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Detailed Site Plan Alternative Compliance

**DSP-08068
 AC-09017**

Application	General Data	
Project Name: SUBUD Washington DC Location: On the north side of Howard Road, approximately 100 feet from the intersection of Montgomery Road and Howard Road. Applicant/Address: SUBUD Washington DC 1231 Hillcrest Road Arnold, MD 21012	Planning Board Hearing Date:	02/04/10
	Staff Report Date:	01/27/10
	Date Accepted:	11/20/09
	Planning Board Action Limit:	02/08/10
	Plan Acreage:	1.0752
	Zone:	R-R
	Dwelling Units:	N/A
	Gross Floor Area:	4,884 sq. ft.
	Planning Area:	61
	Tier:	Developing
	Council District:	01
	Election District	01
	Municipality:	N/A
200-Scale Base Map:	214NE05	

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates	
The construction of a 4,884-square-foot church sanctuary with associated parking and landscaping.	Informational Mailing:	07/21/09
	Acceptance Mailing:	11/19/09
	Sign Posting Deadline:	01/05/10

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Catherine Jones	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan DSP-08068
Alternative Compliance AC-09017
SUBUD Washington DC

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

The detailed site plan was reviewed and evaluated for conformance with the following criteria:

- a. The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance for the R-R (Rural Residential) Zone;
- b. The requirements of the *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*;
- c. The requirements of the Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance;
- d. Referral comments.

FINDINGS

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

1. **Request:** The application has been filed to obtain detailed site plan approval for the construction of a 4,884-square-foot church sanctuary, associated parking, and landscaping in the R-R Zone.
2. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	R-R	R-R
Use(s)	Daycare/vacant	Church
Acreage	1.0752	1.0752
Gross floor area	3,868 square feet	4,884 square feet

Parking and Loading Data

	REQUIRED	PROVIDED
Standard spaces	20	21
Compact spaces	0	0
Van-accessible handicapped spaces	1	1
Total parking spaces	20	22
Loading spaces	0	0

3. **Location:** The site is located on the north side of Howard Road approximately 100 feet east of the intersection of Montgomery Road and Howard Road.
4. **Surrounding Uses:** The subject site is surrounded by residential uses. The lots abutting the property to the east, west, and north are single-family detached units in the R-R Zone. The southern property line is adjacent to Howard Road. Across Howard Road, to the south of the subject property are Beltsville Elementary School and single-family detached units in the R-R Zone.
5. **Design Features:** The subject site is rectangular in shape and the southern property line is adjacent to a public right-of-way. There are no streams, 100-year floodplains, or environmentally sensitive features on-site. The previous land use on the subject property was a daycare center. The applicant is not proposing to continue this use. There is an existing building and driveway which will be razed.

The curb cut and driveway have been relocated from the eastern edge of the property to the center of the southern property line. This curb cut will serve as ingress and egress for vehicular traffic entering the square-shaped parking lot located between the public right-of-way and the building. The parking lot has a landscaped, center island, which serves to guide vehicles and to block view of the building and the bulk of the parking from the street. A sidewalk has been provided to connect the existing sidewalk on Howard Road to the front entrance of the church on the eastern edge of the parking lot. There is a second pathway provided off the main walk that leads to a proposed deck on the rear and east side of the building. The separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic creates a safe environment for both modes of transportation.

The applicant has provided appropriate landscaping, which conforms to the standards set forth by the *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*, with the exception of the Section 4.7 bufferyards to the east and west of the parking lot, for which alternative compliance has been requested. No loading areas or dumpsters are proposed. A heat and air conditioning unit is located on the eastern side of the building where it will be screened from the street and adjacent properties by other plantings proposed to conform to the Landscape Manual. A six-foot-high, vinyl or composite, board on-board fence has been provided on the property lines adjacent to the parking lot providing additional screening for neighboring residences where alternative compliance has been requested.

