

Our Lady of Mercy Public Hearing Variance Executive Summary

The requested variances are for a ± .22-acre property located between West Railroad Avenue and a 10-foot wide midblock alley. The property consists of an existing single residence, which is proposed for demolition to allow construction of a new Parish Hall. The proposed Parish Hall is an expansion of the Our Lady of Mercy campus at 240/250 Park Avenue which is north of the subject property. The proposed Parish Hall is designed to be incorporated into the existing Our Lady of Mercy campus (See Figure 1).



Figure 1. Proposed Parish Hall Location

The property is within the Urban Community Future Land Use category, the Boca Grande Planning Community and is zoned RS-1. Religious facilities are permitted in per Policy 2.1.3 in all land use categories. A companion Special Exception application is on file to allow the expansion of the Church campus onto the subject property consistent with the Land Development Code.

Variance Requests

The following variances are requested:

- (1) A variance from LDC Section 10-416(d)(4) requiring a minimum of 15-foot Type D buffer along property line abutting a right of way to allow a Type D buffer of varying widths along W. Railroad Avenue and the midblock alley;
- (2) A variance from LDC Section 10-416(d)(4) requiring a minimum of 15-foot Type C buffer along the south property line abutting a single family residence with a wall or berm to allow a reduced buffer width and no wall or berm; and
- (3) A variance from LDC Section 10-416(d)(4)(Note 3) limiting the maximum number of palm trees to 50 percent of the required trees and requiring palms to be clustered, to allow installation of exclusively palms trees. The code minimum landscape plantings will be provided within the reduced buffers (See figure 2).



Figure 2. Elevations of Parish Hall

Findings

The exceptional conditions of the property that necessitate the variance requests are historical. The plat was approved in 1925, prior to adoption of the zoning regulations. The subject property consists of two lots of the revised plat of Boca Grande. It is bounded on the east by W. Railroad Avenue and on the west by a midblock alley. This creates two lot frontages. The lot depth is reduced as a result of the angle at which W. Railroad Avenue intersects the lot creating a trapezoid shape and reducing the building area. When the code minimum setbacks are applied the building area is reduced to 45 feet by 60 feet. Most non-residential buildings have an average

depth in excess of 60 feet. The historic conditions created by the plat and application of code minimum property development regulations creates a physical hardship to developing the property.

The limitations of the property are not the result on the property owner's actions. The conditions are created by the historical plat and the requirements of the zoning code are outside the property owner's control. The relief sought for the reduction of the landscape buffer width is the minimum necessary to allow construction of the Parish Hall. Development of the Parish Hall on the property is complicated by the historical conditions created at the time of platting in 1925.

The proposed plantings to be installed within the buffers will provide a denser appearance as the plantings will be grouped closer together due to the reduced buffer width. Plantings will be selected that will thrive best within the reduced buffer widths. The landscape buffers will appear from the surrounding properties as if the full buffer width is provided due to the denser plantings. The proposed building style includes architectural elements and features taken from the existing church which will help the new structure to blend with the existing campus. The additional parking area allows the building separation present on the existing campus to be continued on the subject property. This creates a pleasing appearance and rhythm.