

SELF-CERTIFICATION MEMORANDUM Area Variance Application

To: District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Marnique Y. Heath, Chairperson
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200 S
Washington, DC 20001

From: Mary R. Rankin, AIA LEED AP
Agent / Architect
Perkins Eastman DC

Date: 17 May 2016

Subject: Ron Brown Collegiate Preparatory High School, 4800 Meade Street NE, Square 5159, Lot 801, ANC 7C

I. NATURE OF RELIEF SOUGHT

This statement is submitted on behalf of the District of Columbia Department of General Services (the “Applicant”), the owner of Ron Brown Collegiate Preparatory High School located at 4800 Meade Street NE, Lot 801 in Square 5159 (the “Property”) in support of its application for an area variance from:

- A. the schedule of requirements for parking spaces (§2101.1) which requires public high schools to provide two (2) for each three (3) teachers and other employees, plus either one (1) for each twenty (20) classroom seats or one (1) for each ten (10) seats in the largest auditorium, gymnasium or area usable for public assembly, whichever is greater.

II. JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD

The Board of Zoning Adjustment (the “Board” or “BZA”) has jurisdiction to grant the area variance requested here pursuant to §3103 of the Zoning Regulations

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Description of the Surrounding Area

Lot 801 in Square 5159, is bounded by the Deanwood Community Center & Library on the north, 49th Street NE on the east, Meade Street NE to the south, and 48th Street NE on the west. The area is 205,830 square feet, or 4.72 acres. See DC Office of Zoning Map provided with this application. The Lot is located one block southeast (0.2 miles) of the Deanwood Metro Station. The Lot is not located within any historic District.

The Lot currently contains the Ron Brown Middle School building, along with two recreational basketball courts, a paved playground area, and a parking lot. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 1, provided with this application. Ron Brown Middle School was closed by the District of Columbia Public Schools in 2013 and has been abandoned for the last three years. The proposed modernization of the school will convert the existing building into a District of Columbia public high school.

The elevation of the site is relatively flat and on grade with the surrounding streets. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 2, provided with this application.

None of the existing buildings are currently listed on the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites.

Parking is provided on a surface lot to the north of the building with curb cuts off of 49th Street NE. There are currently eighty-six (86) parking spaces, three (3) of which are striped and marked as handicap accessible.

B. Background Information Regarding the Property

The school was built in 1966 and originally named Roper Middle School. The enrollment capacity of was 1,090 students. In December 1997 the school was renamed after Ronald Harmon “Ron” Brown. At the time of the schools closing in 2013, the enrollment was around 400 students.

The existing school facility consists of two three-story red brick buildings connected by a two story corridor link. The building at the east end of the link, is the Academic Building. The building on the opposite, west end, of the link is referred to as the Multipurpose Building.

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The Applicant is currently undertaking a modernization project of the Property to bring the building up to current educational, energy code, life safety, and accessibility standards. No additions are being added to the school other than a vestibule at the main entrance to the building to meet the current mechanical code, and to provide space for security screening equipment. After renovation, Ron Brown Collegiate Preparatory High School will have approximately 100 full-time and contracted employees and 600 students.

There are currently no existing BZA Orders attached to the Property. There are currently two Zoning Commission (Z.C.) Orders attached to the Property. Z.C. Order No. 08-22, dated 08 December 2008, amends the District of Columbia Zoning Map to change several squares and parcels in Ward 7 from R-5-A to either R-1-B, R-2, R-3, or R-4. Z.C. Order No. 10-02, dated 27 September 2010, also amended the District of Columbia Zoning Map to rezone certain properties within Ward 7 and Ward 8 from or to the R-5-A Zone District, and was intended to address errors, omissions, and oversights in Z.C. Order Nos. 7-30, 8-12, and 8-22. *See* Z.C. Order Nos. 08-22 and 10-02 provided with this application.

IV. NATURE OF RELIEF SOUGHT:

An area variance is sought for automobile parking spaces that do not meet the requirement for quantity provided per 11 DCMR §2101.1, which states that the amount of parking spaces provided for public high schools in any district shall equal two (2) for each three (3) teachers and other employees, plus either one (1) for each twenty (20) classroom seats or one (1) for each ten (10) seats in the largest auditorium, gymnasium or area usable for public assembly, whichever is greater. The Applicant is requesting that they be allowed to maintain a total of eighty-six (86) parking spaces with no increase, which would be a reduction of 39% from current code.

A. SUMMARY:

The existing parking lot at Ron Brown currently contains eighty-six (86) parking spaces. If the renovation is required to provide additional parking spaces per the current zoning code, the site would need to accommodate 142 parking spaces. This number is calculated using 100 full-time staff and an auditorium seating capacity of 750. Adding the additional 56 parking spaces would eliminate the recreational space for the school.

