



**STAFF REPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 26, 2003**

PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

APPLICANT: Powell United Methodist Church
LOCATION: 825 East Olentangy Street
ZONING: PR, Planned Residence District
REQUEST: Approval of a Preliminary Development Plan for a new sanctuary addition of 15,577 sq. ft. and parking lot

The applicant has submitted a revised site plan that shows the removal of the entire northernmost row of parking. Also, the architect is working on a computerized 3-D model that will show a more perspective look at the development of the site. Staff has not been able to examine the model yet, however we have reviewed the new proposed site plan. All other plans are proposed to stay the same (for example the building elevations and landscaping plan). Of course, the landscaping plan will be changes to reflect the new site plan, but in essence, the mounding and plant material will be the same.

The parking lot is now set back 85 feet from the centerline of Powell Road, leaving about 73 feet to the edge of pavement. This leaves a lot of room to install the fencing, pathway and landscaping, and the mounding can be made to have a more natural look and feel about it. Total parking provided now stands at 320 spaces.

Provided a positive outlook toward the perspective modeling is taken, Staff is in support of the revised Preliminary Plan, and recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. That a Traffic Management Plan is done and its recommendations included in the Final Development Plan if accepted by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
2. That the applicant investigate the replacement of the existing parking lot lights on the south and west side parking area and incorporate the same bollard lighting that will be utilized on the east side.
3. That the existing ditch along Powell Road from the eastern entry drive to Valley Run Drive be piped for ease of installation of the pathway, mounding, landscaping and fencing.
4. That appropriate landscaping is installed on the north side of Powell Road, as approved by those property owners opposite of the driveways that screen vehicle lights from shining onto their properties.
5. That architectural recommendations from the Architectural Advisor be implemented in the Final Development Plan.

PBZ Exhibits

2/26/03

Below Contains Previous Staff Reports

STAFF REPORT UPDATE

This Staff Report Update will report on the revised plans submitted by the applicant. The Staff Report from the previous meeting is also included for your reference.

The applicant has submitted revised plans and documentation that goes a long way to addressing many of the comments made from the previous meeting. It also clarifies several issues that provide a more accurate reporting of some of the development statistics as they relate to the Zoning Ordinance that were previously misinterpreted, and that makes a big difference on the type of variances that are being requested by the applicant.

When determining the size of the site needed for a proposed church, Section 1143.13 (a) requires a minimum church site of 5 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 permanent seats over 300 in the main assembly area. Section 1123.01 (127) defines how to determine the number of parking spaces based on permanent seating that may be a bench or pew. This section requires counting a 24 inch width as one seat. Therefore, it is logical to utilize this determination also for the seat width in determining the size of property needed for a church based on the fact that the number of permanent seats in the main assembly area is utilized to determine this size. Therefore, utilizing a 24 inch seat, the number of permanent seats for the proposed sanctuary is at 497, and the minimum size for the proposed church is 7.0 acres. The total site contains 7.6 acres.

Another aspect of the plan that has been changed is the proposed new parking area. The proposed parking area is now designed with larger interior parking lot landscaping islands that really help to break up the mass of asphalt that is needed to provide the number of spaces that they desire, and will probably need due to the expansion of the church, the amount of membership and the present utilization of the church service schedule and Sunday school and other activities. Although this configuration does put the pavement edge a little closer to the property lines, the landscaping plan indicates that the amount of landscape buffering along the edges does not change. Also, the idea of "sinking" the parking area and mounding can also be accomplished. Even the a new mounding plan has not yet been created, the applicant has agreed to place slightly less mounding along the front so as not to create as much of a wall effect. The northern most driveway for the parking lot has also been "cut-off" from the main access drive, as recommended by Staff at the last meeting. Staff is very pleased with the revised parking lot layout scheme.

The revised landscaping plan that has been submitted addresses a number of issues regarding landscaping in front of the proposed addition and addresses the sidewalk access and landscaping at both of the driveway entrances from Powell Road. The plan indicates that there may be trees transplanted from the site if possible. If this does not work out or if the trees should die after they are transplanted, then the trees to be planted at these locations should be a type and size that provides the more dramatic impact the Architectural Advisor recommended. The three rail white fence is also shown as recommended by the Architectural Advisor.

As revised, the Preliminary Development Plan currently contains the following variances to the requirements within the zoning code:

1. The sanctuary addition as proposed encroaches a total of ten feet two inches over the front building line, which is required to be 130 feet from centerline of Powell Road. The architects have advised us that the design of the sanctuary allows for the pitched roof ridge line of the addition to line up with the ridge line of the existing classroom wing. The Church also needs a much larger narthex for the gathering of people between services.
2. The parking lot expansion is proposed to encroach sixty-seven (67) feet over the front building line. Section 1149.05(c)(2) prohibits parking in a required front yard. In a

previous development plan, a divergence of fifty-three feet was granted for the existing parking off the west access point, and sixty-six (66) feet near the east access point.

