



The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Prince George's County Planning Department
Development Review Division
301-952-3530

Detailed Site Plan

Departure from Design Standards

Alternative Compliance

The Children's Guild (St. John Baptist de la Salle)

DSP-95063-09

DDS-675

AC-09008-01

REQUEST	STAFF RECOMMENDATION
DSP: Addition of a 5,524-square-foot modular classroom building to the existing school and increase the total student enrollment to 190 students.	APPROVAL with conditions
DDS: A reduction in the requirements of the 2010 <i>Prince George's County Landscape Manual</i> .	APPROVAL
AC-09008-01: Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses	DISAPPROVAL

Location: On the west side of Sargent Road, approximately 625 feet north of its intersection with Chillum Road.

Gross Acreage: 9.26

Zone: R-55

Dwelling Units: N/A

Gross Floor Area: 81,718 sq. ft.

Planning Area: 65

Council District: 02

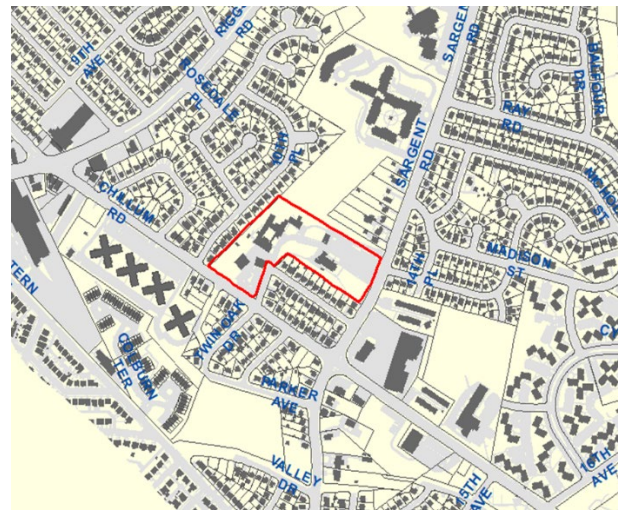
Election District: 17

Municipality: N/A

200-Scale Base Map: 207NE02

Applicant/Address:
The Children's Guild, Inc.
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Baltimore, MD 21234

Staff Reviewer: Andrew Bishop
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Planning Board Date: 01/28/2021

Planning Board Action Limit: 01/29/2021

Staff Report Date: 01/12/2021

Date Accepted: 11/05/2020

Informational Mailing: 04/13/2020

Acceptance Mailing: 11/04/2020

Sign Posting Deadline: 12/29/2020

The Planning Board encourages all interested persons to request to become a person of record for this application. Requests to become a person of record may be made online at

http://www.mnccppcapps.org/planning/Person_of_Record/.

Please call 301-952-3530 for additional information.

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THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan DSP-19058
 Departure from Design Standards DDS-675
 Alternative Compliance AC-09008-01
 The Children's Guild (St. John Baptist de la Salle)

The Urban Design Staff has reviewed the subject application and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of APPROVAL with conditions as described in the Recommendation section of this staff report.

EVALUATION

This detailed site plan and departure from design standards was reviewed and evaluated for compliance with the following criteria:

- a. The requirements of the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance for the R-55 (One-Family Detached Residential) Zone;
- b. The requirements of Detailed Site Plan DSP-95063 and its amendments;
- c. The requirements of the 2010 *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*;
- d. The requirements of the Prince George's County Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance;
- e. The requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance; and
- f. Referral comments.

FINDINGS

Based upon the analysis of the subject application, the Urban Design staff recommends the following findings:

1. **Requests:** The subject application is for approval of a detailed site plan (DSP) for the addition of a 5,524-square-foot modular classroom building to an existing school, an increase of the total student enrollment to 190 students, and the replacement of the existing playground equipment.

The companion Departure from Design Standards, DDS-675, requests a reduction in the requirements of the 2010 *Prince George's County Landscape Manual* (Landscape Manual).

