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DETAILED SITE PLAN

DSP-04061

VARIANCE APPLICATION

VD-04061

DEPARTURE FROM PARKING AND LOADING STANDARDS

DPLS-298

Application	General Data
Project Name: The Redeemed Christian Church of God Location: Southeast corner of 54 th Avenue and Riverdale Road, Town of Riverdale Park Applicant/Address: The Redeemed Christian Church of God C/o David Ijeh 4303 Tavern Green Lane Bowie, MD 20720	Date Accepted: 4/5/2005
	Planning Board Action Limit: Waived
	Plan Acreage: 2.18
	Zone: R-10
	Dwelling Units: NA
	Square Footage: 35,600
	Planning Area: 68
	Tier: Developed
	Council District: 3
	Municipality: Riverdale Park
	200-Scale Base Map: 207NE05

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
Church (750 seats) with a multipurpose room (300 seats)	Adjoining Property Owners Previous Parties of Record Registered Associations: (CB-12-2003) 1/10/2005
	Sign(s) Posted on Site and Notice of Hearing Mailed: 6/14/2005

Staff Recommendation			Staff Reviewer: H. Zhang, AICP
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
		X	

July 3, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Steve Adams, Urban Design Supervisor

FROM: Henry Zhang, Urban Design Section, Development Review Division

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan DSP-04061, The Redeemed Christian Church of God
Variance Application VD-04061
Departure from Parking and Loading Standards Application DPLS-298

The Urban Design staff has completed the review of the subject application and appropriate referrals. The following evaluation and findings lead to a recommendation of **DISAPPROVAL** of the detailed site plan, variance application and the departure from parking and loading standards application as described in the recommendation section of this report.

EVALUATION

This detailed site plan was reviewed and evaluated for compliance with the following criteria:

- a. The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance in the R-10 Zone and the requirements of Section 27-230, Criteria for granting appeals involving variance, and Section 27- 588, Departure from number of parking and loading spaces required
- b. The requirements of preliminary plan of subdivision 4-04193
- c. The requirements of the *Landscape Manual*
- d. The requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance
- e. Referral comments

FINDINGS

Based upon the evaluation and analysis of the subject detailed site plan, the Urban Design Review staff recommends the following findings:

1. **Request:** The subject application is for the approval of a detailed site plan for a church with a multipurpose space, a variance of 11 percent from the maximum lot coverage, and a departure of 34 parking spaces from the minimum required parking spaces for the church.

2. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	R-10	R-10
Use(s)		Church with a Multipurpose Room
Acreage	2.18	2.18
Total Square footage	-	35,600
Church (750 seats)	-	27,100
Multipurpose room (300 seats)	-	8,500
Number of parcels	2	2

OTHER DEVELOPMENT DATA

	REQUIRED	PROPOSED
Total parking spaces	188 (1 space per 4 seats for 750 seats)	164*
Parking spaces for the handicapped	6	10
Loading Space	1	1

Note: * The multipurpose room is an accessory use to the church and will not be occupied at the same time as the sanctuary per the applicant.

3. **Location:** The subject property, consisting of two separate parcels, is located at the southeast corner of 54th Avenue and Riverdale Road, in Planning Area 68 and Council District 3.
4. **Surroundings and Use:** The subject site is composed of a 0.96-acre parcel and a 1.22-acre parcel, which are located west of 54th Avenue. There are two existing residential buildings between the two parcels. The 1.22-acre parcel is located in the southeastern quadrant of the intersection of 54th Avenue and Riverdale Road and is bounded on the north and west sides by the public rights-of-way of Riverdale Road and 54th Avenue. To the south of the 1.22-acre property are existing residential buildings, and to the east is an existing apartment building in the R-10 Zone. The 0.96-acre parcel is bounded to the west by the right-of-way of 54th Avenue. To the north of the 0.96-acre parcel are the two existing buildings; to the east of the property is an existing apartment building in the R-10 Zone; and to the south of the property is a private alley in the R-10 Zone.
5. **Previous Approvals:** The subject site has an approved preliminary plan of subdivision, 4-04193, which was approved by the Planning Board on June 2, 2005. However, at the time the staff report was written, the resolution (PGCPB No. 05-130) had not been adopted by the Planning Board. The stormwater management concept plan for the site is under review and is pending final approval by the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) at the time of this detailed site plan review.
6. **Design Features:** The site plan proposes a 750-seat church, a 300-seat multipurpose space, 16 parking spaces, and one loading space on the 1.22 acre parcel; 148 parking spaces are proposed on the 0.96-acre parcel. The 1.22-acre parcel is accessed from 54th Avenue with a traffic island near the main entrance to the church building. The on-site circulation features a cul-de-sac road with two parking pods of 16 parking spaces. The only access point to the site is located in the south boundary area adjacent to the existing apartment buildings. The 0.96-acre parcel will be improved with 148 parking spaces with two access points off 54th Avenue. The on-site circulation features a loop street with three double-loaded parking islands in the middle of the site.

