



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION
REPORT: Special Permit for the Library/Museum Use at 10 Love Lane, for
consideration on Tuesday June 28, 2022

STAFF REPORT

To: Planning and Zoning Commission

FROM: Evelyne St-Louis, Senior Planner (evelyne.st-louis@hartford.gov)

PROJECT: 10 Love Lane
PARCEL ID: 217-105-143
ENERGov ID: COMM-2022-0629

ZONE: CX-2, Commercial Industrial Mix District
Property is listed on the National Historic Register

TYPE: Special Permit for a Library/Museum Use pursuant to Section 3.3.2.C and
Section 1.3.4 of the Zoning Regulations.

APPLICANT: Christopher Nardi, Silver Petrucci + Associates

OWNER: Northeast Neighborhood Partners, Inc.

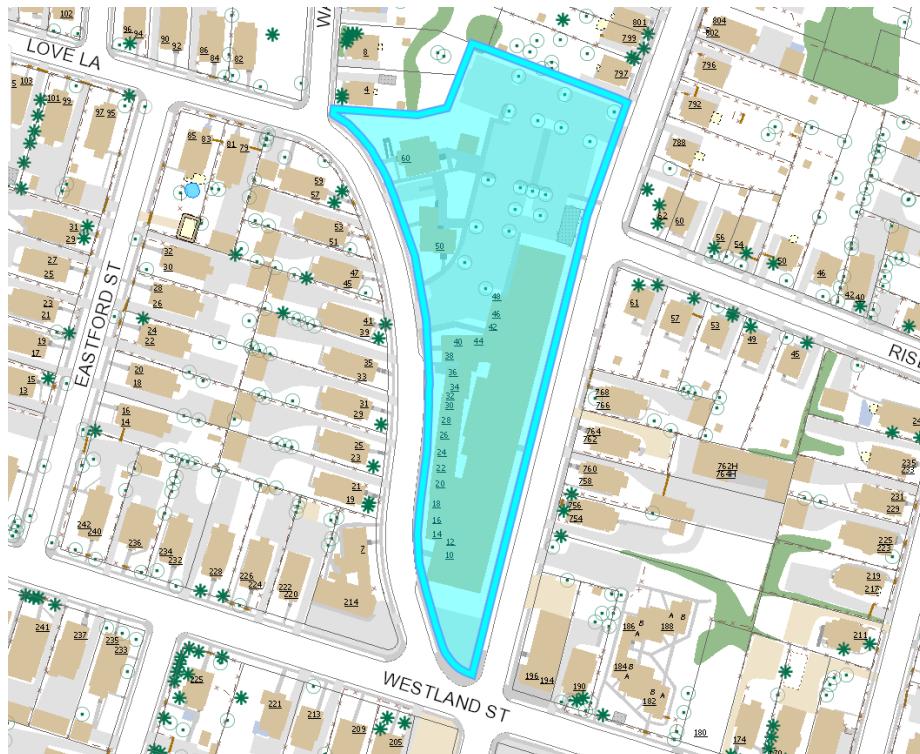


Figure 1: Location of 10 Love Lane (City of Hartford GIS, 2022)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This application is a special permit request for a Library/Museum use at 10 Love Lane. The subject property, commonly known as the Swift Factory, is zoned CX-2, Commercial-Industrial Mix district, and is listed on the National Historic Register.

The purpose of this application is to allow the relocation and expansion of the Hartford Public Library (HPL) Barbour Branch, currently at 261 Barbour Street, to the Swift Factory. The proposed new library is a collaboration between HPL and Community Solutions, who manages the Swift Factory.

Note that the applicant is proposing to do minor exterior work to the building. This request was approved for Historic Review in June 2022 (refer to P&Z-ADMIN-2022-3200). The type of work proposed does not require site plan review. No other sitework is proposed at this time.

KEY APPLICATION TIMELINES

- Application Submission Date: Monday May 16, 2022.
- Date Application Accepted as Complete: Monday May 16, 2022.
- Application Date of Receipt: Tuesday May 24, 2022 (sooner of either: date of next regularly scheduled meeting, or 35 days after acceptance of complete application.)
- Public Hearing scheduled to open: Tuesday June 28, 2022; Open Hearing Deadline: Thursday July 28, 2022.
- Close Hearing Deadline (if opens Tuesday June 28, 2022) (35 days after opening): Tuesday August 2, 2022.
- CT General Statutes Sec.8-7D allow the applicant to consent to one or more extensions of time, provided the total extension of all time periods shall not be longer than 65 days.

