



Eric J. DeBear

Member

Washington, D.C.

edebear@cozen.com | (202) 747-0769

Eric advises clients in land use and zoning matters throughout all phases of residential and commercial real estate development projects. A Washington, D.C., resident for more than a decade, Eric brings to his practice a deep familiarity with the particularities of real estate within the District, focusing primarily on assisting clients with zoning entitlements.

Eric frequently drafts and handles entitlement applications, including as first-chair during agency hearings. He presents applications and advocates on behalf of clients to the D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment, D.C. Zoning Commission, D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board, local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and District government agencies. Additionally, through creative and succinct briefing, Eric has assisted in the successful defense of a number of zoning approvals before the D.C. Court of Appeals.

Eric brings to each representation an appropriate mix of practicality and creativity to help his clients reach their goals in the most efficient manner possible given their unique circumstances. In addition to zoning due diligence and entitlements, Eric has experience in various other real estate matters, such as defending building permits before the Office of Administrative Hearings, real estate-based litigation in D.C. Superior Court, and condominium formation through the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development.

Eric earned his J.D. from the Catholic University of America — Columbus School of Law and his B.A. in government from Connecticut College.

Experience

Represented a national developer in obtaining Zoning Commission approval of a planned unit development and related map amendment for construction of a 12-story, 101,000 sq. ft. building with 115 all-affordable units and ground floor retail in the NoMa neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

Represented a national developer in obtaining Zoning Commission approval for voluntary design review and related zoning relief on a unique site with complex WMATA encumbrances in order to construct a nine-story building with 109 dwelling units.

Obtained zoning relief on behalf of a client who was able to benefit from new penthouse regulations that allow for special exception relief to operate a penthouse restaurant above a 97-room hotel in the Bloomingdale neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

Represented a developer to obtain D.C. Court of Appeals affirmance of approval by the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) of a 36-unit memory care facility in a low-density residential zone that will serve individuals with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, despite substantial opposition from a large group of nearby homeowners.

Represented a regional developer in obtaining zoning relief from the Board of Zoning Adjustment for a 66,000 sq. ft., 11-story hotel in Mount Vernon Square.

Represented the D.C. Department of General Services in obtaining zoning relief and successfully

Practice Areas

- Real Estate
- Real Estate Development
- Zoning, Land Use & Development

Industry Sectors

- Real Estate & Construction

Education

- Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, J.D., 2012
- Connecticut College, B.A., 2007

Bar Admissions

- District of Columbia
- Maryland

Awards & Honors

- Best Lawyers in America, Ones to Watch, 2021-2025

Eric J. DeBear

edebear@cozen.com

P: (202) 747-0769 | F: (202) 861-1905

©2024 Cozen O'Connor. All rights reserved.



defending appeals to the D.C. Court of Appeals for the construction of the Ward 3 and Ward 5 Short-Term Family Housing Buildings.

Represented a regional developer in obtaining Zoning Commission approval of a planned unit development and related map amendment for a 59,000 sq. ft., 70-unit apartment building in the Fort Totten neighborhood.

Represented a national real estate investment firm in opposing a map amendment of its parcel and defending two zoning appeals as well as advice on zoning entitlements and permitting for a 71,000 sq. ft. self-storage facility.

Represented a developer in obtaining zoning and historic preservation approvals for a 195,000 sq. ft. mixed-use development, including 240 units, 5,500 sq. ft. of office and 24,000 sq. ft. of retail in the U Street neighborhood.

Conducted zoning due diligence on D.C. properties for an international investment firm as part of a large equity investment in a hotel chain.

Advised a national developer on zoning and permitting matters in connection with a by-right development of an 8-story, 288,000 sq. ft. mixed-use building.

Represented an affordable housing developer to obtain zoning relief from the Board of Zoning Adjustment for a mixed-use project with 24 residential units, 6,300 sq. ft. of retail and 3,000 sq. ft. of office space in Truxton Circle.

Defended a developer in D.C. Superior Court litigation concerning construction of a proposed fire station.

Advised a developer on zoning compliance and permitting for a 60 micro-unit development in the U Street neighborhood.

Defended a zoning appeal of a building permit for the D.C. Department of General Services concerning the Ward 1 Short-Term Family Housing Building.

Represented a nationwide pet care company in obtaining zoning approval from the Board of Zoning Adjustment for the expansion of a dog daycare facility in Adams Morgan.