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Our Lady of Mercy

Administrative Variance Application
Request Narrative

1. Request a variance from LDC Section 34-2051(a)(1)a. which requires a minimum lot area of 2 acres to allow a minimum lot area of 9,563.98 square feet or .22 acres.

   Justification:
   The existing Our Lady of Mercy church and accessory uses; located on the parcel immediately north of the subject property, create a campus utilizing an aggregation of platted lots from the Revised Boca Grande Plat recorded in 1925. This existing campus is 8 platted lots and a vacated alleyway. The lots were platted at 50 feet wide and range in depth from 50 to 150 feet; which are common dimensions for the plats of Boca Grande recorded during this time period. The original church building first appeared on the tax rolls in 1950 with the additional buildings being constructed and acquired by the Diocese of Venice much later.

   The proposed parish hall is designed to be incorporated into the existing Our Lady of Mercy campus. The subject property at 221 W. Railroad Avenue consists of lots 11 and 12 of Block 6 of the Revised Plat of Boca Grande which combined are approximately .22 acres in size. When aggregated with the existing northern property the entire campus is approximately 1.22 acres in size. The existing campus represents the consistent acquisition of smaller properties over time which currently do not comply with the existing regulations. The acquisition of lots 11 and 12 to be aggregated with the existing campus, improves this existing non-conformity despite being less than the required 2 acres size.

   For context, the properties in the vicinity of the proposed Parish Hall have a taxable value ranging from 2.6 Million to 1 Million. This represents a significant cost to the Diocese of Venice to meet the minimum 2 acre2-acre requirement. Additional acquisitions would increase the developable area for the existing church; however, the existing buildings and the proposed parish hall are a smaller scale and more context sensitive given the mass and scale of the existing historical church building. Additionally, due to the church's location on Boca Grande the number parishioners attending service and other activities on-site are less than what would be considered for a typical inland community. The additional parcel will maintain the size and scope that has historically been associated with the Our Lady of Mercy Campus while enabling the construction of the proposed parish hall to serve the Boca Grande Community as well as improving an existing non-conformity with this provision of the LDC.

2. Request a variance from LDC Section 34-2051(a)(1)c which requires a minimum lot depth of 100 feet to allow an average lot depth of 95.63 feet.

   Justification:

The depth of lots 11 and 12 varies between 63.35 feet to 107.01 feet as demonstrated on the recorded plat of the Revised Plat of Boca Grande in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Varying Lot Depth by Sloping Front Property Line

At the south property line of lot 11 the depth is 107.01 feet which exceeds the minimum lot depth, however at the mid point between the two lots the lot depth is 95.63 feet which is less than the required 100 foot lot depth. The lot has a trapezoid shape due to the varying lot depth. This particular part of Boca Grande was platted in 1925, prior to the Land Development Code. A review of the full plat demonstrates the platted lot depths varies throughout the Block from approximately 50 feet to 150 feet. The lot is bounded on the west by a 10-foot wide midblock alley. Without the platted alley, lots 11 and 12 would not be double frontage lots and exceed the minimum depth rendering the requested variance unnecessary. The requested reduction is less than a 10 percent reduction in the required lot depth. The proposed building design for the parish hall is oriented to provide appropriate building setbacks with the reduced lot depth.

3. Request a variance from LDC Section 34-2051(a)(2) which requires a maximum lot coverage of 40 percent to allow a lot coverage of 40.3 percent.

Justification:
The subject parcel consists of platted lots 11 and 12 with a combined lot area of 9,563.98 square feet permitting 3,825.59 square feet of buildable area at 40% coverage. The platted lots along the east side of Block 6 for the Revised Boca Grande Platt recorded in 1925 are of a smaller size due to a 10ft platted alley. The lot depth of lots on the east side of Block 6 increases from north to south and range from approximately 50 feet to 150 feet. The lot depth of the subject parcel

is 95.63 feet. This is less than the lots on the west side of the Block where the range of lot depths is 100 feet to 150 feet.

