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Detailed Site Plan Alternative Compliance

**DSP-08081
 AC-10001**

Application	General Data	
Project Name: Christian Congregational Church Location: Located on the east side of Walter's Lane, approximately one-quarter mile from the intersection of Walter's Lane and Pennsylvania Avenue (MD 4). Applicant/Address: Dr. Frederick Shumate 4904 Braymer Avenue Suitland, MD 20746	Planning Board Hearing Date:	07/08/10
	Staff Report Date:	06/28/10
	Date Accepted:	02/05/10
	Planning Board Action Limit:	Waived
	Plan Acreage:	1.1034
	Zone:	R-80
	Dwelling Units:	N/A
	Gross Floor Area:	4,688 sq. ft.
	Planning Area:	75A
	Tier:	Developed
	Council District:	06
	Election District:	06
	Municipality:	N/A
200-Scale Base Map:	205SE06	

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates	
A 3,197-square-foot addition to an existing 1,491-square-foot church (for a total of 4,688 square feet) to serve a congregation of up to 120 people.	Informational Mailing:	01/07/09
	Acceptance Mailing:	02/01/10
	Sign Posting Deadline:	06/08/10

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Meika Fields Phone Number: 301-780-2458 E-mail: Meika.Fields@ppd.mncppc.org	
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-08081
Christian Congregational Church

The Urban Design staff has completed its review of the subject application and appropriate referrals. The following evaluation and findings lead to a recommendation of APPROVAL with conditions, as described in the recommendation section of this report.

EVALUATION

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

- a. The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, specifically,
 - Section 27-441, Uses Permitted in Residential Zones;
 - Section 27-442, Regulations for Development in Residential Zones; and
 - Section 27-429, R-80 Zone (One-Family Detached Residential).
- 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 evaluation and analysis of the subject detailed site plan, Urban Design staff recommends the following findings:

1. **Request:** The subject application is for approval of a 3,197-square-foot church addition to an existing 1,491-square-foot building with additional parking to serve a congregation of up to 120 people. Detailed Site Plan review is required for churches on properties between one and two acres within the R-80 Zone (One-Family Detached Residential).

2. **Development Data Summary:**

	Existing	Proposed
Zone	R-80	R-80
Total Site Area	1.1 acres	1.1 acres
Total Building Gross Floor Area	1,491 sq. ft.	4,688 sq. ft.
Building Coverage	0.031 acre	0.1 acre
Lot Coverage (50% maximum)	12% (0.14 acre)	48% (0.53 acre)
Green Area (25% minimum)	88% (0.99 acre)	52% (0.57 acre)

Parking Data:

Required

120 seats @ 1 space per 4 seats 30 spaces

Provided

Standard Spaces 19 spaces

Compact Spaces 9 spaces

ADA Spaces 2 spaces

Van Accessible ADA Spaces 1 space

Total Parking Spaces Provided 31 spaces

3. **Location:** The subject property is located at 3414 Walter’s Lane. The property is located on the east side of Walter’s Lane, approximately one-quarter mile from the intersection of Walter’s Lane and Pennsylvania Avenue (MD 4).

4. **Surroundings and Use:** The segment of Walter’s Lane where the site is located transitions from a mix of commercial, close to Pennsylvania Avenue, to residential as the street moves southward. The 1.10-acre Christian Congregational Church site is in the northern portion of the residential neighborhood, positioned between two single-family homes.

5. **Previous Approvals:** The existing church building is a re-use of a single-family home in the R-80 Zone. In 1993, the church was approved for a Commercial Grading and Use Permit (9315-92-CGU). Alternative compliance was approved in connection with this permit to allow for smaller-size plant material than is otherwise required by the Landscape Manual. The congregation size was noted as 24 members on the site plan.

6. **Design Features:** The existing site has a perimeter of mature trees and an open lawn in the rear yard. The site slopes slightly towards a natural drainage area at the back of the site.

The site plan shows one access point on the site from Walter’s Lane. This private drive is proposed north of the existing building linking to the parking lot at the rear of the site. The site plan shows a mix of one lane and two-lane drive aisles and four planted islands in the rear parking lot.

According to tax records, the existing 1,491-square-foot, single-family detached building was constructed circa 1935. The applicant is proposing a 3,197-square-foot expansion of the existing structure. The existing 1930's building has cross-gable roof with asphalt shingles and painted white siding. The existing building, including the siding, roof, and windows appears to be in a poor state of repair, though the church has regular service in this building on Sundays.

