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Detailed Site Plan

DSP-00007-01

Application	General Data	
Project Name: Debre Genet Medhane Alem Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church Location: South of Old Branch Avenue, approximately 1,400 feet southeast of the intersection of Branch Avenue (MD 5) and St. Barnabas Road (MD 414). Applicant/Address: Debre Genet Medhane Alem Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church 4401 Old Branch Avenue Temple Hills, MD 20748	Planning Board Hearing Date:	06/14/12
	Staff Report Date:	05/30/12
	Date Accepted:	04/11/12
	Planning Board Action Limit:	06/20/12
	Plan Acreage:	4.30
	Zone:	C-O
	Dwelling Units:	N/A
	Gross Floor Area:	13,600 sq. ft.
	Planning Area:	76A
	Tier:	Developed
	Council District:	08
	Election District	06
	Municipality:	N/A
	200-Scale Base Map:	206SE04

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates	
A 1,853-square-foot second-floor addition for Sunday School.	Informational Mailing:	02/10/12
	Acceptance Mailing:	04/10/12
	Sign Posting Deadline:	05/15/12

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Jill Kosack Phone Number: 301-952-4689 E-mail: Jill.Kosack@ppd.mncppc.org	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan DSP-00007-01
Type II Tree Conservation Plan TCPII-001-05/01
Debre Genet Medhane Alem Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church

The Urban Design staff has reviewed the revision to a detailed site plan for the subject property and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of APPROVAL with conditions.

EVALUATION

The detailed site plan (DSP) was reviewed and evaluated for conformance with the following criteria:

- a. The requirements of the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance in the Commercial Office (C-O) Zone.
- b. The requirements of Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-86112.
- c. The requirements of Detailed Site Plan SP-00007.
- d. The requirements of the 2010 *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*.
- e. The requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance.
- f. The requirements of the Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance.
- g. Referral comments.

FINDINGS

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

1. **Request:** The subject application is for approval of a 1,853-square-foot second-story addition to an existing 11,747-square-foot church for use as a Sunday school.

2. **Development Data Summary**

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	C-O	C-O
Total Site Area	4.30	4.30
Uses	590-seat church	590-seat church, accessory Sunday School
Total Building Gross Floor Area	11,747 sq. ft.	13,600 sq. ft.

Other Development Data:

Parking Required	148 spaces
Church—590 seats @ 1 space per 4 seats	148 spaces
Sunday School*	0 spaces

Parking Provided	148 spaces
Standard Spaces	120 spaces
Compact Spaces (49 spaces allowed)	16 spaces
ADA Spaces	6 spaces
Van-Accessible ADA Spaces	6 spaces

Loading Spaces Required	1 space
Loading Spaces Provided	1 space

*No parking is required for the Sunday school because, as noted on the plan, it does not run concurrently with the church.

3. **Location:** The subject property is located on the south side of Old Branch Avenue, approximately 1,400 feet southeast of the intersection of Branch Avenue (MD 5) and St. Barnabas Road (MD 414).
4. **Surrounding Uses:** The site is bounded to the north by the right-of-way for Branch Avenue, and beyond it are commercially-developed properties in the C-M (Miscellaneous Commercial) Zone; to the west and south by single-family detached residential lots in the R-R (Rural Residential) Zone; and to the east by another C-O-zoned property developed with a church.
5. **Previous Approvals:** The subject site has a previously approved Preliminary Plan of Subdivision, 4-86112 (PGCPB Resolution No. 86-332), which was approved by the Planning Board on August 7, 1986. Subsequently, Parcel A was recorded in Plat Book NLP 131-37 on February 11, 1987. The site was the subject of Detailed Site Plan SP-00007 and the associated Alternative Compliance, AC- 00027, which was approved by the Planning Board on July 27, 2000 (PGCPB Resolution No. 00-152), for the existing 590-seat, 11,747-square-foot church.
6. **Design Features:** The subject property has a long linear shape along the south side of Old Branch Avenue. The previously approved and constructed rectangular, one-story, 11,747-square-foot, 23-foot-high church building sits roughly in the middle of the site facing north toward Old Branch Avenue. The majority of the previously approved and constructed parking field lies to the

west of the building, with some spaces to the east and north. An existing trash dumpster is located in the northwestern corner of the property and a loading space in the southeastern corner of the property. Stormwater management is handled by underground infiltration trenches on-site.

The church building itself is faced in red brick on all four sides with horizontal brick accent bands in a cream color. Tall arched windows, with brick surrounds, are evenly spaced along the front and back of the church and access doors are provided on all four sides of the building. The building is enhanced with a slightly sloped standing seam metal roof with a fiberglass segmented dome with a cross and lightning rod in the center of the eastern end.