The applicant has provided a statement referenced below to explain the 'green building' techniques that have been applied:

“At this time we will focus on energy conservation, through the judicious use of materials and techniques. The true North - South orientation of the structure is ideal for passive solar energy. For instance, we can apply techniques from building science to maximize the building envelope to reduce the loads required for heating and cooling. We are interested in this type of construction, because it involves no special features that can be detected from street level. We also favor a tankless, on-demand hot water system. Further, we plan to use high performance heat pumps, activated by programmable HVAC controls. In addition, the use of rainwater catchment tanks would provide irrigation for our landscaping and would assist in drain-water management. All lighting will be of a type to conserve energy, such as compressed florescent lighting and light emitting diodes. Finally, in the future we would like to invest in alternative systems that use little to no carbon based energy resources.”

The proposed 4,884-square-foot, two-story building is 29.6 feet in height. The sanctuary is similar to a single-family detached, residential unit in style with a gable roof and cross gable details. The building is clad with vinyl clapboard siding. The front elevation has polymer-cedar-style shingle accents. A wrap around deck has been provided on the east and north elevations. There is a walkout basement, which can be accessed via a door underneath the deck on the rear elevation.

While the building meets the applicable standards, staff is recommending the following be conditioned, prior to signature approval of the plan, to improve the aesthetics of the proposed building. Staff is requesting that the applicant simplify the material palette for the front elevation of the building. It is felt that the manner in which the siding and shingles have been combined creates a busy appearance. Staff recommends that one of these materials be chosen to dominate, either as the only material on the front façade, or as the dominant material with minimal, restrained accents of the other. Staff is also recommending that the applicant provide brick or siding to wrap the exposed foundation on the basement level of the unit. In addition, the window size and placement on the elevation appears to be out of proportion with the building. Staff is recommending that the applicant provide standard window sizes, at a standardized distance from the floor, and provide larger windows on the first level. These conditions have been added in the recommendation section of this report.

The applicant has provided pedestrian scale, lighted bollards, and post-mounted, ornamental cut-off fixtures for the parking lot. A photometric plan has been provided, which indicates that adequate levels of light have been provided in the parking lot to create a safe environment for visitors while dissipating at the property boundary so as not to disturb adjacent property owners.

The applicant has provided details for an ornamental hanging sign mounted between two posts. The sign itself has a ‘cottage red’ background with black accents and ‘pale almond’ text. This sign meets all applicable standards and regulations.

The applicant has prepared the following statement to explain the nature of the proposed institution, its use, and impact on the surrounding neighborhood:

“In SUBUD, members receive an individual inner experience that enlivens their spiritual and ethical understanding and leads to natural life changes.”

“SUBUD is a highly personal experience, which differs from person to person. It is not a religion and is not based on any dogma or teachings. It is available to people of all religious affiliations and to those without any religious ties or particular beliefs.”

“The Latihan Kejiwaan (Indonesian for ‘inner training’)”

“This is what SUBUD is all about. In the latihan, during which one remains fully conscious, one quiets the mind and moves and expresses oneself according to one’s inner state, empty of desires and thoughts. This is cleansing and is often accompanied by a sense of worship. SUBUD is about living this inner life within the material world.”

“Members meet twice a week to do the exercise for 30 minutes, men and women separately, each receive for themselves from a higher source what they need. In this way, one may come to sense one’s true nature and talents, and to feel an inner security and a direction for living one’s life.”

“The usual effect of the latihan is a feeling of well-being and relaxation. Practiced consistently over time, it tends to bring about a gradual personal development with changing attitudes and values. One can also draw on the latihan for an inner guidance for the best attitude, or action to take in any difficult situation.”

Comment: In response to neighborhood concerns, the applicant is also entering a notarized letter into the record that formalizes an agreement between the applicant and the neighborhood to clarify the uses that may take place within the building and related impacts to the neighborhood.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

6. **Zoning Ordinance:** The subject application has been reviewed for compliance with the requirements of the R-R Zone and the site design guidelines of the Zoning Ordinance. A church is a permitted use in the R-R Zone. The proposal meets all applicable standards for a church in the R-R Zone.

Section 27-441(b) Table of Uses (footnote 52)(B) states: “When possible, there should be no parking or loading spaces located in the front yard.”

Comment: The subject application has proposed parking in the front yard. The applicant has prepared a justification referenced below based on the topography and drainage requirements of the site that indicates that compliance with this standard is not possible. Staff is in agreement with this justification.