The proposed church with a multipurpose space is in a roughly square footprint with a truncated corner part as the main entrance. The proposed church building is designed in a modern architectural style with rich details and design treatments. The Riverdale Road elevation features two solid ends with large fenestration in the middle. The middle section is also composed of three discrete parts with a cultured stone base, a middle with large expanse of windows, and a solid top. The 54th Avenue elevation focuses on the main entrance to the building that is marked in the middle by a cross-gable with an embedded religious theme graphic on the gable wall. The similar cultured stone base with masonry accent band provides street level visual interest to passing pedestrians. A combination of EIFS (exterior insulated finishing system), cultured stone, brick, masonry accent band, and aluminum window systems provide an attractive and distinctive design.

An identification sign located at the intersection of 54th Avenue and Riverdale Road and building-mounted signs have been shown on the site plan and on the elevation renderings. But no sign details have been proposed with this application.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. **The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance in the R-10 Zone:** The subject application is for approval of a church in the R-10 Zone and is subject to the requirements of the R-10 Zone and site plan design guidelines.
 - a. The proposed church with a multipurpose room as an accessory use is a permitted use in the R-10 Zone pursuant to Section 27-441(b). However, the multipurpose room must be used for church functions only. A condition of approval has been proposed in the recommendation section that requires the use of the multipurpose room be for church functions only and not be occupied at the same time as the sanctuary.
 - b. The proposal is also in conformance with the applicable requirements of Section 27-442(b), Regulations, except for the maximum lot coverage, for which the applicant has filed a variance application. The maximum lot coverage for a church is 50 percent. The detailed site plan shows lot coverage on the 0.96-acre parcel as 61 percent, while lot coverage on the 1.22-acre parcel is 36.4 percent. A variance of 11 percent is requested for the 0.96-acre parcel where the proposed church is located.

The Urban Design staff believes that the subject site is overdeveloped with a 750-seat church because the site not only needs a variance from the maximum allowable lot coverage, but also a departure from the required number of parking spaces. Per Section 27-230, Criteria for granting appeals involving a variance, a variance can be granted when all of the three criteria are met as follows:

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

Comment: The subject site, consisting of two separate parcels (1.22-acre and 0.96-acre parcels), is located in the Developed Tier of the county within the Town of Riverdale Park. Because the two small parcels are not contiguous to each other, the church has to be built on a larger parcel with most of the parking on a smaller parcel. There are one single-family detached residence and one multifamily apartment building located between the two parcels that require

Section 4.7 bufferyards be installed on the subject properties. However, the church parcel itself is a normal corner lot in the developed neighborhood, and it is not characterized by exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape, or by exceptional topographic conditions.

- (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**

Comment: The Planning Board approved the preliminary plan of subdivision for the subject site for a not more than 750-seat church and church-related use, including a 200-seat banquet hall or equivalent development that generates no more than 468 (243 in and 225 out) new trips during the Sunday peak hour. The approval is based on the satisfactory test for adequate public facilities. However, detailed site plan review has altogether different criteria from that of the preliminary plan of subdivision, which focuses on whether or not the site can accommodate the proposed activities. This application has been shown to have adequate public road facilities to support it, but that does not necessarily mean the buildable part of the site is adequate to accommodate the proposed use and activities. The hardship related to this application is self-imposed and is associated with overdevelopment of the subject site.

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

Comment: This application does not conform to the multifamily land use recommendations of the 1994 Planning Area 68 master plan for multifamily land use (see memorandum from Community Planning Division, O'Connor to Zhang, April 29, 2005). But churches are allowed under the detailed site plan process in the R-10 Zone and are a permitted use pursuant to Section 27-441(b).

The Urban Design Section believes that the variance application cannot satisfy two of the three criteria for approval. Both the variance and departure applications are the result of an impractical development proposal for the subject site that does not sufficiently take into consideration many constraints of the property. The hardship in this case is self-imposed in nature and can be relieved if the applicant reduces the total number of seats for the proposed church to 500 seats or less. The staff therefore recommends disapproval of the variance from the maximum lot coverage for the 0.96-acre parcel.

