

July 30, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Steven Adams, Urban Design Supervisor

FROM: James Jordan, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan, SP-00011
Variance No. VD 00011A
Seaton Memorial AME Church

The Urban Design staff has reviewed the Detailed Site Plan and Variance for the subject property and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of APPROVAL with Conditions. This report separately addresses the required findings and recommended conditions of approval for both applications.

EVALUATION

The Detailed Site Plan was reviewed and evaluated for compliance with the following criteria:

1. The requirements of Section 27-428 of the Zoning Ordinance governing development in the R-R Zone and the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.
2. The requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance.
3. Site Design Guidelines.
4. Referrals.

FINDINGS

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

1. Location: The Seaton Memorial AME Church is an existing church located approximately 600 linear feet south of the intersection of Maryland Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. The subject property is located on Lincoln Avenue, and consists of a series of contiguous lots on both sides of the right-of-way. The main property, Lots 27-34, on the east side of Lincoln Avenue is where the existing church and parsonage are located. Lots 19 and 20, on the west side of Lincoln Avenue and directly across from the existing church facility, provide an additional parking lot for the church. North, south and east of the site are existing single-family residential properties, zoned R-R; and west of, and adjacent to, the site is the Lincoln Avenue right-of-way.
2. The Proposed Development: The subject application is a request to construct a 4,980-square-foot building addition to provide classroom and office space within the church facility. The addition will be located on the north side of, and adjacent to, the existing church. The site configuration is rectangular. The church will be accessed by means of one entrance drive from Lincoln Avenue. Parking for the church will be located in two separate parking compounds on both sides of Lincoln Avenue. The application consists of site plans, landscape plans and architecture.
3. Background: The approved *Master Plan for Glenn Dale-Seabrook-Lanham and Vicinity* (1993) proposed Low Suburban Residential as the recommended land use for the subject property. The Sectional Map Amendment (1993) was approved with the property recognized as zoned R-R. No master plan issues are related to the subject application.
4. Subdivision: The subject application was referred to the Subdivision Review Section and in a memorandum (Del Balzo to Jordan) dated June 23, 2000, it was noted that Section 24-111(c) of the Subdivision Regulations would require resubdivision of the subject property for the approval of the proposed church addition as it was initially shown on the plan. Subsequent to the receipt of the subdivision memorandum, the applicant has revised the plans to reduce the size of the proposed addition from 5,089 square feet to 4,980 square feet, thus fulfilling one of the exemption criteria for resubdivision of properties prior to development. Section 24-111(c)(3) states as follows:
 - (1) The development proposed is in addition to a development in existence prior to January 1, 1990, and does not exceed 5,000 square feet of gross floor area;The proposed development does not require resubdivision at this time. The Detailed Site Plan is in conformance with Final Plat of Subdivision BDS 1 @ 58.
5. Development data for the subject property are as follows:

Zone

R-R

Tract Area	1.71 acres
100-year floodplain	None
Primary Use	Church
Secondary Use	Residential (Parsonage)
Parking Spaces Required	
Church (@ 1 spc. per 4 seats : 250 seats)	63 spaces
Residential	2 spaces
Total	65 spaces
Parking Spaces Provided	70 spaces
Loading Space Required	1 space
Loading Space Provided	1 space

6. Conformance to the Requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and Landscape Manual :
The Detailed Site Plan is in general conformance with the requirements of Section 27-428 of the Zoning Ordinance for development in the R-R Zone.

The site is subject to Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.7 of the *Landscape Manual*. The subject plan does not meet the requirements of Section 4.2 of the *Landscape Manual*, Commercial and Industrial Landscape Strip Requirements, and the applicant applied for Alternative Compliance, AC-00033, for a reduction in the required width of a portion of the landscape strip. The Alternative Compliance Committee recommended approval of the proposed landscape plans, and the Planning Director recommended approval to the Planning Board. The following is the recommendation of the Alternative Compliance Committee and the Planning Director:

■REQUEST: Alternative Compliance is requested for Section 4.2, Commercial and Industrial Landscaped Strip Requirements, for a portion of the west property line along Lincoln Avenue.

