

May 27, 2014

Anthony Hood, Chairman  
District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
Office of Zoning  
441 4th Street, N.W., Ste. 200-S  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Zoning Case 13-14  
Vision McMillan Partners, LLC & DC Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development

Dear Mr. Hood:

I am writing to call to the Zoning Commission's attention an issue of importance regarding development at the McMillan Reservoir site as it relates to views from the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) to the U.S. Capitol.

During the preparation of the adopted AFRH Master Plan (Plan), and the accompanying National Historic Preservation Act 106 consultation process, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) worked with the D.C. Office of Planning and others to develop height limits on proposed development on the south side of the AFRH campus. As indicated in the attached excerpt from the AFRH Master Plan, subsequent height limits were incorporated into the final, adopted Plan. These limitations were intended to protect historically significant views of the U.S. Capitol from the AFRH property. Similar viewshed protection may be needed for development on the McMillan site, but the National Capital Planning Commission believes further study is necessary to determine whether and what protections may be warranted.

Accordingly, the NCPC would like to ask the Zoning Commission to consider keeping the record for ZC 13-14 open an additional 45 days beyond the date of tonight's final hearing. During that time, NCPC intends to work with the applicant, the Office of Planning and others as may be necessary to investigate potential impacts on historic viewsheds resulting from development on the McMillan Reservoir site. The goal of the study is to ensure consistency with the viewshed protections incorporated into the AFRH Master Plan.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call Christine Saum at (202) 482-7245 or e-mail Ms. Saum at [christine.saum@ncpc.gov](mailto:christine.saum@ncpc.gov).

Sincerely,



Marcel C. Acosta  
Executive Director  
National Capital Planning Commission

# Landscape Guidelines

The Home is a designed landscape in which trees play an important role in establishing the character of the Home and its various sub-zones, such as Chapel Woods. Trees serve a number of functions both on site and from afar. Some of the functions are screening views, buffering the perimeter, and providing canopies and a green oasis. Therefore, it is a goal to retain and enhance the form and function of trees. In addition, the general character of the existing landscape is to be maintained and enhanced. It is to be altered only where deemed appropriate.

## Views and Topography

Protected viewsheds and view corridors can be found on the map to the right. The map on the following page outlines areas from which AFRH-W is visible and areas of AFRH-W visible from beyond property boundaries.



South view to Washington Monument



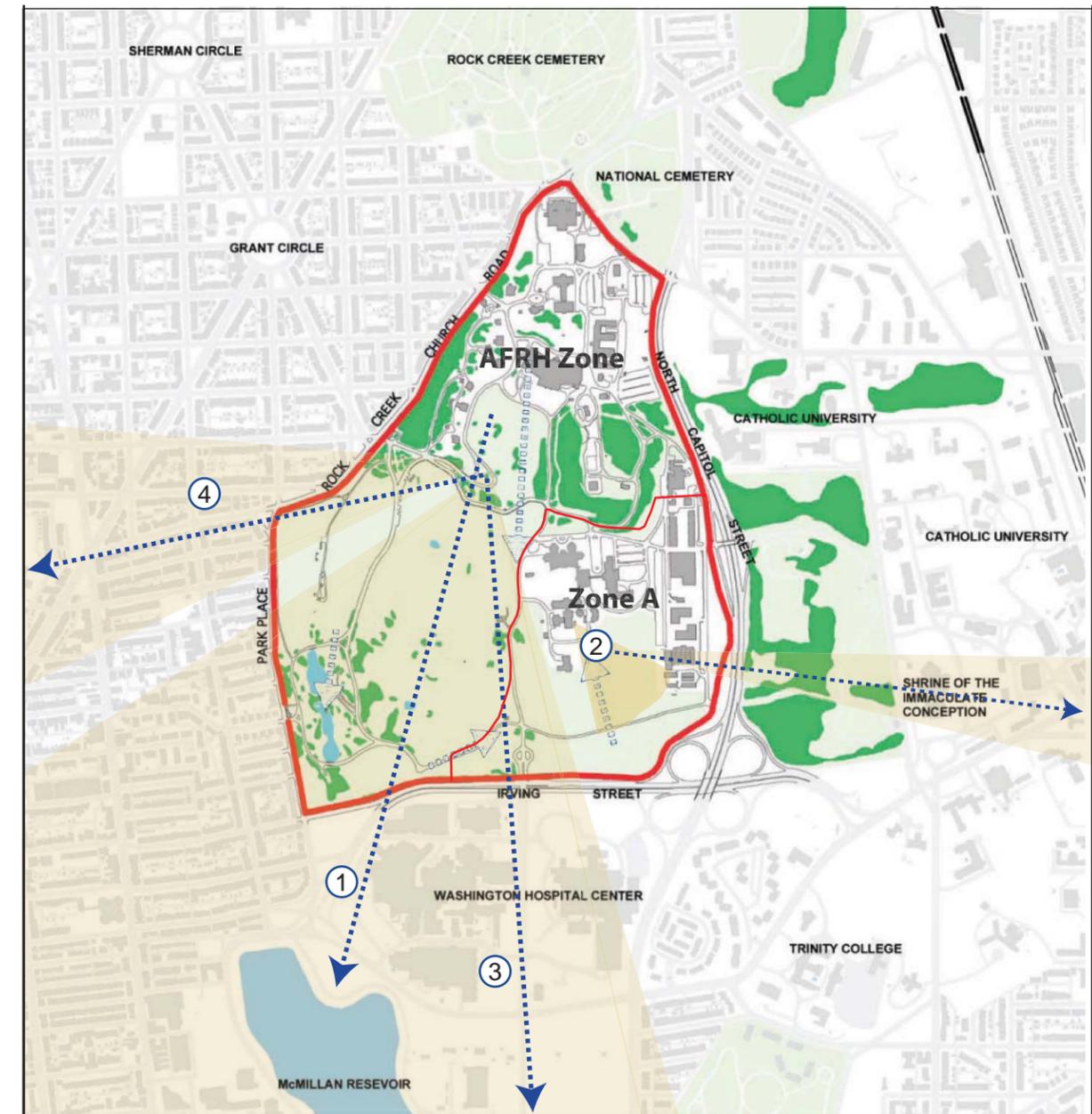
East view to the Catholic University of America and Shrine of the Immaculate Conception