The applicant proposes a one-story building addition with a brick façade. This addition will serve as the main sanctuary area with 120 seats. Staff has encouraged the applicant to consider some modifications that would create a more compatible design between the existing building and the proposed structure. The building should have one continuous roof line and roof treatment. The applicant is proposing a standing-seam metal roof. The brick proposed in the addition should be incorporated into the existing building. The applicant has proposed brick along the water table of the existing building. Staff recommends that the proposed brick along the water table be shown with a 24-inch height to create more compatibility between the materials in the existing building and the addition.

Staff additionally recommends that the existing building have a more attractive street presence. The siding should be refinished. No bars should be on the windows of the church. The windows on the existing building should be replaced. The applicant has also proposed window shutters on the existing building and a wider front porch with a pediment to create a better street presence that is more compatible with the neighborhood.

The applicant is proposing six-foot-tall lanterns in the rear parking lot. In consideration of neighboring property owners, staff recommends that exterior lighting consist of full cut-off, post-mounted, or wall-mounted lamps to mitigate impact on adjoining properties.

Pedestrian connectivity around the church should be improved. There are multiple proposed entries on three sides of the proposed building addition: the north, south, and west. The north side of the church is proposed to have one major sanctuary entry with double glass doors and one secondary entry/exit. Currently, this north side of the building is not connected to the rest of the church through walking paths. Staff recommends that a continuous concrete walkway, at least three feet in width, be provided around the entire building and addition.

The applicant has expressed the view that there are design challenges in providing a continuous walkway around the building, such as the site's narrowness and the need to maintain a 22-foot drive aisle. These challenges do not negate the need to provide safe pedestrian connectivity on the site which minimizes vehicular/pedestrian conflicts.

The northeast corner of the building addition extends very close to the drive aisle, reducing pedestrian connectivity on the north side of the building. Staff recommends the building footprint be modified leaving at least five feet between the top of the curb of the drive aisle and the side of the building. Once this space is achieved, a sidewalk at least three feet in width should be provided.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. **Zoning Ordinance:** The subject detailed site plan is in compliance with Section 27-441, Uses Permitted in Residential Zones; Section 27-442, Regulations for Development in Residential Zones; and Section 27-429, R-80 Zone (One-Family Detached Residential) of the Zoning Ordinance. Churches are a permitted use on lots that are between one and two acres in size without special exception, if a detailed site plan is approved.

Section 27-429(c). Regulations.

- (1) **Additional regulations concerning the location, size, and other provisions for all buildings and structures in the R-80 Zone are as provided for in Divisions 1 and 5 of this Part, the Regulations Tables (Division 4 of this Part), General (Part 2), Off-Street Parking and Loading (Part 11), Signs (Part 12), and the Landscape Manual.**

Comment: Additional regulations referenced above have been reviewed as applicable and are discussed in this technical staff report.

Section 27-441 (b). Table of Uses.

Footnote 52

A church or similar place of worship that is located on a lot between one (1) and two (2) acres in size shall require a Detailed Site Plan in accordance with Part 3, Division 9, of this Subtitle. In addition to the requirements of Section 27-285(b), the following requirements shall be met:

- (A) **The minimum setback for all buildings shall be twenty-five (25) feet from each lot line;**

Comment: The 25-foot setback required by the Zoning Ordinance is maintained with the church addition.

- (B) **When possible, there should be no parking or loading spaces located in the front yard; and**

Comment: The church has an existing parking lot partially in front of the existing building that accommodates six spaces. Including the church addition, a total of 30 spaces are required. Twenty-four additional parking spaces will be located at the rear of the church building. Parking in front of the church has been minimized; however, due to the restricted nature of the narrow lot and the parking requirement, it has not been completely eliminated. Additional landscaping has been recommended to mitigate the impact of the parking spaces in the front of the lot.

- (C) **The maximum allowable lot coverage for the zone in which the use is proposed shall not be increased.**

Comment: The maximum lot coverage within the R-80 Zone is 50 percent. The detailed site plan shows 48 percent lot coverage.

The church is proposing one freestanding sign on the site. Signs for nonresidential uses in residential zones are permitted in accordance with Section 27-615 of the Zoning Ordinance which reads:

Section. 27-615. Nonresidential uses in Residential and R-M-H Zones.

When not otherwise provided for in this Subtitle, a sign associated with a nonresidential use allowed in a Residential Zone or the R-M-H Zone shall be permitted, and shall be regulated by the same provisions as those for the least intensive Commercial Zone in which the nonresidential use is allowed.