- c. The detailed site plan proposes to develop a 750-seat church with a 300-seat multipurpose room. The required number of parking spaces for a 750-seat church is 188 spaces at a parking ratio of one parking space for every four seats. The total number of parking spaces that can normally be provided on both parcels is 164. The applicant is requesting a departure of 24 parking spaces from the required number. The applicant has also indicated that the church has entered into an agreement with a nearby property owner at 5801 Riverdale Road in order to allow the church to use 45 parking spaces on its property on weekday evenings and weekends when the demand for parking at the site will be the heaviest. But because the location of the 45 parking spaces is not within 500 feet of the church property and the lease for using the 45 parking spaces is good for only five years,

the parking calculation cannot count the aforementioned 45 parking spaces toward fulfilling parking requirements.

Section 27- 588 Departure from number of parking and loading spaces required: The Planning Board must make the following findings:

(8) Required findings:

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

(i) The purpose of this Part (Section 27-550) will be served by the applicant's request;

Comment: The purposes of this part are:

- (1) To require (in connection with each building constructed and each new use established) off-street automobile parking lots and loading areas sufficient to serve the parking and loading needs of all persons associated with the buildings and uses.
- (2) To aid relieving traffic congestion on the streets by reducing the use of public streets for parking and loading and reducing the number of access points.
- (3) To protect the residential character of residential areas.
- (4) To provide parking and loading areas which are convenient and increase the amenities in the Regional District.

As discussed previously, the two parcels of the subject application are separated by an existing single-family detached residence and an existing multifamily apartment building. The DSP for the 750-seat church does not have sufficient parking areas on-site to accommodate the proposed activities due to the confined site and limited buildable envelope. The two parcels can only provide 125 parking spaces that will support only a 500-seat church. The above purposes will not be served by granting the departure in this case.

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

Comment: The site is located in a developed area with comparatively narrow streets and small lots. The departure far exceeds the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstance of the request.

(iii) 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.

Comment: The subject application consists of two small parcels that are separated by the existing residential uses. However, the departure is needed not because of the physical aspects of the site but due to overdevelopment of the 0.96-acre parcel. The granting of the departure results in additional traffic to the area and further congests the existing streets.

- (iv) **All methods for calculating the number of spaces required (Division 2, Subdivision 3, and Division 3, Subdivision 3, of this Part) have either been used or found to be impractical; and**

Comment: All methods for calculating the number of parking spaces have been used and none of the calculations generates enough parking spaces for the proposed scale of 750 seats. The available parking spaces on both sites can only support a 500-seat church.

- (v) **Parking and loading needs of adjacent residential areas will not be infringed upon if the departure is granted.**

Comment: One existing single-family residence and one existing multifamily apartment building are located between the two church parcels. The existing residential use is adjacent to the subject site where the church building is located. Given its location close to the church parcel, it seems likely that the parking needs of the existing residential uses will be infringed upon if the departure is granted.

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

- (i) **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 five hundred (500) feet of the subject property;**

Comment: The general vicinity of the subject property consists mainly of multifamily garden apartment buildings predominantly developed around the 1940s. Parking in general has been an issue in the area with limited on-street spaces. The applicant has entered a five-year-term parking agreement with the owner at 5801 Riverdale Road to provide an additional 45 parking spaces in order to alleviate the parking deficiency. However, the 45 off-street parking spaces are located more than 500 feet away from the subject property.

- (ii) **The recommendations of an Area Master Plan, or County or local revitalization plan, regarding the subject property and its general vicinity;**

Comment: The Community Planning Division indicates in a memorandum (April 29, 2005, O'Connor to Zhang) that this application does not conform to the multifamily land use recommendations of the 1994 Planning Area 68 master plan for multifamily land use. Churches are allowed under the detailed site plan process in the R-10 Zone. After reviewing all evidence presented with this application, the Urban Design Section believes that the subject site is overdeveloped.

(iii) The recommendations of a municipality (within which the property lies) regarding the departure; and

Comment: Both parcels included in this application are located within the limits of the Town of Riverdale Park. At the time the staff report was written, no official comments from the town were available. The town's comments will be presented at the time of public hearing if they become available.

(iv) Public parking facilities which are proposed in the County's Capital Improvement Program within the general vicinity of the property.

Comment: No public parking facilities of any kind are proposed in the county's Capital Improvement Program within the general vicinity of the subject property.