The proposed parish hall is 3,642 square feet and includes a covered walkway providing access between the existing church on the north parcel and the proposed parish hall; which must be considered in the requested lot coverage. Approximately 212.60 square feet of the covered walkway area occurs within the southern parcel boundary. The walkway is not connected to either the church or the parish hall. The walkway is not completely enclosed however, it was included in the lot coverage calculation. When considered, the covered walkway increases the lot coverage of the southern parcel to .3% over the allowed 40 percent lot coverage. Without the additional covered walkway area, the lot coverage of just the parish hall is 38 percent less than the allowed lot coverage of 40 percent. The parish hall is not meant to be a separate principle use but rather an accessory use as part of the larger religious campus. When the entire Our Lady of Mercy campus is considered the lot, coverage is 36 percent which does not exceed the 40 percent lot coverage limitation.

4. Request a variance from LDC Section 34-2051(a)(4)a. which requires a minimum front setback of 25 ft to allow:
    - A varying front setback of between 11.15 feet to 23.50 feet for a new building along West Railroad Avenue.
    - A second front setback of 8.50 feet for a new building along a 10-foot wide unnamed alley on the western property boundary line.

Justification:
The combined lot area of lots 11 and 12 is 9,563.98 square feet or .22 acres. The lots along the east side of Block 6 are smaller in size. The lot depth of lots on the east side of Block 6 increases from north to south and range from approximately 50 feet to 150 feet. The lot depth of the subject parcel is 95.63 feet. This is less than the lots on the west side of the Block 6 where the lot depth exceeds 100 feet.

Lots 11 and 12 are trapezoid in shape, the front property line slopes from north to south as the lot depth increases. The reduced lot depth reduces the overall development area on the lots. Figure 2 demonstrates the sloping lot line of the lots along W. Railroad Avenue in Block 6 of the revised plat of Boca Grande.

Figure 2. Varying Lot Depth Due To Sloping Front Property Line

These variance requests are from the section of the Land Development Code that govern the front setbacks for Places of Worship and Religious Facilities. The variance request results from the reduced lot depth and area of the subject property; which occurs from the underlying plat. The parcel is bounded by W. Railroad Avenue on the East and by the midblock alley on the west. This results in two frontages; which would be required to provide two front setbacks of 25 feet. When the code is applied 50 feet of lot depth is eliminated leaving only 45 feet of buildable area. A buildable depth of 45 feet is small in comparison to most non-residential buildings. Most non-residential buildings have a building depth of 60 feet or more. When applied, the code required setbacks permit a building of approximately 2,737.80 square feet. This is in line with an average single family home however for a parish hall to serve the Our Lady of Mercy congregation it is not large enough. The reduced lot depth and double frontages reduce the development area to the 2,737.80 square feet. The proposed parish hall is smaller than the existing meeting building in the northeast corner of the Our Lady of Mercy Campus.

The front setback gets larger from north to south due to the orientation of the front property line. From the street frontage of West Railroad Avenue, the location of the proposed building from the right of way provides an appearance similar in nature to the rectory and meeting building on the northern parcel; which have existing setbacks of 18.85 feet and 10.10 feet respectively.

The proposed parish hall is consistent in mass and scale with the surrounding character of the neighborhood. The architectural features of the proposed building are consistent with the existing church campus and surrounding residences, ensuring the roadway frontages will not be dominated by the proposed building. The existing meeting building in the northeast corner of the church campus has a front setback of 10.10 feet to W. Railroad Avenue. The rectory in the northwest of the church campus has a front setback of 18.85 feet to Park Avenue. The proposed setbacks are comparable to setbacks of the existing structures within the campus.

Figure 3: Rendering of Parish Hall from W. Railroad Avenue with Mature Landscaping

Even with the requested reduced setback, the required plantings of the landscape buffers will be provided. Therefore, when mature, the landscaping between the building and the right of way will provide visual buffering, as demonstrated in Figure 3, and allow the proposed Parish Hall to blend into the existing campus and neighborhood.

