

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6518



ANACOSTIA NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY LIBRARY REPLACEMENT

1800 Good Hope Road, SE
Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the District of Columbia Public Library

March 27, 2008

Abstract

The District of Columbia Public Library has requested comments on the concept design for a new Anacostia Neighborhood Library, located at 1800 Good Hope Road, SE, in Washington D.C. The project will replace the existing library on the same site. The new two-story building will have one floor above grade and one floor partially below grade. The contemporary design, integrating glass curtain wall and perforated metals, will give identity to the new building and allow it to stand out as an anchor for this changing neighborhood.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of concept design pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Comments favorably on the concept design plans for the Anacostia Neighborhood Library, Washington, DC, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 82.00(38.00)42484.

Commends the applicant for the integration of multi-purpose community space and the incorporation of environmental design to achieve a LEED silver rating.

Recommends that for the preliminary and final design submissions, the site and landscape plans be further developed to include durable and functional areas as well as other elements to visually screen parking and service areas from surrounding areas.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

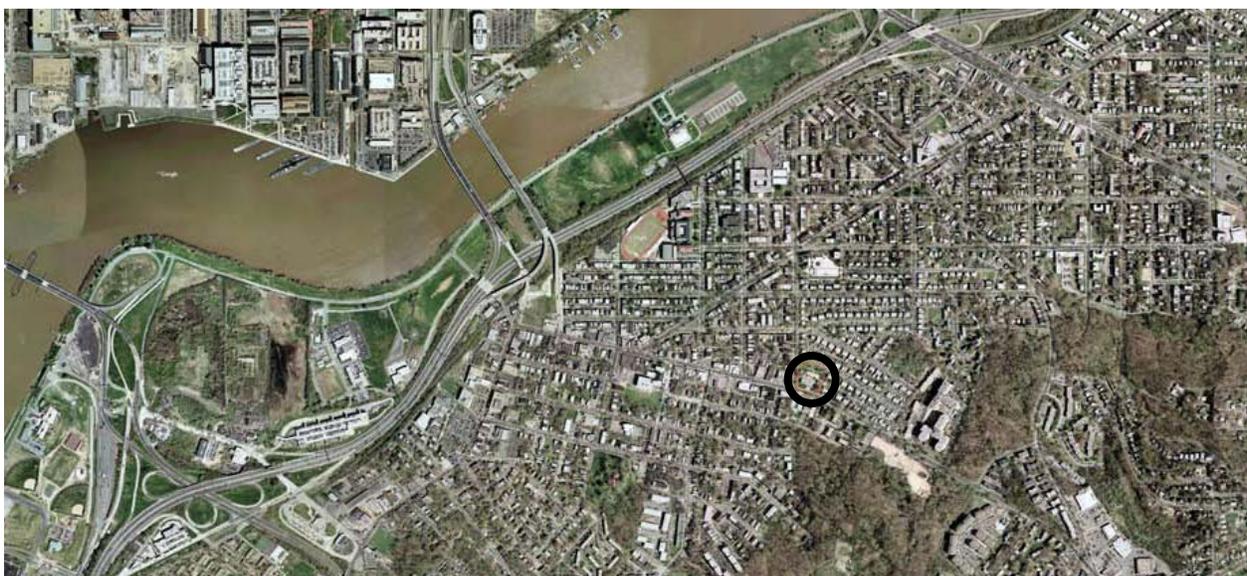
The DC Public Library System (DCPL) is undergoing a transformation that includes services, programs, collections and buildings. DCPL is addressing facility needs across the system and will start with building four new libraries to replace those that have closed. The previous Anacostia Library was demolished, and a temporary library on the same site is presently serving the community.

NCPC reviewed and approved plans for the Anacostia Library in 2005; however, DCPL did not move forward with construction because a larger budget was ultimately approved. As a result, DCPL hired the architecture firm of Freelon and Ronnie McGee and Associates to redesign the building with the new budget and image in mind. Over the last year DCPL has held two public meetings to gain input from community residents and other key stakeholders.

Three main goals are driving the design: 1) Input from key stakeholders, 2) High level architectural design, and 3) Sustainable design.

Site

The Anacostia Neighborhood Library will be located at 1800 Good Hope Road in southeast Washington DC, on the same site as the former library. The site slopes downhill from south the north and is bounded by Good Hope Road, SE, 18th Street, SE, U Place, SE, and a public alley. The building's main entrance will be off of Good Hope Road, with a secondary entrance will be accessed from the north (U Street, SE) end of the building.



LOCATION PLAN

Good Hope Road is a key artery that will tie the neighborhood to other developments planned along the Anacostia River, and the library is envisioned as a catalyst for growth and change in the community.