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

- (i) Public transportation available in the area;**
- (ii) Any alternative design solutions to off-street facilities which might yield additional space;**
- (iii) The specific nature of the use (including hours of operation if it is a business) and nature and hours of operation of other (business) use within five hundred (500) feet of the subject property;**
- (iv) In the R-30, R-30C, R-18, R-18C, R-10A, R-10, and R-H Zone, 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.**

Comment: The Urban Design Section reviewed the existing situations such as available public transportation, the specific nature of the use included in this application, and the nature and hours of operation of the uses close to the subject site before recommending disapproval of the departure from parking and loading standards. There is public bus

service on Riverdale Road, but no ridership information is available. The site is surrounded primarily by multifamily apartment buildings developed in the 1940s. Within 500 feet of the subject site, there are only some single-family dwelling units located to the north of the subject site across Riverdale Road. It does not seem likely that the parking needs of the existing residential use will be infringed upon if the departure is granted.

8. **The requirements of Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-04193:** Preliminary plan of subdivision 4-04193 was approved by the Planning Board subject to three conditions. Draft resolution PGCPB No. 05-130 is scheduled for adoption by the Planning Board on July 7, 2005. The following discussion is based on the draft resolution. Any revisions to the conditions of approval in the draft resolution that are applicable to the review of this detailed site plan will be further applied to this detailed site plan prior to certification. Of the three conditions of approval attached to preliminary plan of subdivision 4-04193, only Condition 2 is applicable to the review of this detailed site plan as follows:

2. **Total development within the subject property shall be limited to a 750-seat church and church-related uses, including a 200-seat banquet hall or equivalent development that generates no more than 469 (243 in and 225 out) new trips during the Sunday peak hour. Any development generating an impact greater than that identified herein above shall require a new preliminary plan of subdivision with a new determination of the adequacy of transportation facilities.**

Comment: The subject detailed site plan proposes a 750-seat church with a 300-seat multipurpose room. The application also includes a request for relief from maximum allowable lot coverage for the 0.96-acre parcel and a request for relief from the parking and loading standards in order to accommodate the proposed activities on the site. As discussed in Finding 7 above, due to the encumbrance of Section 4.7 bufferyards, the subject parcel has a limited buildable envelope. The Urban Design Section recommends disapproval of the departure of 24 parking spaces from the parking requirements in order to minimize possible negative impact associated with this application.

9. ***Landscape Manual:*** The subject application is subject to the requirements of Section 4.2, Commercial and Industrial Landscaped Strip Requirements; Section 4.3, Parking Lot Requirements; Section 4.4, Screening Requirements; and Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, of the *Landscape Manual*.
 - a. The proposed church is a nonresidential use in a residential zone. Per Section 4.2, a landscaped strip should be provided on the property adjacent to all public rights-of-way. The two parcels included in this application are adjacent to the public rights-of-way of 54th Avenue and Riverdale Road. The landscape plan proposes a minimum 10-foot-wide landscaped strip (Option 1) along both 54th Avenue and Riverdale Road to be planted with a minimum of 1 shade tree and 10 shrubs per 35 linear feet of frontage, excluding driveway openings, that complies with the requirements of Section 4.2.
 - b. The 0.96-acre parcel will be improved as a parking compound for the church and is subject to Section 4.3(a) Landscaped Strip Requirements and Section 4.3(c) Interior Planting. The landscape plan uses Option 4, which is a minimum four-foot-wide landscaped strip to be planted with a minimum 1 shade tree per 35 linear feet of the frontage in addition to a foot-high brick wall behind the landscaped strip. Per Section

4.3(c), when a parking lot is larger than 7,000 square feet but smaller than 49,999 square feet, a minimum five percent of the total area of the lot must be interior planting area to be planted with at least 1 shade tree for each 300 square feet of interior landscaped area provided. The landscape plan complies with the requirements of both Section 4.3 (a) and (c). However, since the layout of the parking compound results in a large number of parking spaces located continuously along the perimeter of the lot, additional shade trees should be provided along the southern and eastern boundary of the site in order to provide enough shade during the summer months.

- c. Section 4.4 requires that all loading areas be screened from land in a residential zone and all adjacent public roads. The proposed church with a multipurpose space (on the 1.22-acre parcel) has a gross floor area of approximately 35,600 square feet, which is less than 100,000 square feet, and per Section 27-582, Schedule (number) of loading spaces required, one standard loading space is required. The site plan shows one loading space in front of the main entrance to church building behind a traffic island around the access point to the site. Given the many constraints for locating a loading space on this corner lot, the Urban Design Section believes that the current location is the best practical location for the proposed loading space.
- d. The 1.22-acre parcel is adjacent to an existing single-family detached residence and an apartment building to the south and abuts another three-story apartment building to the east. Per Section 4.7, the church is a medium impact use. When a medium impact use is adjacent to a single-family detached residence, a Type C bufferyard is required. When a medium impact use is adjacent to a multifamily building, a Type B bufferyard is required. The landscape plan provides a six-foot-high, board-on-board wood fence in addition to landscape materials in the required bufferyards and thus is in conformance with the *Landscape Manual*.