■Section 4.2, (Commercial and Industrial Landscaped Strip Requirements), south property line along Lincoln Avenue, approximately 29 linear feet.

■REQUIRED: Option # 1 - Minimum 10-foot-wide landscaped strip with one shade tree and 10 shrubs per 35 linear feet of frontage, excluding driveway openings.

■Plant materials: 1 shade trees
■10 shrubs

■PROVIDED:

- Width of landscaped strip: 7-10 feet
- Plant materials: 1 shade tree
 - 10 shrubs

■JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDATION:

■The west property line which abuts the Lincoln Avenue right-of-way provides a continuous landscaped strip along its frontage. A 29-foot-long portion of that landscaped strip south of the site entrance does not meet the minimum 10-foot width requirement. The applicant provides that the required width of the landscaped strip in this location cannot be fulfilled because this area is a small strip between the existing parking lot and the right-of-way, and that increasing the size of the strip would entail demolition and reconfiguration of a portion of the existing parking lot. The proposed section of landscaped strip in question incorporates a shade tree and shrubs. The proposed plan provides for the construction of a parking lot island with additional landscaping in a nearby area of the existing parking lot to increase the interior parking lot planing area for the subject property. The proposed plant materials in the section of landscaped strip in question meet the requirements of the *Landscape Manual* in terms of quantity, and it is the opinion of the Alternative Compliance Committee that the proffered island and additional interior planting area added to the existing parking lot, combined with the mixture of shrubs and shade trees, provides an aesthetically pleasing and well defined entrance to the property while satisfying the intent of the *Landscape Manual*. Considering the existing conditions on the subject property and the addition of the island and interior green at the parking lot nearby the landscaped strip in question, the committee is of the opinion that the applicant's proposal is equal to or better than normal compliance with the *Landscape Manual* in terms of quality and effectiveness.

■RECOMMENDATION:

■The Alternative Compliance Committee recommends APPROVAL of the alternative compliance plan for Section 4.2 at the south property line along Lincoln Avenue, as proposed.●

The Permit Review Section noted in a memorandum (Bakka to Jordan) dated June 20, 2000, that the existing house, used as a parsonage, on the subject property must meet the minimum setback requirements of 25 feet per Section 27-441(b)(2)(C), Footnote 52, of the Zoning Ordinance. The Alternative Compliance Committee found that although the residential property is accessory to the church use, the house itself is a residential use adjacent to a residential use on the adjoining property and therefore Section 4.7 of the *Landscape Manual* is not applicable in this situation. The site is essentially that of two uses, residential and church, with the requirements for residential properties in the R-R Zone being applicable to that portion of the site which is occupied by the residential structure. Similarly, the requirements of Section 4.2 of the *Landscape Manual* were found to not be applicable to the residential portion of the property based on the aforementioned reasoning and analysis. Staff concurs with the findings of the Alternative Compliance Committee.

7. Conformance to the Woodland Conservation Ordinance : The subject plan was referred to the Environmental Planning Section and in a memorandum (Metzger to Jordan) dated June 23, 2000, it was noted that although the site is above 40,000 square feet it contains less than 10,000 square feet of woodland and does not have a previously approved Tree Conservation Plan. It was also noted that the subject property was issued a letter of exemption on November 5, 1999; therefore, the site is exempt from the provisions of the Woodland Conservation Ordinance.
2. Urban Design : The subject application was reviewed by the Urban Design staff and the following comments are provided with respect to the development proposal:
 - a. The applicant is proposing to provide an addition onto the existing church structure that measures 56-feet-wide by 89-feet-long. The proposed addition will generally match the existing church structure in height, exterior finish material, and articulation. The proposed addition will be adjacent to the northernmost part of the existing structure in an open portion of the site which has the most extensive available area for linear extension of the building. Although approximately equal in size to the existing structure, the proposed addition will appear as if it were constructed with the original facility because of the efforts expended to match the height, material and style of the existing structure. The exterior finish of the proposed addition will be brick, as is that of the existing church sanctuary structure. The existing open space fronts onto the adjacent roadway, Lincoln Avenue. The existing church sanctuary space is octagonal in shape, and this design theme is reflected in the existing roof articulation above the sanctuary. The new addition proposes a similar smaller scale octagonal element, a roofed entrance feature, that staff believes provides a physical and conceptual linkage to the existing structure that reinforces the overall design theme previously established for the church. Staff believe that the proposed architecture will provide a compatible and complementary treatment to that already in place, and furthermore adequately addresses the prospective views of the facility from the adjacent thoroughfare.
9. The subject property has an approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan (CSD # 008003890), which was approved on May 12, 2000. Upon initial referral of the subject application to the Department of Environmental Resources it was found, as reported in a referral response dated June 12, 2000, that the plan was not consistent with the approved stormwater management concept. Subsequent to the referral, the applicant revised the proposed plan and it was found that the revised plan was in conformance with the approved stormwater management concept plan.
10. The Detailed Site Plan was referred to all applicable agencies and divisions; no significant issues were identified. The Permit Review Section raised several issues regarding revisions and the provision of additional information on the plans. The applicant has revised the plans to address all of the comments of the Permit Review Section subsequent to receipt of the memorandum. The Transportation Planning Section noted that signage must be provided to indicate one-way ingress/egress points on the subject property, and Condition 1.a. of the Recommendation section of this staff report provides for the requirement of said signage.

