐	☐
51. Special Doors, Gates, Turnstiles (1010.1.4, 1010.2, 1010.3)	☐	☐	☐	☐
52. Door Landings (1010.1.5-1010.1.7)	☐	☐	☐	☐
53. Door Hardware (1010.1.9-1010.1.10)	☐	☐	☐	☐
54. Stairways (1011)	☐	☐	☐	☐
55. Roof Access (1011.12)	☐	☐	☐	☐
56. Ramps (1012)	☐	☐	☐	☐



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57. Handrails (1014)	☐	☐	☐	☐
58. Guards (1015)	☐	☐	☐	☐
59. Emergency escape and rescue (1030, 1006.1)	☐	☐	☐	
60. Assembly aisles & Features	☐	☐	☐	☐
61. Bleachers	☐	☐	☐	☐
62. Assembly Exits and Egress (1029)	☐	☐	☐	☐
INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT AND BUILDING ENVELOPE	YES	NO	N/A	DOB
63. Ventilation (1203)	☐	☐	☐	☐
64. Temperature (1204)	☐	☐	☐	☐
65. Lighting (1205)	☐	☐	☐	☐
66. Yards and Courts (1206)	☐	☐	☐	☐
67. Exterior wall coverings (1404, 1405, 1407)	☐	☐	☐	☐
68. Exterior wall Combustible material restrictions (1406)	☐	☐	☐	☐
69. Flashing (1503.2, 1507.2.9, 1507.3.9, 1507.5.7, 1507.7.7, 1507.8.8, 1507.9.9)	☐	☐	☐	☐
70. Roof Covering (1507)	☐	☐	☐	☐
71. Sound Transmission (1207)	☐	☐	☐	☐
72. Interior Space Dimension (1208)	☐	☐	☐	☐
73. Efficiency Dwelling Unit (1208.4)	☐	☐	☐	☐
74. Roof Insulation (1508)	☐	☐	☐	☐
75. Rooftop Structures (1510)	☐	☐	☐	☐
STRUCTURAL REVIEW	YES	NO	N/A	DOB
76. Structural Design Calculation (106.1.4)	☐	☐	☐	☐
77. Design Loads on Construction Documents (1603)	☐	☐	☐	☐
78. Floor Live Loads (1603.1.1, T1607.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐

BUILDING CODE PERMIT #:

DCMR 12A REVIEWER:

DCMR 12D 12E REVIEW DATE:

79. Live Load Reduction (1603.1.1, 1607.10, 1607.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
80. Roof Live Loads (1603.1.2, 1607.12)	☐	☐	☐	☐
81. Snow Loads (1608.1.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
82. Wind Load (1603.1.4, 1609 or ASCE 7-10 26-31)	☐	☐	☐	☐
83. Earthquake Design Data (1603.1.5, 1613 and ASCE 7-10 chap. 12-23)	☐	☐	☐	☐
84. Flood Loads (1603.1.7, 1612)	☐	☐	☐	☐
85. Concentrated Live Loads (1607.4)	☐	☐	☐	☐
86. Partition Loads (1607.5)	☐	☐	☐	☐
87. Impact Loads (1607.9)	☐	☐	☐	☐
88. Misc. Loads (1607.6, 1607.7, 1607.8, 1607.13, 1607.14, 1610, 1611, 2404)	☐	☐	☐	☐
89. Soil Investigations/Reports (1803.1, 1803.2, 1803.3, 1803.6) a. Excavation, Grading and Fill (1804) b. Damp proofing and Waterproofing (1805) c. Load Bearing Values (1603.1.6, 1806)	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐
90. Foundation walls and Retaining walls (1807)	☐	☐	☐	☐
91. Shallow Foundation (1809)	☐	☐	☐	☐
92. Deep Foundation (1810)	☐	☐	☐	☐
93. Concrete (Chapter 19)	☐	☐	☐	☐
94. Masonry (Chapter 21)	☐	☐	☐	☐
95. Steel (Chapter 22)	☐	☐	☐	☐
96. Wood (Chapter 23)	☐	☐	☐	☐
97. Special Inspections (Chapter 17) a. Special Inspections Manual	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix D

Notification of Intent to Use a Third-Party Inspection Agency Form

NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO USE THIRD-PARTY INSPECTION AGENCY

LANGUAGE: ☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Chinese ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Amharic ☐ Other _____

The purpose of this Notification is to advise the District of Columbia Department of Buildings (DOB) of the Permit Applicant's intention to utilize third-party inspection services in connection with the following construction project. Please use a separate form for each third-party agency being used on the project. Once a project is assigned as being third party inspected, the entire project must be inspected as such (every discipline, every inspection).

SUBMIT THIS FORM ONLY. NO ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS ARE REQUIRED.

Section A: Property Owner/Agent Information

Owner/Agent Name _____

Telephone Number _____ Email Address (required) _____

Project Name _____

Project Address _____

Section B: Primary Third-Party Inspection Agency Identification

Third Party Agency _____ Primary Agency? Check One ☐ Yes ☐ No

DOB Certification Number _____

Projected/Actual Date of First Inspection _____ DOB may audit inspections after project has begun.

Section C: Permits (list all applicable permits and numbers issued for the above noted project)

Primary Building	
Building	
Mechanical	
Electrical	
Elevator	
Plumbing	
Fire	
Other	

Please note any additional relevant permit information or comments below:

Section D: Acknowledgements

By submitting this form, I certify that the above statements on this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to comply with all applicable laws and regulations of the District of Columbia. Signature/submission by a Third Party Agency indicates a contractual relationship between that agency and the building owner. The making of false statements on this application is punishable by criminal penalties (DC Code SEC. 22-2514). Submission of the online form does not require signatures.

Property Owner

Owner/Agent Name _____ Title _____

Signature _____ Signature Date _____

Third Party Inspection Agency

Agent or PIC Name _____ Title _____

Signature _____ Signature Date _____

I/We understand that anyone who makes a false statement on this form can be criminally prosecuted; and, if convicted, fined up to \$1000, imprisoned up to 180 days, or both, under D.C. Official Code § 22-2405.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

ACCEPTED FOR DOB BY:

STAFF NAME _____ SIGNATURE _____

TITLE _____ DATE _____

DC INSPECTOR GENERAL HOTLINE: If you are aware of corruption, fraud, waste, abuse or mismanagement involving any DC government agency, official or program, Contact the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) at (202) 727-0267 or (800) 521-1639 (toll free). All reports are confidential and you may remain anonymous by law. Government employees are protected from reprisals or retaliation by their employers for reporting to the OIG. The information you provide may result in an investigation leading to administrative action, civil penalties or criminal prosecution in appropriate cases.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION: In accordance with DC Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended, DC Code Section 2.1401.01 et seq., ("the Act") the District of Columbia does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disabilities, source of income, or place of residence or business. Discrimination in violation of this act will not be tolerated. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action.

About ODCA

The mission of the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor (ODCA) is to support the Council of the District of Columbia by making sound recommendations that improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of the District government.

To fulfill our mission, we conduct performance audits, non-audit reviews, and revenue certifications. The residents of the District of Columbia are one of our primary customers and we strive to keep the residents of the District of Columbia informed on how their government is operating and how their tax money is being spent.

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