

July 10, 2001

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-91043/03, Metropolitan Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church and School
Alternative Compliance, AC-96043/01
Departure from Design Standards, DDS-523

The Urban Design staff has reviewed the Detailed Site Plan for the subject property and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of APPROVAL with conditions 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*.
- b. The requirements of Preliminary Plat 4-96034.
- c. The requirements of Detailed Site Plan SP-91043 and two revisions.
- d. The requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.
- e. The requirements of the *Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance*.
- f. 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 the addition of a gymnasium to an

existing private church and school shown on Detailed Site Plan SP-91043, Metropolitan Seventh Day Adventist Church and School.

2. Location: The site is located in Planning Area 65, Council District 2. More specifically, it is situated along the east side of MD 212 (Riggs Road), to the south of its intersection with MD 211 (Sargent Road) and to the north of its intersection with MD 501 (Chillum Road).
3. Surroundings and Use: The subject application is within Lot 1 of the Chillum Oaks Subdivision, which includes two lots with gross tract area of 9.28 acres. To its south is Parcel ■C,• Riggs-Sargent Shopping Center, zoned C-S-C; to its north are Lot 2, SE 4179, Chillum Oaks Advent Apartments, and Parcel ■A,• the Carl Albert Heider single- family residence; to its east is M-NCPPC's park, zoned O-S; and to its west is MD 212 (Riggs Road).
4. Previous Approvals: The subject site has a previously approved Preliminary Plat 4-96034 (Chillum Oaks), Special Exception-4179 (Apartment Housing for the Elderly or Physically handicapped Families in R-55 zone), DPLS-133 (Departure from Parking and Loading Schedules) and Detailed Site Plan SP-91043 (G.E Peters SDA School). To date, two revisions have been made to the Detailed Site Plan, i.e., SP-91043/01 (which included a playground relocation) and SP-91043/02 (which added a summer day care center program). The subject site has also an approved Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCP II/39/91), which was approved on June 3, 1991 and subsequently revised on October 31, 1994. Both the original approval and revisions included the entire 9.28 acres parcel.

The third revision to the Detailed Site Plan SP-91043/03 forming the subject application was submitted on March 12, 2001, for the approval of the addition of a gymnasium to the existing church and school. During the review process, many issues were identified. In order to have more time to address the problems, the applicant waived the 70-day processing period by a letter (Cindy A. Gower to Henry H. Zhang) dated April 26, 2001.

The subject site is only 7.42 acres out of the original 9.28 acres as the result of Preliminary Plat of Subdivision 4-96034. The proposed expansion will significantly change the extent and location of the woodland conservation areas and will cause the alteration of the existing nontidal wetland. The approval of the revised Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCP II/39/91) is mandated by the *Prince George's Woodland Conservation Ordinance* in this case.

5. Site Plan Data

Zone	R-55
Gross Tract Area	7.425 acres
Enrollment	250 Students (K Through 8th Grade)
Existing Use	Church and Private school
Proposed Additional Use	Gymnasium
Proposed Building Area	15,634 square foot
Parking Required	167 spaces
Church	125 space
School	42 space
Parking Provided (Standard 19.0' X 9.5')	209 spaces
Existing	135 spaces
Proposed Addition	74 spaces
Loading Required and Provided	2 spaces

Design Features: The proposed gymnasium is a two-story, single mass building with decorative mansard roof of standing seam metal and brick exterior wall that will match the existing building in terms of color and pattern. The height of the building varies from 17 feet 3 inches (17'-3") to 36 feet 4 inches (36'-4") so as to fit into the topography and harmonize with the existing school building.