Comment: In the least intensive commercial zone, a sign eight feet in height is permitted. While an eight-foot-tall sign is permitted per the Zoning Ordinance, a sign of that height would be too visually prominent on this residential-scaled site. The applicant is proposing a sign less than six feet in height with a signage area of 15 square feet. The main rectangular signage area is three feet in height and includes the church name, a Christian cross, and a changeable message area. The sign is designed with a pedestal which raises the sign 2.5 to 3 feet off the ground. Staff recommends in proposed conditions below that the height of the sign pedestal be limited to 18 inches, so as not to create a large visual obstruction in the front yard of the church.

The materials for the sign are not specified in the detailed site plan. In proposed conditions below, staff recommends that the applicant provide a dimensioned signage detail in color that indicates the materials proposed. Materials for the sign should be compatible with the proposed building and should include brick as a design element.

The DSP does not specify if the changeable message area of the sign illuminates.

8. **Prince George's County Landscape Manual:** Landscaping, screening, and buffering of development in the R-80 Zone should be provided as set forth in the *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*. The site plan is subject to 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 subject site is bordered by one public right-of-way (Walter's Lane). The landscape plan provides a ten-foot-wide landscape strip along Walter's Lane in accordance with Section 4.2 of the Landscape Manual.
 - b. Section 4.3(a), Parking Lot Landscape Strip, requires a landscape strip in any zone when a parking lot is adjacent to a public right-of-way. The landscape strip requirements are met through the subject detailed site plan.
 - c. Section 4.3(c), Interior Planting, requires a certain percentage of the parking lot, according to the size of the lot, to be interior planting area and to be planted with one shade tree for each 300 square feet of interior landscaped area provided. The DSP has approximately 12,274 square feet of surface parking lot. A minimum five percent of the parking lot, approximately 614 square feet, should be interior planting area. The applicant is proposing four shade trees in the surface parking lot which complies with Section 4.3(c).

- d. Section 4.4, Screening Requirements, requires that all dumpsters and loading spaces be screened from all adjacent public roads. No loading spaces are required for the subject detailed site plan. Additional screening requirements are met through the DSP.
- e. As the site is adjacent to single-family residential buildings, conformance with Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, is required. A Type “C” bufferyard, which includes a 40-foot setback and a 30-foot-wide landscaped yard, is required along the northern, southern, and eastern property lines. The applicant has requested alternative compliance to Section 4.7 along the northern and southern property lines due to the narrowness of the site. The Alternative Compliance Committee has decided to accept a 15-foot landscaped yard with a 25-foot building setback, as required in Section 27-441 of the Zoning Ordinance. A mix of shade, evergreen, and ornamental trees with the addition of fencing along the northern and south property lines are provided to adequately screen the building addition and parking lot from adjacent property owners. The Alternative Compliance Committee finds that the proposed fence and additional plant material along the northern and southern property lines will result in buffers that are equal to or better than normal compliance with the *Prince George’s County Landscape Manual*. The findings of the Alternative Compliance Committee are as follows:

This request for alternative compliance is filed in conjunction with a detailed site plan that proposes an addition to the gross floor area of the existing church building and expansion of the parking lot. The site is subject to Section 4.7 of the *Prince George’s County Landscape Manual* because the proposed additions to the church building and parking lot constitute an increase in gross floor area (GFA) of more than ten percent of the existing GFA. The church is also a use which is incompatible with the adjoining properties. The applicant has filed this request for alternative compliance because the proposed building does not meet the 40-foot-wide building setback along the southern property line and the plan does not provide for the full 30-foot-wide landscape yard requirements along the northern and southern property lines.

REQUIRED: 4.7 Buffering Incompatible Uses, along the northern property line, adjacent to a single-family detached dwelling.

Length of bufferyard	375.4 feet
Building setback	40 feet
Landscape yard	30 feet
Fence or wall	Yes (board-on-board)
Plant units (120 per 100 l. f.)	226

PROVIDED: 4.7 Buffering Incompatible Uses, along the northern property line.

Length of bufferyard	375.4 feet
Building setback	40 feet
Landscape yard	15 feet
Fence or wall	Yes (board-on-board)
Plant units	310

REQUIRED: 4.7 Buffering Incompatible Uses, along the southern property line, adjacent to a single-family detached dwelling.

Length of bufferyard	376.6 feet
Building setback	40 feet
Landscape yard	30 feet
Fence or wall	Yes, partial (board-on-board)
Plant units (120 per 100 l. f.)	226

PROVIDED: 4.7 Buffering Incompatible Uses, along the southern property line.

