

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment  
**FROM:** Brandice Elliott, Case Manager  
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review  
**DATE:** July 23, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** BZA Case 18590, 1801 Hamlin Street, N.E.

**I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION**

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following:

- § 2101.1, Parking Spaces (20 spaces required, 11 spaces proposed)

**II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

Address	1801 Hamlin Street, N.E.
Legal Description	Square 4210, Lot 825
Ward	5, 5C
Lot Characteristics	The lot is generally square-shaped, having a lot area of 20,812 square feet. The lot has a frontage of 118.92 feet on Hamlin Street, 33.98 feet on Rhode Island Avenue and 124.68 feet on 18 <sup>th</sup> Street. A 15 foot wide public alley abuts the southern property line
Zoning	C-2-A – office employment centers, shopping centers and medium-bulk mixed use centers located in low and medium density residential areas
Existing Development	District of Columbia Public Library, permitted in this zone.
Historic District	N/A
Adjacent Properties	To the north, across Hamlin Street, is an auto repair facility. To the south, across the public alley, is Langdon Park Community Center. To the east is a detached single family dwelling. To the west, across 18 <sup>th</sup> Street, is a commercial development.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding neighborhood character is generally low density residential, consisting of detached and semi-detached single family residences, with commercial uses along the Rhode Island Avenue corridor.



### III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The subject property is located at the southeast corner of 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Hamlin Street and is currently developed as the Woodridge Branch of the D.C. Public Library. The proposed development would replace the existing building with a new 22,000 square foot public library with modern facilities. The building, consisting of two main stories and a partial third floor reading lounge, would be designed to achieve a LEED Gold status. The entrance to the building will be located on Hamlin Street, just east of the intersection at 18<sup>th</sup> Street. A total of 20 parking spaces are required; however the applicant proposes to provide 11 spaces in the same location where they are currently provided on the lot, along the south building elevation and north of Langdon Park Community Center. The elevation of the site slopes down to the southern portion of the lot, resulting in the proposed building having two exposed floors adjacent to Hamlin Street and three exposed floors along the south building elevation, adjacent to the parking area.

The site is accessible via public transit, including the 81, 82, 83, 84, 86 and T18 Metrobus routes, and is just over one mile from the Rhode Island Metro Station. In addition, a Capital Bikeshare station is located just south of the site at Langdon Park Community Center.

### IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF

C-3-A Zone	Regulation	Proposed	Relief
Height § 400	50 ft. max.	42.75 ft.	None required
Lot Width § 401	118.92 ft. min.	118.92 ft.	None required
Lot Area § 401	20,812 SF min.	20,812 SF	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 402	1.5	1.05	None required
Lot Occupancy § 403	60% max.	%	None required
Rear Yard § 404	15 ft. min.	22.1 ft.	None required
Side Yard § 405	8 ft. min.	15.1 ft.	None required
Parking Spaces § 2101	20 spaces	11 spaces	Required

### V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

#### a. Variance Relief from § 2101, Parking Spaces

##### i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The subject property slopes down from the highest elevation, along Rhode Island Avenue, to the lowest elevation along the southern property line. The consulting engineering firm has determined that the soil at the site is of poor quality and is extremely unstable. Excavation of the soil to create a larger basement that would accommodate parking would be too costly, as driving piles would be required for stabilization.

In addition, at 20,812 square feet, the subject property is small for its intended purpose. Other similar libraries have larger lots, including Capitol View Library at 21,817 square feet, the Benning

Library at 25,065 square feet and the Palisades Library at 22,500 square feet. The subject property is landlocked and cannot expand by acquiring more land.

Finally, the District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) mandates a broad program for each Full Service Neighborhood Library, such as the proposed Woodridge Library. Each facility must be approximately 22,000 square feet, consisting of a book drop, circulation area, staff work areas, the children's room and community meeting rooms accessible outside of library hours. The proposed library would meet the goals of this program, but would have little area left for parking. Much of the basement area will be used to accommodate mechanical equipment that cannot be located on a green roof. Underground parking is not feasible due to the cost associated with stabilizing the soil and the area needed to accommodate mechanical equipment.

### **ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good**

Relief can be granted without detriment to the public good. The library will primarily serve people in the neighborhood and those patrons are likely to walk to the library. Those who visit the library from further distances have several transit options, including bus, metro and bikeshare. The existing library has been located at the subject site for over fifty years and has only ever provided eleven parking spaces, the same number of parking spaces currently proposed. The proposed parking would be supplemented by on-street parking spaces available on Hamlin Street, Rhode Island Avenue and 18<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations**

Relief can be granted without impairing the intent of the zoning regulations. The existing library has been on the property for over 50 years with eleven parking spaces, the same number of parking spaces proposed for the new facility. There have been no apparent significant adverse impacts as a result of the reduced parking spaces, as additional parking is available on 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Hamlin Street and Rhode Island Avenue. Further, it is anticipated that most patrons will walk to the neighborhood library. The site is accessible by public transit, as it is located along several bus routes, is approximately one mile from the Rhode Island Avenue Metro Station, and is near a Capital Bikeshare station.

