



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
PO Box 15020
Washington, DC 20003



September 13, 2022

Director Matthew Marcou
Public Space Committee
District Department of Transportation
250 M Street SE
Washington, DC 20003

Re: Support for Public Space Permit #395836, Brown Memorial AME Church

Dear Mr. Marcou:

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on September 8, 2022, our Commission voted 5-0-1 (with 5 Commissioners required for a quorum) to support the request of Brown Memorial AME Church to replace their existing chain link fence with a decorative black metal fence no taller than 72 inches and in accordance with the documentation submitted in their permit application, Public Space Permit #395836.

The rise in violence against Black institutions is a horrific reality that the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security have advised communities to prepare for. Brown Memorial AME received a non-profit security grant to add additional physical protection measures to their facility. Congress created the program to help Black institutions protect themselves from increasing violence.

Brown AME's grant investments include reinforced doors and windows, security cameras and lighting, as well as a decorative black iron fence that is proposed to be 30 inches above the regulatory standard for spaces adjacent to public space. The terms of the grant require that the recipient use industry standards and best practices to mitigate potential terrorist events that would be harmful to their members and their facilities.

Our community recognizes that shared spaces that bring people together, including community centers, schools and places of worship, merit additional security measures, beyond those of individual homeowners or businesses. Our Commission believes that granting support to their application is a worthwhile exception and would not automatically create precedent for fences above the 42-inch limit at personal residences or businesses. Hallowed and shared spaces are unique in their circumstances and deserving of a different approach.

¹ ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on, anc-6a@googlegroups.com, and newhilleast@groups.io, at www.anc6a.org, on Twitter (@ANC6A) and through print advertisements in the Hill Rag.

Some examples of exceptions to the 42-inch fence rule include the following shared spaces on Capitol Hill:

- Sherwood Recreation Center has a sidewalk adjacent fence that is 6 feet tall and runs around the perimeter of the facility;
- The Hill Center's 7-foot tall fence runs the length of the sidewalk in the 900 block of Pennsylvania Avenue SE;
- Brent Elementary's 8-foot tall fence runs the length of the sidewalk 3rd St SE between North Carolina Avenue and D Street, and along D Street; and
- Christ Church Episcopal/Washington Parish, has a 5-foot tall fence adjacent to the sidewalk on G Street, and a 6-foot chain link fence along the F Street Terrace

According to Brown AME representatives, they have researched the standards for what qualifies as a security/anti-climb fence to find that it must be no less than six feet in height. A shorter fence would not meet the standard. The church has selected an ornamental style fence that provides greater resistance to climbing and that is more aesthetically pleasing than that of a chain-link fence. Each vertical picket is spaced to provide more than 80% openness. They have also pledged to work with neighbors to place plantings and flowers on the inside of the fence line to soften its appearance.

Our Commission recognizes that granting Brown AME permission to construct a 72-inch fence would be an exception for the Public Space Committee. We ask that the Committee consider the information provided by the Church and this Commission in making their decision.

Thank you for giving great weight to the recommendations of this Commission. I can be contacted at 6A04@anc.dc.gov.

On behalf of the Commission,



Amber Gove

Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A