The proposed gymnasium is located inside the northeast portion of the site connected with the existing one-story school building. Because there is only one entrance leading from Riggs Road to the site, the addition of the gymnasium results in some 1,200 feet of cul-de-sac that links six parking lots. The proposed gymnasium will require substantial earth work in order to create a buildable site and significant disturbance to the existing woodland conservation areas. The site plan proposes a 600-foot-long keystone retaining wall with varied height from 4.5 to 14.5 feet circling around the northeast boundary of the proposed building site.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA:

6. Zoning Ordinance: The subject application has been reviewed against the requirements in the R-55 zone and the site plan design guidelines of the *Zoning Ordinance*.
- a. The subject use, the addition of a gymnasium to the existing Detailed Site Plan SP-91043, Metropolitan Seventh Day Adventist Church and School, is in conformance with the requirements of Section 27-443, which governs the development of a private school in a residential zone.

The subject application is to increase activity area of the existing school by adding a gymnasium, which will further strengthen the functioning of the school on its existing site. The proposed gymnasium will accommodate all indoor activity needs

of the existing school.

7. Preliminary Plat: The subject site has a previously approved Preliminary Plat 4-96034 (Chillum Oaks). This is a minor plat of subdivision in accordance with Section 24-117 of the Subdivision Regulations. Conditions attached to this approval require the following findings regarding the Detailed Site Plan review.

- 1. **Development of this subdivision shall be in compliance with the approved Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCP II/39/91)...**
- 2. **Prior to the issuance of any grading or building permits, the limit of disturbance shown on TCP II/39/91 shall be revised to reflect the current layout (as shown on the Preliminary Plat) and approved by the Natural Resources Division.●**

Comment: The proposed addition of a gymnasium to the Detailed Site Plan SP- 91043, Metropolitan Seventh Day Adventist Church and School, as noted by the Environmental Planning Section, will have a significant impact on the existing woodland conservation areas. According to the *Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance*, a revision to the previously approved TCP II/39/91 is required for the approval. The revised TCP II was submitted with the subject Detailed Site Plan application. The Environmental Planning Section has found that the revised TCP II has addressed the environmental issues associated with this application and recommended approval of the revised TCP II/39/91.

- 3. **Development of this subdivision shall be in accordance with the approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan, Concept # 968004080.●**

Comment: A Stormwater Management Concept Approval # 008003700-2000-00, which was approved on March 12, 2001, was submitted with the subject Detailed Site Plan. The DER/Concept Section found that the subject Detailed Site Plan DSP-91043/03 is consistent with SWM Concept Approval #008003700.

8. Detailed Site Plan: Detailed Site Plan SP-91043, G.E Peters SDA School and its subsequent two revisions do not have any conditions regarding the expansion of any kind of the subject property.
9. Landscape Manual: The proposed addition of a gymnasium to the existing Detailed Site Plan involves 15,634 square feet of building gross floor area, which is a 43.7 percent increase in the gross floor area of the existing church and school and proposes a significant disturbance to the existing woodland conservation areas. This addition is subject to the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.
- a. The subject application is subject to the requirements of Section 4.2, Commercial and Industrial Landscaped Strip Requirements for nonresidential uses in a residential zone; Section 4.3, Parking Lot Requirements and Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses. The landscape treatments in both the approved Detailed Site Plan SP-91043 and the subject Detailed Site Plan SP-91043/03 meet the

requirements of Section 4.2 and 4.3, but fail to comply completely with the requirements of Section 4.7.

- b. At the time of Detailed Site Plan SP-91043, an Alternative Compliance (AC-91043) from the requirements of Section 4.7 for its southern property line abutting Chillum Oaks Adventist Apartments was requested and approved. Instead of providing the required twenty (20)-foot-wide landscape buffer, the subject property was allowed to provide a ten (10)-foot landscape buffer, while another ten (10)-foot buffer was allowed to be provided on the Chillum Oaks Adventist Apartments property. This Alternative Compliance from the *Landscape Manual* is still valid in the subject application.
- c. A new Alternative Compliance (AC-96043/01) request was submitted with this application concerning the location of a retaining wall, which is part the addition project as proposed on the detailed site plan in order to minimize the height of the proposed gymnasium site and make it a feasible building site. Due to the extreme topography of the site, a portion of the retaining wall is located within a type ■B• bufferyard pursuant to Section 4.7 with only an eight-foot setback from the adjacent property line. The AC committee has recommended the approval of this Alternative Compliance to the Planning Director because it is the AC Committee's opinion that the retaining wall will be equal to or better than normal compliance to the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.
- d. A review of the Landscape Plan indicates that the proposed plant schedule submitted with the Landscape Plan is acceptable except for the minimum size of some plants and the distance between big shade trees.