2. Development Data Summary:

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone	R-55	R-55
Use	Church, Rectory, Convent, and Private School	Church, Rectory, Convent, and Private School
Total Acreage	9.263	9.263
Parcels	2	2
Gross Floor Area (sq. ft.)	76,194	81,718 (5,524 proposed)
Church	581 Seats	581 Seats
Rectory/Convent	7 Residents	7 Residents
Private School	154 students	190 students

Parking and Loading		
Use	Required	Provided
Church: 581 Seats @ 1 space/4 seats	146	181
Convent/Rectory: 7 Residents @ 1 space/2 residents	4	7
School		
Grades K-9: 140 Students @ 1 space/6 students	24	44
Grades 10-12: 50 Students @ 1 space/3 students	17	30
Total Required	191	262
Handicapped-accessible	6 (2 van)	10 (3 van)
Standard Spaces	-	241
Compact Spaces	-	11
Loading Spaces		
81,718 sq. ft. Institutional Use*		
1 space for 10,000-100,000 sq. ft.	1	1

Note: *The square footage is incorrect in General Note 18 and should be corrected to reflect the total amount of institutional use, as conditioned herein.

- 3. Location:** The subject property is located on the west side of Sargent Road, in Planning Area 65, and Council District 2. More specifically, it is located at 5706 Sargent Rd, 625 feet north of its intersection with Chillum Road. The L-shaped property includes the remainder of Liber 1556 Folio 339, and Parcel B, which are located on Tax Map 41 in Grid B-3 and are recorded in Plat Book NLP 143-97.
- 4. Surrounding Uses:** The subject property is in the One-Family Detached Residential (R-55) Zone and is bounded to the southeast and west by single-family detached dwellings in the R-55 Zone; to the southwest by the public right-of-way of Chillum Road; and to the east by Sargent Road. The property abuts Parcel A in the R-55 Zone to the north, which was

included in Special Exceptions SE-3846 and SE-4603, and has been developed with a multifamily building.

5. **Previous Approvals:** The church and school buildings were constructed in the 1950s. The first development application for the site was Preliminary Plan of Subdivision (PPS) 4-88156, which was approved by the Prince George's County Planning Board on September 8, 1988 for the creation of two parcels (Parcels A and B) on 26.18 acres, subject to 8 conditions, none of which are applicable to this application. The PPS was approved, indicating that the existing school, church, and rectory on the subject site would continue to operate on Parcel B, while a new elderly housing facility was proposed on Parcel A to the north.

DSP-95063 was approved by the Planning Board in 1995 to validate the existing uses of the church, rectory, convent, and school on the site, as embodied in PGCPB Resolution No. 95-399. DSP-95063-01 was filed to change the parking schedule to include high school students, but was never approved. The Planning Director approved the three following amendments: DSP-95063-02 was approved in 2003 to construct a temporary classroom building that remains on the site today; DSP-95063-03 was approved in 2004 to add a greenhouse and an entrance canopy to the school building; and DSP-95063-04 was approved in 2007 to add an elevator, restrooms, and waiting area. DSP-95063-05 and the associated Alternative Compliance application, AC-09008, was approved by the Planning Board on November 19, 2009 to add a modular classroom, a multipurpose building, and reduce the width and setback of the landscape buffer on the church campus, as embodied in PGCPB Resolution No. 09-162.

The DSP was further amended as approved by the Planning Director two additional times; DSP-95063-06 was approved in 2012 to reduce the size of the multipurpose building; DSP-95063-07 was withdrawn; and DSP-95063-08 was approved in 2019 to increase the enrollment of the school to 154 students. The site also has an approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan No. 20201-2020-00, which is valid through October 21, 2023. It is noted that the DSP provides duplicates of some previous certificates of approval and does not provide others. Therefore, a condition has been included herein requiring the applicant to revise the DSP to include the appropriate certificates of approvals and remove those that have been duplicated on the DSP, as appropriate.

6. **Design Features:** The campus of St. John Baptist de la Salle is currently improved with a church, convent, rectory, and school with a multipurpose building on-site. The property is accessed from Sargent Road and Twin Oak Drive, with the primary vehicular access onto the site from the latter, which intersects with Chillum Road west of the property.