Length of bufferyard	376.6 feet
Building setback	25 feet
Landscape yard	15 feet
Fence or wall	Yes, partial (board-on-board)
Plant units	390

Justification of Recommendation:

The applicant is requesting relief from the building setback and the minimum landscape yard in order to construct a 3,197-square-foot addition to the existing structure on-site. The proposed 25-foot setback from the southern property line encroaches into both the 40-foot setback and 30-foot landscaped yard required by the *Prince George’s County Landscape Manual*. The Zoning Ordinance, per Section 27-441(b), requires a minimum 25-foot-wide setback from each property line, with which the proposed addition complies. The addition is not proposed to protrude any further toward the southern property line than the existing structure.

The applicant is proposing a drive aisle along the northern property line to provide access to a parking lot located in the rear of the property that will provide adequate parking for the church. The drive aisle and proposed parking lot encroach into both the required 30-foot-wide landscape yards along the northern and southern property lines. The proposed drive aisle and parking lot will reduce the northern and southern landscape yards to no less than 15 feet. There are stormwater management culverts that are proposed to be located within a portion of the same 15-foot landscape yards for diversion of stormwater to the rear of the site. The applicant is proposing a six-foot-high, board-on-board, wood fence (which is compatible with existing fencing on-site) along the entire northern and southern property lines. They are also proposing 37 percent and 72 percent additional plant units above the amount required by the *Prince George’s County Landscape Manual* along the northern and southern property lines, respectively.

A site inspection revealed that the existing fence located along the northern property line is dilapidated. The fence appears to be rotting, is missing boards, and falling down. A condition to replace this fencing has been included in the Alternative Compliance Committee’s recommendation.

The conditions of approval for AC-10001 are included in the recommendation section of this technical staff report.

9. **Woodland Conservation Ordinance:** A standard letter of exemption to the Prince George’s County Woodland Conservation Ordinance was approved for the Christian Congregational Church of Faith property on August 21, 2008. The standard exemption for this site is valid until August 21, 2010. Therefore, the property is not subject to the provisions of the Prince George’s County Woodland Conservation Ordinance. There are no previously approved tree conservation plans associated with the property.
10. **Referral Comments:** The subject application was referred to concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:
 - a. **Historic Preservation**—In comments dated February 5, 2010, the Historic Preservation Section stated that the subject project would have no effect on historic resources.
 - b. **Archeological Review**—In a memorandum dated February 18, 2010, the staff archeologist noted that a Phase I archeological survey would not be recommended on the subject property because a search of current and historic photographs, topographic and historic maps, and locations of currently known archeological sites, indicated that the probability of archeological sites within the subject property is low.
 - c. **Community Planning Division**—In comments dated April 15, 2010, the Community Planning Division stated that the application is not inconsistent with the 2002 *Prince George’s County Approve General Plan Development Pattern* policies for centers in the Developed Tier and conforms to suburban land use recommendations of the 1985 *Approved Master Plan for Suitland-District Heights and Vicinity, Planning Areas 75A and 75B*.
 - d. **Transportation Planning Section**— In a memorandum dated February 5, 2010, the Transportation Planning Section provided a review of the detailed site plan application. The access and circulation on the site are acceptable and the ultimate right-of-way line for Walter’s Lane is shown adequately on the plan. No structures are placed within the ultimate right-of-way.
 - e. **Subdivision Section**—In a memorandum dated March 10, 2010, the Subdivision Section stated that the site plan correctly indicates that the property is Parcel 8, on Tax Map 89, in Grid D1. Parcel 8 is an acreage parcel, never having been the subject of a record plat. Parcel 8 was created by deed prior to January 1, 1982. The site plan general notes and plan state that the existing development on the site is 1,491 square feet. The square footage should be amended to “gross floor area,” if the area is consistent with the gross floor area definition of Section 27-107.01(105) of the Zoning Ordinance. “Square footage” is not defined in Subtitle 27 nor is it a unit of measurement recognized in Subtitle 27 or Subtitle 24 for the purpose of this detailed site plan.

The PGAtlas aerial photograph for this site (2009) reflects an additional existing structure on the site in the vicinity of the entrance drive along the northern property line, located within the proposed access drive. If that structure exists, it should be indicated on the site plan as to be razed (TBR).

Parcel 8 was created by deed prior to January 1, 1982 and, based on 1984 aerial photographs, the existing 1,491-square-foot structured existed at that time. Based on this information, the applicant may construct up to an additional 5,000 square feet of gross

floor area before a preliminary plan of subdivision would be required. Therefore, the total gross floor area allowable before a preliminary plan is required is 6,491 (1,491 plus 5,000). The applicant should provide a note on the site plan indicating the date of construction of the existing building to remain.

