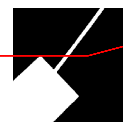


Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
 Prince George's County Planning Department  
 Development Review Division  
 301-952-3470



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. 4369

## DEPARTURE FROM DESIGN STANDARDS APPLICATION NO. 510

Application	General Data
<b>Project Name</b> Lincoln Memorial Park Cemetery  <b>Location</b> 4001 Suitland Road Suitland, MD 20746  <b>Applicant/Address</b> Lincoln Memorial Park, Inc. 4001 Suitland Road Suitland, MD 20746 ATTN: Jesse Walker	Accepted 11/29/99
	Ag Board Action Limit N/A
	Leasing Date N/A
	acreage 5.9109 Acres
	O-S
	g Units N/A
	Footage N/A
	g Area 75A
	l District 7
	pality N/A
	ale Base Map 203,4SE 03R

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
Cemetery in the O-S Zone Reduction in the commercial landscaping strip	ing Property Owners 12/03/99 (CB-15-1998)
	as Parties of Record N/A (CB-13-1997)
	Posted on Site 06/09/00
	ce(s): Adjoining N/A Property Owners

Staff Recommendation			Reviewer
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION

	<b>CONDITIONS</b>		
<b>X</b> <b>(DDS-510)</b>	<b>X</b> <b>(SE-4369)</b>		

DATA.FRM

NEW-

June 21, 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: Tom Lockard, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: **Special Exception Application No. 4369**  
**Departure from Design Standards Application No. 510**

REQUEST: **SE-4369: Cemetery in the O-S Zone**  
**DDS-510: Reduction in the 25-foot wide landscaped strip along Suitland Road**

RECOMMENDATION: **SE-4369: Approval, subject to conditions**  
**DDS-510: Approval**

## 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.

## FINDINGS:

- A. Location and Field Inspection: The subject property is located on the south side of Suitland Road, 700 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet east of its intersection with Southern Avenue. The site is part of the Lincoln Memorial Park Cemetery. It is hilly in topography, descending gradually from east to west. This section of the cemetery is developed with a small two-story office at the entrance from Suitland Road as well as a maintenance facility, which is to be replaced by five 19-foot-high mausoleums.
- B. History: The cemetery was first established in 1927 and expanded in 1944, prior to the area's incorporation into the Regional District in 1949. Two small additions to the cemetery were approved in the early Seventies (SE-2246, which added 7.75 $\frac{1}{2}$  acres; and SE-2628, which added the maintenance facility to be replaced by this request.)

The 1986 *Sectional Map Amendment for Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity* placed the property in the O-S Zone.

- C. Master Plan Recommendation: The 1985 *Master Plan for Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity* recommends a public/quasi-public use for the site in recognition of its long use as a cemetery.
- D. Request: The applicant seeks permission to replace a maintenance facility (SE-2628, approved in 1972) with five 19-foot-high mausoleums within a 145 foot by 127 foot area. The applicant would also add a 4,000 square foot addition onto the existing office at the cemetery entrance off Suitland Road.
- E. Neighborhood and Surrounding Uses: The site is surrounded by the Lincoln Memorial Park Cemetery. It in turn, is surrounded by the following uses:

Northwest - A high rise apartment building in the R-10 Zone, townhouses in the R-T Zone, undeveloped land and single-family dwellings in the R-55 Zone.

Northeast - Across Suitland Road is the Cedar Hill Cemetery on the O-S Zone.

Southeast - Washington National Cemetery in the O-S Zone and the Suitland Federal Center in the C-O Zone.

Southwest - Suitland Parkway.

The neighborhood is defined by the following boundaries:

North - Pennsylvania Avenue (MD 4)

East - Silver Hill Road (MD 458), Suitland Road (MD 218) and the eastern edge of the Cedar Hill Cemetery

South - Suitland Parkway

West - Southern Avenue

The surrounding neighborhood is dominated by three large cemeteries and the Suitland Federal Office Center. A mixture of apartment, townhouse and single-family residential development is found along Southern Avenue and between Suitland Road and Pennsylvania Avenue.

F. Specific Special Exception Requirements: Sec. 27-341. Cemetery or crematory.

**A cemetery (including an animal cemetery) or a crematory may be permitted, provided that the use shall not be located within any proposed street or other public right-of-way, notwithstanding Section 27-259.**

Finding: The subject property is not within a proposed or existing street right-of-way.

G. Parking Regulations: The expanded office and mausoleums would require 19 parking spaces. The site plan shows an area labeled as 20 parking spaces, but does not show the space dimensions. The site plan should be revised to show the following:

1. Dimensions of the parking spaces and drive aisles.
2. A ramp or other means of accessing the buildings.
3. The parking schedule shall show the size of the spaces provided.
4. A note shall be provided exempting the chapel from off-street parking requirements since it was established prior to March 1, 1955.

