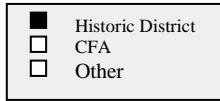


GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF PLANNING



## PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

**DATE:** March 12, 2010  
**TO:** Public Space Committee  
**FROM:** Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner  
**SUBJECT:** 735 8th Street, SE – Sidewalk Cafe

### APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

**Applicant:** Michael Fowler (Authorized Agent)

**Location:** The property is located on the west side of 8th Street SE between I Street SE and G Street SE. The property is located in a commercial area zoned CHC/C-2-A. It is located in the Capitol Hill Historic District. The proposed seating is in an area along 8th Street, SE. Drawings submitted with the application show the sidewalk width along this block of 8th Street SE is 15'-5'', which includes a 6' furniture zone.

**Proposal:** The applicant is requesting an unenclosed sidewalk café area with 5 tables and 10 seats. The proposed seating area has a total square footage of 218.

### BACKGROUND

The application was submitted to the DDOT public space permitting office on February 1st, 2010. The application has been reviewed and approved by HP.

### BASIS OF REPORT

The Office of Planning (OP) has reviewed the application, considered existing site conditions, and completed research on the site to prepare this report. OP also referred to several policies in the Comprehensive Plan and other District regulations as part of completing this report:

#### **Policy UD-3.1.2: Management of Sidewalk Space**

Preserve the characteristically wide sidewalks of Washington's commercial districts. Sidewalk space should be managed in a way that promotes pedestrian safety, efficiency, comfort, and provides adequate space for tree boxes. Sidewalks should enhance the visual character of streets, with landscaping and buffer planting used to reduce the impacts of vehicle traffic.

#### **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.

**Policy UD-3.10: Sidewalk Cafes**

Discourage the enclosure of sidewalk cafes in manner that effectively transforms them into indoor floor space. The design of sidewalk cafes should be compatible with the architectural qualities of the adjoining buildings, should compliment the street environment, and should not impede pedestrian movement.

**KEY ISSUES**

The proposed unenclosed sidewalk café has an area of 218 square feet and proposes 5 tables and 10 chairs. The width of the sidewalk from the property line to the curb is 21'-5". The existing clear pedestrian walkway is 15'-5", which includes a 6' furniture zone. The proposed café will reduce the clear pedestrian walkway to 6'. For the past several years, the Public Space Committee has required a minimum 8' clear pedestrian walkway along Barrack's Row, including 711 8<sup>th</sup> Street SE and 424 8<sup>th</sup> Street SE. The café should be reduced in size to maintain a minimum 8' clear pedestrian walkway. This will result in a smaller seating area and may impact the number of seats allowed.

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION**

Sidewalk cafes are a welcome addition to Barrack's Row. However, the size of the proposed café needs to be reduced in order to provide a minimum of 8' of clear pedestrian walkway. This may impact the number of seats allowed as part of this application.

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

- 1. The applicant reduces the size and scale of the café and provides a minimum 8' adjacent clear pedestrian walkway; and**
- 2. The number of seats be recalculated based on the revised seating area.**