LEGAL STANDARD

Standard for Application Type:

The Commission reviews special permits in accordance with Zoning Regulations Section 1.3.4. Special permits may be approved, approved with conditions, or denied. Considerations the Commission may weigh in special permit review include: harmony with the plan of conservation & development; compliance with the purposes of the district; effect on existing development; creation of safety hazards in vehicular and pedestrian circulation; effects on traffic; compatibility with adjacent properties; suitability of arrangement of buildings, open space, and provision of light and air; impact on essential services; impact on stormwater runoff; impact on city services and infrastructure; tree and landscape provision; and pedestrian amenities. The Commission may deviate from the minimum requirements for building siting, height, street facades, accessory structures dimensions, tree installation, landscape installation, buffers, fencing, lighting, parking, signage, and street design by up to 15% upon certain findings.

STANDARDS SPECIFIC TO THE USE

Hartford Zoning Regulations

Figure 3.2-A. Table of Principal Uses. The Library/Museum Use is permitted subject to the approval of a special permit in the CX-2 district.

Section 3.3.2 Civic & Institutional Uses. A category of uses related to fulfilling the needs of day-to-day community life including assembly, public services, educational facilities, and hospitals.

Section 3.3.2.C. Library/Museum. A structure open to the general public housing educational, cultural, artistic, or historic information, resources, and exhibits. Includes such uses as libraries, museums, aquariums, planetariums, and exhibitions. May also include theater space, gift shops, classrooms, food service uses that may or may not serve alcohol per section 3.3.4 C.(6), and other accessory uses customary to libraries or museums.

Section 4.8 General Building Type

Section 4.8.2.C. General Building Type - Permitted Uses in the CX-2 district.

- Ground story: Any use permitted by district, except retail, service, and adult use cannabis uses are limited to no more than 25% of the ground floor area and shall be located along the street façade.
- Upper stories: Any use permitted by district except retail and service uses, except Eating Places, Drinking Places, and Adult Use Cannabis uses as permitted in the district are allowed on the second story per Note 4.

City of Hartford Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)

Grow400 - Make Hartford's economy more prosperous

- **Promote Hartford as the “Scale-Up City”.** Marketing Hartford as a place for people to take an idea and develop it into a business will attract new entrepreneurs to the city.
- **Prepare youth for college and careers.** Arming our high-school-aged population with skills and knowledge needed for them to succeed in higher education and in the workplace will improve health and economic outcomes.
- **Scale up a multi-employer apprenticeship program.** Funding apprenticeship programs in growing industries will connect our residents, including our Second Chance workforce, and put them on a path to long-term economic security.
- **Scale up internship programs in growing sectors.** Bridging the gap between growing firms and local talent through paid internship programs like the Technology Talent Bridge will create a talent pipeline for local youth.
- **Support college and career readiness on a continuum.** Ensuring that schools offer personalized pathways that support blended learning, leading to career certifications and credentials aligned with industry demand, will diversify pathways for our youth.
- **Connect residents to tech sector opportunities.** Training in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and blockchain will employ residents and accelerate anchor industries: manufacturing, health care, and finance/insurance.
- **Shift adult education to contextualized training.** Complementing changes in higher ed with a shift to supported, contextualized adult education will enable our residents to compete for jobs in industry growth sectors.

Live 400 - Make Hartford's community more equitable

- **A decade of progress since the last city plan: Swift Factory Revitalization.** Broke ground on a \$34 million, 65,000 sf transformation of a Promise Zone site into a vital community hub.

- **Improve early literacy proficiency.** Increasing rates of early literacy, particularly for the 20% of students who are English learners, will set students up for success during their schooling years and beyond.
- **Establish financial literacy education.** Educating high schoolers and adults about matters such as establishing credit, managing a bank account, and taking out a loan, will ensure better choices and enable financial security.

Play400 - Make Hartford's culture more vibrant

- **Fund and enhance the libraries.** Investing in the facilities and programs of the libraries will facilitate learning and expression of culture for people of all ages and abilities, including immigrants and youth.

