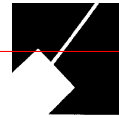


Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
 Prince George's County Planning Department  
 Development Review Division  
 301-952-3470



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

## Special Exception Application No. SE-4363

Application	General Data
<b>Project Name:</b> Ascension Lutheran Church  <b>Location:</b> Northeast corner of Ardwick Ardmore Rd. and Buchanan St.  <b>Applicant/Address:</b> Ascension Lutheran Church 7415 Buchanan St. Landover Hills, MD 20784	<b>Date Accepted:</b> 8-13-99
	<b>Planning Board Action Limit:</b> N/A
	<b>ZHE Hearing Date:</b> Not scheduled
	<b>Plan Acreage:</b> 4.38± acres
	<b>Zone:</b> R-55
	<b>Dwelling Units:</b> N/A
	<b>Square Feet:</b>
	<b>Planning Area:</b> 69
	<b>Council District:</b> 3
	<b>Municipality:</b> None
	<b>200-Scale Base Map:</b> 206NE 6R

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
Expansion of existing school	<b>Adjoining Property Owners:</b> 8-13-99 (CB-15-1998)
	<b>Previous Parties of Record:</b> None (CB-13-1997)
	<b>Sign(s) Posted on Site</b> N/A
	<b>Variance(s): Adjoining Property Owners</b> N/A

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer Jimi Jones	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION

	<b>CONDITIONS</b>		
	<b>X</b>		

NEW DATA.FRM

**January 5, 2000**

**TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT:**

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board  
The Prince George's County District Council

VIA: Arie Stouten, Zoning Supervisor

FROM: Jimi Jones, Planning Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Special Exception Application No. 4363**

REQUEST: **Private School**

RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVAL, with a condition.**

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NOTE:

This application is on the agenda for the Planning Board to decide whether or not to schedule a public hearing. If the Planning Board decides to hear the application, it will be placed on a future agenda.

Any person may request the Planning Board to schedule a public hearing. The request may be made in writing prior to the agenda date or in person on the agenda date. All requests must specify the reasons for the public hearing. All parties will be notified of the Planning Board's decision.

You are encouraged to become a person of record in this application. The request must be made in writing and sent to the Office of the Zoning Hearing Examiner at the address indicated above. Questions about becoming a person of record should be directed to the Hearing Examiner at 301-952-3644. All other questions should be directed to the Development Review Division at 301-952-3280.

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## FINDINGS:

- A. Location and Field Inspection: The subject property is located in the northeast quadrant of Ardwick/Ardmore Road and Buchanan Street. The property is irregularly shaped and developed with a brick church and school. Two gray/silver-colored, vinyl-clad trailers containing classrooms are located at the rear of the one-story brick church building that fronts on Buchanan Street. A large play area (fields and mulch covered areas for play equipment) occupies the central portion of the site. The eastern ~~panhandle~~ section (which is approved for a day care center and 16 parking spaces in SE-3390) is undeveloped and partially wooded.
- B. History: The subject property was retained in the R-55 Zone with adoption of the *1994 Sectional Map Amendment for Bladensburg-New Carrollton and Vicinity*. On January 15, 1965, the District Council granted Special Exception No. 1126 to authorize use of 2.25 $\frac{1}{2}$  acres of the site for a ~~Private~~ Educational Institution. On April 25, 1983, the Council approved SE-3390, which expanded the use to the subject 4.37 $\frac{1}{2}$  acres and added a nursery and day care center. In March 1994, District Council approved a special exception (SE-4135) allowing the placement of two temporary classroom trailers on the property with a condition permitting the trailers to remain for seven years. This seven-year period ends in March 2001.
- C. Master Plan Recommendation: The 1990 *Master Plan for Bladensburg-New Carrollton and Vicinity* recognizes the existing church and private school.
- D. Request: The applicant wishes to remove the two existing classroom trailers permitted pursuant to a condition of approval for SE-4135 and construct a permanent building addition to house the additional classroom space.
- E. Neighborhood and Surrounding Uses:

The property is surrounded by the following uses:

North - Multifamily dwellings in the R-18 Zone.

East & South - Across Ardmore-Ardwick Road are single-family detached homes in the R-55 Zone.