The setback to the alley is approximately 8.5 feet. The alley has limited traffic; providing primary access for two properties and secondary access to one property. The home at 233 Banyan Street uses the alley as primary its primary vehicular access as the garage to the existing residence is accessed via the ally. This residence also has a circular driveway on Banyan Street for guests. The home at 235 Banyan Street uses the alley as primary access. The alley ends at the northwest property corner of lot 12 and the remainder of the was previously vacated and closed within the northern parcel of the Our Lady of Mercy campus. Figure 4 below demonstrates the vacation of the alley; the existing Our Lady of Mercy campus is lots 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 15, and 16, in 1996.

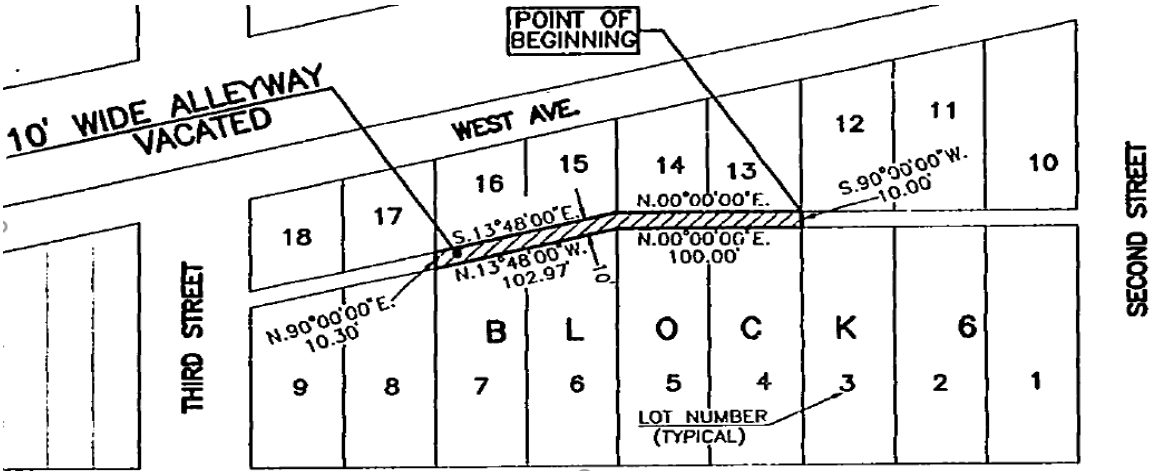

Figure 4. Vacated Alley North of Lot 12

An additional vacation of the alley between Lots 8 and 17 and Lots 9 and 18 was completed in 2006 for the Boca Grande Health Clinic. The two vacations prohibit thru travel along the alley between Banyan Street and Third Street.

The lots along W. Railroad Avenue in Block 6 are limited by the angle of the right of way of W. Railroad Ave and constrained further by the midblock alley. All of the lots on the east side of the Block 6 are reduced in area and have smaller lot depths than the lots on the west side of the Block. The lots along Park Street (west side of Block 6) are approximately 100 feet to 150 feet deep. The additional depth makes development on these lots easier.

The lots on the east side of Block 6 are bounded by West Railroad Avenue on the east and the midblock alley on the west. This result in two frontages for these lots. The condition of two frontages is unique to lots 1, 2, 3, 10, 11 and 12 of Block 6 since the northern portion of the midblock alley was vacated. However, only lots 11 and 12 have lot depths less than 100 feet, which restricts the building depth to 45 feet when the code required setbacks of 25 feet for each frontage are applied. The two front setbacks eliminate a total of 50 foot of lot depth. When the code minimum size setbacks are applied the width of the development area is reduced to 60 feet. The buildable area of the lot is a trapezoid with an approximately depth of 45 feet by 60 feet area. The reduced lot depth and application of the code minimum setbacks limits the development potential of the subject property to 2,737.80 square feet without the requested variance. This condition is usually. Most non-residential building have a depth of 60 feet or more. No additional property can be acquired because closing the alley is not feasible given that at least two homes take principal vehicular access from the alley. The reduced setbacks are necessary to allow the development of the parish hall on the subject property.

