



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: August 10, 2010
FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
ADDRESS: 3701 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
APPLICATION: Over-height fence with a height of 6'-5" for a restaurant

Site Information

Zone: GA/C-3-A
Historic District: No
CFA: No
Neighborhood Character: Neighborhood commercial district

Background:

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

Relevant Policies of Planning Initiatives (Comprehensive Plan)

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.

Policy UD-3.1.7: Improving the Street Environment

Create attractive and interesting commercial streetscapes by promoting ground level retail and desirable street activities, making walking more comfortable and convenient, ensuring that sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic, minimizing curb cuts and driveways, and avoiding windowless facades and gaps in the street wall.

KEY ISSUES

The site is located on Rock Creek Church Road, NW. The application is for a 6'-5" high wood fence along the perimeter in the rear of a restaurant, although the fence is in a public sidewalk. Although the existing public space regulations allow fences, the maximum height for fences is 42". The applicant does not provide any justification for the need to construct an over-height fence in public space.

Rock Creek Church Road is a secondary street, but it has connections with major arterials: New Hampshire Avenue and Georgia Avenue. The character of the immediate neighborhood is rowhomes with neighborhood serving commercial uses. This site is within the Georgia Avenue neighborhood commercial district.

The proposed over-height fence has a negative impact on the street environment. It does not create an attractive or activated streetscape in this commercial district. As a result, this type of fence is not appropriate on a sidewalk in any commercial district.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Rock Creek Church Road is a secondary street that is near an important gateway into the District from New Hampshire and Georgia avenues. Fences in public space or within building restriction lines should be built to 42", the maximum height allowed by regulation, and fifty percent open as a way to maintain the open landscaped character of this roadway.





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