The existing brick church is located in the southern portion of the site, facing Sargent Road, and is set back approximately 270 feet from the roadway by a wide lawn. East of the church is a large asphalt parking lot, which provides parking for the church and school uses.

The existing school, rectory, and multipurpose buildings are located on the northern portion of the site. The school includes a rectory for the church, two existing modular classrooms, and is the location for The Children's Guild, a school for special needs children. The existing church, school, and multipurpose buildings are not proposed to change with this application. The subject application has been filed to increase the student enrollment to 190 students, to replace the existing playground equipment, and to construct a modular

classroom between the multipurpose building and the northwestern property line of the site. The proposed playground equipment is located west of the school building, and the proposed modular building is approximately 130 feet north of Chillum Road and is separated from the roadway by an open lawn area. Details of the multipurpose building and equipment being replaced have been submitted with this application and are acceptable.

Architecture

The proposed 14-foot-high modular classroom building is 5,524 square feet and is proposed between the multipurpose building and the existing adjacent single-family detached homes to the northwest. The standard modular building proposes evergreen colored, vertical-panel sides, a rubber-coated roof, and windows on the north and south elevations. The structure will sit on footers and is accessed by a handicapped-accessible ramp on the northern side of the building and an aluminum staircase on the south side of the building for emergency egress.

Signage

One existing freestanding brick sign is located along Sargent Road near the entrance to the church parking compound, and two building-mounted signs are located on the property. One building-mounted sign is located on the school and one is located on the existing multipurpose building. The existing signs will remain, and no additional signage is proposed with this application.

Lighting

The applicant is proposing additional site and building-mounted lighting on the proposed modular building and near the walkways on-site. The details and specifications for the lighting show a downward facing light fixture with a 20-foot-high pole. Due to the location of the proposed site and building-mounted lighting, staff recommends that the light pole be reduced to 15 feet in height and that a photometric plan be submitted with the DSP. The photometric plan should show appropriate lighting levels with a balanced pattern on the property and not cause glare onto the adjoining residential properties. Therefore, conditions have been included herein requiring the applicant to reduce the height of the pole-mounted lighting, clearly label its location on the site plan, and provide a photometric plan, showing adequate lighting levels on the property.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. **Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance:** The application has been reviewed for compliance with the requirements of the R-55 Zone and the site plan design guidelines of the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance.
 - a. The subject application is in conformance with the requirements of Section 27-441(b) of the Zoning Ordinance, which governs uses in residential zones. The convent is a permitted use, and the church is permitted on a lot that is more than 2 acres, a condition that is met by this property. The private school is permitted, subject to the requirements of Section 27-443 of the Zoning Ordinance. The convent, church, and multipurpose building are not being revised with this application, and the regulations applicable to their approval have been made with prior approvals. The school is proposing to increase the enrollment to 190 students, construct a modular classroom, and replace the playground equipment on the site.

The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance that require discussion are as follows:

Section 27-443(a)(1)

(A) The school shall be located on property of at least five (5) acres, in size on which the maximum enrollment shall be four hundred (400) students, unless the school is located on property which was previously used as a public school by the Board of Education, in which case, the minimum acreage requirement shall be four and one-half (4 1/2) acres. For each acre over five (5), the total enrollment may be increased by one hundred (100) students. State and local health, education, or fire regulations may reduce the number of students permitted to be enrolled. The school may be located on a parcel of at least two and one-half (2 1/2) acres provided that:

- (i) The property had obtained an approved Special Exception use as an eleemosynary or philanthropic institution;**
- (ii) The property abuts parkland owned by the Commission containing at least two and one-half (2 1/2) acres; and**
- (iii) The maximum enrollment shall not exceed one hundred thirty (130) students.**

(For the purposes of this Section, enrollment shall mean the total number of students enrolled in the institution at any one (1) time. If there are separate morning, afternoon, and evening sessions, each of which is attended by different students, enrollment shall mean the number of students enrolled in the session having the largest number of students.)

The site is 9.26 acres in area and the enrollment of the school is proposed to be increased to 190 students, which is within the allowable number of students for this site.