West - Across Buchanan Street is a postal facility and the rear of a shopping center fronting on Annapolis Road in the C-S-C Zone.

The neighborhood is defined by the following boundaries:

North - Annapolis Road (MD 450)

South - Landover Road (MD 202)

East - John Hanson Highway (US 50) and the Amtrak line

West - Baltimore-Washington Parkway

The subject neighborhood is residential in character, containing all or segments of the Landover, Landover Hills and West Lanham neighborhoods. This is the same neighborhood used in SE-4135.

F. Specific Special Exception Requirements: Section 27-396 of the Zoning Ordinance provides that:

(a) **A private school which offers instruction at levels above the sixth grade may be permitted, subject to the following:**

(1) **There is a demonstrated need for the proposed use in the area.**

Comment: There is a need for the proposed use. There has been a private elementary school operating at this site since before 1965. A special exception was approved in 1994 to permit two classroom trailers which now accommodate seventh and eight grade classes. The previous special exception approved the trailers for a period of seven years. The proposed addition to the existing school will provide a permanent building for the students and is necessary to accommodate a growing student population.

(2) **The proposed site is of sufficient size to properly accommodate a school of the type proposed without adversely affecting abutting land uses.**

Comment: The proposed site is of sufficient size to properly accommodate a school of the type proposed without adversely affecting abutting land uses. The subject site is over four acres in size but only 32 percent of the land area is covered by structures. Staff also notes that the capacity of the school is only 400 students according to the site plan. The site plan also indicates that ample room for outdoor play is available. The play area is adequately buffered from the existing multi-family development (Chesapeake Terrace Apartments) to the north, a single-family home to the east and single-family detached homes across Ardmore-Ardwick Road to the south by a wooded area that surrounds the playground.

(3) **No private school shall be located in a multifamily dwelling or in any building of a multifamily project.**

Comment: The subject use is not located in a multi-family building. It is connected to an existing church.

(4) **The Council may specify the maximum number of students to be enrolled, which may not be increased by State or local health, education, or fire regulations.**

Comment: The previous special exception noted a maximum enrollment of 394 students. The current special exception request increases the enrollment to 400 students. The Prince George's County Fire /Emergency Medical Services Department, in a memo dated Sept. 15, 1999, concludes that the proposal ■... creates minimal impact to the services of the Prince George's County Fire Department in the area of fire protection. The plan is adequate to satisfy the requirements of Subtitle 4 of the County Building Code specific to emergency vehicle access.●

- (5) **If the school offers general academic instruction below college level, an outdoor play area (or other outdoor activity area) shall be provided, which shall have a usable space of at least one hundred (100) square feet per student. This area shall be located at least twenty-five (25) feet from any dwelling on an adjoining lot, and shall be enclosed by a substantial wall or fence at least five (5) feet high.**

Comment: Based on a proposed enrollment of 400 students, a 40,000-square-foot play area is required. The site plan indicates that 51,000 square feet of play area is provided. The site plan also indicates that an apartment building adjacent to the play area is 35 from the northern property line. There is also a 20-foot-wide wooded area between the play area and the property line. The total distance to this nearest dwelling is 55 feet. The play area is also surrounded by a six-foot-high chain-link fence.

(c) **In addition to the requirements of Section 27-296(c), the site plan shall show:**

- (1) **The character of the proposed use.**
- (2) **The proposed enrollment.**
- (3) **The location of all dwellings located on adjoining lots.**
- (4) **The location and size of outdoor play (or activity) areas.**

Comment: The site plan adequately displays the information required above. With respect to the character of the use, replacing the trailers with a permanent building will have a positive impact on the subject property as well as adjacent properties.

