

Docket Item # 5  
BAR CASE # 2008-0175

BAR Meeting  
October 22, 2008

**ISSUE:** Concept Approval for Addition/Alterations

**APPLICANT:** Church of God and Saints of Christ, Sixteenth Tabernacle

**LOCATION:** 634 N. Patrick Street

**ZONE:** RB/Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy, with the following conditions to be addressed:

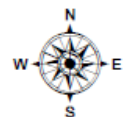
1. That the overall scale of the addition be reduced so as not to overwhelm the historic church;
2. That the front (east) elevation/façade of the addition not extend passed the vestibule of the historic church, towards North Patrick Street;
3. That the applicant explore ways to reduce the height of the addition so as not to directly align with the ridge line on the historic church.

**\*\*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

**\*\*BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by the Code Enforcement Bureau (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Enforcement, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information



**BAR CASE #2008-0174, 0175 10/22/2008**



NOTE: Docket item # 4 must be approved before this item can be considered.

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting a concept approval for an addition and alterations to the Church of God and Saints of Christ, located at 634 North Patrick Street. The applicant has been working with Staff in Planning & Zoning for over three years to develop an addition, with the goal of achieving an addition that would be compatible and not overwhelm the historic church, while providing much needed space for church activities.

The purpose of the conceptual design review is for the Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review to make a finding of appropriateness on the issues of *height, scale, mass and architectural character* of the proposed project. Subsequently, after approval of the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP), the BAR will review detailed plans and will focus on materials, proportions, relationships between architectural elements and the detailing of specific elements such as windows and doors for a determination that the final design complies with the Board's Standards and the *Design Guidelines* in all respects.

As proposed and discussed in the previous report, the addition would entail the demolition the entire east elevation of the existing concrete rear addition and a portion of the south elevation.

The new addition will be approximately 2,809 square feet, and consist of a two-story (first floor and attic) wood framed gabled roof structure. The height of the addition at the ridge line will be 26'9 1/2", aligning with the ridge line of the original historic church. The east elevation will have a street frontage of 25'1" along North Patrick Street. As proposed, the addition will project 4'2 1/2" more than the existing vestibule of the historic church, towards North Patrick Street. The main length of the addition will run 49' 1/4", with 4' 2 1/2" wide components on the east and west elevations, recessed from the main body of the addition.

In respect to the architectural character of the addition, the addition takes its cues from the vernacular form of the historic church, while not directly copying such elements as the Gothic windows and cupola. The addition will have a steep double-gabled roof, with slightly projecting rafter tails, six shed dormers located within the roof, three on each side. The east elevation will have two single window openings on the first floor and one single window opening at the second floor. The south elevation will have a series of three, paired windows on the first floor, with paired windows within the three dormers on the second floor. Two new doors will be incorporated in the east elevation, one for the new addition, and one for the existing addition. The north elevation will have two sets of paired windows on the first floor, and paired windows within the three dormers on the second floor. The west elevation will have a single window opening on the first floor.

While materials and final design details are reviewed under the Certificate of Appropriateness application, the applicant is showing asphalt shingles for the roofing, with standing seam metal for the six dormers, wood lap siding for the exterior, CMU for the foundation, wood doors, and one-over-one double-hung wood windows (either Kolbe and Kolbe or Marvin).

## **II. HISTORY:**

The two story, gable roofed, frame church building at the southwest corner of North Patrick and Wythe streets is believed to have been constructed circa 1926 for Bethel Church or Bethel Presbyterian Mission. The African American congregation was established in 1921 and existed as a mission church affiliated with Alexandria's Second Presbyterian Church. For a time, it met in the building now known as the Old Presbyterian Meeting House while raising funds to erect a building on the lot at N. Patrick and Wythe Streets. In 1926, the congregation was formally organized as Bethel Presbyterian Church, the first black Presbyterian congregation in the Presbytery of the Potomac, Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Sothern Presbyterian Church; now reunited with former Northern Presbyterian Church as Presbyterian Church in U.S.A.). On January 21, 1971, the relationship with the Presbyterian Church was dissolved and the name appears to have been changed to Bethel Community Mission Church. The building was purchased by the current Church of God and Saints on November 24, 1976. [2<sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian Church Session Minutes, April 13, 1922; 2<sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian Church History 52, 91, William E. Thompson, 1989. 'A Set of Rebellious Scoundrels': Three Centuries of Presbyterians Along the Potomac, 229, 278, 318; Old Presbyterian Meeting House Session Minutes, January 12, & February 9, 1971].