(B) The property shall have frontage on, and direct vehicular access to, a street having a paved surface at least thirty-six (36) feet wide. This width shall not apply where the property is located in sparsely settled or farm areas, or where the Planning Board determines that adequate passenger debarkation areas are provided.

Conformance to this requirement was found with the prior approvals and will not change with this application.

(C) An outdoor playground or activity area shall be provided. It shall contain at least one hundred (100) square feet of usable space per student. The area shall be located at least twenty-five (25) feet from any dwelling on an adjoining lot and buffered from adjoining uses in accordance with the provisions of the Landscape Manual. The play area shall be enclosed by a substantial wall or fence at least three (3) feet

high for grades six (6) and below, and at least five (5) feet high for other grades, with the following exception:

- (i) A private school which has been in continuous operation since January 1, 1970, may satisfy these fencing requirements by providing another type of barrier that is subject to approval by the State Department of Human Resources.**

The plan notes that the total proposed play area on the site is 31,857 square feet in size, which exceeds the square feet required for 190 students. The school grounds and play areas are fenced and meet this requirement.

- b. The subject DSP demonstrates conformance with Section 27-442 of the Zoning Ordinance, which provides additional regulations for development in residential zones, including requirements for setbacks.
- c. The DSP is in general conformance with the applicable site design guidelines, as referenced in Section 27-283 and contained in Section 27-274 of the Zoning Ordinance. For example, vehicular and pedestrian circulation is designed to be safe, efficient, and convenient for both pedestrians and drivers; pedestrian access is provided to the site from the public right-of-way; and the architecture proposed for the building is constructed of durable, low-maintenance materials, and employs a variety of architectural features and designs, such as window and door treatments, projections, colors, and materials, as conditioned.
- d. **Departure from Design Standards DDS-675:** The applicant's Alternative Compliance application, AC-09008-01, was recommended for disapproval by the Planning Director. Therefore, the applicant requires a departure from the design standards in Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, of the Landscape Manual. Section 4.7 requires a Type C bufferyard, which includes a 40-foot-wide building setback, and a 30-foot-wide landscape yard, adjacent to existing single-family detached dwellings. Based on the existing site limitations, the applicant has provided a 12.5-foot setback to the proposed modular classroom building and a 9-foot-wide landscape yard, for approximately 23 percent of the property line.

Section 27-239.01(b)(7) of the Zoning Ordinance contains the following required findings in order for the Planning Board to grant the departure:

- (A) In order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:**

- (i) The purposes of this subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal;**

The site is bound on all sides by constraints established by the development of the property, and strict compliance with the requirements of the Landscape Manual cannot be effectively applied without redeveloping the site. The applicant is proposing a solution to further screen the existing uses on the property by an existing fence and additional landscaping. Staff agrees that the proposed

improvements to the property will equally serve the purposes of this subtitle.

(ii) The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request;

The previous layout approved with DSP-95063-05 and AC-09008 included an existing tennis/basketball court and play area whose location required alternative compliance, due to the reduced bufferyard width. The proposed modular classroom is in the same location as the tennis/basketball court, and the playground equipment is proposed in the same location as the prior approval. The subject application is not dissimilar to the previous application in that it will also propose a reduced bufferyard and will propose the play equipment in the same location.

The applicant states that a portion of the existing woods will be retained along the northernmost property line, the existing 6-foot-high fence will remain, and the majority of the planting material will be preserved from the prior approvals to screen the use. The retained plant material is proposed to be supplemented by additional plantings, which will increase the required planting units by approximately 30 percent over the number of plant units that would normally be required and provide additional screening of the property. Given the applicant's proposed treatment of the bufferyard, staff is in agreement that the applicant has minimized the impacts, to the extent practical.

(iii) The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are unique to the site or prevalent in areas of the County developed prior to November 1949;

The church and school buildings were constructed in the 1950s, with multiple applications for renovations and expansions approved for the subject property's use since then. The current application proposes to place the modular building on the existing tennis/basketball court, which is necessary as a base for the building. The applicant has indicated that the Prince George's County Fire Code requires a minimum separation of 22 feet between the proposed building and the existing multi-use building to the east, which is all that is provided. The unique circumstances of the existing development on the property and Fire Code requirements makes this location the most reasonable alternative for the proposed building.