The subject revision application proposes the construction of a partial second-story, 1,853-square-foot addition in the southwestern corner of the building, which will be accommodated within the existing roof height of the building. Additional minor site improvements include a canopy-covered outdoor staircase and access door on the rear building elevation to provide an emergency exit for the new second story, some adjustments to the windows at the western end of the rear of the building to accommodate the proposed second story, and a new entrance door with ramp and stairs on the eastern end of the front building elevation to provide a second entrance to the internal assembly space. The only other proposed revisions involve minor updates to landscaping and fencing; no other revisions are proposed to the building, parking, or signage.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. **Zoning Ordinance:** The subject application has been reviewed for compliance with the requirements of the C-O Zone and the site plan design guidelines of the Zoning Ordinance.

The subject DSP is in conformance with Section 27-461, Uses Permitted in Commercial Zones; Section 27-453, C-O Zone (Commercial Office); and Section 27-462, Regulations in Commercial Zones of the Zoning Ordinance. Churches are a permitted use and a Sunday school is considered an accessory use to a church.

8. **Conformance to Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-86112:** Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-86112 (PGCPB Resolution No. 86-332) for Gordon's Corner was approved by the Planning Board on August 7, 1986. The resolution for the approved preliminary plan contains two conditions which warrant the following discussion:

1. **Approval of a site plan by the Planning Board prior to issuance of any grading, sediment control, or building permits. The site plan shall address the following issues:**

- a. **The appearance of development from the Gordon's Corner Subdivision to the rear of the property.**

Comment: The finding was made with the original DSP approval that the landscape plan provided sufficient supplemental planting along the rear of the property, adjacent to the Gordon's Corner subdivision, to address this condition. The subject DSP revision proposes only minor site improvements, none of which will affect the existing landscaping or the appearance of the development.

- b. **Ingress/egress to and from Old Branch Avenue, and Branch Avenue.**

Comment: No changes to the previously approved ingress/egress have been proposed with this DSP revision.

c. The appearance of development from the Master Plan designated ‘Perceptually sensitive corridor along Branch Avenue.’

Comment: The finding was made with the original DSP approval that the proposed landscaping, parking lot layout, circulation, and building architecture were designed in a sensitive manner. The subject DSP revision proposes only minor site improvements, none of which will substantially affect the landscaping, parking lot layout, circulation, or building architecture.

e. Development of the property in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Comment: The previously approved DSP was found to be in conformance with the above-referenced condition. The subject DSP revision does not propose any changes that substantially affect the site development.

9. Conformance to Detailed Site Plan SP-00007: The Planning Board approved Detailed Site Plan SP-00007 on July 27, 2000 subject to two conditions, which warrant the following discussion:

1. Prior to signature approval, the following revisions shall be made or information supplied:

a. A detail of the lighting shall be added to the detail sheet.

Comment: The submitted DSP revision shows a detail of the lighting on the detail sheet, although it is not changing with this revision.

b. The applicant shall submit an approved technical stormwater management plan to the Urban Design Section to incorporate into the file. The plan shall also be reviewed for compliance with the approved landscape plan.

Comment: No changes to the stormwater management plan are required with this revision, as the area of disturbance is on top of an existing structure and does not create any significant additional impervious area on-site.

c. The Detailed Site Plan shall be revised to reflect the required setbacks and they shall be corrected on the cover sheet.

Comment: The submitted DSP revision shows the required setbacks on the cover sheet, although they are not changing with this revision.

d. The plans shall be revised to include traffic movement arrows.

Comment: The submitted DSP revision shows traffic movement arrows, although traffic circulation is not changing with this revision.

e. The word vertical, describing the brick accent bands on the elevations, shall be changed to horizontal.

Comment: The submitted DSP revision included architectural elevations and the brick accent bands are labeled correctly.

- f. **The applicant shall provide the Urban Design Section with appropriate documentation from DER stating that the site plans are acceptable with regard to the layout of the stormwater management concept plan. In the event DER does not find conformance with the stormwater management concept plan, the plans shall be revised and resubmitted to DER for approval. Upon approval from DER, they shall be forwarded to the Urban Design Section to review for conformance with the approved Detailed Site Plan. In the event conformance is not found, a revision to the Detailed Site Plan shall be filed.**

Comment: No changes to the stormwater management plan are required with this revision, as the area of disturbance is on top of an existing structure and does not create any significant additional impervious area on-site.

2. **The applicant shall submit all proposed signage to the Urban Design Section for approval by the Planning Board or its designee. No pylon-mounted signage shall be allowed and special attention shall be given to the materials, colors and landscaping of signs.**

Comment: The submitted DSP revision does not include any proposals or revisions for any signage on-site.