“The proposed parking has been placed in the front yard, due to the following reasons:”

- “a. According to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Section 5.2 Storm Water Management (SWM) for Innovative Site Planning, Disconnection of Roof Top Runoff Credit, the criteria for the disconnection of any rooftop and impervious area includes a 75-foot disconnection length channel with a five percent slope or less. The proposed open channel, located on the northeast side of the site follows the natural topography of the site, and it was designed to comply with MDE criteria. Furthermore, it is the best and most practical solution to minimize the impact from the impervious area of the site and to treat the runoff water without major disturbances to the site. So, in order to provide an innovative SWM solution, minimize the impact to the site, and comply with MDE requirements, this open channel system is the most efficient and environmentally

friendly way to treat runoff water. If the parking lot were to be located at the rear of the property, the MDE criteria for open channels is not met; therefore, a conventional SWM method shall apply.”

- “b. To comply with the requirements of the Prince George’s County (section 4.7); the site needs a 30-foot landscape buffer, and a 40-foot setback along the east and the west side of the property. The proposed building sits exactly in between both building restriction lines, which leaves only ten-foot clearance on both sides of the building. If the parking lot were to be located at the rear of the property, a 22-foot-wide drive aisle must be provided, therefore, one of the buffers must be reduced to accommodate the driving aisle.”

7. ***Prince George’s County Landscape Manual:*** The subject application conforms to the applicable requirements of the *Prince George’s County Landscape Manual* with the exception of Section 4.7. The applicant has requested alternative compliance for relief for less than 100 linear feet of eastern and western property lines adjacent to the parking lot, in accordance with Section 4.7 of the *Prince George’s County Landscape Manual*. The recommendation by the Planning Director as contained in Alternative Compliance AC-09017 is as follows:

REQUIRED: 4.7 (Table 2) Buffering Incompatible Uses, along the southwest side of the property line.

Length of bufferyard	91.43 feet
Building setback	40 feet
Landscape yard	30 feet
Fence or wall	Yes
Plant units (120 per 100 l.f.)	55 plant units (with 50% reduction)

PROVIDED: 4.7 (Table 2) Buffering Incompatible Uses

Length of bufferyard	91.43 feet
Building setback	40 feet
Landscape yard	25 feet
Fence or wall	Yes (6-foot fence/Board on Board)
Plant units	114 plant units

REQUIRED: 4.7 (Table 6) Buffering Incompatible Uses, along the southeast side of the property line.

Length of bufferyard	98.48 feet
Building setback	40 feet
Landscape yard	30 feet
Fence or wall	Yes
Plant units (120 per 100 l.f.)	59 plant units (with 50% reduction)

PROVIDED: 4.7 (Table 6) Buffering Incompatible Uses

Length of bufferyard	98.48 feet
Building setback	40 feet
Landscape yard	20 feet
Fence or wall	Yes (6-foot fence/Board on Board)
Plant units	162 plant units

Justification of Recommendation:

The church parking lot does not meet Section 4.7 of the *Prince George's County Landscape Manual* requirements, because the proposed parking lot encroaches into the landscaped yard along the southwest and southeast property lines. This request for alternative compliance is based on the fact that the current parking layout, which includes a landscape island, needs extra space to provide a safe and functional circulation pattern for vehicles entering the site and to facilitate the movement of through traffic along Howard Road. In order to justify the reduction in the landscape yard, the Alternative Compliance Committee finds that the proposed board-on-board fence and the incorporation of additional plant material along the southeast and southwest property lines will result in buffers that are equal or better than normal compliance with the *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*.

Recommendation:

Based on the above analysis, the Planning Director recommended approval of the request for Alternative Compliance pursuant to Section 4.7 of the *Prince George's County Landscape Manual* along the southeast and southwest property lines.

8. **Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance:** The site is exempt from the requirements of the Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance because it is more than 40,000 square feet in area, has less than 10,000 square feet of woodlands, and does not have a previously approved tree conservation plan.