B. BASIS FOR GRANT OF AREA VARIANCE:

Under 11 DCMR §3103.5 (b), the Board is authorized to reduce the amount of parking spaces required for nonresidential uses under §2101.1 to an extent greater than what may be permitted by special exception in §3104.

C. APPLICANT MEETS THE BURDEN OF PROOF FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION

Per § 3103.2, “[w]here, by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape of a specific piece of property at the time of the original adoption of the regulations, or by reason of exceptional topographical conditions or other extraordinary or exceptional situation or condition of a specific piece of property, the strict application of any regulation adopted under D.C. Official Code §§ 6-641.01 to 6-651.02 would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to or exceptional and undue hardship upon the owner of the property, to authorize, upon an appeal relating to the property, a variance from the strict application so as to relieve the difficulties or hardship; provided, that the relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zone plan as embodied in the Zoning Regulations and Map.”

The Applicant requests the Board shall give consideration to the following in evaluating this variance:

(a) Nature and location of the structure;

The Ron Brown building is located in a predominately residential area of Northeast DC. The building occupies 33.5% of the Lot, and the existing parking lot covers an additional 16% at the north side of the lot. The remaining open space to the north of the building currently contains basketball courts and a paved playground. The open space to the south side of the building is landscaped. If the project is required to meet the current minimum parking requirement of 142 parking spaces, the school would lose its current recreation space. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 1, provided with this application

(b) Maximum number of students, employees, guests, customers, or clients who can reasonably be expected to use the proposed building or structure at one time;

The Ron Brown Collegiate Preparatory High School will have 100 full-time employees. Students will not be allowed to park on site. Since the Deanwood

Metrorail station is less than a ¼ mile from the school, a high number of staff are expected to arrive by public transportation. The District of Columbia Public School system, based on the patterns of other high schools located in close proximity to Metrorail stations, anticipates a modal split for full-time employees of 60% arriving by Metro train or bus, 35% via car, and 5% by bike or walking. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 3, provided with this application.

(c) *Amount of traffic congestion existing or that the building or structure can reasonably be expected to create in the neighborhood;*

The site contains an existing District of Columbia public middle school that was originally built to accommodate 1,090 students. The modernized building will house a District of Columbia public high school that will accommodate 600 students. No increase to traffic congestion is expected.

(d) *Quantity of existing public, commercial, or private parking, other than curb parking, on the property or in the neighborhood that can reasonably be expected to be available when the building or structure is in use; and*

The Property currently contains a parking lot with eighty-six (86) parking spaces. The adjacent Deanwood Community Center & Library has a parking lot containing twenty-five (25) parking spaces. The Deanwood Metrorail Station has a parking lot with 194 all-day spaces. A fee of \$4.60 is charged upon leaving the Metrorail lot between 9:30 AM – 1:00 AM Monday through Thursday, and 9:30 AM – 4:00 AM Friday to Saturday. Reserved metro parking is also available along the north side of Minnesota Avenue NE between Nash Avenue NE and 48th Street NE. The reserved parking cost is \$65 per month.

In addition, a survey of the existing curb parking was undertaken by the applicant. For a period of one (1) week, the streets immediately surrounding the school site as well as all streets at least radiating one (1) block out were observed between 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM, after peak rush hour was ended, and the parking totals were recorded. The neighboring streets that were residentially zoned were 37.7% full. See Curbside Management Report, provided with this application.

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- (d) Proximity to public transportation, particularly Metrorail stations, and the availability of public transportation service in the area or a ride-sharing program approved by the D.C. Department of Transportation.**

The Property is less than ¼ mile from the Deanwood Metrorail station. The R12, U4, U7, V14, V15, and W4 Metrobus routes all serve the area, with bus stops between one to two blocks from the Property.

Along with this application, we have included the following items:

- a) Agent Authorization Letter;
- b) BZA Form 120, Application;
- c) BAZ Form 135, Self-Certification;
- d) Statement of the Applicant;
- e) List of names and mailing addresses of owners of all property located within 200 feet of the boundaries of the Property;
- f) Existing Zoning Commission Order Nos. 08-22 and 10-05;
- g) Zoning Map;
- h) Official Building Plat from the DC Office of the Surveyor; and
- i) Architectural plans, elevations, site plans, and photographs of the Property.
- j) Curbside Management Report at the request of the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT).

If you require any further clarification or have any questions regarding the application, we are available at any time to discuss them with you.

Regards,



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