3. The building height of the sanctuary addition is proposed at thirty-seven feet. Section 1143.13(a) limits building heights to thirty-five feet, measured as the mid-point between the eave and the ridge lines. Lowering the ridge line would result in a roof pitch less than 7:12, which would also be a divergence (Section 1147.12(2)).
4. Reduction of parking stall length from 19 feet to 18 feet (Section 1149.05 (a)) in order to reduce the amount of pavement and increase buffer space.

The Commission has asked Staff to research the previous approval for building additions. The latest approval included a sanctuary addition of 5,740 square feet that contained 600 seats. We are not sure whether 18" per seat or 24" per seat was utilized at that time. The plans for the sanctuary addition were part of Preliminary Development Plan and Final Development Plan, however the architectural plans would have been required to come back to the Commission for approval.

The applicant has made a number of changes to the plan to try to accommodate as many concerns that were discussed at the last meeting. The biggest issue, in Staff's opinion, is looking at the code requirements to see if the proposed site development is too large for the site in question. At the last meeting, the plan was reviewed looking at the permanent seating to be based upon an 18" seat. The code utilizes a 24" seat when determining the number of parking spaces and based on this, it is logical to utilize this seat width in determining the number of permanent seats and therefore the size of the property needed for the size of the proposed church. Also, the redesign of the proposed parking area considerably exceeds code requirements for interior parking lot landscaping and buffering, even if it does encroach into the front yard setback.

As stated in the Staff Report for the last meeting, the church is a vital and important member of the community and solutions should be found that allow for an expansion that will meet their needs, and the church should provide the amenities that will make it fit into the fabric of the community. All of this also should realize that the proposal should not negatively impact either the community as a whole and specifically the neighborhood adjacent to it. Both the City and the church should be players that work together to create a very creative and useful gateway for the community. In fact, having a great church as a landmark at the gateway to the community is an asset to the character of the community. Staff believes that the Preliminary Development Plan as it is now amended has done this. **Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:**

6. **That a Traffic Management Plan is done and its recommendations included in the Final Development Plan if accepted by the Planning and Zoning Commission.**
7. **That the applicant investigate the replacement of the existing parking lot lights on the south and west side parking area and incorporate the same bollard lighting that will be utilized on the east side.**
8. **That the existing ditch along Powell Road from the eastern entry drive to Valley Run Drive be piped for ease of installation of the pathway, mounding, landscaping and fencing.**
9. **That appropriate landscaping is installed on the north side of Powell Road, as approved by those property owners opposite of the driveways that screen vehicle lights from shining onto their properties.**
10. **That architectural recommendations from the Architectural Advisor be implemented in the Final Development Plan.**

The Powell United Methodist Church (PUMC) has acquired the property located at 1681 W. Powell Road and are proposing to expand the sanctuary and parking lot in order to better serve their fast growing congregation. The total property now consists of 7.6 acres. The proposal includes the expansion of the existing church building with a new sanctuary, narthex, offices and bell tower, and expansion of the parking area. The proposal also includes the removal of the single family residence located on the property.

The proposed building addition includes the following:

Basement	8,090 sq. ft.
1 st floor	14,125 sq. ft
2 nd floor	1,452 sq. ft.
TOTAL	23,667 sq. ft.

Some of the parking lot expansion is needed for their current congregation and the applicant has indicated the need to expand their parking as much as possible to allow for future growth. Staff has reviewed information submitted by the church regarding the number of people attending the various services and Sunday School, which is attended by people of all ages. Based upon this information, it is Staff's belief that the parking requirement within the Zoning Code does not satisfy the way the church is presently being used, and that a greater parking amount than the minimum required by the zoning code is appropriate. The church has indicated that they have tried Saturday services in order to try to reduce the number of Sunday worshipers; however they indicated that it was not well received. Typically, Sunday is the day for church attendance, and it is not the local government's responsibility or authority to regulate when people should be able to worship. Therefore, Staff is changing its recommendation to reduce the number of spaces to the minimum required that was stated at the Sketch Plan. It will then be important to design the parking area accordingly. The plan that has been submitted goes a long way toward meeting that goal.