10. **Prince George's County Landscape Manual:** The subject revision to a DSP is subject to the requirements of the 2010 *Prince George's County Landscape Manual* (Landscape Manual) because it involves an increase of gross floor area of more than ten percent. The site plan is subject to Section 4.2, Requirements for Landscape Strips along Streets; Section 4.4, Screening Requirements; Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses; and Section 4.9, Sustainable Landscaping Requirements of the Landscape Manual. The site plan is not subject to Section 4.3, Parking Lot Requirements, as it does not involve an increase in impervious area on-site for parking or loading spaces.

- a. Section 4.2, Requirements for Landscape Strips along Streets, would apply to all public and private road frontages, which includes the entire northern property line along Old Branch Avenue. The requirements of Section 4.2 include a minimum ten-foot-wide strip planted with one tree and ten shrubs for every 35 feet of road frontage, excluding driveway openings. The submitted DSP revision provides the appropriate schedule and shows the requirement being fulfilled.
- b. Section 4.4, Screening Requirements, requires that all loading spaces, trash and recycling areas, and mechanical equipment be screened from all public roads and adjacent land in residential zones. The DSP revision includes a trash dumpster area in the northwestern corner of the site that is screened by an existing six-foot-high board-on-board fence and evergreen tree plantings. There is also a single loading space in the southeastern corner of the site that is to be screened from the residential properties to the south by a proposed wooden screening fence. No detail was provided for this fence on the DSP, hence a condition has been included in the Recommendation section of this report requiring one be added.

- c. Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, requires a buffer between adjacent incompatible land uses. The proposed church and Sunday school use is considered a medium impact use and requires a Type “C” buffer against the residential properties to the west and south. The landscape plan provides the appropriate schedules for these areas showing the requirements being fulfilled.

The previously approved DSP did include an Alternative Compliance, AC-00027, for a reduction in the width of the Section 4.7 landscape yard along the southern property line to accommodate a stormwater management pond. During the site development, this pond was removed and the full landscape yard was able to be provided. Therefore, this alternative compliance is no longer required and the submitted plans note this.

- d. Section 4.9, Sustainable Landscaping Requirements, requires certain percentages of native plants be provided on-site, along with no invasive plants, and no plants being planted on slopes steeper than three-to-one. The submitted landscape plan provides the required schedule and notes showing the requirements being met.

- 11. **Prince George’s County Woodland Conservation Ordinance:** This site is subject to the Woodland Conservation Ordinance which was effective prior to September 1, 2010 because it has a previously approved tree conservation plan approved under that ordinance and no significant changes to the limits of disturbance are proposed. A revised Type II Tree Conservation Plan, TCPII-001-05/01, has been submitted and reviewed.

The overall site has a gross tract area of 4.30 acres and, based on the proposed clearing, the total woodland conservation requirement is 2.78 acres. The TCPII proposes to meet the requirement with 1.04 acres of woodland preservation, and 0.30 acre of fee-in-lieu. The proposed fee-in-lieu is appropriate because it is less than one acre.

The revised TCPII is in conformance with the Woodland Conservation Ordinance.

- 12. **Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance:** The project is subject to the requirements of Subtitle 25, Division 3: The Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance. The requirement for the subject property is ten percent of the gross tract area or 0.43 acre (18,731 square feet), based on the C-O zoning. The required worksheet was provided for the tree canopy coverage (TCC) requirement showing it being met by the existing 1.04 acres of preserved woodland on-site.

- 13. **Referral Comments:** The subject application was referred to concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:

- a. **Community Planning South Division**—At the time of drafting of this staff report, no comments were received from the Community Planning South Division.
- b. **Transportation Planning Section**—In a memorandum dated April 26, 2012, the Transportation Planning Section indicated that the existing church is expected to generate 360 trips during the peak hour of Sunday services. This trip rate from the *Trip Generation Handbook, 3rd Edition* (Institute of Transportation Engineers) typically includes meeting rooms, classrooms, party facilities, etc. Therefore, the new Sunday School space is expected to generate few if any additional trips.

Overall, traffic circulation on the site and the location of the driveway on Old Branch Avenue appear reasonable. Any additional trips from the Sunday School could easily be accommodated. The driving aisles are well marked with traffic arrows.

In summary, the Transportation Planning Section determined that the site plan is acceptable. Any traffic related conditions contained in Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-86112 would have been addressed by the approval of SP-00007.

- c. **Subdivision Review Section**—In a memorandum dated May 3, 2012, the Subdivision Review Section indicated that the site plan correctly shows all of the bearings, distances, and lot sizes as reflected on the record plat. The record plat denies access along the northwestern portion of Parcel A along Branch Avenue (MD 5), which denial is not indicated on the DSP. The DSP does not show any existing or proposed access at the northwestern corner of Parcel A; however, the DSP should indicate the denial of access as reflected on the record plat.

