

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: August 11, 2010
FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
ADDRESS: 1937 Capitol Avenue NE
APPLICATION: Curb cut and driveway

Site Information

Zone: R-4
Historic District: No
CFA: No
Neighborhood Character: Residential

Background:

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on August 2, 2010.

Relevant Policies of Planning Initiatives

Policy HP-2.5.4: Landscaped Yards in Public Space

Preserve the continuous and open green quality of landscaped front and side yards in public space. Take special care at historic landmarks and in historic districts to protect this public environment from intrusions, whether from excess paving, vehicular access and parking, high walls and fencing, or undue disruption of the natural contours or bermed terraces.

Policy UD-2.2.1 Neighborhood Character and Identity

Strengthen the defining visual qualities of Washington's neighborhoods. This should be achieved in part by relating the scale of infill development, alterations, renovations and additions to existing neighborhood context.

KEY ISSUES

The proposal is for a new driveway and curb cut for a residence on Capitol Avenue, NE, between Providence and Fenwick Streets. The area of the new driveway is 250 square feet in public space. The width of the proposed driveway is 10 feet.

The block in which this property is located does not have an internal alley. Most of the lots in this block do not have curb cuts to the street. On the surrounding blocks, a similar pattern emerges. None of the immediate surrounding blocks have alleys, but the majority of properties do not have curb cuts to the street. The majority of blocks to the south have alleys with not many curb cuts to the street.

The proposed curb cut and driveway is on West Virginia Avenue NE, which is a minor arterial street. Capitol Avenue NE is on the other side of the property and is a local street and carries significantly less vehicular traffic. Locating a curb cut on the street with the least amount of traffic will reduce the number of potential conflicts between cars pulling into or out of the driveway and traffic on the adjacent street.

The property associated with this curb cut is new construction. Zoning requires that new construction have on-site parking. In this case, the development project requires 1 on-site parking space. The curb cut requested is required for this development to comply with existing zoning regulations.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning discourages new curb cuts for existing properties that do not have them. However, in this case the block that this property is located in does not have an alley. The requested curb cut is required for the development project to comply with existing zoning regulations. To reduce the amount of conflicts between vehicles using the driveway and traffic on the adjacent street, the curb cut and driveway should be located on the street with the lowest classification, which in this case is Capitol Avenue.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved with the condition that the curb cut and driveway be located on Capitol Avenue NE .