- ii. The applicant is requesting a variance from Section 27-441(b)(2)(C), Footnote 52, which states that minimum setbacks for all buildings shall be twenty-five (25) feet from each lot line. An existing residential structure, used as a parsonage, is located eight linear feet from the north property line of the church property. No change to the existing residence or construction activity is proposed in this area. Thus the applicant requests a variance of 17 feet in order to validate the existing structure located within the 25-foot setback limits.

Section 27-230 contains the criteria for approval of a variance. This request meets the criteria contained in Section 27-230 as follows:

- (1) **A specific parcel of land has exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape, exceptional topographic conditions, or other extraordinary situations or conditions;**

The extraordinary situation or condition of the subject property is that the existing residential structure was constructed prior to the church, and the structure met all previous requirements for residential construction in the R-R Zone. The structure is only in violation of the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance because subsequent to its construction it became an accessory use to a church, which purchased the residence and the adjoining six lots for the purposes of constructing a church. Notwithstanding the status of the residential structure as an accessory use to the church, the residence/parsonage has and will continue to be maintained as a residence for the purpose of providing living quarters for the church's minister. Given that the residential structure was constructed generally about the same time as abutting and surrounding residential properties, the character and size of the parsonage are compatible with that of the surrounding residential community and for all intents and purposes the parsonage is just as much part of the residential community as it is part of the church use.

- (2) **The strict application of this Subtitle will result in peculiar and unusual practical difficulties to, or exceptional or undue hardship upon, the owner of the property; and**

The existing residential structure is in good condition, provides a necessary use for the church, and is an integral part of the surrounding residential community. It would thus pose a peculiar and unusual practical difficulty and undue hardship upon the owner of the property to move or raze the parsonage for the purposes of strict compliance with regulations that require a minimum of a 25-foot setback for all buildings from each lot line.

- (3) **The variance will not substantially impair the intent, purpose, or integrity of the General Plan or Master Plan.**

The property is located in the area covered by the *Glenn Dale-Seabrook-Lanham and Vicinity* Master Plan, which was adopted and approved in 1993. The master plan recommended Low Suburban residential land use for the subject property and also for the abutting and surrounding residential properties. The existing setback of eight feet from the north property line for the subject residential structure is common throughout the community for residential uses and, furthermore, the existence of the residential structure in this location on the church property will not impair the integrity of the master plan as these uses are allowed and encouraged in the R-R Zone.

12. The Detailed Site Plan represents a reasonable and workable alternative for satisfying the site design guidelines, without requiring unreasonable costs and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the foregoing analysis, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and APPROVE Detailed Site Plan SP-00011, Alternative Compliance AC-00033, and Variance No. VD 00011A, for Seaton Memorial AME Church subject to the following condition:

1. Prior to certification, the Detailed Site Plan shall be revised as follows:

Provide signage at the vehicular entrance and exit points to the church compound on Lincoln Avenue to indicate One-Way traffic flow and Do Not Enter.