South view to the Capitol

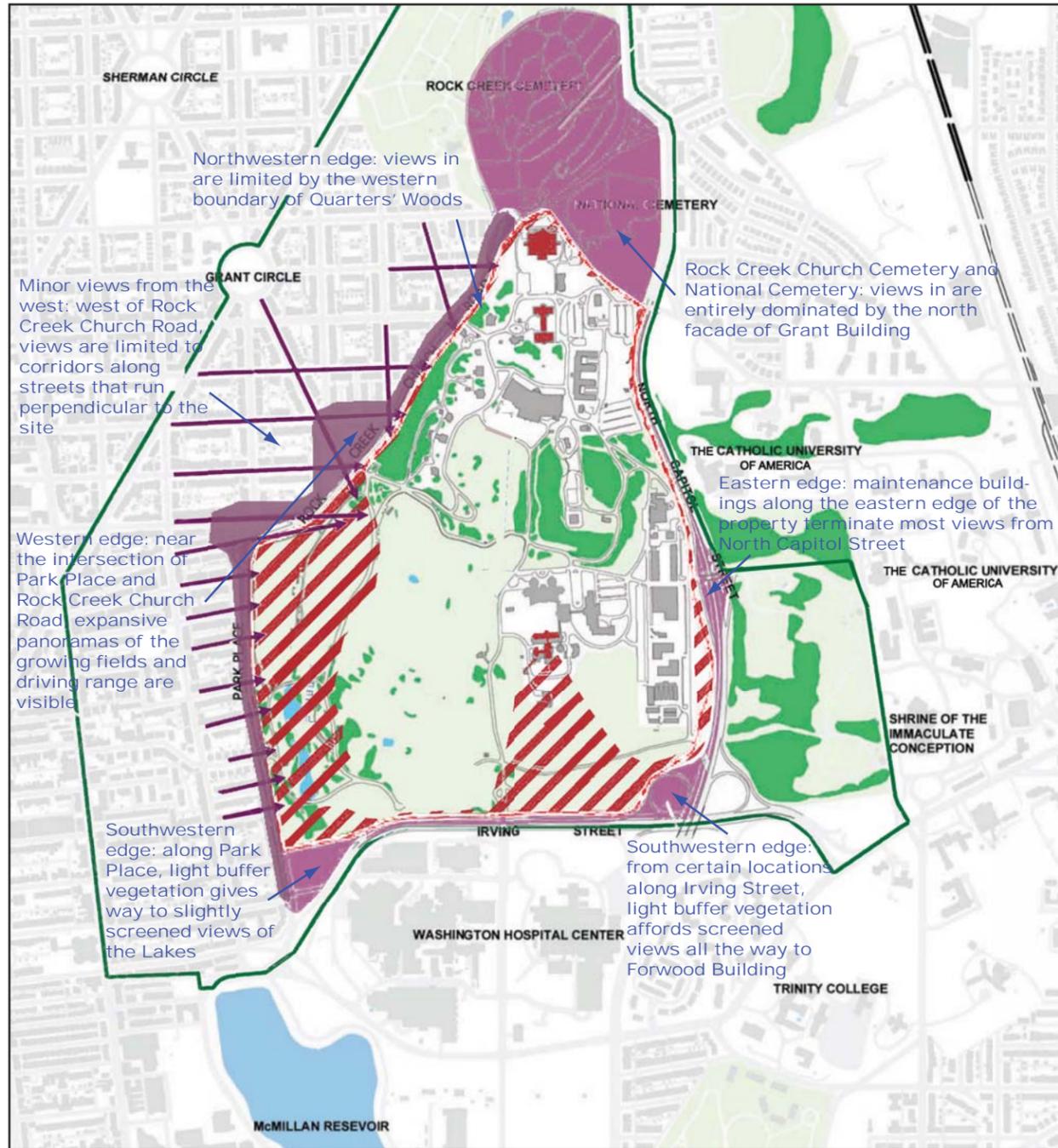


West view to the National Cathedral



Existing views and view corridors from the site

Intact historic viewshed  
Intact view corridor



Areas of visibility from outside of AFRH-W

The preservation of key views is outlined within the zone-specific guidelines. Much of the existing development within AFRH-W was carefully sited to take advantage of the varied topography that is present throughout the site. Historically, topographical features were used to create, define, or obscure key views to, from, and between built resources of the Home.

The Master Plan for new development shall respect the site's topography, take advantage of views, preserve existing view corridors to the extent possible, and help frame internal views of the existing landscape. As part of Master Planning process, potential development in each zone was studied from numerous vantage points inside and outside the Home in an effort to retain historic topography, significant topographic features, and key associated views. New development shall avoid causing adverse visual impacts whenever possible. If not possible to avoid an adverse impact, efforts shall be made to minimize or mitigate the adverse impact.