Proposal

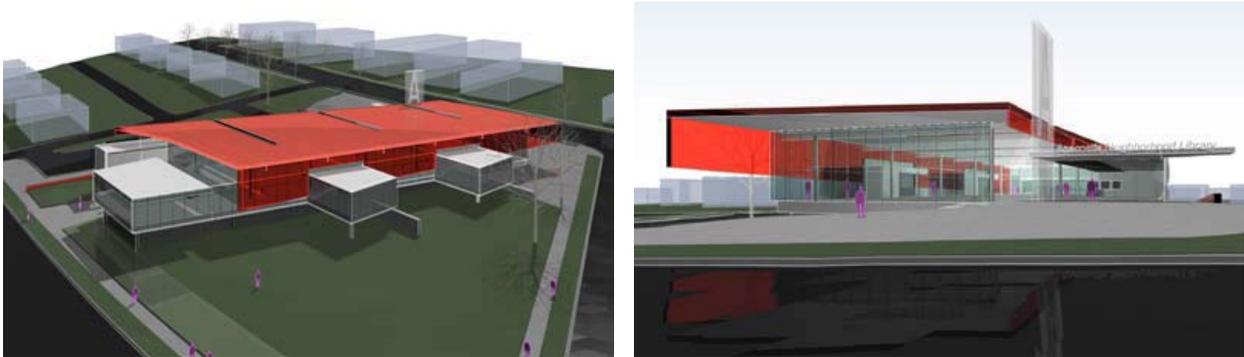
The District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) has requested comments on the concept design for a new Anacostia Neighborhood Library that will serve to connect the commercial district along Good Hope Road and the residential neighborhoods that surround the site, and also as a catalyst for growth in the community. The proposed project will include a two-story building of approximately 23,000 gross square feet, with the lower level partially below grade. The overall site concept includes a building in a park-like setting, using landscaping, trees and other site improvements (i.e., new paving, perimeter walls, and site lighting) to create a welcoming environment. Surface parking for approximately twenty vehicles will also be included, and will be screened from the adjacent residential areas with landscaping; a bicycle parking area is also expected.



SITE PLAN

The inspiration for the design of the Anacostia Neighborhood Library comes from the scale of the adjacent residential context. The scale and massing of these immediate residential blocks are reflected in the library design as pavilions or solid volumes. These volumes are portions of the library program which require enclosure such as the Young Adult's area, portions of the children's area and other program spaces such as staff areas and restrooms. The remainder of the level one plan is high ceiling, open space housing library collections and public seating areas. This open space, as well as the solid volumes of the plan, is covered by a large veil-like roof which provides shelter and a sense of community. This 20' high roof projects over the Good Hope Road plaza framing the large open interior space of the Library. The children's area is the most visible element of the program beneath this overhang from Good Hope Road, thus reflecting learning and children as the symbolic heart of the community.

The building materials are planned as a combination of glass curtain wall, perforated metal panels, and brick; however, the final material selection will be made consistent with the final project budget. A large roof overhang on the south elevation will serve as both an architectural element as well as a solar shade for the curtain wall on the southern elevation.



PERSPECTIVES

Environmental design is expected to result in a LEED Silver rating for the facility. Included in the proposal are several early concepts for inclusion of a bio-retention system to manage stormwater runoff from the building.

The public space surrounding the site will be landscaped and new public sidewalks will be provided. Several mature trees existing on the site will be preserved and incorporated into the final landscaping plan. Related site lighting and landscaping plans have not been fully developed at the concept phase, but will be included as part of the preliminary and final submissions for this project. As the site plan is developed, maintaining an open and transparent environment is seen as a key means of addressing safety and security needs.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Staff finds that the proposed design for the new Anacostia Neighborhood Library is well developed, and its design will contribute to the new image for the District of Columbia Public Library while relating architecturally to the surrounding neighborhood. Its scale and massing are compatible with adjacent development, and its contemporary design will give identify to the new building and allow it to stand out as an anchor for this changing neighborhood. Additionally, the integration of multi-purpose community space and the planned stormwater management system is to be commended.

Staff recommends that the site and landscape plans be further refined to create durable and functional spaces for library patrons and local residents. Screening of parking and service areas from surrounding areas should be accomplished with both hardscape and landscape elements.

Review of the project roof into the public space may require review by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT); the applicant is encouraged to coordinate with DDOT prior to the preliminary design submission.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The overall design concept for the library is consistent with the Federal and District elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*.

National Environmental Policy Act

As a District of Columbia project outside the Central Area, NCPC does not have independent NEPA responsibility. The applicant has submitted an Environmental Impact Screening Form to the District Department of the Environment (DDOE); DDOE has determined that there will be no adverse impacts as a result of the proposed project.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

Because this is a District of Columbia project outside of the Central Area, NCPC is advisory and does not have independent responsibility under the National Historic Preservation Act. Due to the site's proximity to a National Register Historic District, the applicant has initiated consultation with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office and is awaiting a determination from that office.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its March 12, 2008 meeting and forwarded it to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies represented. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the General Services Administration and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA)

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts reviewed and approved the concept for the project at its February 21, 2008 meeting. The Commission stressed the importance of detailing the building construction to ensure durability and to honor the design's high level of sophistication.