Comment: Prior to signature approval of the detailed site plan, the applicant should amend references to square footage in the DSP notes by replacing them with “gross floor area,” and should provide a note on the site plan indicating the date of construction of the existing building to remain.

- f. **Trails**—In a memorandum dated March 18, 2010, the Transportation Planning Section provided a no comment referral with regard to trails.
- g. **Permit Review Section**—In a memorandum dated February 22, 2010, the Permit Review Section made several comments requesting clarification of several plan elements. The Permit Review Section’s comments have been addressed by revisions to the plans.
- h. **Environmental Planning Section**—In a memorandum dated February 16, 2010, the Environmental Planning Section stated that the site is not subject to the Woodland Conservation Ordinance and that there are no other issues.
- i. **Fire/EMS Department**—The Prince George’s County Fire/EMS Department offered no comment at the time this technical staff report was written.
- j. **Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T)**—In a memorandum dated April 28, 2010, DPW&T offered the following:
 - All improvements within the public right-of-way as dedicated to the county are to be designed in accordance with the requirements of the County Road Ordinance, DPW&T specifications and standards, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - Conformance with street tree and lighting standards shall be required.
 - All storm drainage systems and facilities are to be designed in accordance with DPW&T requirements.
 - Existing utilities may require relocation and/or adjustment. Coordination with the various utility companies shall be required.

The above requirements will be enforced directly by DPW&T through their separate permitting process.

- k. **Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)**—No comment was received from WSSC at the time this technical staff report was written.
- l. **Verizon**—In an email dated February 2, 2010, Verizon indicated that a ten-foot public utility easement (PUE) parallel, contiguous, and adjacent to the public right-of-way free and clear of all obstructions including landscape and bioretention area is required.

11. As required by 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, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and APPROVE Detailed Site Plan DSP-08081 and AC-10001 for Christian Congregational Church, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to signature approval of the detailed site plan, the following information shall be provided, notes added, or revisions made:
 - a. Provide exterior lighting consisting of full cut-off, post-mounted, or wall-mounted lamps to mitigate impact on adjoining properties.
 - b. Provide notes indicating that the siding on the existing building will be refinished and details of the treatment to be used.
 - c. Provide notes that bars on the windows of the church will be removed.
 - d. Provide notes that broken windows on the existing building will be replaced.
 - e. Revise the sign detail to show that the pedestal on which the sign is placed is no greater than 18 inches. The maximum church sign height shall be 4.5 feet after installation.
 - f. Provide a dimensioned signage detail in color that indicates the materials proposed. Materials for the sign shall be compatible with the proposed building and shall include brick as a design element.
 - g. Remove discussion of a loading space from the general notes.
 - h. The minimum interior landscape area for parking lots 7,000 to 49,000 square feet is five percent. Remove reference to eight percent minimum landscape area from notes.
 - i. Add a fence detail to the plans indicating the use of a six-foot-high, non-wood, natural color privacy fence.
 - j. The net lot area shall be provided on the site plan, and the lot coverage shall be recalculated based on the net lot area.
 - k. The south chimney shall be refaced in brick.
 - l. The front entry stairs and porch surface shall be refaced in brick.
 - m. Label building setbacks and dimensions of the proposed addition.
 - n. Revise the plant material schedule to indicate the quantity of *Quercus rubra* as 17.

- o. Revise the labeling of the *Betula nigra*, located in the rear bufferyard, to indicate a quantity of four.
- p. Revise the site plan and Section 4.7 Bufferyard Schedule, along the southern property line, to clearly indicate the length of fencing that exists and that is proposed along the entire bufferyard length.
- q. Replace the existing fence along the northern property line with a six-foot-high, non-wood, natural color privacy fence.
- r. Amend references to square footage in the DSP notes, by replacing them with “gross floor area.”
- s. Provide a note on the site plan indicating the date of construction of the existing building to remain.
- t. Revise the parking lot circulation arrows to show that the one-way access road north of the parking lot is exit only. Revise additional circulation arrow accordingly in consultation with Urban Design staff.
- u. The roofline of the addition shall be continuous with the existing building.
- v. The entire roof shall be shown as a standing-seam metal roof.
- w. Brick shall be shown at the water table of the existing building. The height of the water table shall be no less than 24 inches.
- x. The site plan shall be revised to provide a continuous concrete walkway, at least three feet in width, around the entire building and addition.