The record plat contains two notes and the following notes in bold relate to the review of this application:

1. **Subject to approval of a site plan by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission Planning Board prior to issuance of any grading, sediment control, or building permits.**
2. **Subject to approval of a conceptual stormwater management plan by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission prior to site plan review.**

The site was approved with a Detailed Site Plan, SP-00007, on July 27, 2000 by the Planning Board for a church. The applicant submitted the subject revised DSP for an addition to the church for a Sunday School.

The property is the subject of Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-86112. Preliminary Plan 4-86112 for Gordon's Corner was approved and the resolution was adopted by the Planning Board on August 7, 1986 (PGCPB Resolution No. 86-332). The resolution for the approved preliminary plan contains two conditions which have been addressed above, in Finding 8. The resolution of the approved preliminary plan contains no trip cap or other restriction on adequate public facilities; therefore, a new preliminary plan of subdivision for the proposed additional square feet of gross floor area on the church is not required. There are no other subdivision issues at this time.

Comment: The applicable comments have been included in the Recommendation section of this report as conditions.

- d. **Permit Review Section**—In a memorandum dated April 23, 2012, the Permit Review Section offered several comments, which are either not applicable at this time, have been addressed through revisions to the plans, or are addressed through proposed conditions of approval of this DSP.
- e. **Environmental Planning Section**—In a memorandum dated May 10, 2012, the Environmental Planning Section indicated that the site is not subject to the environmental regulations of Subtitle 27 that became effective on September 1, 2010 because the site

has a previously approved preliminary plan and the proposed request is a revision to a previously approved DSP. A natural resources inventory is not required.

A review of the available information indicates that streams, wetlands, wetland buffers, 100-year floodplain, and steep slopes do not occur on the property. The predominant soil types on the site are Beltsville and Croom. The site is adjacent to Branch Avenue (MD 5); however, noise impacts are not a concern because no residential or residential-type uses are proposed. According to information obtained from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Program, there are no rare, threatened, or endangered species found to occur in the vicinity of the site. According to available information, Marlboro clay is not found to occur on this property. This property is located in the Henson Creek watershed of the Potomac River Basin and in the Developed Tier as reflected in the *Prince George's County Approved General Plan*. A copy of the approved stormwater management concept plan and letter were not included with the subject application. The detailed site plan appears to show all stormwater to be directed to an existing storm drain system.

Recommended Condition: Prior to certification of the detailed site plan, a copy of the approved stormwater management concept plan shall be submitted.

Comment: The subject DSP revision does not require a stormwater management concept plan or letter as the proposed site improvements are not large enough to require one.

- f. **Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department**—The Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, in a memorandum dated April 30, 2012, provided standard comments regarding fire apparatus, hydrants, and lane requirements. Those issues will be enforced by the Fire Department at the time of the issuance of permits.
 - g. **Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T)**—In a memorandum dated April 24, 2012, DPW&T stated that the permit request is for an addition of a second floor on the existing building and that they require a commercial restoration bond for Old Branch Avenue.
 - h. **Prince George's County Police Department**—In a memorandum dated April 20, 2012, the Police Department indicated that they had no major issues regarding the subject application.
 - i. **Prince George's County Health Department**—In a memorandum dated April 27, 2012, the Health Department indicated that they had completed a health impact assessment review of the subject application and they had no comments or recommendations.
 - j. **Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA)**—In a memorandum, SHA indicated that they had no objection to plan approval as access is to a county road.
14. Based upon the foregoing analysis and as required by Section 27-285(b) of the Zoning Ordinance, the detailed site plan represents a reasonable alternative for satisfying the site design guidelines of Subtitle 27, Part 3, Division 9, of the Prince George's County Code without requiring unreasonable cost and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.

15. Per Section 27-285(b)(4) of the Zoning Ordinance, which became effective on September 1, 2010, a required finding for approval of a detailed site plan is as follows:

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.

Comment: The site is not subject to the environmental regulations of Subtitle 27 that became effective on September 1, 2010 because the site has a previously approved preliminary plan and the proposed request is a revision to a previously approved detailed site plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation and analysis, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and APPROVE Detailed Site Plan DSP-00007-01 and TCPII-001-05/01 for Debre Genet Medhane Alem Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, subject to the following condition:

1. Prior to certification of the DSP, the following modifications shall be made:
 - a. Provide a note on the site plan regarding the denial of access along the northwestern property line as reflected on the record plat.
 - b. Provide a detail for the proposed wooden screening fence.