

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Prince George's County Planning Department

Development Review Division

301-952-3530

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Comment [COMMENT1]: WHEN INSERTING INFORMATION AT THE @ SIGN REMEMBER TO USE INDENT FOR SECOND LINE - NOT TAB. ALSO, IT WILL LOOK LIKE THE TEXT IS GOING WACKO, BUT DON'T WORRY - IT IS FINE.

## DDS-532 and DPLS-282

Application	General Data
<b>Project Name:</b> Cave Auto Body  <b>Location:</b> South side of Old Alexandria Ferry Road approximately 227 feet east of Heflin Drive, known as 6905 Old Alexandria Ferry Road.  <b>Applicant:</b> Gary L. & Mary R. Cave 7805 Ferry Avenue Clinton, Maryland 20735  <b>Contract Purchaser:</b> Dennis R. Moore	Date Accepted 2/25/02
	Planning Board Action Limit N/A
	Tax Map & Grid 107 E-4
	Plan Acreage 0.47
	Zone C-M
	Dwelling Units N/A
	Square Footage N/A
	Planning Area 81A
	Council District 09
	Municipality None
	200-Scale Base Map 210SE6

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
<b>DDS-532:</b> Requesting reductions in landscape, bufferyard, building setback, driveway width and loading access requirements to accommodate an increase of 2,000 square feet in gross floor area.  <b>DPLS-282:</b> Requesting a reduction in the number of required parking spaces from 21 to 13.	Adjoining Property Owners 2-26-02 (CB-15-1998)
	Previous Parties of Record N/A (CB-13-1997)
	Sign(s) Posted on Site 5-30-02
	Variance(s): Adjoining Property Owners N/A

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Jimi Jones	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

June 18, 2002

# **TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT:**

TO: The Prince Georges County Planning Board

VIA: Arie Stouten, Zoning Supervisor

FROM: Jimi Jones, Planning Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Departure from Design Standards Application No. 532**  
**Departure from Parking and Loading Standards Application No. 282**

REQUEST: **DDS-532 - Reduction in landscape, bufferyard, building setback, driveway width and loading access requirements to accommodate an increase of 2,000 square feet in gross floor area**

**DPLS-282 - Reduction in the number of required parking spaces from 21 to 13**

RECOMMENDATION: **Approval, with Conditions**

## NOTE:

The Planning Board has scheduled this application for a public hearing on the agenda date indicated above. The Planning Board also encourages all interested persons to request to become a person of record in this application. Requests to become a person of record should be made in writing and addressed to the Development Review Division at the address indicated above. Please call 301-952-3530 for additional information.

## FINDINGS:

- A. Location and Field Inspection: The subject property is a small, rectangularly shaped parcel located on the south side of Old Alexandria Ferry Road, approximately 220 feet west of Ferry Avenue. The site is developed with a one-story, brick structure that contains a vehicle repair facility. This structure also has three service bays and is surrounded by an asphalt parking area. Two driveways provide access to the property from Old Alexandria Ferry Road.
- B. History: The property was retained in the C-M Zone during the 1993 Sectional Map Amendment for Subregion V.
- C. Master Plan Recommendation: The 1993 Master Plan for Subregion V places the subject property in Employment Area **■B.1**. The plan recommends low-intensity industrial uses for properties in this area that are compatible with the adverse effects of flight operations from Andrews Air Force Base, which is less than a quarter-mile north of the subject property.
- D. Request: The applicant proposes to construct a second building of 2,000 square feet to the rear (south) of the existing main building that comprises 4,923 square feet and fronts Alexandria Ferry Road. The DDS was filed because the proposal requires reductions in the landscape, bufferyard, building setback, driveway width and loading access requirements. The DPLS was filed to reduce the number of required parking spaces from 21 to 13.
- E. Surrounding Uses:
- North - Across Old Alexandria Ferry Road is Andrews Air Force Base in the I-1 Zone.
- East - Typewriter/VCR repair business and dance studio in the C-M Zone.
- South - Vehicle repair facility in the C-M Zone and single-family detached homes in the R-80 Zone farther south along Heflin Drive and Ferry Street.
- West - A single-family detached home in the C-M Zone and service-commercial uses further west along Old Alexandria Ferry Road in the C-M Zone.
- F. Design Requirements:
1. Parking and Loading Areas:
- a. **Sections 27-554 and 27-557 of the Zoning Ordinance require a dust-free surface for parking and loading areas, respectively.** A note should be added to the site plan indicating that the surface material of the parking and loading areas will be dust free.
- b. **Section 27-561 requires parking spaces to be marked with a durable contrasting material.** A note should be added to the site plan indicating that the parking and loading spaces will be marked with a durable contrasting material.
- c. **Section 27-560 requires driveways located along parking spaces to be at least**

**22 feet wide, and other two-way driveways to be at least 20 feet wide. In addition, Section 27-581 requires access to loading facilities to be at least 22 feet wide, extending to the street.** The driveway entrances along Alexandria Ferry Road are only 19 feet wide. The two-way driveway along the west side of the main building is only 13 feet wide, and the driveway behind parking space Nos. 14 and 15 is only 20 feet wide.