REFERRALS

9. The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:
 - a. **Archeological Review**—In a memorandum dated December 18, 2009 (Stabler to Jones), the Archeological Review staff indicated that a Phase I archeological survey is not recommended for the subject property, as the existing building (to be razed) was built in 1953 and that the probability of archeological sites within the subject property is low. The memorandum provided additional information on nearby historic resources.
 - b. **Community Planning Division**—In a memorandum dated December 21, 2009 (McCune to Jones), the Community Planning Division stated that there are no significant issues for the subject detailed site plan since a church/daycare was the previous use. Further, the application is consistent with the 2002 General Plan Development Pattern policies for the Developing Tier.

- c. **Transportation Planning Section**—The Transportation Planning Section stated, in a referral dated November 30, 2009 (Masog to Jones), that the site is not adjacent to any master plan rights-of-way and that access is acceptable.
- d. **Subdivision Section**—The Subdivision Section indicated, in a memorandum dated December 4, 2009 (Chellis to Jones), that the property is the subject of record plat DSH 4@ 46, recorded in March of 1936. The site plan correctly identifies the property as Lot 15, Block 5 of the Home Acres subdivision. The site plan indicates that the applicant proposes to raze an existing structure and construct a 4,884-square-foot building for an institutional use. The site plan should indicate if the square footage is gross floor area as defined by Section 27-107.01(105) of Subtitle 27 of the Zoning Ordinance. The site plan has been amended to include a general note, which states the following:

“Pursuant to Section 24-111(c)(2) the current development proposed does not exceed 5,000 square feet of gross floor area. Any additional gross floor area which would result in a total GFA for this site of more than 5,000 square feet will require a preliminary plan of subdivision.”

There are no subdivision issues, and the proposed detailed site plan is in conformance with the record plat.

- e. **Trails**—The trails coordinator indicated in a memorandum dated December 29, 2009 (Janousek to Jones), that there are no master planned trails that affect the subject application. The applicant proposes to construct a church on the subject site and proposes new four-foot-wide sidewalks along Howard Road to serve the new church. A proposed internal sidewalk that will connect the proposed church and sidewalks appears to be adequate for the proposed use.
- f. **Permit Review Section**—The Permit Review Section, in a memorandum dated December 11, 2009 (Hughes to Jones), provided ten comments that pertained to the subject proposal. Each of these comments has been addressed by the applicant.

The permit review section found that the proposed sign meets all applicable standards of Part 12, Section 27-617 of the Prince George’s County Zoning Ordinance.
- g. **Public Facilities**—In a referral dated December 30, 2009 (Williams-Jennings to Jones) , Public Facilities indicated they have no comments or issues.
- h. **Environmental Planning Section**—The Environmental Planning Section stated, in an e-mail dated December 1, 2009 (Shoulars to Jones), that this site is exempt from the Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance. There are no environmental issues.
- i. **Countywide Planning**—In a memorandum dated December 2, 2009 (Mangalvedhe to Jones), the Special Projects Section had no comment.
- j. **Verizon**—Verizon responded, in an undated referral sent out November 20, 2009 (Gabor to Jones), indicate that they have no comments or issues.

- k. **Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T)**—The subject application has an approved Stormwater Management Concept 14420-2008-00, which will expire June 19, 2011. The plans were referred to the DPW&T for comment. At the time of the writing of this report, DPW&T had not responded.
- 10. **Urban Design Section:** In addition to the above findings and discussion, the Urban Design Section finds that the proposal to construct a church sanctuary and associated parking is in conformance with the standards of the Zoning Ordinance and the *Prince George’s County Landscape Manual*.
- 11. In accordance with Section 27-285(b) of the Zoning Ordinance, the detailed site plan represents 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, Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and APPROVE Detailed Site Plan DSP-08068 and Alternative Compliance AC-09017 for SUBUD of Washington DC, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Prior to signature approval, the applicant shall revise the architectural elevations to reflect the following:
 - a. Simplify the material palette for the front elevation to utilize siding or shingles. The shingles should be restricted to the gables if they are to be utilized as accents.
 - b. The foundation, where it is exposed, shall be wrapped with brick, siding, or other appropriate façade material.
 - c. Provide standardized windows in regard to size and placement. The distance between the base of the window and floor shall conform to residential construction standards.
 - d. Provide larger windows on the first floor.