Staff could not locate a building permit for the construction of the church building, but did find a 1927 permit for roofing the church (Building Permit #947, 10/6/1927). Thus, the building was constructed between 1921, when the lot is shown as vacant in the 1921 Sanborn Atlas, and 1927. The frame main block remains much as constructed. The 1931 Sanborn map shows the footprint of the main block with a small frame addition extending from the southwest corner. Building permit records indicate that the gabled front vestibule was constructed in 1964 (BLD#20275, 2/7/1964). However, the drawings show it as an open porch supported by columns. It is not known whether the enclosed vestibule is what was actually constructed at that time or represents a further alteration. The same 1964 drawing shows that the steeple was to be raised by several feet and the accompanying permit form indicates that all window sash was to be replaced. It is not known precisely when the present concrete block rear addition was constructed, but it clearly dates to after 1941, as it is not shown on the Sanborn map of that date. From visual inspection, Staff believes the concrete addition was added post 1950.

On October 24 of last year, the Board approved new HVAC units and screening at a new location to the rear of the main block of the historic church. (BAR Case # 2007-0215).

## **III. ANALYSIS:**

Outstanding zoning and site plan issues will be addressed during the Developmental Special Use Permit (DSUP) process, with the project complying with the Zoning Ordinance prior to the Certificate of Appropriateness being docketed before the Board.

Because the applicant has been working with Staff over three years on the development of this project, Staff believes it is appropriate to bring the proposal to the Board at this time for a Concept review of the addition. During the three years of review, the applicant has made great strides to address the various site plan and design issues that were raised by Staff. Staff commends that applicant for the changes that have been incorporated into the proposal as it has evolved.

The *Design Guidelines* do not directly address additions to institutional buildings such as churches or schools. However, guidance for commercial and residential additions, particularly related to elements such as style, differentiation, massing, height, form, and architectural detailing are relevant to the discussion of the proposed addition to the church.

In respect to style, form and differentiation, the *Design Guidelines* state: “No single architectural style is mandated. The design of an addition should respect the heritage of the historic building to which it is attached as well as adjacent buildings. The Boards generally prefer addition designs that are respectful of the existing structure and which seek to be background statements or which echo the design elements of the existing structure...In general, the existing form of a historic building should be retained in the expression of the addition...An addition to a historic building should be clearly distinguishable from the original structure. An addition should not obscure or dilute the architectural and historic importance of an existing building by creating a false sense of the past...Offsetting the footprint of the addition to break the wall plane of the existing building can also be used as a means of creating a differentiation between the old and the new.” In general, Staff believes the applicant has successfully chosen to mimic the form of the historic church for the addition, using vernacular design cues from the historic church, while clearly demonstrating a differentiation between the old and new. However, while supportive of the architectural expression of the addition, Staff maintains concerns that the addition as proposed is overwhelming to the historic church, and that the massing and scale should be reduced.

The *Design Guidelines* state: “As a general rule, the Boards favor contextual background buildings which allow historic structures to maintain the primary visual importance.” As proposed, with the scale and massing of the addition, the historic church becomes the back ground building, rather than maintaining its focal point as the primary building on the lot. The front façade of the addition will project over 4’ passed the end of the vestibule on the historic church and over 10’ beyond the church itself, thus enhancing the perception that the historic church is the subordinate structure rather than the addition. The front elevation/façade should be revised so as to be behind the front building of the historic church. In attempting to reduce the overall scale of the addition, Staff would encourage the applicant to explore ways to reduce the height of the addition so as not to directly align with ridge line on the historic church.

Staff would recommend a deferral to allow the applicant to address these issues. As stated previously, Staff appreciates the work of the applicant to this point, but feels more work is in order to achieve an addition that allows the applicant to gain the space needed, while still allowing the historic church to maintain its predominance as a focal point and a community landmark building in the Parker-Gray Historic District.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends deferral of the application for restudy, with the following conditions to be addressed:

1. That the overall scale of the addition be reduced so as not to overwhelm the historic church;
2. That the front elevation/façade of the addition not extend passed the vestibule of the historic church, towards North Patrick Street;
3. That the applicant explore ways to reduce the height of the addition so as not to directly align with the ridge line on the historic church.