(iv) The departure will not impair the visual, functional, or environmental integrity of the site or the surrounding neighborhood.

The applicant's statement of justification indicates that the existing and proposed landscaping, in addition to the existing fence, will screen the visual impact of the proposed classroom, improve the environmental quality of the site, and reduce the impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

- (B) For a departure from a standard contained in the Landscape Manual, the Planning Board shall find, in addition to the requirements in paragraph (7)(A), above, that there is no feasible proposal for alternative compliance, as defined in the Landscape Manual, which would exhibit equally effective design characteristics.**

With respect to the specific departure requested, the applicant cannot provide a feasible proposal for alternative compliance that would exhibit equally effective design characteristics. The applicant proposed, and was recommended for disapproval of, AC-09008-01.

Based on the analysis above, staff recommends that the Planning Board approve DDS-675, to allow a departure to the Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses requirements along the northwest boundary line.

- 8. Detailed Site Plan DSP-95063 and its amendments:** DSP-95063 was approved by the Planning Board on November 26, 1995 with no conditions. The Planning Board's decision was affirmed by the Prince George's County District Council and is embodied in PGCPB Resolution No. 95-399. The plan is in conformance with the previous DSPs approved for the property and none of the conditions attached to those approvals directly impact the development that is the subject of this application.
- 9. 2010 Prince George's County Landscape Manual:** The application is subject to the requirements of Section 4.2, Landscape Strips Along Streets; Section 4.3, Parking Lot Requirements; Section 4.4, Screening Requirements; Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses; and Section 4.9, Sustainable Landscaping Requirements, of the Landscape Manual. The landscape and lighting plan provided with the subject DSP contains the required schedules demonstrating conformance to these requirements, with the exception of Section 4.7. Alternative Compliance, AC-09008-01, was submitted and reviewed.

The Planning Director did not find the applicant's proposal to be equally effective as normal compliance with Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, of the Landscape Manual for the reasons discussed in the AC-09008-01 report. Therefore, the Planning Director recommends DISAPPROVAL of AC-09008-01 and the applicant filed DDS-675, as discussed in Finding 7.d. above.

- 10. Prince George's Country Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance:** Subtitle 25, Division 3, the Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance, requires a minimum percentage of the site to be covered by tree canopy for any development projects that propose more than 5,000 square feet of gross floor area or disturbance and require a grading permit. This DSP, in the R-55 Zone, requires 15 percent tree canopy coverage, or 1.39 acres. The submitted DSP provided a schedule showing the requirement is being met through existing and proposed trees.

11. **Prince George's County Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance:** The site is exempt from the provisions of the Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance (WCO) because the property contains less than 10,000 square feet of woodland and has no previous tree conservation plans. The site has been issued a standard exemption from the WCO (S-069-2020) and a Natural Resources Inventory Equivalency Letter (NRI-068-2020), which were both issued on May 19, 2020.
12. **Referral Comments:** The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized, as follows:
- a. **Community Planning**—In a memorandum dated December 14, 2020 (Mierow to Bishop), incorporated herein by reference, the Community Planning Division offered a discussion of the DSP's conformance with the 2014 *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan*, and noted that pursuant to Part 3, Division 9, Subdivision 3, of the Zoning Ordinance, master plan conformance is not required for this application.
 - b. **Historic Preservation**—In a memorandum dated November 17, 2020 (Stabler to Bishop), incorporated herein by reference, the Historic Preservation Section concluded that this proposal will not impact any historic sites, historic resources, or known archeological sites.
 - c. **Transportation Planning**—In a memorandum dated December 28, 2020 (Masog to Bishop), incorporated herein by reference, the Transportation Planning Section provided an evaluation of the application and the previous approvals and found that, from the standpoint of vehicular transportation, it was determined that the plan is acceptable. Given that the church does not appear to have expanded its footprint since PPS approval, and given that the applicant seeks expansion of the existing school to accommodate 190 students, and furthermore given that the two senior housing complexes on Parcel B total 200 units and are well below the additional trips considered by PPS 4-88156, it is determined that the additional modular space can be completed within the current entitlement.
 - d. **Trails**—In a memorandum dated December 28, 2020 (Smith to Bishop), incorporated herein by reference, the Trails planner provided an evaluation for conformance with the 1989 *Approved Master Plan for Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt and Vicinity*. Based on staff's findings, a condition to replace the existing bicycle racks with two, inverted U-style bicycle racks is included in the Recommendation section of this report.
 - e. **Subdivision and Zoning**—In a memorandum dated December 18, 2020 (Sievers to Bishop), incorporated herein by reference, the Subdivision and Zoning Section provided an evaluation of the application that is incorporated into Finding 8 and found the application acceptable.
 - f. **Environmental Planning**—In an email dated November 25, 2020 (Rea to Bishop), incorporated herein by reference, the Environmental Planning Section concluded that there were no issues with this proposal.