Per Section 6.2, 3. Plant Measurements, the minimum size for planting ornamental trees shall be 7-9' tall; the minimum size for planting evergreen trees shall be 6-8' tall.

Enough distance between the shade trees is crucial to their healthy growth. Generally, shade trees are planted 30 feet apart on-center. The Landscape Plan and minimum size of the proposed ornamental and evergreen trees on the Plant Schedule should be revised according to the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.

10. Woodland Conservation Ordinance: The property is subject to the provisions of the *Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance* because the lot is over 40,000 square feet of gross tract area, there are more than 10,000 square feet of existing woodland, and there will be more than 5,000 square feet of woodland clearing.

- a. A Forest Stand Delineation (FDS) plan was previously approved for this property.
- b. An approved Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCP II /39/91) submitted with this application addressed only the requirements of the 1989 *Woodland Conservation Ordinance*. Because this application proposes significant changes to the extent and location of the existing woodland conservation areas, an updated TCP II was required.

The revised Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCP II/39/91), as revised on May 23, 2001, has been submitted and reviewed by the Environmental Planning Section. The Environmental Planning Section found that the revised TCP II satisfies the requirements of the *Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance*.

- c. The Woodland Conservation Threshold (WCT) for the 9.28 acres property is 20 percent of the size of the property or 1.83 acres and a replacement requirement of 1.05 acres for a total requirement of 2.88 acres. The revised TCP provides 1.0 acres of on-site preservation and 0.64 acres of on-site reforestation areas. The revised TCP II fails to clearly identify the location of the leftover 1.24 acres of off-site mitigation.
- d. This application also proposes disturbances of the 50-foot stream buffer, nontidal wetland and the 25-foot wetland buffer. The mitigation method proposed by the applicant is to build a retaining wall so as to minimize the impact. The proposed wetlands and wetland buffer disturbance application was approved by Water Management Administration, Department of the Environment, State of Maryland, on September 13, 2001 with the authorization number of 00-NT-0148/200063749.

11. Referral Comments: The subject application was referred to all concerned agencies and divisions. Major referral comments are summarized as followings:

- a. The City of Hyattsville had not responded to the referral request at the time the staff report was written.
- b. The State Highway Administration has no objection to the approval of the addition of a gymnasium to the existing Detailed Site Plan. The SHA states in a memorandum dated March 25, 2001, that the proposed school expansion will have negligible impact on the road network.
- c. The Environmental Planning Section reviewed the submitted TCP II/39/91 on March 29, 2001 and found that the TCP II did not meet the requirements of the *Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance*. TCP II/39/91 was previously approved for the property on June 3, 1991 and subsequently revised on October 31, 1994.

The applicant resubmitted the revised TCP II on May 23, 2001. In the subsequent review, the Environmental Planning Section noted in a memorandum dated June 11, 2001, that:

■TCP II/39/91 as revised on May 23, 2001 has been found to satisfy the requirements of the Prince George's

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- d. The Permit Review Section provided questions concerning compliance with the applica ble sections of both the *Zoning Ordina nce* and the *Landsc ape Manual* as well as addition al informa tion being added to the Detailed Site Plan in a memora ndum dated April 5, 2001. The informa tion has been

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- e. The subject application was referred to the Transportation Section and in a memorandum dated March 12, 2001, transportation staff had no further comments on this proposal.