## **V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

### Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-2 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-3 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Additions and Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 Additions and Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.
- C-8 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-9 Toilet Rooms for Persons with Disabilities:  
(a) Water closet heights must comply with USBC 1109.2.2  
(b) Door hardware must comply with USBC 1109.13
- C-10 Toilet Facilities for Persons with Disabilities: Larger, detailed, dimensioned drawings are required to clarify space layout and mounting heights of affected accessories. Information on door hardware for the toilet stall is required (USBC 1109.2.2).
- C-11 Required exits, parking, and facilities shall be accessible for persons with disabilities.
- C-12 The applicant shall comply with the applicable accessible signage requirements of USBC 1110.

### Historic Alexandria:

Approve.

S- Consider relocation Gothic windows on front façade of fellowship hall. Consider six-over-six full divided light double-hung sash windows for side elevations of fellowship hall.

Alexandria Archaeology:

**Finding**

This property is the site of the Tabernacle of God and Saints of Christ Church. At the present time, there is little historical data available on earlier activities on this lot, and it is possible that no structures were built on the property until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeological monitoring is needed to insure that there are no remnants of earlier activities that could provide information about Alexandria's past.

**Recommendations**

\*1. To insure that significant information is not lost as a result of the current development project, the applicant shall contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-838-4399) at least two weeks prior to any ground disturbance so that an inspection and monitoring schedule for City archaeologists can be arranged.

\*2. The applicant shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development when archaeologists are not present. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

\*3. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

4. The statements in archaeology conditions above marked with an asterisk "\*" shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Demolition, Basement/Foundation Plans, Landscaping, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Utilities and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

5. If significant resources are discovered during the archaeological monitoring, the applicant shall work with Alexandria Archaeology, and possibly hire a consultant, to complete the archaeological investigations in the area of significance and prepare a Documentary Study in order to provide a historical context for the resources discovered.

6. If warranted by the City Archaeologist, the developer will design, write and erect historic markers (interpretive signage) on the property according to specifications provided by Alexandria Archaeology. The markers will be subject to approval by Alexandria Archaeology and will highlight the historical and archaeological significance of the property.



