

Docket Item # 4
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2003-0099

Planning Commission Meeting
December 2, 2003

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for a special use permit for a parking reduction at a church.

APPLICANT: Shiloh Baptist Church
by Thomas Bolen

LOCATION: 1400 Duke Street

ZONE: OCM/Office Commercial Medium

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends **approval** of a request for a special use permit for a parking reduction, subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and permit conditions as listed in Section III of this report.

I. DISCUSSION

Request:

The applicant, Shiloh Baptist Church, requests special use permit approval for a parking reduction for expanded church facilities located at 1400 Duke Street.

Site Description:

The subject property is part of a parcel comprised of lots of record together having approximately 498 feet of frontage on Duke Street, approximately 335 feet of frontage on South West Street, and a total lot area of approximately 167,786 square feet, or 3.8 acres. The site is developed with the Roundhouse Square complex of office buildings, warehouses and flex space. Access to the property is from both Duke and South West Streets. The subject property is located at the southwest corner of Duke and South West Streets, and bordered by Jamieson Street to the south. The subject building is currently occupied by the Shiloh Baptist church administrative offices at the north end of the building, and Bae Systems, located in the middle portion of the building. The rear space, which Shiloh intends to occupy, is now vacant.

Surrounding Uses:

To the east of the site is Fannon Petroleum Company's sales and distribution facilities and Thrifty Car Rental. To the south and southeast is the Old Town Village development, with the residential condominium buildings located directly behind the Roundhouse Square complex along Jamieson Street. To the west, along Duke Street, is the Marriott hotel complex, and high density office buildings. The uses across the street between South Peyton and South Henry Streets are a mix of uses, including residential townhouses, the existing Shiloh Baptist Church location and office buildings.

Project Description:

Previous Approval:

On June 15, 2002, City Council granted Special Use Permit #2002-0035 for a parking reduction at 1400 Duke Street to move the main sanctuary, and accessory church activities, operating from its current location at 1401 Duke Street across the street, to the front portion of the subject building. The church has been located at its current site since 1891. The building is small and it is difficult for the church to accommodate its activities, including regular church services, in the cramped space. The proposed location, at 1400 Duke Street, in the Roundhouse Square complex, contained 18,400 square feet of space and was previously occupied by the Tesst Technology Institute. The parking requirement for the proposal was 102 spaces, and the applicant had only 58 spaces available at the premises (a technical parking reduction of 44 spaces). The applicant had secured 211 parking spaces to use evenings and weekends during its peak times. Although the church has yet to use the proposed sanctuary, it uses the front portion of the building at 1400 for its administrative offices. Church services continue to be offered from the old building at 1401 Duke Street.

Current Request:

Since last year's approval, the applicant has also secured the use of the rear portion of the building at 1400 Duke Street. The church now plans to locate its sanctuary there, instead of at the front of the building. The front portion of the building will continue to be occupied by the administrative offices, and will provide space for other church related activities (see *Meeting and Conference Center Activities* below). The middle portion of the building will continue to be occupied by Bae Systems, although the church hopes to occupy the space sometime in the future. The new sanctuary will allow the applicant to enlarge its seating capacity to 650 seats, 143 more seats than were proposed last year. The space proposed to be occupied by the sanctuary at the back of the building, and the church-related uses at the front of the building totals 31,565 square feet. A church is a permitted use as a zoning matter, and does not require a special use permit. However, in this case, the proposal for church parking does not meet the parking requirements of the zoning ordinance and a special use permit for a parking reduction has been requested.

Meeting and Conference Center Activities:

According to the applicant, the "Meeting and Conference Center" is a name selected by the membership to help highlight the purpose and need for the building. The applicant explained that the activities offered at the facility will be targeted toward the members of the church. Additionally, the applicant states that the facility is not a "conference center" in the usual sense of the term serving groups using the space for functions not related to the church. Activities on the premises will include worship services, bible studies, Sunday school, choir rehearsals, meetings, funerals, weddings, bookstore sales and other similar activities that currently take place at the 1401 Duke Street location. In general, the facility will offer the following activities:

- Hold Sunday School classes for Shiloh Baptist Church members.
- Meet regularly in the space for workshops as it relates to Christian education for Shiloh Baptist Church members.
- House the administrative offices, for 15 to 20 staff members, operating from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, which allows the employees of Shiloh Baptist Church to perform the daily duties of normal church operations.
(The office is currently open and operating at 1400 Duke Street.)

Schedule of Activities at Sanctuary:

The applicant anticipates the following regular schedule of activities at the sanctuary, and number of attendees:

- One Sunday morning service from approximately 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to be held from the new sanctuary, with approximately 600 members attending.
- Bible study to be held at 7:30 p.m. each Wednesday night, which concludes no later than 9:00 p.m., with a total of approximately 300 members.
- Choir rehearsal every Tuesday and Thursday night at 7:30 p.m., with an estimated total of 65 members.

Membership:

According to the applicant, church membership consists of some 1,100 people, with about 800 to 900 of them regularly attending services.

