

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: May 25, 2010

ADDRESS: 1747 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

APPLICATION: Unenclosed Sidewalk café in an area of 320 square feet with 15 tables and 30 chairs.

Site Information

Zone: C-4

Historic District: No

CFA: No

Neighborhood Character: Active commercial area and Central Business District

Background:

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on April 12, 2010.

Relevant Policies of Planning Initiatives

Policy UD-3.10: Sidewalk Cafes

Discourage the enclosure of sidewalk cafes in manner that effectively transforms them into indoor floor space. The design of sidewalk cafes should be compatible with the architectural qualities of the adjoining buildings, should complement the street environment, and should not impede pedestrian movement.

KEY ISSUES

District regulations require that there be 15 square feet for every seat within a dining area. A 320 sq' sidewalk café has enough space for 21 seats; the proposed unenclosed café has 30 seats. This is nine more than what is allowed in an area of this size.

District regulations also require a 10' clear pedestrian path adjacent to a sidewalk cafe. The sidewalk width from the property line to the curb is approximately 30', a space adequate to accommodate a sidewalk café. However, there is only a clear pedestrian walkway of 7' between the café and a 5' furniture zone at the curb. Within the Central Business District, it is important to maintain the required 10' clear pedestrian path to accommodate significant levels of pedestrian traffic.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The sidewalk café is a welcome addition to the neighborhood. However, the café needs to be reduced in size to provide an adequate adjacent pedestrian path and the number of seats needs to be reduced accordingly.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application is approved with the condition that the size of the café is reduced in order to provide an appropriate clear pedestrian path and that the number of seats is reduced accordingly.