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GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES IN THE
WOODLEY PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

The primary purpose of these guidelines is to assist property owners and tenants in the Woodley Park Commercial Area (Connecticut Avenue from the Taft Bridge to Woodley Road; Calvert Street from 24th Street to Woodley Place; and 24th Street from Connecticut Avenue to Calvert Street) in their plans for both new construction and the renovation or rehabilitation of existing buildings. It is intended that these guidelines reflect the concerns and interests of the Woodley Park Community Association ("WPCA"), and that they (i) serve as a supplement to existing zoning regulations, (ii) be taken into consideration by the Historic Preservation Review Board ("HPRB") in reviewing building permit applications, and (iii) will encourage property owners and merchants to voluntarily protect and enhance the character of our neighborhood.

The guidelines apply to a compact geographic area surrounding the Woodley Park/Zoo Metrorail station, comprising those lots zoned WP/C-2-A in Squares 2202 and 2203, and those lots zoned WP/C-2-B in Square 2204. These properties front on Connecticut Avenue, Calvert Street and 24th Street, and the focus of the guidelines is on building facades visible from these streets. As noted separately in Woodley Park's residential guidelines, the rears of buildings and sides along alleys serve purely functional purposes, generally have no distinguishing architectural features and are of insignificant importance from a historical perspective. Accordingly, work involving building features and masses not facing the street and/or not visible to a person on the street should not be subject to special scrutiny by the WPCA or the HPRB.

The following guidelines are therefore noted:

(1) Demolition: Preservation and enhancement of Woodley Park's existing inventory of commercial properties is of the utmost importance. As a result, it is WPCA's position that renovation and repair of existing structures should be encouraged and that the razing or demolition of buildings that are contributing structures in the historic district should be strongly discouraged. At the same time, there may be situations where renovation is impractical or undesirable due to the structural condition of the building in question, or where the building has little or no historic value and/or the newly-designed replacement provides compelling practical and aesthetic advantages.

In these circumstances, WPCA will consider plans for demolition, provided that (i) such plans are in conjunction with the design for a new, replacement building, (ii) the WPCA Executive Committee or its designee has ample opportunity to meet with the owner/developer to review, comment upon and approve architectural plans for the new building and (iii) the owner/developer intends to commence new construction immediately after demolition of the old building so as to limit the amount of vacant land within the community and promote Woodley Park's retail and commercial vitality.

(2) New Construction: In evaluating plans for any new exterior construction, WPCA's primary goal is to maintain the scale and character presently found in the community's commercial area. It may be necessary to deviate somewhat from the original or current neighborhood characteristics because of the difficulty in procuring certain building materials. However, the scale and design found in the neighborhood should be maintained wherever possible, and compatible building materials should be used whenever available.

Accordingly, the WPCA Executive Committee or another designated community group should have ample opportunity to review, comment upon and approve architectural plans for new structures or additions visible from the street. It is intended that this review be conducted on an informal and cooperative basis with the owner/developer, and that its results be presented to both the HPRB and ANC 3-C. The details of the community involvement in the review process are not yet defined and are expected to evolve with experience.

(3) Renovation and Repair: It is recognized that a number of Woodley Park's commercial buildings have been significantly altered over the years from their original design. As a general guideline, when a building or elements of a building are "non-original", they may be renovated or replaced with like "non-original" elements or replaced with replications of the original elements as they appeared when the building was built. In this connection, owners should be encouraged to adopt the latter approach, i.e. to replace existing "non-original" elements with elements that tend to return towards the original, even if they are not exactly like the original.

(4) Front Facades: The front facades of many buildings display decorative detail which contributes to the neighborhood character and should be maintained. These include interesting brick and tile patterns, keystones, medallions, moldings and cornices. No permanent additions to the front of buildings (e.g. enclosed entrances, additional rooms, front fences or masonry walls) should be permitted.

(5) Windows: Windows, as character defining features of buildings, should maintain the depth of set-in, profile of moldings and material of the original windows. Whenever possible, windows should not be changed in such a way as to disturb existing muntin patterns or the rhythmic pattern of the facades from the street.

(6) Mechanical Equipment: There should be no through-the-wall installation of air conditioners visible from the street. Window air conditioners on the front facades should be discouraged, and owners should be encouraged to install central heating, ventilating and air conditioning equipment whenever possible. No compressors, fans, air handling units or other equipment should be visible from the street.

(7) Roofs: The roofs that are visible from the street should be maintained "as is" with existing materials, or returned to the original materials or substantially similar substitutes. There should be no change to the roofline of buildings, unless such change is in conformance with plans for new construction approved by the WPCA Executive Committee or its designee.

(8) Other Structures: Roof decks, greenhouses, satellite dishes or other structures visible from the street should not be permitted.

(9) Sidewalk Cafes: Sidewalk cafes should be permitted provided that (i) they are not enclosed; (ii) they do not impede pedestrian traffic or other appropriate benefits of the public space; (iii) all support structures, awnings, furniture and planters are removed when weather prohibits outside dining, at least November 1 through March 31; (iv) at least ten (10) feet of sidewalk space is retained; (v) the design is compatible with the neighborhood; and (vi) all permit and license requirements are satisfied.

(10) Sidewalk Sculpture/Art: Sidewalk sculpture/art should be permitted provided that (i) it does not impede pedestrian traffic or other appropriate benefits of the public space; (ii) it will not deteriorate or become unsightly in inclement weather; (iii) it is compatible with the neighborhood; and (iv) all permit and license requirements are satisfied.

(11) Dumpsters: Dumpsters should be located in the rear of the buildings and should, to the extent practicable, be suitably screened.

(11) Signage: It is hoped that building owners and tenants will be sensitive to, and voluntarily comply with, WPCA's desire for exterior and interior signage that maintains certain aesthetic standards compatible with the surrounding historic community. It is not WPCA's intent to deny or limit the creativity or business

procedures of any owner or tenant, but rather to protect the overall appearance of Woodley Park's commercial area, and to avoid unnecessary and unsightly "sign clutter" at individual business establishments.

Exterior signs should be surface mounted and may be internally lit, although flashing or blinking signs and internally-illuminated sign boxes with stenciled plastic faces should be discouraged. Signs should be in scale with the particular building, and should not unduly cover distinctive architectural details. Signs should not project more than 6" in front of the plane of the building, and supporting brackets or rods should be hidden behind the signage so as to be relatively invisible from the surrounding sidewalk area. Signage should not be attached to, placed on or supported by the exterior faces of door or window glass or framing. Colors and material finishes should be designed to be compatible with the building exterior.

Signage visible through the glass portions of storefronts should not project beyond a 4" perimeter margin within each glass panel and should not be taped or applied with adhesive to the building or glass surface, unless stencil-painted on the glass with a strippable material. Permanent interior signage should be painted, screened or machined on durable materials and firmly supported in front of glass areas.

Temporary signage and banners announcing a new tenant to the neighborhood should be permitted, provided that it is designed to not become bowed, warped, stained or deteriorated during its temporary display period. Temporary signage that dominates a storefront or window should be discouraged after a tenant is open for business.

Coated fabric awnings with the owner/tenant's own graphic design and colors should be permitted, provided that such awnings shall not project more than three (3) feet beyond the storefront or window, and shall use materials as approved by the District of Columbia Building Codes. Design elements of the awnings should be compatible with the building exterior.