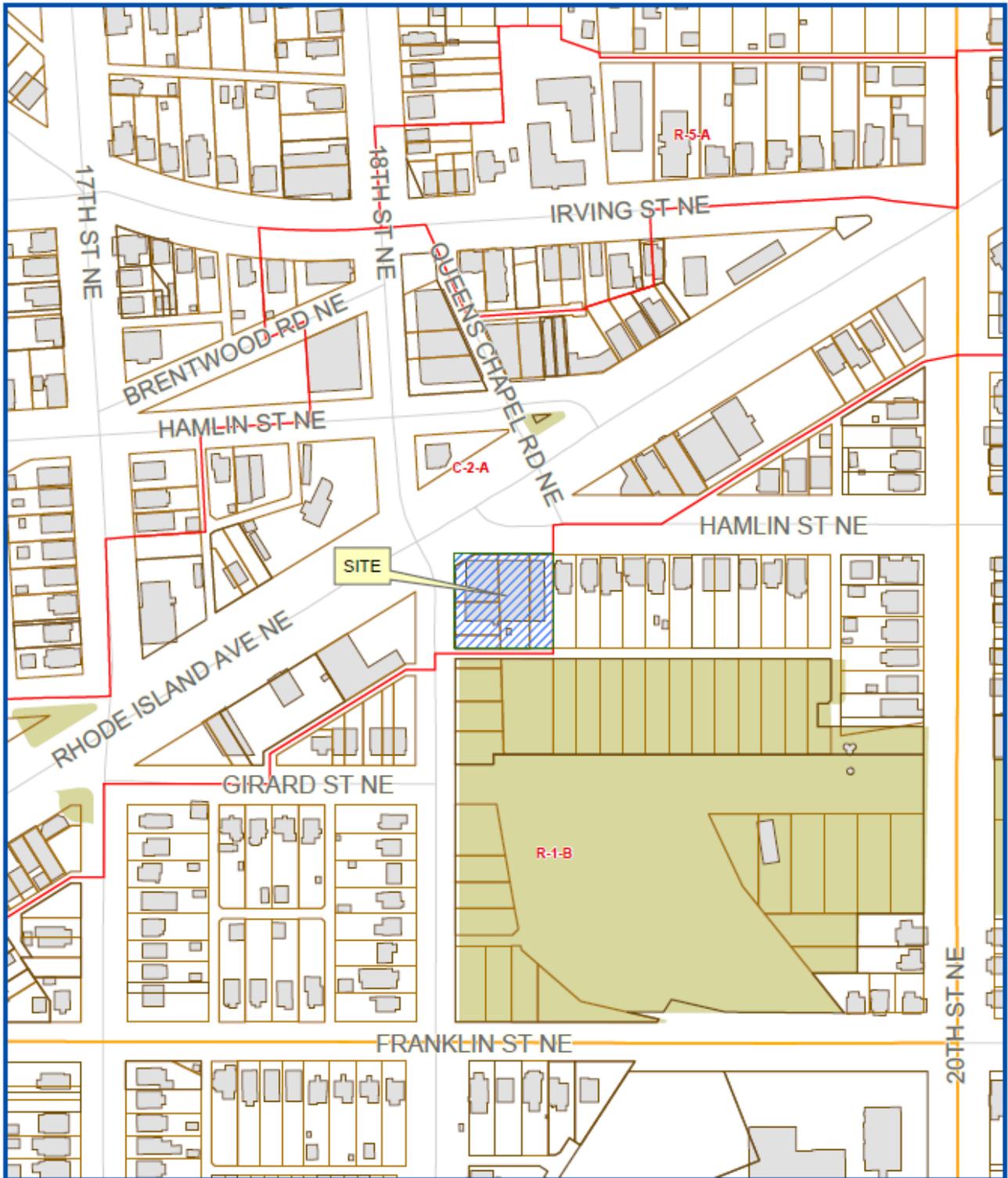
## **VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES**

Comments of other District Agencies had not been received as of the writing of this report. However, DDOT will file a report under separate cover.

## **VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

As of this writing, the Office of Planning has received no comments regarding the proposal from neighbors. At its regularly held meeting on June 19, 2013, the ANC voted unanimously to recommend approval of the requested variance.

Attachment: Location Map



### BZA Case 18590 - 1801 Hamlin Street, N.E.

DC Office of Planning

This map was created for planning purposes from a variety of sources. It is neither a survey nor a legal document. Information provided by other agencies should be verified with them where appropriate.