FINDING OF FACTS

Subject property:

- The subject property is a 2.6-acre parcel zoned CX-2, Commercial-Industrial Mix district, and listed on the National Historic Register.
- This is the site of the former Swift & Sons gold leaf factory, which opened in 1887 and was a major manufacturing center until the second half of the 20th century.
- The site was revitalized and rehabilitated into an innovative, adaptive re-use project known as the Swift Factory. The Swift Factory is a 82,000 sf community hub with a mission to create jobs, foster economic development, engage local youth, and enhance neighborhood safety. It rents out offices, co-working space, loft kitchens, and commercial lofts, and offers services such as a Community Business Center, a Business and Food Business Incubator, on-site financial lenders, and internship programs. The project was developed by Community Solutions, based on substantial input from residents of the North End.
- The parcel is occupied by several buildings as well as a rear yard parking lot. The building of interest for this application is the 2-story brick building at the southern end of the property, referred to as “Building 4” on the site plan submitted by the applicant and on the approved site plan for the Swift Factory project (see amended site plan dated July 18, 2017 from P&Z-ASPREV-2016-0035). This building is classified as a General Building type per Section 4.8.
- Approved uses on the Swift Factory parcel include various office and craftsman industrial uses (see amended site plan dated July 18, 2017 from P&Z-ASPREV-2016-0035), an elementary school (P&Z-COMM-2020-0144), and a child day care center (P&Z-ADMIN-2021-2450).
- The surrounding neighborhood includes a mix of uses. There is a small commercial node at the corner of Westland St, Garden St, and Love Lane, and two public elementary schools located within a few blocks from the site. Otherwise, the surrounding parcels are primarily residential. Of note, Keney Park is also located in close proximity to the site.
- Note that the Hartford Public Library Barbour Branch is currently located at 261 Barbour Street, in Unity Plaza (see Figure 2).

Proposed application:

- This application is for the proposed relocation and expansion of the Hartford Public Library Barbour Branch. The new branch will about 15,000 sf and will be located in “Building 4” on the Swift Factory parcel, with the following layout:

- ~1,560 sf in the basement.
- ~7,450 sf on the ground floor. This space will house the neighborhood library portion of the branch (books/shelves, reading areas, etc.) and will offer more traditional library programs focused on youth and family, teens, and literacy.
- ~7,700 sf on the second floor. This space will house a learning and skills training center known as Next Gen @ Swift. This center will include an intake office and four classrooms: two 25-seat regular classrooms, a computer lab, and a “simulation lab” classroom focused on technology and light manufacturing learning (including learning through Virtual Reality). The applicant estimates that these classrooms can hold up to 100 people, though at the time of launch, the applicant anticipates an average of about 20 users. The second-floor space will also have a new community room, which can hold up to 125 guests.
- With the addition of the Next Gen @ Swift learning center, the library will be able to offer a range of educational programs, including foundational courses (e.g., computer training, financial literacy classes, citizenship courses, pre-GED/GED/ ESOL classes), as well as more targeted job skills training and workforce development (e.g., training in technology, health care, light manufacturing, and small business development.)
- Programs and classes will be taught by a range of partners, including HPL, Community Solutions, Chase Bank, Hartford Chamber of Commerce, Goodwin University, and others.
- There will also be opportunities for collaboration between the new library and resources already available at the Swift Factory, such as the Community Business Center and the Business and Food Business Incubator. Tenants currently at the Swift Factory will also have the opportunity to offer on-the-job training or internships.
- The library will be accessed through the ground-floor entrance on Love Lane.
- The applicant is proposing minor exterior building renovations, including the in-kind replacement of a door on the west elevation and three windows on the east elevation. This type of work does not trigger site plan review. The applicant has also confirmed that they will apply for sign permits at a later stage.



Figure 2. Current location of the Hartford Public Library Barbour Branch at 261 Barbour Street, at Unity Plaza (Google Streetview, January 2022).



Figure 3. Overview of the Swift Factory (photo obtained from the Swift Factory website)