2. Landscaping, Buffering and Screening:

1. The applicant filed Alternative Compliance (AC) Application No. 01053 for the building setbacks and landscaped bufferyards along the east and west property lines. The existing building setback along the west property line is 13 feet, and the applicant proposed a six-foot-high, sight-tight fence as an alternative to the **requirement for a 30-foot building setback with a 20-foot wide landscaped bufferyard containing 155 plant units.** The existing building setback along the east property line is five feet, and the applicant proposed no alternative to the **requirement for a 20-foot building setback and a 10-foot-wide landscaped yard containing 40 plant units per 100 linear feet.** The AC application was denied by the Planning Director based upon the determination that the proposed fence along the west property line did not constitute an alternative that was equal to or better than normal compliance (refer to the attached Alternative Compliance decision).
- b. **In addition, Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the Landscape Manual require a 10-foot-wide landscaped strip containing one shade tree and 10 shrubs per 35 linear feet along the right-of-way for Alexandria Ferry Road.** Although there is room to construct the landscaped strip on the subject property, it would necessitate the elimination of at least two more required parking spaces. However, there is a grass-planted strip approximately 46 feet long and nine feet wide located within the existing right-of-way, between the two access driveways. The applicant proposes no additional landscaping in this area.

3. Signs: There are no freestanding signs proposed in this application.

G. DDS Required Findings:

- (A) Section 27-239.01(b)(9) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that in order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:

1. **The purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal.**

The purposes of the Zoning Ordinance will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal. The general purposes are to protect and promote the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the county. With regard to the landscaped strip along Old Alexandria

Ferry Road, space is extremely limited and new construction is not proposed for this portion of the property. The new construction will occur in the rear of the property, behind the existing main building. Furthermore, the proposed second building will not be visible from the street and, therefore, it would be unreasonable to require full compliance under these circumstances.

With respect to the required building setbacks and landscaped yards, the adjacent single-family home to the west is zoned for commercial use (C-M Zone). The property is also for sale. Clearly, in placing this adjacent property in the C-M Zone, it was the intent of the master plan to promote service/commercial use in this immediate area. Furthermore, it is likely that commercial development will eventually occur on the adjacent property, and the proposed sight-tight fence provides adequate screening during the transition from residential to commercial development..

The adjacent property to the east is occupied by a typewriter-VCR repair shop and a dance studio. The building for these uses extends more than 130 feet southward along the common property line, effectively screening itself from all of the activity taking place to the rear of the existing main building on the subject property.

With respect to the reduced driveway width, the site has functioned in its current configuration for many years without apparent detriment to the public. In addition, the two 19-foot-wide connections to the street are more than adequate, given the low volume of trips likely to be generated to the site by the general public. Furthermore, the 13-foot-wide driveway along the west side of the existing building is used solely by employees and a small number of delivery truck drivers who are familiar with the constraints of on-site circulation.

2. **The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.** The requested departures are the minimum necessary since additional landscaping, buffering and screening would serve no practical purpose, given the zoning and physical characteristics of the subject property and the surrounding properties. In addition, the reduced driveway widths have been evident and operational for many years without apparent harm or detriment to employees and visitors to the site. Furthermore, there are no additional reductions requested in conjunction with the proposed building expansion.
3. **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 29, 1949.** The departures are necessary to alleviate unique circumstances which include: (1) The adjoining property to the west is undergoing transition from residential to commercial use. Furthermore, it is quite possible that no bufferyard will be required when the transition is complete; (2) The adjoining property to the east contains a large, one-story industrial building that effectively provides its own screen from the proposed expansion on the subject site; and (3) There is no room to install a landscaped strip along Old Alexandria Ferry Road without eliminating additional parking spaces.
4. **The departure will not impair the visual, functional or environmental quality**

**or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood.** The departure will not impair the visual, functional or environmental quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood. Most properties in this area have existed for many years, and they were developed with minimal building setback and landscape requirements. In addition, the proposed expansion on the subject site will occur to the rear of the existing building; it will not be visible from surrounding properties and from along the street.

- (B) **For a departure from a standard contained in the *Landscape Manual*, the Planning Board shall find, in addition to the requirements in paragraph (A) above, that there is no feasible proposal for alternative compliance, as defined in the *Landscape Manual*, which would exhibit equal or better design characteristics.** There are no feasible alternatives for equal or better compliance with the *Landscape Manual* due to space limitations on the site and the characteristics of existing development on the subject site and surrounding properties.

