



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: May 26, 2010
ADDRESS: 2619 Branch Avenue, SE
APPLICATION: Over-height fence varying in height from 54" to 67" and two 58" stone piers.
FROM: Chris Shaheen, Program Manager

Site Information

Zone: R-1-B
Historic District: N/A
CFA: No
Neighborhood Character: Single-family residential with significant landscaping

Background:

The Office of Planning received this public space application for review on April 8, 2010.

Relevant Policies of Planning Initiatives

Policy HP-2.5.2: Historic Landscapes (Comprehensive Plan)

Preserve the distinguishing qualities of the District's historic landscapes, both natural and designed. Protect public building and monument grounds, parks and parkway systems, government and institutional campuses, gardens, cemeteries, and other historic landscapes from deterioration and incompatible development.

Policy UD-1.4.1: Avenues/Boulevards and Urban Form (Comprehensive Plan)

Use Washington's major avenues/boulevards as a way to reinforce the form and identity of the city, connect its neighborhoods, and improve its aesthetic and visual character. Focus improvement efforts on avenues/boulevards in emerging neighborhoods, particularly those that provide important gateways or view corridors within the city.

KEY ISSUES

Branch Avenue is a Primary Arterial that serves as a gateway to the District of Columbia, and is an important avenue connecting natural park areas where Branch Avenue intersects with Southern Avenue (US Res. 490), Texas Avenue (Fort Circle Parks), Pope Street (Popes Branch), and Mississippi Avenue (Randle Circle). Its significance as a green boulevard and its "public parking" is reinforced by its right-of-way width that reaches up to 120' in some areas—a width that is comparable to Alabama Avenue (110') and Pennsylvania Avenue (160'). This is in contrast to the adjacent, narrower neighborhood streets. This address is also on a visually prominent corner (Branch Avenue and Erie Street) and one of the first within the District boundaries. The character of the surrounding neighborhood is one of single family homes within a landscaped setting.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Branch Avenue, SE, is a Primary Artery that serves as a gateway into the District of Columbia. The existing landscaped and open character along this primary entry corridor into the District should be maintained. This character is, in part, defined by low and consistent fence heights. Fences in public space or within building restriction lines should be built to 42", the maximum height allowed by regulation, as a way to maintain the open landscaped character of this roadway.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved with the condition that the height of the fence be reduced to 42", or that the fence be relocated to the property line or building restriction line.

