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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: August 10, 2010
TO: Public Space Committee
FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
SUBJECT: 2100-2199 Block of Wisconsin Avenue NW

APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Applicant: Glover Park Citizens Association
Location: The sites of the proposed signs are located at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue NW and 35th Street NW. The sites are located in a R-3 zoning district.
Proposal: The applicant is proposing to install two single-sided wood signs in landscaped areas of public space.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on August 3, 2010.

BASIS OF REPORT

The Office of Planning (OP) has reviewed the application, considered existing site conditions, visited the site, and completed research on the site to prepare this report. OP also referred to the Comprehensive Plan and building code as part of completing this report:

Comprehensive Plan

HP-2.5 Historic Landscapes and Open Space

More than almost any other feature, the exceptional width and openness of Washington's parks and streets define the basic character of the city. These spaces include the major monumental greenswards of the Mall, riverfront and street valley parks, and the green space of estates, cemeteries, and campuses. Tree-lined streets and landscaped front yards unite many historic neighborhoods, and there are small green oases scattered throughout the city. Some are public owned, and others are private. Many provide the setting for historic buildings, creating a balance between the natural and built environment that is a unifying feature of the city. Such settings should be protected and maintained as significant landscape in their own right or as contributing features of historic landmarks and districts.

The overarching goal for urban design in the District is:

Enhance the beauty and livability of the city by protecting its historic design legacy, reinforcing the identity of its neighborhoods, harmoniously integrating new construction with existing buildings and the natural environment, and improving the vitality, appearance, and security of streets and public spaces.

DCMR Title 12: Building Code

3107.7.8 Signs on public space. No structure or standard used as a sign, bulletin, or advertisement of any sort shall be built, placed, erected, hung, maintained, or left in or upon any street, avenue, alley, highway, footway, sidewalk, parking or other public space in the District of Columbia, unless specifically approved by the code official, including the use of directional signs as described in Section 3107.6.6, in accordance with provisions of this Section.

DCMR Title 24: Public Space and Safety

Section 24-108. SIGNS, POSTERS, AND PLACARDS does not allow for the type of sign proposed in this application.

KEY ISSUES

The proposed wood single-sided signs would be a permanent fixture in public space. The applicant is the Glover Park Citizens Association and the signs would serve as a gateway for their neighborhood. One sign's proposed location is on a small triangle park, is 4' by 6' (a total of 24 sq'), and is located approximately 3' from the curb. The other sign's proposed location is in front of the Holy Rood Cemetery, is 5' by 7' (a total of 35 sq'), and its located approximately 11' from the curb.

The application needs to be accompanied with a landscape plan. In addition, the Office of Planning would like the Glover Park Citizens Association to consider adopting the small triangle park where one of the signs is proposed. The Office of Planning reached out to the applicant. The applicant seems willing to consider the adoption of the small triangle park and the inclusion of landscaping around both signs.

The District's goals for urban design include reinforcing the identity of its neighborhoods. The proposed neighborhood signs will be a strong identifier for the Glover Park community.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning is supportive of neighborhood gateway signs being installed at the proposed locations. The signs will be a strong identifier for the Glover Park community. The Office of Planning also recommends that the applicant provide a landscape plan and consider adopting the small triangle park.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved with the conditions that the applicant provides a landscape plan and considers the adoption of the small triangle park.