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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: January 4, 2009
TO: Public Space Committee
FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
SUBJECT: 933 5th Street, SE

APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Applicant: David Fontana (Authorized Agent)
Location: The property is located on a corner lot at 5th Street SE and K Street SE. It is located on the west side of 5th Street SE and the north side of K Street SE. It is located in a R-5-B zoning district.
Proposal: The applicant is requesting to install a 6' high wood fence. The length of the fence is 28' on the K Street SE side.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on November 24, 2009.

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 several policies in the Comprehensive Plan as part of completing this report:

UD-3.2.4: Security Through Streetscape Design

Develop and apply attractive, context-sensitive security measures in the design of streets, plazas, and public spaces. These measures should use an appropriate mix of bollards, planters, landscaped walls, vegetation, and street furniture rather than barriers and other approaches that detract from aesthetic quality.

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 proposed application is for a 6' high wood fence, 28' in length for a residential property. The immediate area is residential in character. The existing public space regulations limit the height of fences and walls to 42". In addition, this neighborhood is in transition and will be increasingly developed with more residential and commercial uses in the near future.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The proposal for an over height in this neighborhood context is not appropriate. The fence should be limited to a maximum height of 42'' in accordance with public space regulations. The applicant has not provided any compelling reasons why an over height fence is necessary.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be denied. The applicant's proposed fence should be limited to a maximum height of 42''.