The 0.96-acre parcel is adjacent to a multifamily building on both the northern and eastern sides. A Type B bufferyard is required, which is a minimum 20-foot-wide landscaped strip to be planted with 80 plant units per 100 linear feet of property line. The landscape plan provides a six-foot-high, board-on-board wood fence in addition to landscape materials and meets the requirements.

- 10. **Woodland Conservation Ordinance:** This property is not subject to the provisions of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance because, although the gross tract area is in excess of 40,000 square feet, it contains less than 10,000 square feet of existing woodland on site.
 - a. A detailed forest stand delineation (FSD) was submitted for the subject property and was found by the Environmental Planning Section to generally address the requirements of a simplified FSD. No further information is required with this detailed site plan.
 - b. A Type I tree conservation plan was submitted as part of this detailed site plan application. A review by the Environmental Planning Section indicates that the site is exempt from the Woodland Conservation Ordinance due to less than 10,000 square feet of existing wooded area on both parcels of this application. A Standard Letter of Exemption was issued by the Environmental Planning Section on February 15, 2005.
- 11. **Referral Comments:** The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:

- a. In a memorandum dated April 29, 2005, the Community Planning Division noted that the application is consistent with the 2002 General Plan Development Pattern policies for the Developed Tier Corridors. But this application does not conform to the land use recommendation of the 1994 Planning Area 68 master plan for multifamily land use. The community planner also indicates that the Town of Riverdale Park wants to be a party of record and to provide comments under separate cover.

Comment: The community planner also raised issues regarding parking on two separate parcels and lot coverage exceeding the maximum allowable coverage of 50 percent in the memorandum, which have been discussed in Finding 7 above. The Town of Riverdale Park was entered as a party of record for this case on February 14, 2005.

- b. The Transportation Planning Section, in a memorandum dated July 5, 2005, noted that there are no additional transportation issues associated with this detailed site plan because all transportation-related issues had been addressed at time of subdivision review.

In a separate memorandum from the Transportation Planning Section dated May 5, 2005, on detailed site plan review for master plan trail compliance, the trails planner stated that Riverdale Road is designated as a master plan bikeway. Since there is not an agreement with the Town of Riverdale Park for the installation of bikeway signage for this designation, staff makes no recommendation.

- c. The Subdivision Section, in a memorandum dated July 5, 2005, indicated that there are no subdivision issues with this application.
- d. The subject application was also referred to the Department of Environmental Resources. In a memorandum dated April 29, 2005, the staff noted that the stormwater management concept plan, #42827-2004, has not been approved for this site yet. According to Section 27-282(e)(10) a stormwater management concept plan is required to be included with a detailed site plan application.
- e. The Environmental Planning Section, in a memorandum dated April 19, 2005, indicated that there are no environmental issues with this application. But the environmental planner noted that no stormwater management concept approval letter has been submitted with this application.
- f. The Permit Section, in a memorandum dated April 21, 2005, provided 14 comments on the site plan regarding compliance with the requirement of the Zoning Ordinance. Most of the comments have been addressed through a revised plan.
- g. The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), in a memorandum dated June 14, 2005, indicated that both 54th Avenue and Riverdale Road are under the jurisdiction of Riverdale Park. The road improvement requirements should be obtained from the Town of Riverdale Park.
- h. The Fire/EMS Department of Prince George's County, in a memorandum dated June 16, 2005, provided a standard memorandum listing applicable regulations regarding access for fire apparatus, fire lanes, and location and performance of fire hydrants. Since both parcels of the subject site front onto the rights-of-way of 54th Avenue and Riverdale Road and are located within 500 feet of a fire hydrant on both public rights-of-way, the site plan is in general compliance with the applicable regulations.

- i. The Town of Riverdale Park, the City of College Park, Bladensburg, Edmonston, Hyattsville and University Park had not responded to the referral request at the time the staff report was written.
12. The application does not adequately take into consideration the many constraints of the subject property. The variance and departure applications are the results of overdevelopment of the site. The hardship presented in this application is self-imposed in nature and can be immediately relieved if the applicant reduces the total number of proposed seats in the church from 750 to 500 seats. As required by Section 27-285(b), the detailed site plan does not represent 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation, analysis and findings, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and **DISAPPROVE** detailed site plan DSP-04061 for The Redeemed Christian Church of God, the variance from the maximum allowable lot coverage VD-04061, and the departure from parking and loading standards application, DPLS-298.