In another memorandum on Detailed Site Plan Review for Master Plan Trail Compliance dated April 16, 2001, the Trail Planner identified that the required trail along Riggs Road is a Class III bikeway with appropriate signage according to the Adopted and Approved Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt Master Plan. The Trail Planner further stated that:

■Because Riggs Road is a state right-of-way, the applicant, and the applicant's heirs, successors, and/or assigns shall provide the installation of one ■Share the Road with a Bike sign in accordance with State requirements. However, prior to the Planning Board conditioning the placement of the signs, SHA should have the opportunity to review the proposed locations to ensure they are acceptable. The developer would purchase the signs from the State and install them in accordance with the State's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices dealing with the section on bicycle facilities. A note shall be placed on the final record plat that installation will take place prior to the issuance of the first building permit.●

- f. The subject application was also referred to the Special Hazards Section, Bureau of Fire Prevention, Prince George's County Fire Department, because the proposed addition of the gymnasium is located far inside the property away from the street.

In a memorandum dated May 4, 2001, the staff listed the applicable regulations concerning the fire prevention on the site. The staff also stated that:

■Please note and direct the owner to comply with aforementioned Subtitle. (Subtitles 11-276,277) I have highlighted on the submitted drawings all areas which may contribute to the loss of emergency vehicle access due to its configuration. These locations shall be marked with painted yellow curbs and the posted "No Parking Fire Lane" by order of the Prince George's County Fire Department's signs. The developer should contact Fire Department's Bureau of Fire Prevention and Investigations to assist in designating the fire lanes.

■In addition, please be advised Subtitle 4-186. Section 1015.2, titled "Location and Performance of Fire Hydrant" which states, "every building shall be provided with sufficient fire hydrants located such that no exterior portion of the building is located more than five hundred (500) feet from a fire hydrant. The distance shall be measured as a hose line would be laid along paved street, through parking lot entrances, around obstructions, etc., in accordance with the determination of authority having jurisdiction."

■Also areas may be highlighted on the drawing in noted colors to show areas that do not accommodate the turning radius of a 43-foot wheel base vehicle or other comments. These areas need to be widened to allow emergency apparatus to turn.

■Any courts or dead ends created should provide a 43-foot turning radius within 200 feet of the end of the road.

Staff Comment: Except for the only existing entrance from Riggs Road, there is no alternative emergency fire access to the subject site because of its unique site configuration. There is a fire hydrant on the existing parking lot in front of the school building. The presence of this fire hydrant makes all the exterior portions of the buildings well within the 500-foot required fire prevention limit.

- g. The Subdivision Section staff identified three conditions attached to the approval of Preliminary Plat 4-96034 (Chillum Oaks) that are applicable to the subject application. These conditions are discussed in Finding Seven of this staff report.
12. The Detailed Site Plan, if revised in accordance with the proposed conditions, will represent a reasonable alternative for satisfying the site design guidelines without requiring unreasonable costs and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed

development from its intended uses.

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-91043/03, Metropolitan Seventh Day Adventist Church and School, Alternative Compliance, AC-96043/01 and the revised Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCP II/39/91) subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to issuance of any permits, the applicant shall identify the location of the off-site woodland mitigation and record an easement in the Land Records of Prince George's County.
2. Prior to issuance of the building permit, the applicant shall complete the installation of one ■Share the Road with a Bike■ sign in accordance with state requirements on the location reviewed and approved by SHA along Riggs Road.
3. Prior to certification of approval of DSP-91043/03, the applicant shall make the following revisions to the Detailed Site Plan and Landscape Plan:
 - a. Provide the correct distance for the middle segment on the west property line of Lot 1.
 - b. Identify on the Site Plan the turning radius of the proposed driveway leading to the parking lot of the gymnasium.
 - c. Modify the Plant List to provide the minimum size plants as required by the *Landscape Manual*
 - d. Modify the Landscape Plan to provide enough space (minimum 25-30 feet) between proposed shade trees.

Departure from Design Standards, DDS-523

Required Findings

1. The site is located along the east side of MD 212 (Riggs Road), to the south of its intersection with MD 211 (Sargent Road) and to the north of its intersection with MD 501 (Chillum Road). The site is zone R-55 and encompasses 7.425 acres.