- G. Parking Regulations: The site plan correctly indicates parking standards for the church (with 280 seats at 1 space per 4 seats) and school (with 400 students at 1 space per 6 students). Based on these standards, 70 spaces are required for the church and 67 spaces are required for the school. However, based on comments from the Permit Review Section (attached memo dated September 23, 1999) an interpretation of Section 27-584 of the parking regulations by the Chief of the Information and Permit Review Division (attached memo dated September 3, 1993) ~~grandfathers~~ certain private schools connected with churches that predate 1981. This interpretation allows such uses to provide only the greatest number of spaces required. In this case, the greatest number of spaces required is 70 parking spaces. The site plan correctly reflects this interpretation.
- H. Landscape Manual Requirements: The proposed building addition is subject to the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*. The Urban Design Section, in a memo dated January 4, 2000, provides the following comments:
- l. The subject application is for the proposed development of a 5,225-square-foot building addition onto an existing church school facility. The plan is acceptable in terms of layout, circulation, and open space. Staff is concerned about conformance to the requirements of the *Landscape Manual* and provides the following comments:

- a. Although the subject property was developed prior to the implementation of the Landscape Manual, construction of the proposed building addition will necessitate that the site be in conformance to the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.
- b. Sections 4.2, Commercial and Industrial Landscape Strips, 4.4, Screening Requirements, and 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses are applicable to the subject plan. The proposed plan appears to satisfy the requirements of Section 4.2 along the frontage at Ardmore-Ardwick Road, and the requirements of Section 4.4 in the parking compound. The requirements of Section 4.2 along Buchanan Street do not appear to have been met, nor do those of Section 4.7 along the north property line adjacent to the multi-family residential development.
- c. The applicant has noted on the plan that existing plantings are proposed to satisfy the requirement of Section 4.2 along the Buchanan Street frontage, but those plantings are outside of the required landscape strip...•
- d. The existing parking lot at the northwest corner of the subject property encroaches into the required bufferyard and building setback areas...•

In addition, the applicant must demonstrate that the loading space is adequately screened from view along the public roadways. The site and landscape plans must be revised to correct these deficiencies. Due to the extent of the existing development, Alternative Compliance is viewed as a reasonable option for conformance with the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.

- I. Zone Standards: The proposed use meets the general height, bulk and size requirements for the R-55 Zone. No variances are required.
- J. Sign Regulations: No signs are proposed with this application. Any future freestanding sign must be indicated on the approved site plan.
- K. Required Findings:

**Section 27-317(a) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that a special exception may be approved if:**

- (1) The proposed use and site plan are in harmony with the purposes of this Subtitle.**

Comment: The proposed use and site plan are in harmony with the purposes of this Subtitle. The 15 purposes of the Zoning Ordinance are listed in Section 27-102. However, the first purpose is a general statement that could be said to summarize these purposes: ■To protect and promote the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the County.• The proposed school addition furthers these purposes by providing educational alternatives to residents and facilities that are used by the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Volunteers of America and other community organizations. In addition, on three occasions, the District Council has found a private school at this site to be in harmony with the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance.

There is no reason to consider the replacement of two temporary classroom trailers on the site with a permanent school building as a substantial impairment to these purposes.

- (2) **The proposed use is in conformance with all the applicable requirements and regulations of this Subtitle.**

Comment: With a condition of approval requiring compliance with the *Landscape Manual*, the proposed use conforms with all the applicable requirements and regulations of this Subtitle.

- (3) **The proposed use will not substantially impair the integrity of any validly approved Master Plan or Functional Master Plan, or in the absence of a Master Plan or Functional Map Plan, the General Plan.**

Comment: The proposed use will not substantially impair the integrity of 1990 Master Plan for Bladensburg-New Carrollton and Vicinity. The Plan recognizes the existing church and private school. The Community Planning Division, in a memo dated Aug. 30, 1999 concludes that no master plan issues are created by this application.

- (4) **The proposed use will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of residents or workers in the area.**

- (5) **The proposed use will not be detrimental to the use or development of adjacent properties or the general neighborhood.**

Comment: The proposed use will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of residents or workers in the area or be detrimental to the use or development of adjacent properties or the general neighborhood. The subject use has served the community for over 30 years. No information has been submitted that suggests any adverse or detrimental impacts have been caused by the school.

- (6) **The proposed site plan is in conformance with an approved Tree Conservation Plan.**

Comment: The proposed building addition does not require the disturbance of over 10,000 square feet of woodland. A tree conservation plan is not, therefore required.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Based on the above comments, staff recommends APPROVAL of this application subject to the following condition:

The site and landscape plans shall be revised to obtain approval for Alternative Compliance with the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*. Otherwise, a departure is required.