VI. IMAGES



Figure 1: Existing elevations

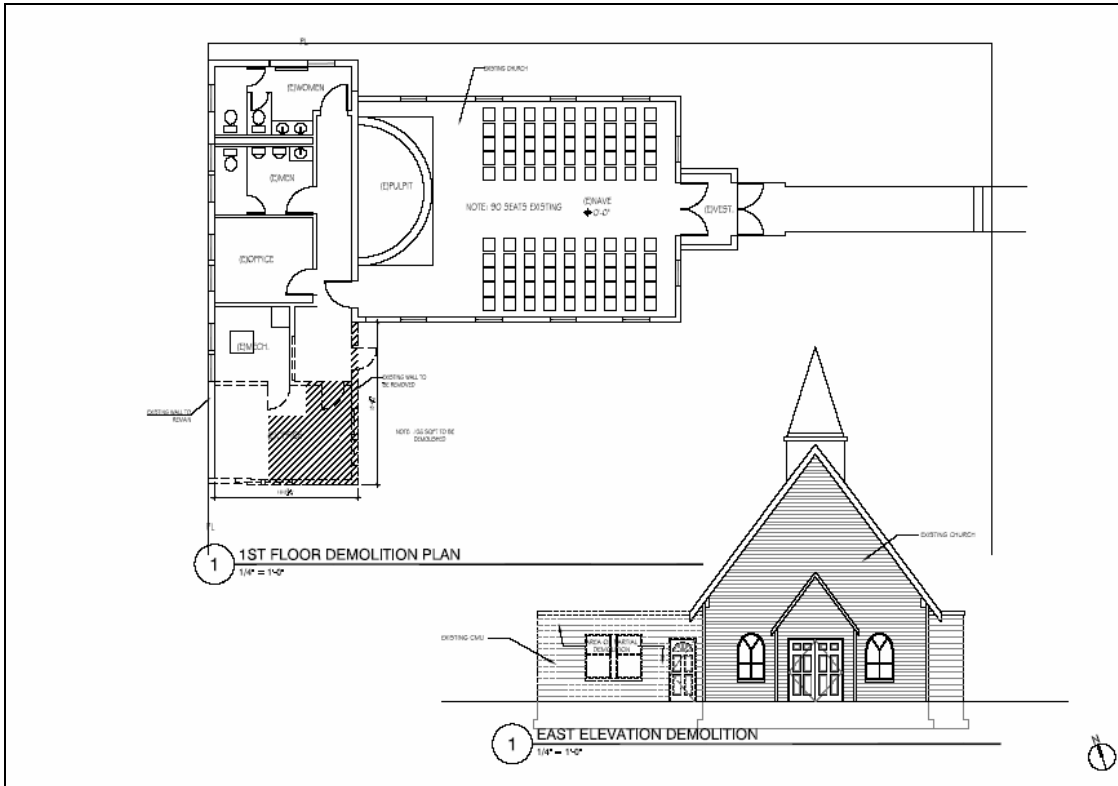


Figure 2: First floor demolition plan





Figure 4: Front elevation showing proposed addition