5. Request a variance from LDC Section 34-2051(a)(4)b. which requires a minimum side setback of 20 feet and a maximum of 40 feet up to 10% of the lot width to allow 11.33 feet for a new building along the southern property line.

Justification:
The revised plat of Boca Grande was recorded in 1925. Historical plats, such as Boca Grande, were often developed with irregular lots and alleys. Block 6 has a range of lot sizes. The lots on the east side of the Block are smaller than the west side lots. The depth of the westside lots range from 100 feet to 150 feet. The westside lots are uniform in appearance. Park Street runs perpendicular to the west side lots creating a straight front property line. The same is not true for the eastside of Block 6. The lots along the east side range in lot depth between approximately 59 feet and 120 feet. The lot depth increases north to south. W. Railroad Avenue intersects the east side lots at an angle of less than 90 degrees resulting in lots with sloping front lot lines. The midblock alley is also angled in parts of the block, constraining the lot depth further. The lot depth of the subject property is 95.63 feet. This is less than the code required 100 feet.

The Land Development Code regulations governing historic districts do not contemplate the type of proposed development; which includes memorializing the development of the existing

Church campus and proposing new development on a new parcel to be brought into the campus. The proposed parish hall is not a standalone facility but rather an accessory and expansion of the existing Our Lady of Mercy campus. The LDC requires side setbacks for the proposed accessory religious facility are greater than the setback requires for a typical residence due to the supplemental regulations. The code requires side setback for places of worship or religious facilities is ten percent of the lot width, with a minimum of 20 feet. Lots 11 and 12 have a combined lot width of 100 feet and therefore must provide the minimum of 20 feet without the request. The facility is being proposed in the current orientation to facilitate pedestrian movement between W. Railroad Avenue, the new building, and the existing campus. A redeveloped parking area to accommodate the required parking for the expansion is provided in the northern portion of the subject property and the parish hall is appropriately located within the parcel. The proposed side setback of the parish hall is 11.33 feet. The proposed building orientation was selected to maximize the setbacks from the east, west and south property lines. The home at 233 Banyan Street appears to have a reduced site setback of 3 feet to the side lot line. Several homes on the west side of Park Avenue have similar reduced setback, some side yard setbacks appear to be less than 3 feet.

The south to north ascending front property line on W. Railroad Avenue results in the smaller lot depth in the north part of the subject parcel. The greater lot depth in the southern portion of subject property permits a larger setback between the proposed building and W. Railroad Avenue. Providing the code minimum setback to the south property line would essential eliminate the front setback from W. Railroad Avenue. The lot depth reduction along the north property line would reduce the setback to less than 10 feet. The area between the building and the right of way would be to small to be considered open space and the code minimum landscaping buffer width could not be provided. Required parking can be accommodated on site by shifting the parish hall to the south. The parish hall was moved closer to the south property line to maximize the right of way setback on W. Railroad Avenue and provide adequate vehicular circulation for the redeveloped parking to address an existing non-conformity. The 20 foot side setback from the adjacent property cannot be accommodated and provide additional parking spaces, code minimum landscape buffer width or required plantings. Having a building to close to a right of way of W. Railroad Avenue would intensify the needed variances.

The proposed 11.33 feet side setback is in line with side setbacks in the area. The existing meeting building on the Our Lady of Mercy campus has a side setback of 7.45 feet. The requested reduced setback for the Parish Hall is consistent with historical setbacks in the neighborhood as evidenced by the setback of the existing meeting building. The required plantings of the required Type C buffer will be provided and planted along the southern boundary line within the setbacks. A public hearing variance will be requested to allow the landscape buffer to be less than the required 15 feet. The reduced buffer width will not impact the visual screening provided by the required plantings for the proposed Parish Hall.