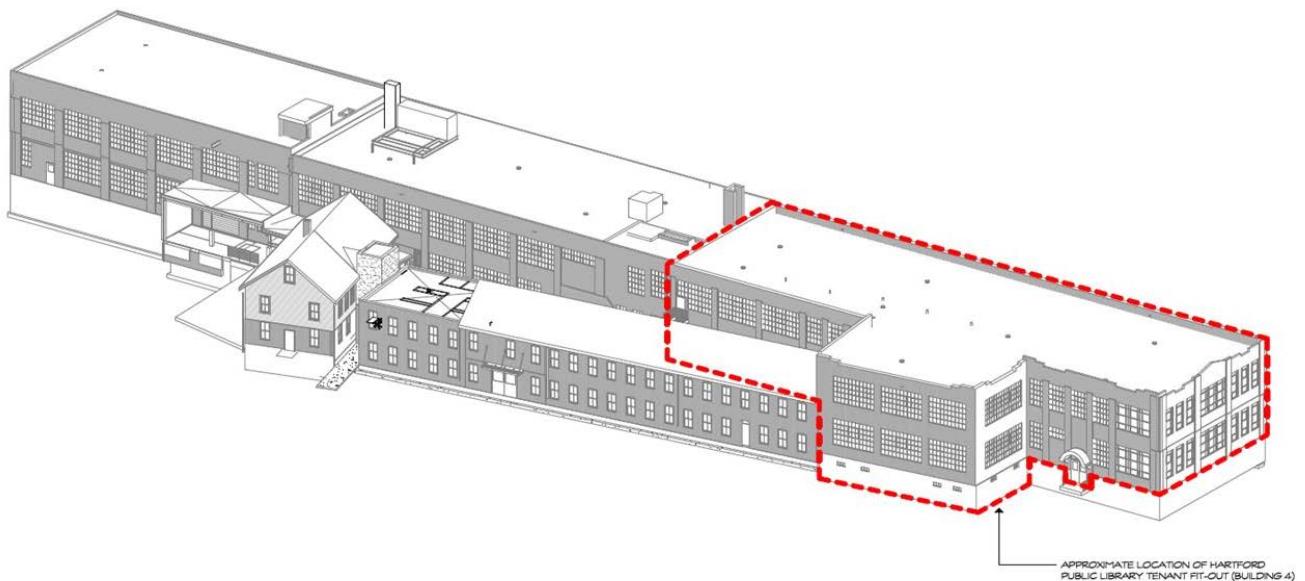


Figure 4. Proposed location of the relocated and expanded library branch within the Swift Factory (prepared by Silver Petrucelli + Associates dated 5/9/2022).