Existing Church Facility at 1401 Duke Street:

When the new sanctuary opens at 1400 Duke Street, the church will only use the existing church building at 1401 Duke Street for an early Sunday morning service, and occasional bible study or Sunday school classes. The church will not hold functions at the existing facility at the same time that worship services or other activities are taking place at the new facility. The existing sanctuary includes 400 seats. An auxiliary basement room seats an additional 50 to 75 worshippers.

Parking:

Parking Requirement:

Under section 8-100 (A) (10) of the zoning ordinance, a church is required to provide parking at a ratio of one space for each five seats in the sanctuary. With a 650 seat sanctuary, the parking requirement for the proposed location is 130 parking spaces, 28 more spaces than required for last year's proposal (SUP#2002-0035). The location of those spaces, under section 8-200 (C)(4) requires that they be on the same site as the church or on an immediately contiguous lot. As part of its lease of the proposed new church location at Roundhouse Square, the church will have 52 parking spaces there dedicated for its use (17 more spaces than were proposed for the last permit).

The Shiloh Baptist Church now operating at 1401 Duke Street has a total of 33 on-site spaces. Ten of those spaces are allocated to St. Coletta's for daytime use, and two will be removed to provide an enlarged entrance at the rear of the building. As the zoning ordinance requirement can only be met with approved, fully dedicated parking spaces that are available at all times for the church use, and the two lots in combination total only 73 spaces, the church is 57 parking spaces short of the zoning ordinance requirement.

The applicant has therefore requested a parking reduction special use permit and, in justification of the request, has identified a number of sites in the area on which parking is made available to the church on Sundays, Saturdays and on weekday evenings. All of these proposed sites were considered during the last parking reduction approval, however, the applicant has secured access to an additional 87 spaces located to the west of the building.

Parking Available on Nights and Weekends:

The following parking spaces are made available to the church on evenings and weekends, which is when the most intense use of the church facilities takes place:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Number of Spaces</u>
1400 Duke St	Shiloh Meeting and Conf Ctr	87
1400-A Duke St	APTI/Bae Systems	12
1400 Duke St	Cannon Estates	18
1401 Duke St	Shiloh Baptist Church*	38***
1415 Duke St	American Society of Consultant Pharmacists	13
1429 Duke St	American Statistical Society*	7
205 S. Henry St	Fannon Oil site	65**
1320 Duke St	Fannon Oil	18**
1315 Duke St	Urban League	8
207 S. Peyton St	St Coletta	25
223 S. West St	Shiloh Baptist offices*	2
207 S. West St	Shiloh Baptist work center*	1
346 Commerce St	St Coletta*	4

	Subtotal	298
	Plus church spaces	73

	TOTAL	371

* These sites are owned by Shiloh Baptist Church

** These sites are likely to be redeveloped in the future. If they are, the parking spaces would not be available.

*** These spaces are in addition to the approved spaces at the existing Shiloh location. They are achieved as necessary by stacking the cars close together.

Applicant's Parking Study:

The zoning requirement of one space for each five seats assumes that cars arrive at a church with five passengers each. While some families are that large, most cars in modern driving practice include fewer passengers. Therefore, for the last application, Planning staff requested that the applicant attempt to determine the church's real parking requirements during its peak activity times, which are for Sunday services, Saturday afternoons and Wednesday evening Bible study classes. In response, over the course of a few weeks, the church handed out surveys to attendees at its functions and questioned them about their driving and parking practices.

The results showed that, on average, attendees at the church services and functions create a parking demand at a ratio of 1.5 people for each car. However, the parking surveys also revealed that attendance varies greatly at the church. Out of the 400 seats available at the church, attendance numbers over four services included 196, 333, 184, and 176. The church explained that there are wide fluctuations in attendance at services depending on the weather, the time of the year, competing holidays or worship holidays. Attendance at the Wednesday evening bible school numbered 163 attendees.

Zoning:

The subject property is located in the OCM-50/Office Commercial zone. Under section 4-902(E) of the zoning ordinance, a church is a permitted use in the OCM zone. Section 8-100 (A)(4) of the zoning ordinance allows a parking reduction with a special use permit.

Master Plan:

The proposed use is consistent with the King Street/Eisenhower Avenue chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for Office Commercial Medium use.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff does not object to the proposed parking reduction for church uses located at 1400 Duke Street. While the parking requirement has increased by 28 spaces from last year's proposal, the applicant has secured an additional 17 parking spaces on the premises for use all of the time, and an additional 87 spaces available during evening and weekend hours, the facility's peak times. The church is an established part of the community in this part of the city, and participates in a shared parking arrangement whereby it makes its parking lot available to community businesses during the workday. Those same businesses and others make their parking spaces available to the church on evenings and weekends. Approval of the last parking reduction established that the city and neighborhood are willing to accommodate this historic church with its parking impact as part of the community. With the added parking spaces to accommodate the increased parking requirement in this application, staff supports the parking reduction.

