



United States Department of State

Office of Foreign Missions

Washington, D.C. 20520

December 2, 2011

Rauzia Ruhanna Ally, AIA
President
Dupont Circle Conservancy
c/o 1432 Swann Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Ms. Ally:

Thank you for your letter of September 20, 2011, concerning the Embassy of the Republic of Congo's unauthorized replacement of the landscaped front lawn of its chancery, located at 1720 16th Street, NW, with pavement.

The District of Columbia's Department of Transportation ("DDOT") has investigated this matter and informed the Embassy via a letter dated November 17, 2011, that the referenced action constitutes a violation of the Board of Zoning Adjustment's Notice of Final Rulemaking and Determination and Order (No. 18162), issued on March 8, 2011. DDOT has further informed the Embassy that it is required to remove the unauthorized paving from public space and replace it with DDOT-approved landscaping within thirty days of the date of DDOT's letter.

Subsequent to the delivery of DDOT's letter, the Department of State again formally raised this matter with the Congolese Embassy, advising that it expects the Embassy to comply with the DDOT's requirement that it take prompt, corrective action.

I recently had the privilege of receiving a tour of the interior of the Congolese Embassy. As a result, I can personally attest to the care the Government of the Republic of Congo has taken to renovate and preserve the character of this historic property. Thus, it is unfortunate that the problems cited above have distracted from this achievement. It is the Department's expectation that the Embassy will do as DDOT requires and that once these actions are taken, the *Dupont Circle Conservancy* and its members will come to view the Embassy of the Republic of Congo as an active and contributing partner to enhancing the beauty of the Dupont Circle neighborhood and preserving its historic character.

If the Office of Foreign Missions can be of further assistance with this or any other related matter, please do not hesitate to contact us by telephone at (202) 647-3417 or by electronic mail at OFMProperty@state.gov.

Sincerely,



Cliff Seagroves

Acting Director

Diplomatic Property, Taxes, Services & Benefits

cc: Embassy of the Republic of the Congo
The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton, House of Representatives
The Honorable Vincent C. Gray, Mayor of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Jack Evans, D.C. Council Member, Ward 2
Mr. Charles Robertson III, Chairman, Committee of 100 on the Federal City
Mr. Michael Feldstein, Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission, 2B
Ms. Rebecca Miller, Executive Director, DC Preservation League
Ms. Deborah Screiber, President, Dupont Circle Citizens Association
Ms. Rauzia Ruhanna Ally, AIA, President, Dupont Circle Conservancy
Mr. Matthew LeGrant, District's Zoning Administrator
Mr. David Maloney, SHPO, District Historic Preservation Office
Mr. Matthew Marcou, District's Department of Transportation