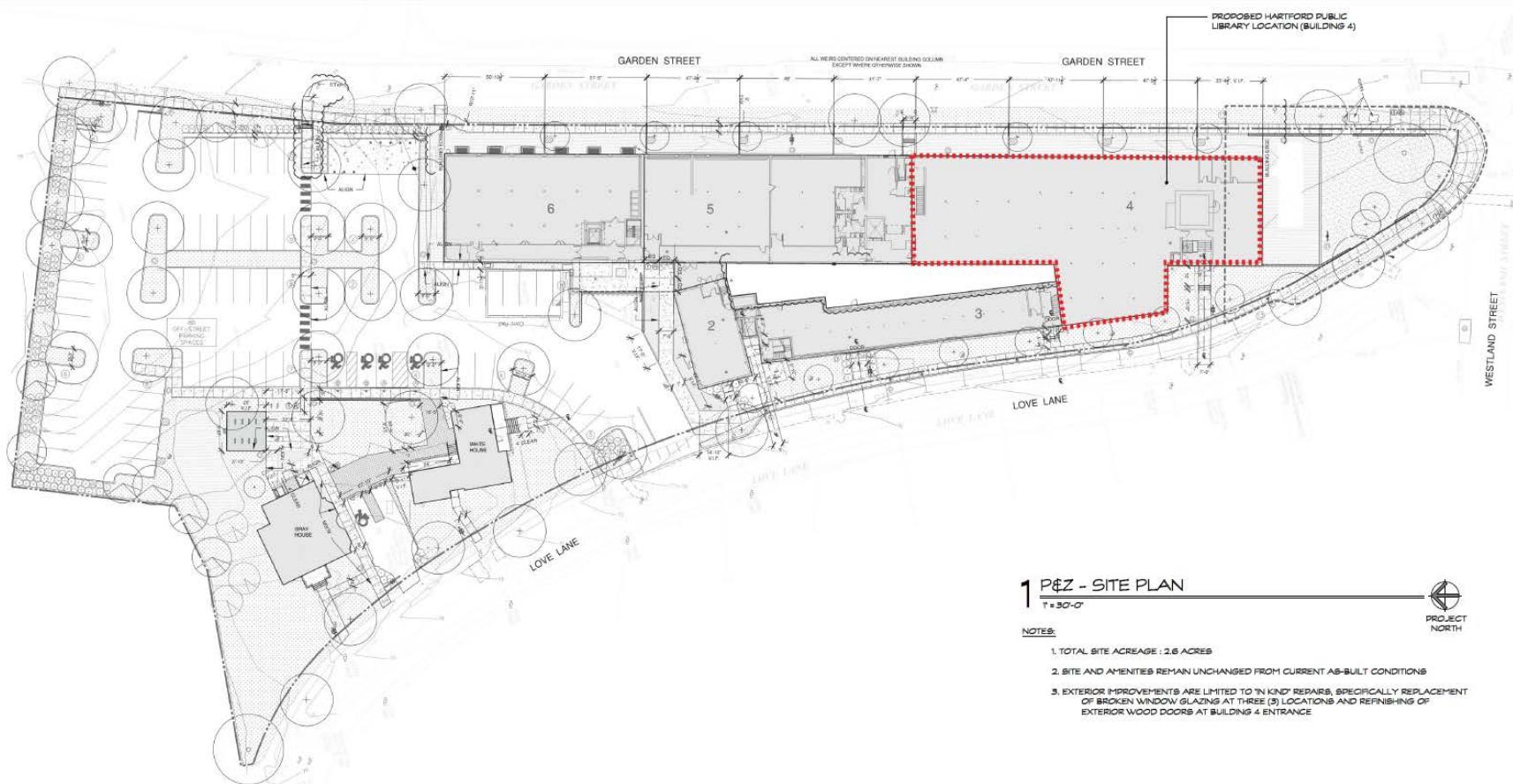
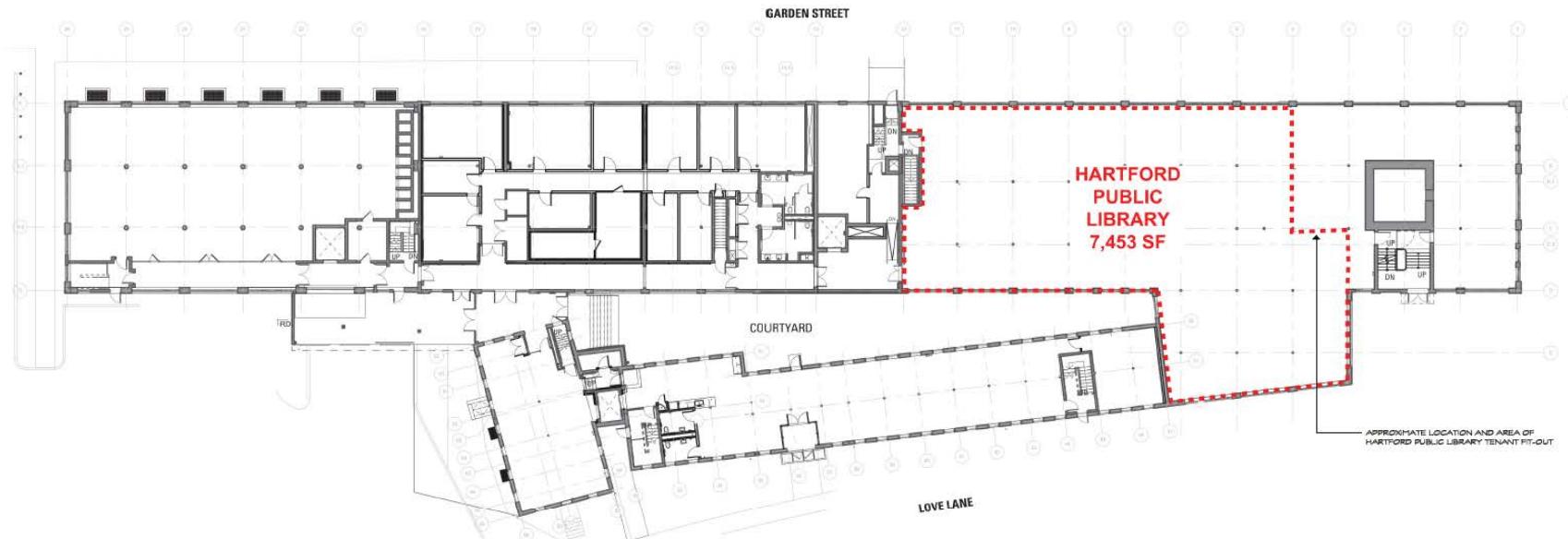


Figure 5. Site plan showing the proposed Hartford Public Library branch in what is referred to as “Building 4” (prepared by Silver Petrucci + Associates dated 5/9/2022).



1 GROUND LEVEL FLOOR PLAN
1'0" = 1'-0"



Figure 6. Ground-level floor plan showing location of the proposed library (prepared by Silver Petruccelli + Associates dated 5/9/2022).