Staff has maintained conditions requiring that employees park off street, and that the church post information about its off site parking and about available transit options. As in last year's approval, staff has not included a condition specifying the number or exact location of parking spaces that must be maintained but, based on the representations in this application, expects that comparable parking arrangements will continue in the future for staff to monitor.

As to site improvements at 1400 Duke Street, staff has required that the church provide landscaping along the entire length of the South West Street frontage of the parking lot, and along the Jamieson frontage of the building's parking lot. Staff has also included a condition to that effect and requiring that the lighting in the parking lot be increased if deemed necessary by the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services and the Police Chief. In addition, to accommodate increased pedestrian traffic at the South West and Duke Street intersection resulting from church activities, staff recommends that the applicant provide pedestrian improvements, including countdown and audible pedestrian signals, to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services.

With these conditions, staff recommends approval of the special use permit.

STAFF: Eileen Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;
Barbara Ross, Deputy Director;
Valerie Peterson, Urban Planner.

III. PERMIT CONDITIONS

1. The special use permit shall be granted to the applicant only or to any corporation in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z) (SUP#2002-0035)
2. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** A parking reduction is permitted allowing the proposed church with ~~507~~ 650 seat sanctuary to be located at 1400 Duke Street, consistent with this application. (P&Z)(SUP#2002-0035)
3. The applicant shall post signs inside the building indicating the location of the off-street parking. (P&Z) (SUP#2002-0035)
4. The applicant shall require that its employees park off street. (P&Z) (SUP#2002-0035)
5. The applicant shall encourage its members and staff to use mass transit when traveling to and from the school, by posting information regarding DASH and METRO routes, the location where fare passes for transit are sold, and advertising of car pooling opportunities. (P&Z) (SUP#2002-0035)
6. Trash and garbage shall be stored inside or in a dumpster shall be placed in sealed containers which do not allow odors to escape and shall be stored inside or in closed containers which do not allow invasion by animals. No trash and debris shall be allowed to accumulate on site outside of those containers. (P&Z) (SUP#2002-0035)
7. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** Landscaping shall be installed in the form of approximately ~~twenty~~ 43 shrubs along the Jamieson Avenue side of the property ~~the South West Street side of the property~~ and approximately 40 shrubs along the SouthWest Street side of the property, between the existing parking lot and sidewalk to screen parking from the public right of way ~~and to extend the existing shrubbery~~, with the specific plant type, size and spacing to be to the satisfaction of the Directors of Planning and Zoning and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. (P&Z)(RP&CA)(SUP#2002-0035)
- 7a. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** A Landscaping Plan shall be submitted to the satisfaction of the Directors of Planning and Zoning and Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities. (RP&CA) (P&Z)
8. The applicant shall contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department regarding locking hardware for the facility. (Police) (SUP#2002-0035)

- 8a. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The applicant is to contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a security survey for the church. (Police)
9. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** All ~~LOUDSPEAKERS~~ are shall be prohibited from the exterior of the buildings. (T&ES)(SUP#2002-0035)
10. Lighting in the parking lot area shall be to the satisfaction of Transportation and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Chief of Police. (Police) (P&Z) (SUP#2002-0035)
11. The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the special use permit one year after the use is operational and shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions, (b) the director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review which rises to the level of a permit violation, or (c) the director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed. (P&Z) (PC) (SUP#2002-0035)
12. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The applicant be required to install pedestrian improvements on the west side of the intersection of Duke Street and South West Street in the form of countdown pedestrian signals and audible pedestrian signals. (T&ES)

Staff Note: In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Transportation & Environmental Services:

- F-1 T&ES has no record of complaints relative to the parking reduction approved under SUP #2002-0035, and have no objection to the amended parking numbers.
- R-1 Staff has received complaints from Shiloh Church that it is difficult for members to cross Duke Street when going between church buildings or parking lots. In response T&ES recommends that the applicant be required to install pedestrian improvements on the west side of the intersection of Duke Street and South West Street in the form of countdown pedestrian signals and audible pedestrian signals.
- R-2 All loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the buildings.
- C-1. The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line.

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 A fire prevention code permit is required for the proposed operation. An egress plan showing fixture location, aisles and exit doors shall be submitted for review with the permit application.
- C-4 Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and /or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Four 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-5 When a change of use requires a greater degree of structural strength, fire protection, exit facilities or sanitary provisions, a construction permit is required.
- C-6 The current use is classified as S-Storage; the proposed use is A-Assembly. Change of use, in whole or in part, will require a certificate of use and occupancy (USBC) and compliance with USBC including but not limited to: limitations of exit travel distance, emergency and exit lighting, a manual fire alarm system, and accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- C-7 Required exits, parking, and accessibility for persons with disabilities must be provided to the building.

Health Department:

- F-1 No comments.

Police Department:

- R-1 The applicant is to contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a security survey for the church.
- R-2 The property owner is to survey the lighting level of the parking lots. The lighting level is to be a minimum of 2.0 foot candles minimum maintained.