H. Number of Required Spaces:

1. **Section 27-582 requires one loading space for the site, based upon a range of 2,000 to 10,000 square feet of gross floor area (GFA).** The required loading space is illustrated on the site plan, based upon the combined GFA of 7,518 square feet for the two main buildings and the storage shed.
2. **Section 27-568 requires three parking spaces per service area (for the maximum number of cars that can be worked on at the same time).** Based upon the site plan and supplemental information provided by the applicant, approximately seven cars can be worked on at the same time. Approximately 21 parking spaces are required, but only 13 can be provided. Therefore, a departure of eight spaces is needed.
3. In addition, there are a few related site plan deficiencies that need to be corrected: (1) The fence blocking access to parking space Nos. 13, 14 and 15 must be removed or relocated; (2) The parking schedule needs to be revised to accurately indicate the numbers of parking and loading spaces required and provided; (3) The site plan must accurately illustrate vehicular access to the buildings, and parking spaces must be removed or relocated so that vehicular access is not blocked. Currently parking space Nos. 6 and 7 are blocking vehicular access to the existing building.

I. DPLS Required Findings:

- (A) **Section 27-588(b)(8) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that in order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:**
1. **The purposes of Section 27-550 will be served by the applicant's request.** The general purposes are to provide safe and adequate parking facilities to serve existing development and to preclude the overflow of commercial parking into adjacent residential areas. In this instance, the applicant's proposal will improve the limited parking situation on site. Currently, the existing building of nearly 5,000 square

feet is served by only five parking spaces. This proposal includes an increase in gross floor area of only 2,000 square feet and the addition of eight more parking spaces, for a total of 13. Therefore, the ratio of parking spaces to floor area will be substantially increased, lessening the possibility of parking overflow into adjacent areas.

2. **The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.** The departure of eight spaces is the minimum necessary, given the space limitations on the property. Every available space has been used to maximize the number of parking spaces available on site.
3. **The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are special to the subject use, given its nature at this location, or alleviate circumstances which are prevalent in older areas of the County which were predominantly developed prior to November 29, 1949.** The departure is necessary to alleviate the space limitations on this property. In addition, the body shop at this location tends to generate a low volume of trips from the general public.
4. **All methods for calculating the number of spaces required have either been used or found to be impractical.** All methods for calculating the number of spaces required have either been used or found to be impractical to further reduce the parking requirement.
5. **Parking and loading needs of adjacent residential areas will not be infringed upon if the departure is granted.** Parking and loading needs of adjacent residential areas will not be infringed upon if the departure is granted. The subject property does not abut a residential area. However, there is a small residential area along Heflin Drive and Ferry Avenue with on-street parking nearby. Based on field inspections of the site, the existing parking area is sufficient to meet the parking needs of the subject use (even with the building addition).

**(B) In making its findings, the Planning Board shall give consideration to the following:**

1. **The parking and loading conditions within the general vicinity of the subject property, including numbers and locations of available on- and off-street spaces within 500 feet of the subject property.** There are no available off-street parking spaces within 500 feet of the subject property. The immediate area that surrounds the subject property is generally commercial. All uses have adequate off-street parking. There is an undeveloped C-M and C-2 Zoned parcel on the east side of Ferry Avenue that is just over 500 feet from the subject property. In addition, an area of 500 to 600 linear feet of street frontage is available for on-street parking.
2. **The recommendations of an area master plan, or County or local revitalization plan, regarding the subject property and its general vicinity.** The 1993 Master Plan for Subregion V recommends low intensity industrial uses for properties in this area that are compatible with the adverse effects of flight

operations from Andrews Air Force Base. The subject use is consistent with the recommendations of the plan.

3. **The recommendations of a municipality (within which the property lies) regarding the departure.** The subject property does not lie within a municipality.
4. **Public parking facilities which are proposed in the County's Capital Improvement Program within the general vicinity of the property.** No public parking facilities are proposed in the county's Capital Improvement Program within the general vicinity of the property.

(C) **In making its findings, the Planning Board may give consideration to the following:**

1. **Public transportation available in the area.** The area is served by Prince George's County's local bus system (The Bus).
2. **Any alternative design solutions to off-street facilities which might yield additional space.** There are no apparent alternative design solutions that would yield additional spaces.
3. **The specific nature of the use (including hours of operation if it is a business) and the nature and hours of operation of other (business) uses within 500 feet of the subject property.**

The subject use and neighboring businesses operate generally Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

4. **In the R-30, R-30C, R-18, R-18C, R-10A, R-10 and R-H Zones, where development of multifamily dwellings is proposed, whether the applicant proposes and demonstrates that the percentage of dwelling units accessible to the physically handicapped and aged will be increased over the minimum number of units required by Subtitle 4 of the Prince George's County Code.**

The subject property is in the C-M Zone. The above requirement does not therefore, apply.

**CONCLUSION:**

Staff recommends APPROVAL of DDS-532, subject to the site plan being revised as follows:

1. A note shall be added to the site plan indicating that the surface material of the parking and loading areas will be dust free.
2. A note shall be added to the site plan indicating that the parking and loading spaces will be marked with a durable contrasting material.
3. The parking schedule shall indicate the number of parking spaces required, as well as the amount provided.



4. A loading schedule shall be provided on the plan.
5. The fence blocking access to parking spaces nos. 13, 14 and 15 shall be either removed or relocated.
6. The site plan shall accurately illustrate vehicular access to the buildings, and parking spaces must be removed or relocated so that vehicular access is not blocked.

Staff further recommends APPROVAL of DPLS-282.