- g. **Permit Review**—In a memorandum dated December 28, 2020 (Jacobs to Bishop), incorporated herein by reference, the Permit Review Section offered no comments on the subject application.
 - h. **Prince George’s County Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE)**— At the time of the writing of this report, a memorandum had not been provided by DPIE.
 - i. **Prince George’s County Health Department**—In a memorandum dated November 13, 2020 (Adepoju to Bishop), incorporated herein by reference, the environmental health specialist noted that a desktop health impact assessment had been completed and offered multiple recommendations with respect to health-related issues on the property. These recommendations have been included as conditions of approval in the Recommendation section of this report, as appropriate.
 - j. **Prince George’s County Police Department**— At the time of the writing of this report, a memorandum had not been provided by the Police Department.
 - k. **Prince George’s County Fire/EMS Department**—At the time of the writing of this report, a memorandum had not been provided by the Office of the Fire Marshal.
13. Based on the foregoing and as required by Section 27-285(b)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance, the DSP, if revised as conditioned, represents a reasonable alternative for satisfying the site design guidelines of Subtitle 27, Part 3, Division 9, of the County Code, without requiring unreasonable costs and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.
14. Per Section 27-285(b)(4), which became effective on September 1, 2010, a required finding for approval of a DSP is as follows:
- (4) **The Planning Board may approve a Detailed Site Plan if it finds that the regulated environmental features have been preserved and/or restored in a natural state to the fullest extent possible in accordance with the requirements of Subtitle 24-130(b)(15).**

The site does not contain any regulated environmental features or primary management area. Therefore, this requirement is not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation and analysis, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and:

- A. DISAPPROVE Alternative Compliance AC-09008-01 and APPROVE Detailed Site Plan DSP-95063-09 for The Children’s Guild (St. John Baptist de la Salle), subject to following conditions:

1. Prior to certification of the detailed site plan (DSP), the applicant shall make the following revisions to the plans:
 - a. Provide at least two inverted U-style bicycle racks, or a similar style that allows for two points of secure contact, on-site.
 - b. Revise General Note 18 to reflect the correct proposed square footage.
 - c. Include all previous certificates of approval and remove duplicates, as appropriate.
 - d. Reduce the height of the proposed pole-mounted lighting to 15 feet and clearly indicate their location on the site plan.
 - e. Provide a photometric plan that demonstrates adequate lighting levels on the property with no spillover onto adjacent residential properties.
 - f. Provide the site plan notes, as follows:

“During the demolition and construction phases, this project will conform to construction activity dust control requirements as specified in the 2011 Maryland Standards and Specifications for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.”

“During the demolition and construction phases, this project will conform to construction activity noise control requirements as specified in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR).”
- B. APPROVE Departure from Design Standards, DDS-675, from the applicable standards of the Landscape Manual, to allow a reduction of the required building setback to a minimum of 12.5 feet in width and a reduction of the landscape yard to 9 feet in width for the Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, requirement along the northern property line.