

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 13329, of Metropolitan Baptist Church, pursuant to Paragraph 8207.11 of the Zoning Regulations, for variances from the rear yard requirements (Sub-section 3304.1 and Paragraph 7107.22) and the lot occupancy requirements (Sub-section 3301.1 and Paragraph 7107.23) to construct an addition to an existing church which is a non-conforming structure in an R-4 District at the premises 1225 R Street, N.W., (Square 276, Lot 829).

HEARING DATE: September 17, 1980

DECISION DATES: October 1 and November 5, 1980

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The subject property is located on the north side of R Street between Vermont Avenue and 13th Street and is known as 1225 R Street, N.W. It is in an R-4 District.
2. The subject site is approximately 22,000 square feet in area. It is improved with a Church which consists of two two-story sections and one three story section. The existing building is non-conforming regarding the lot occupancy and the rear yard requirements of the Zoning Regulations.
3. Adjacent to the subject lot 829 on the east is a fifteen foot wide public alley which is adjoined by a vacant tract of land which extends to Vermont Avenue. The rear of the site is adjoined by a ten foot public alley which is adjacent to the former Crittenden Home which fronts on 13th Street and the Garrison Public School which fronts on S Street. Adjacent on the west is a group of three story residential row structures which front on 13th Street. Across from the church, on R Street, are two and three story row dwellings and apartments. A small grocery store occupies the southwest corner of Vermont Avenue and R Street. The immediate area surrounding the church site is predominantly residential. Two and three story row dwellings and small apartment buildings are the principal building types in the area. The predominant zoning is R-4 with the exception of 14th Street which is zoned C-M-2 and C-M-3 near this location.
4. The church presently has a membership of some 3,000 persons and it also operates a number of recreational and educational programs. It recently celebrated its 116th anniversary. Its history dates back to the late 1800's.

5. The applicant proposes to raze the existing sanctuary and the adjacent two story addition on the east and construct a new sanctuary, administrative offices and educational facilities. The applicant is requesting a lot occupancy variance of 5,515.31 square feet or 41.8 per cent and a rear yard variance of twenty feet or 100 percent.

6. The proposed addition will be fifty feet in height and three stories. It will connect to the existing recreation building on the west.

7. The addition will include a sanctuary and balcony to seat 1,400 persons, Sunday school space, administrative offices, a multi-purpose function room, classrooms and storage space.

8. The existing building to remain, Memorial Hall, occupies approximately 6,229 square feet of Lot 829. The proposed addition will cover 12,486 square feet which yields a total lot occupancy of 18,715 square feet or eighty-five percent. The maximum lot occupancy permitted in this case is sixty percent or 13,200 square feet.

9. The applicant does not propose to provide a rear yard. In this instance a twenty foot rear yard is required.

10. The Office of Planning and Development by report, dated September 5, 1980, recommended that the application be approved. In its report the OPD stated that the subject Metropolitan Baptist Church conducts extensive community service work and has a broad range of recreational programs to serve the community. The present sanctuary is no longer adequate to house the church membership and its age and physical condition necessitates its replacement. The proposed addition will be constructed in essentially the same "footprint" of the existing sanctuary and the 1963 addition to the east. Although the sanctuary roof will be approximately fifty feet above grade at its highest point, the height of the building at the rear and east will be approximately thirty-six feet above grade with the exception of a stair tower. Both the north and east facades of the building are bordered by public alleys. The Office of Planning and Development noted that the proposed addition will occupy roughly the same area as the existing church. In addition, the height of the proposed structure will be approximately the same. With the existing recreational facility to remain the church cannot expand except within the confines of lot 829. It does not own any adjacent property. The Office of Planning and Development believes that the proposed addition will not have any adverse impacts upon adjoining or nearby properties. Due to the configuration of Lot 829 and the existing facility to be incorporated into the new structure, OPD believes that the proposed addition is a reasonable solution. The Board so finds.