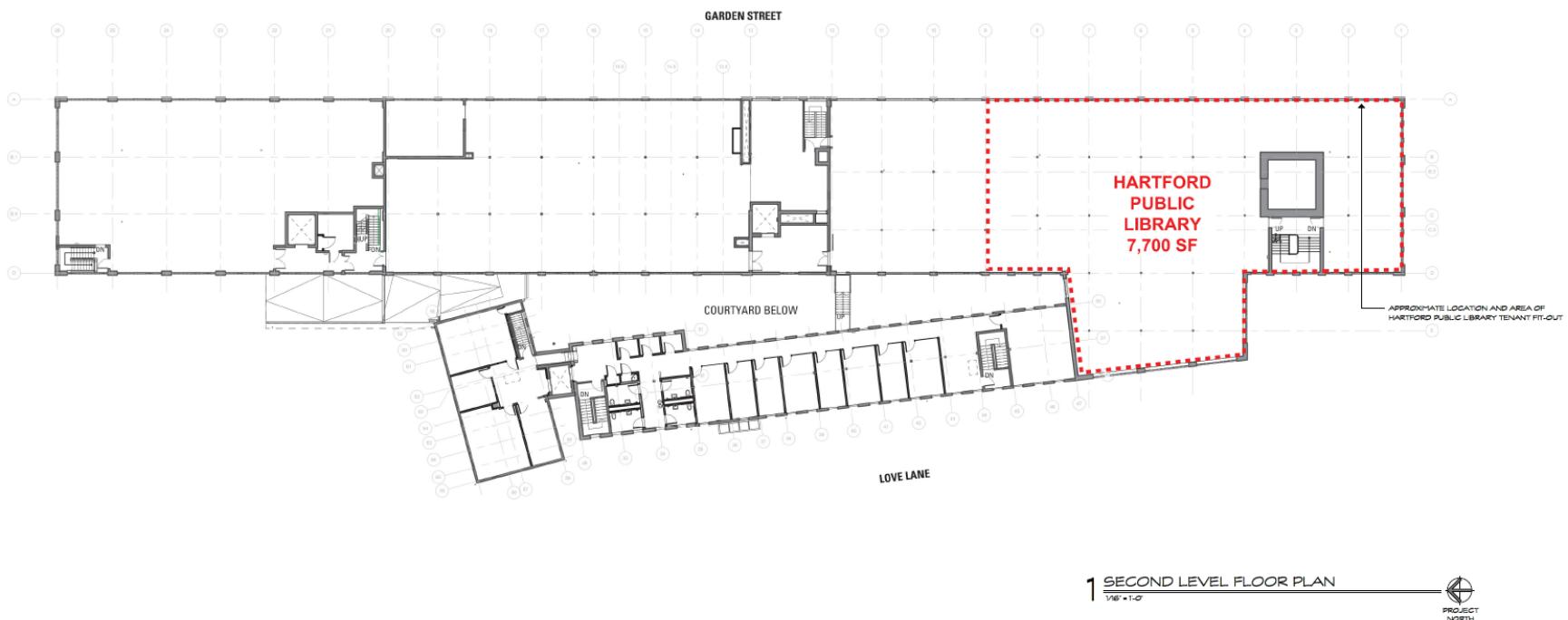


Figure 7. Second level floor plan showing location of the proposed library (prepared by Silver Petruccelli + Associates dated 5/9/2022).

COMMENTS RECEIVED (NRZs, AGENCIES, DEPARTMENTS)

Community Solutions has been in communication with the Northeast NRZ for several years regarding ongoing plans for the Swift Factory, including the possible relocation of the Barbour Branch. In addition, HPL attended the Northeast NRZ's April 2022 meeting to share information about the new branch and seek input on the proposal. The Northeast NRZ later submitted a letter expressing their strong support of the proposed library (see Attachment 1). As of the time of writing, no other public comments were received regarding this application.

ANALYSIS

Special permit applications should be reviewed for consistency with the Zoning Regulations and with the various criteria listed in Section 1.3.4, as described below.

