

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: May 12, 2010

ADDRESS: 1900 Q Street NW

APPLICATION: Expand an existing unenclosed sidewalk cafe

Site Information

Zone: DC/C-3-B

Historic District: Dupont Circle Historic District

CFA: No

Neighborhood Character: Active mixed-use neighborhood

Background:

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on April 5, 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

The proposed enclosed café has an estimated area of 720 square feet and proposes 32 tables and 64 chairs. The District's public space regulations require that there be 15 sq' for every seat within a dining area. The 64 seats included in this application are more than the 48 that are allowed in an area of this size. It is also unclear what area of the café is unenclosed and enclosed.

The sidewalk width from the property line to the curb is 30', and District regulations require that the sidewalk adjacent to a café include a minimum 10' clear pedestrian path. There is a clear pedestrian walkway of 11'- 8'' from the edge of the café to the curb on the Q Street NW side, and a clear pedestrian walkway of 12'- 7'' from the edge of the café to the curb on the 19th Street NW. However, this width does not take into account the 4' furniture zone or tree box area at the curb. This application requires more discussion between the Public Space Committee and the applicant.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The sidewalk café is a welcome addition to the neighborhood. However, the café as proposed has too many seats based on the estimated square footage of the café area. In addition, it is not clear how much of the café is enclosed and unenclosed, the total square footage of café area, or where existing seating is located. More information and details are needed from the applicant.

The Office of Planning supports a sidewalk café at this side, but at this time does not have enough information to provide a specific recommendation on number of seats or adjacent sidewalk widths.