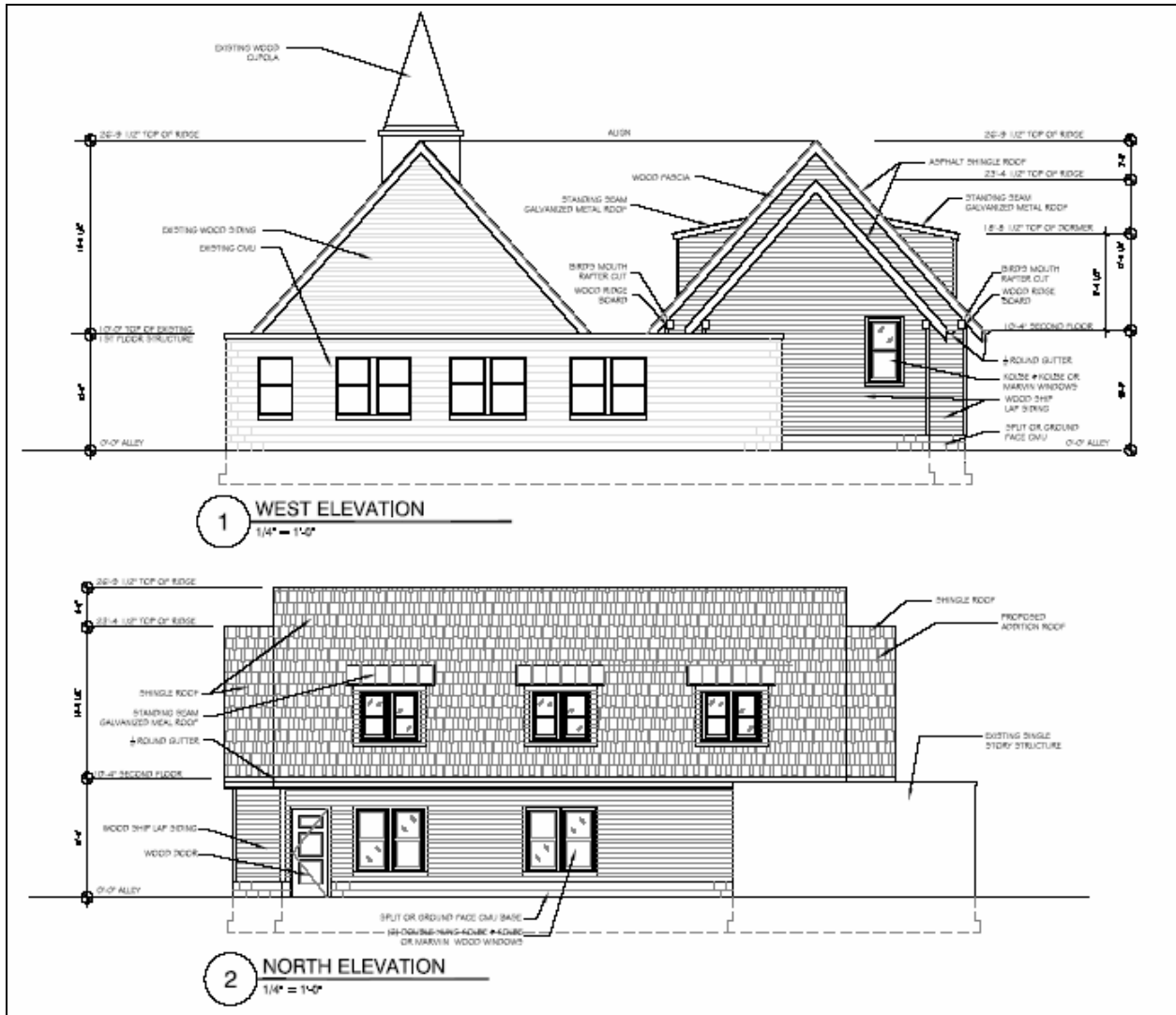


Figure 5: West and north elevations



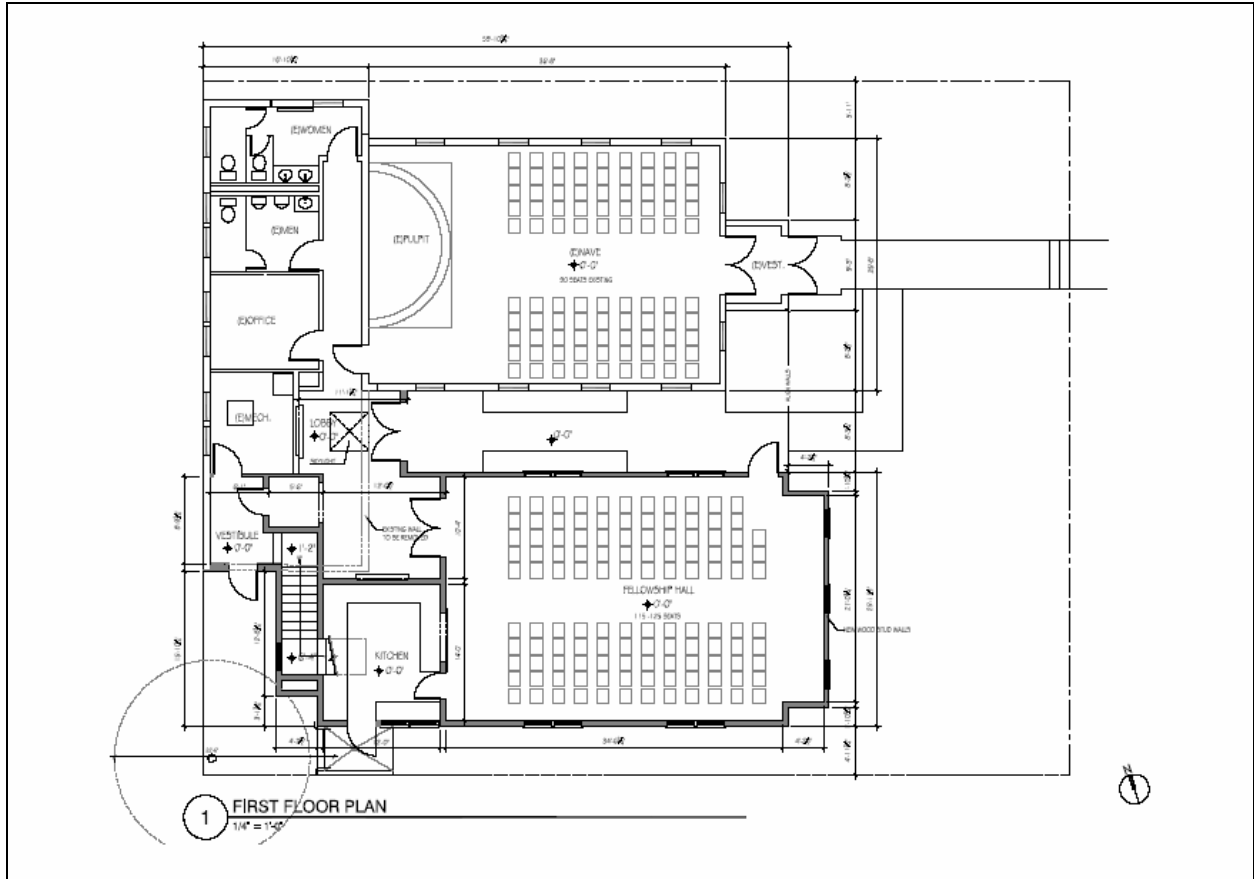


Figure 7: First floor plan