Consistency with the Zoning Regulations

The applicant's request for a special permit fully complies with the Zoning Regulations, as follows:

- The Library/Museum use is permitted in the CX-2 district upon approval of a special permit. The Regulations do not list any specific conditions of approval for this use.
- The proposed activities of the new library, including the Next Gen @ Swift center, are in line with the description of the Library/Museum use as being “open to the general public [and] housing educational, cultural, artistic, or historic information, resources, and exhibits.” The Regulations also state that the Library/Museum use may include “theater space, gift shops, *classrooms*, food service uses that may or may not serve alcohol and other accessory uses customary to libraries or museums” [emphasis added]. The proposed HPL branch will include classrooms and a community room, which fall within the allowable accessory uses.
- No food or alcohol sales is proposed at the library.
- The new library is proposed to be located on the first, second, and basement floors of a General Building type. Per Section 4.8.2.C, civic and institutional uses are permitted on both the ground and upper stories of the General Building type.

Consistency with the POCD

Staff find that the proposed project is very consistent with the POCD. To begin, the Play400 chapter explicitly names the goal of funding and enhancing libraries as a way to support “learning and cultural expression for people of all ages and abilities, including immigrants and youth”.

More broadly, the POCD has a strong focus on education and workforce development across all ages. For example, the Grow400 and the Live400 chapters highlight the need to promote literacy and skills among children of all ages, from early childhood to high school, to better prepare them for college and careers. The Grow400 chapter discusses workforce development and the need to create and leverage opportunities for internships, apprenticeship programs, and other hands-on learning opportunities for adults, particularly in anchor industries such as the technology, health care, and finance/insurance sectors.

The breadth of programs offered at the new library and the opportunity for synergies with the Swift Factory's resources are consistent with the POCD's vision for a “complete pipeline from learning and skills training to meaningful employment.”

Additional Considerations

Section 1.3.4 of the Zoning Regulations lists additional criteria to examine when evaluating a special permit. This section examines a selection of the most relevant criteria.

First, staff find that the proposed project is compatible with the purposes of the district. The CX districts are described as “situated along commercial corridors that are transitioning from a historically industrial past” and they have “flexible regulations [to] encourage the re-use of traditional warehouse and factory buildings.” The creative re-use of this former factory for diverse uses, including civic uses such as a library, seems consistent with the intent of the CX-2 district.

The proposed project also appears compatible with adjacent properties. The library, located at the southern end of the Swift Factory’s campus, will complement the small commercial node at the corner of Garden and Westland Street. Staff does not anticipate that the library will negatively impact surrounding residential uses in terms of noise, traffic, or crowding. In fact, the proximity to a library is generally seen as positive, especially for families with children. Also of note, there are three elementary schools located within walking distance of the proposed library; these schools may be able to utilize the new library as part of their programs or activities.

Staff does not see major issues for vehicular or pedestrian safety. For visitors arriving by car, the parking lot in the rear yard provides a pedestrian walkway connecting to the sidewalk on Love Lane, thereby providing a safe way for visitors to access the library entrance. There are also some basic pedestrian amenities near the site, such as the stop-sign and crosswalks at the corner of Westland and Garden Streets. The library entrance is located on Love Lane, which is a relatively narrow street. However, staff recognizes that additional traffic signage or lighting could further enhance pedestrian safety, especially for children and youth visiting the library.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the special permit for a Library/Museum use at 10 Love Lane.

A draft resolution follows.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1. Northeast NRZ letter of Support, dated April 26, 2022.

REVIEWED,

Aimee Chambers, Director



**CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION
10 LOVE LANE
SPECIAL PERMIT FOR LIBRARY/MUSEUM USE**

- Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application for a special permit for the Library/Museum use at 10 Love Lane (parcel ID 217-105-143), per Section 1.3.4 and Section 3.3.2.C of Hartford's Zoning Regulations; and
- Whereas,** The subject property is zoned CX-2, Commercial-Industrial Mix district; and
- Whereas,** The subject property is listed on the National Historic Register as M. Swift & Sons Company; and
- Whereas,** The subject property is commonly known as the Swift Factory, a recently revitalized community hub with a mission to create jobs, foster economic development, engage local youth, and enhance neighborhood safety, for which a site plan review was approved in 2016 and later amended in 2017 (see amended site plan dated July 18, 2017; refer to P&Z-ASPREV-2016-0035); and
- Whereas,** The purpose of the special permit application is to allow the relocation and expansion of the Hartford Public Library Barbour Branch, currently located at 261 Barbour Street, to a new location at 10 Love Lane; and
- Whereas,** The proposed new library branch is to be operated by Hartford Public Library, in collaboration with Community Solutions, the manager of the Swift Factory; and
- Whereas,** The proposed new library branch would be located in the southernmost 2-story brick building on the 10 Love Lane parcel; it is referred to as "Building 4" in previously approved site plans for the Swift Factory and in the site plan submitted as part of this application; and
- Whereas,** The proposed new library branch would be occupy approximately 15,000 sf, distributed across the basement (1,560 sf), the ground floor (7,450 sf) and the second floor (7,700 sf), with the primary entrance located on Love Lane; and
- Whereas,** The new library branch is proposed to have a neighborhood library space on the ground