H. Landscape Manual Requirements: The applicant applied for Alternative Compliance to allow the existing mix of woods and large expanses of open space substitute for the required commercial landscaped strip along Suitland Road (AC-99022). This application was denied, in part, by the Planning Director. Therefore, the applicant has applied for a Departure from Design Standards (DDS-510) to reduce the commercial landscaped strip required along Suitland Road. Staff will analyze this request later in this report.

I. Zone Standards: The proposal conforms to the requirements of the O-S Zone. No variances are required.

J. Sign Regulations: No new signs are shown.

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.**

Finding: With the recommended conditions, the proposed use and site plan are in harmony with the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance. These purposes generally seek to protect and promote the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the County. The proposal will simply expand a use that has occurred on the surrounding acreage for more than 70 years.

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

Finding: The proposal is generally in conformance with the requirements and regulations of the Zoning Ordinance. In those instances where it is not, staff has recommended conditions of approval which will bring the site plan into compliance.

**(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.**

Finding: The proposed use will not impair the integrity of the 1985 *Master Plan for Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity*, which recommends a public/quasi-public use for the site.

- (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.**

Finding: Special exception uses are those uses which are deemed compatible in the specific zone they are allowed, but are not permitted by right because they may have some potential impact on the health, safety and welfare of the area in which they are proposed. In the subject case, impacts to adjacent properties and the health, safety and welfare of those residents and workers in the area are not apparent.

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

Finding: The site is exempt from this requirement. A letter of exemption, dated September 2, 1998, was issued because the proposed development will not result in woodland disturbance, and the site does not have a previously approved Tree Conservation Plan.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Only minor site plan revisions are needed to ensure that this proposal conforms to all the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, staff recommends APPROVAL of SE-4369, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The site plan should be revised to show the following:
  - 1. Dimensions of the parking spaces and drive aisles.
  - 2. A ramp or other means of accessing the buildings.
  - 3. The parking schedule shall show the size of the spaces provided.
  - 4. A note should be provided exempting the chapel from off-street parking requirements since it was established prior to March 1, 1955.

### Departure from Design Standards Application No. 510:

The applicant seeks permission to substitute a combination of existing woodlands and large expanses of open space for a 25-foot-wide commercial landscaped strip required pursuant to Section 4.2 of the Landscape Manual.

## **5. Required Findings:**

- (A) **Section 27-239.01(b)(9) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that in order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:**

- 1. **The purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal.**

Finding: The subject cemetery has been in existence for more than 70 years. While the existing woodlands adequately provide for the requirements of the Landscape Manual in some sections, it is not continuous. Its frontage along Suitland Road contains a mixture of

existing woodlands and shrubbery as well as sections which have no landscaping, but do provide for scenic views into the site.

The requirement for a commercial landscaped strip is necessary to soften the appearance of development from the road. Here we are talking about several 19-foot high mausoleums which will be located almost 1/4 mile from Suitland Road. The 4,000 square foot addition to the office will be well hidden behind a 70+ foot-wide swath of mature trees. A cemetery is not a commercial use, but rather a quasi-public use that has the appearance of open space. It would make little sense to require a commercial landscaped strip to ~~soften~~ a use that is essentially open space. Allowing the applicant to use the existing woods to buffer the office addition while allowing the scenic vistas into the site to remain unencumbered by additional plantings will serve the purposes of Section 27-102 equally well as compliance.

2. **The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.**

Finding: Allowing the existing woodlands and scenic vistas into this mature cemetery to substitute for new landscaping is the minimum departure necessary. All new development proposed on this site plan will either be hidden by existing woods (the office expansion) or distance (the new mausoleums).

3. **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.**

Finding: The subject property was established as a cemetery in 1927. A cemetery is significantly different than most commercial developments in that it involves a minimal amount of buildings and is predominantly open space. Thus, there is little need for a commercial landscaped strip.

4. **The departure will not impair the visual, functional or environmental quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood.**

Finding: The departure will allow for a continuation of the existing situation, which uses a combination of mature trees, existing woodlands and scenic views to substitute for plantings along Suitland Road. This approach has remained virtually unchanged for the 70+ years that this use has been established in this area. It has not, and will not impair the visual, functional or environmental quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood.

- (B) **For a departure from a standard contained in the *Landscape Manual*, the Planning Board shall find, in addition to the requirements in paragraph (A) above, that there is no feasible proposal for alternative compliance, as defined in the *Landscape Manual*, which would exhibit equal or better design characteristics.**

Finding: Alternative Compliance Application No. AC-99022 was denied in part by the Planning Director with the recommendation that the applicant either plant in accordance with the requirements of the Landscape Manual, or obtain a DDS. We conclude that allowing the applicant to maintain the scenic views into and out of the site without requiring additional plantings is the correct action in this case. We can find no alternative which would result in a better design. Therefore, staff recommends APPROVAL of DDS-510.

