

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: August 20, 2010
FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
ADDRESS: 2446 Belmont Road NW
APPLICATION: Curb cut and driveway

Site Information

Zone: R-1-B
Historic District: Sheridan-Kalorama Historic District
CFA: Yes
Neighborhood Character: Residential

Background:

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on August 4, 2010. The application site is located within an area under the jurisdiction of the Commission of Fine Arts and is located in a historic District. The DC Historic Preservation Office has reviewed the application. However, they need to give final approval based on any revisions to the drawings. The Commission of Fine Arts has not reviewed and approved this application.

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 Belmont Road, NW, between Tracy Place and 24th Street. The area of the proposed new driveway is 323 square feet in public space. The width of the proposed driveway is 19 feet. There is an existing curb cut and driveway adjacent to the residence's garage, which will no longer be used. In addition, a new fence and gate is proposed. It is not clear from the drawings whether they are in Public Space.

The Public Space Committee needs to clarify with the applicant that any proposed fence and gate in Public Space must not exceed a height of 42'' and must be at least fifty percent open as a way to maintain the open landscaped character of this roadway. Otherwise the fence can be relocated to the property line or building restriction line. The applicant should reduce the width of the driveway from 19' to a more appropriate size of 10'.

The block in which this property is located does not have an internal alley. Most of the immediately surrounding blocks do not have alleys, the majority of properties do have curb cuts to the street, and very few do not have curb cuts.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning discourages new curb cuts for existing properties that do not have them. In addition, it is immediately adjacent to the extensive Rock Creek Park greenway. The existing landscaped and open character along this street should be maintained. The width of the proposed new driveway is 19' and it should be reduced in size to 10'. Also any new fence or gate in public space must not exceed a maximum height of 42'' and be at least fifty percent open.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved with the following conditions:

- 1. The existing curb and driveway is closed off and removed;**
- 2. The width of the new driveway is reduced in size to 10';**
- 3. Any fence or gate be reduced to a height of 42'' and be at least fifty percent open;**
- 4. Sign off is given from HP and CFA**