floor, which will offer programs focused on literacy and youth/teens programs, and a learning and skills training center (Next Gen @ Swift) on the second floor, which will offer various classes and programs and will include four classrooms (two 25-seat regular classrooms, one computer lab, and one simulation lab focused on technology and light manufacturing learning) and a 125-person capacity community room; and

Whereas, The Library/Museum use per Section 3.3.2.C is a permitted use in the CX-2 subject to the approval of a special permit by the Planning & Zoning Commission; and

Whereas, The building in which the library is proposed to be located is considered a General Building Type per Section 4.8 of the Zoning Regulations; and

Whereas, Civic and institutional uses, which include the Library/Museum use category, are permitted uses for the first and upper stories of the General Building Type per Section 4.8.2.C; and

Whereas, The proposed activities and programs to be offered at the new library branch, as well as the inclusion of classrooms for learning and skills-training in the Next Gen @ Swift component of the new branch, are consistent with the Library/Museum use as described in the Regulations Section 3.3.2.C; and

Whereas, The applicant has proposed to do minor exterior work to the subject building, including in-kind replacement of doors and windows, for which the applicant received historic approval (refer to P&Z-ADMIN-2022-3200); and

Whereas, No other sitework is proposed at this time, and the applicant has confirmed that sign permits will be applied for at a later stage; and

Whereas, The request for a special permit will help achieve several goals listed in the POCD, namely to fund and enhance the City's libraries (Play 400), to improve early literacy proficiency (Live400), to establish financial literacy education (Live400), to support college and career readiness on a continuum (Grow400), to scale up internship programs in growing sectors (Grow400), to prepare youth for college and careers (Grow400), and to shift adult education to contextualized training (Grow400), among other goals from the Workforce Development and Entrepreneurship sections of the Grow400 chapter; and

Now therefore Be It

Resolved, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby **denies/approves** the request for a special permit for the Library/Museum use at 10 Love Lane (parcel ID 217-105-143), which use is to be located on the basement, ground floor, and second floor of the southernmost building on the parcel referred to as "Building 4" on the site plan submitted as part of this application, per Section 1.3.4 and Section 3.3.2.C of Hartford's

Zoning Regulations.

Be It Further,

Resolved, This 28th day of June, 2022.

Attachment 1. Northeast NRZ letter of Support, dated April 26, 2022.

Northeast Revitalization Association
(N.E.R.A.) NRZ

Bridget E. Quinn
President and CEO
Hartford Public Library
500 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Ms. Quinn,

April 26, 2022

As Chairperson of the Northeast Revitalization Association (NERA), Northeast Hartford's Neighborhood Revitalization Zone organization, I am delighted to write this letter in support of the Hartford Public Library's project to relocate, expand and enhance the Barbour Street Branch Library within the Swift Factory facility.

An expanded library branch will help to enable our residents in the Northeast District to access the depth of services provided at the Downtown Library. Services are inclusive to programs such as: Workforce Readiness, Career and Certification Trainings, Computer instruction and, Small Business/Entrepreneurial Support alongside Traditional Library Services. Traditional Programs such as: Youth and Family Services, Teen Programs and Literacy. The Library will be partnering with Community Solutions, an organization we have supported since the beginning of the Swift Renovations. Swift has kept our Community regularly informed about the progress of the Library. We truly appreciate HPL providing a Presentation and update at our April meeting allowing our Community to have more opportunities to engage in the design process.

The HPL project supports the vision for Swift and will spark investment, entrepreneurial activity and job creation and leverage the investment already made by City, State and Federal agencies.

NERA acknowledges that Community Solutions has reported regularly at our monthly meetings for nearly 6 years, including the status of the Barbour Street Library branch relocation. We are extremely confident this development will be beneficial and valuable to the residents of our Community. We are excited to see this project come into fruition and look forward to future reports on the developments moving forward. We encourage you to continue your updates through NERA standing agenda items at our NRZ meetings or as a special report as warranted.

Respectfully,

Darlene R. Childs

Darlene Robertson-Childs, M.S., V.P.P.
President, NERA