The request of the applicant in Departure from Design Standards DDS-523 is as follows:
To permit the continuation of an existing condition in which access to an existing loading space is within 42 feet of a residentially zoned property line in lieu of the required 50 feet, as required by Section 27-579 (b) of the *Zoning Ordinance*.

2. The G.E Peters Seventh Day Adventist Church and School are existing facilities located at 6303 Riggs Road. The church was constructed first. The school was constructed later in

1992. A Detailed Site Plan SP-91043 (G.E Peters SDA School) was approved for the school construction. The entire property was 9.28 acres.

In 1996, the Chillum Oaks Adventist Apartments was constructed on the site. Because of HUD's financing requirements, the site was subdivided into a 1.86-acre Apartment parcel and a 7.42-acre Church and School parcel by a minor subdivision process, Preliminary Plat 4-96034 (Chillum Oaks). Both properties are owned and controlled by the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

When the property was subdivided, the property line of Chillum Oaks Adventist Apartments was within approximately 42 feet of the only existing entrance of the church and school property leading to a loading space. A situation was created where the access to an existing loading space is within 50 feet of a residentially zoned property, which is not in compliance with the requirements of Section 27-579 (b). This nonconformance was overlooked at the time of minor subdivision and the subsequent two site plan revisions.

A new gymnasium is proposed to serve the existing school which forms the subject application DSP-91043/03. The addition of gymnasium to the existing site requires a revision to the approved Detailed Site Plan. During the subject Detailed Site Plan review process, the aforementioned nonconformance was identified. Since it is impossible to change the locations of both the existing loading space and the entrance, the applicant is requesting a Departure from Design Standards per Section 27-579 (b) to allow the current access to the loading space to continue being within 42 feet of the apartment property line instead of fulfilling the required 50 feet requirement.

3. Section 27-239.01(b)(9), Required findings, of the *Zoning Ordinance* provides that:
 - (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 purposes of the *Zoning Ordinance* set forth in Section 27-102 in general are to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public in Prince George's County. In this instance, the facts establish that granting the requested departure will in no way jeopardize these purposes. The subject property is located in the R-55 zone surrounded on its north, east and west by C-S-C and O-S zones and Riggs Road respectively. The steep terrain to the north and east of the property makes this site the isolated end of the R-55 zone. The access in question is located between the 7.425-acre parcel and 1.86-acre parcel. Viewing this portion of the site, except from Riggs Road, is impossible. By granting this departure, the purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well served by the applicant's proposal.

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

The departure is the minimum necessary because the applicant is requesting a departure of eight feet from the standard in order to continue the existing situation where the access to the

existing loading space is within 42 feet of the residential property line in lieu of the required 50 feet. Meanwhile, there is some nine-foot difference in ground elevation between the access driveway and the parking lot of Chillum Oaks Adventist Apartments. Currently a staircase links the higher church and school parcel to the lower Chillum Oaks Adventist Apartments parcel. The change of elevation between the two parcels makes this eight-foot departure even less noticeable.

- (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 29, 1949;•**

The departure is necessary to alleviate circumstances that are unique to the site. The subject property was originally one single lot. The HUD's financing requirements made it necessary for the owner to subdivide the property into two parcels so as to build the Chillum Oaks Adventist Apartments for the elderly or physically handicapped families. The nonconformance resulted directly from this subdivision in 1996. The situation was never discovered in the two subsequent revisions (SP-91043/01 and SP-91043/02) to the detailed site plan which make the situation unique to the subject application. The approval of the two previous revisions further emphasizes the unique character of the existing nonconformance.

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

As discussed above, the departure is approximately eight feet only and is located between the church and school parcel and the apartment parcel. The unique topography of the site makes this departure less conspicuous to the extent that it will be almost invisible from Riggs Road and impossible to be seen from other properties. The departure will not impair the visual, functional or environmental quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood as it has already existed since 1996.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the preceding analysis and findings, it is recommended that DDS-523 be APPROVED.