To determine the required parking the greater of two calculations is used. One involves the number of **permanent** seats plus the number of classrooms and the other involves the square footage of the main **assembly area** (See Section 1149.07(d)(1)). On sheet two of the submitted plans the applicant shows the required parking to be 287 by the seat method and 340 by the square feet method. Staff calculates the following:

Seat Method		Square Feet Method	
8,090	Permanent Seats: 662	First Floor <u>Main</u> Assembly:	
1,452	Classrooms: 20	Balcony Assembly:	
counted here)		(other assembly areas not	
9,542	Seats / 3: 221	Total Square Feet Assembly:	
	Plus Classrooms: 20	Total / 45:	
TOTAL	241	TOTAL	213

Since the greater number applies, the required parking for the site with the expansion is 241 spaces, of which seven must be handicap. The applicant is proposing 335 total spaces. In a conversation with the applicant earlier this year, the church membership was approaching 1,800. The applicant has stated they currently offer three services and three Sunday Schools on Sunday. Many people attending one service also attend the Sunday School, as there are classes designed for all ages. Because of this, many people stay for one service and one Sunday School. Therefore, the number of spaces for this particular church is going to be higher than what would

normally be required. If a larger lot is going to be approved, than more care needs to be taken in planning the buffering, landscaping, lighting and other amenities that go into creating a nice looking parking area.

The applicant has reduced the proposed number of parking spaces by 12 since the sketch plan. They are also asking for a variance to reduce the parking stall length to 18 feet from the required 19 feet. This saves a total of 6 feet of pavement, and increases the green space between the parking lot and the residences to the south. There is also a greater setback from Valley Run Drive to the east. This allows for a wider setback and more area in which to install mounding and landscaping buffers. The landscape plan that is proposed is very extensive and should provide a very good buffer. The evergreens are shown to be planted at 10 to 15 feet apart on center, with the introduction of deciduous trees interspersed along the perimeter and within the parking lot interior landscaping islands. Of all of the existing trees on site, there are only a few that are worth keeping. Those that are within the parking area that are worth saving, the applicant is proposing to move. Staff recommends that these trees be moved to in front of the building because these are specimen type trees (pin oak, red maple) that are substantial in size. The parking lot area has been staked at the site so one can see the amount of green space that is there to create a buffer, and one can see the extent of the proposed paving. It is much easier to see this on the site rather than from just the drawings.

The parking lot lighting has been changed since the sketch plan. The applicant is now proposing to use bollard-type lights that will add safety at night and not cause undue glare when on. These lights are low (3-4 feet high) and are decorative in nature. The specific type is not yet chosen. It might be a good idea for the applicant to investigate the use of this type of light throughout the entire parking lot, including the existing lot to the west.

The proposal does include the continuation of the bikepath along the south side of Powell Road east to Valley Run Drive. There will also be a white rail fence along the front of the parking area from the new entry point east and a small section of fence on the west side of the entry. The Commission may want to require the white fence along the entire frontage.

The Preliminary Development Plan currently contains the following variances to the requirements within the zoning code:

1. The sanctuary addition as proposed encroaches a total of ten feet two inches over the front building line, which is required to be 130 feet from centerline of Powell Road. The architects have advised us that the design of the sanctuary allows for the pitched roof ridge line of the addition to line up with the ridge line of the existing classroom wing. The Church also needs a much larger narthex for the gathering of people between services.
2. The parking lot expansion is proposed to encroach sixty feet over the front building line. Section 1149.05(c)(2) prohibits parking in a required front yard. In a previous development plan, a divergence of fifty-three feet was granted for the existing parking off the west access point.
3. The building height of the sanctuary addition is proposed at thirty-seven feet. Section 1143.13(a) limits building heights to thirty-five feet, measured as the mid-point between the eave and the ridge lines. Lowering the ridge line would result in a roof pitch less than 7:12, which would also be a divergence (Section 1147.12(2)).
4. The total site acreage is required to nine acres, based upon 5 acres plus one acre for every 100 permanent seats over three hundred (Section 1143.13 (a)). The total proposed site acreage is 7.6 acres.
5. Reduction of parking stall length from 19 feet to 18 feet (Section 1149.05 (a)) in order to reduce the amount of pavement and increase buffer space.

6. The interior parking lot islands are proposed to be 6 feet wide instead of the size of a parking stall as required by Section 1145.31. There will still be two trees planted within each landscape island. Again, this is being requested in order to keep the overall size of the parking area to a minimum.

The applicant has hired Traffic Engineering Services, Inc. as a consultant for coming up with recommendations that can be implemented to allow for the best ingress/egress and interior parking lot movement. They will also verify whether a left turn lane into the property will be needed westbound on Powell Road. Initial discussion with Gary Wilcox from TES indicates that the warrants for a left turn lane will probably not be met as there is no specific requirement for uses such as churches or other special users. Recommendations could include such things as which exit to promote left turns in to and out of the site, vehicle queuing recommendations, pavement striping, etc.

The City Engineer has reviewed the preliminary engineering feasibility as proposed in this plan and finds it acceptable up to this point.

Architecturally, the plan is similar to the one presented at the Sketch Plan. Staff will rely upon the Architectural Advisor to the Commission to provide necessary comments related to the building design.

After review of all of the pertinent information submitted by the applicant and reviewing the site, Staff recommends approval of the Preliminary Development Plan with a number of conditions listed below. Although there are several variances asked for in this application, Staff believes that there are some good reasons behind these requests. It would be easy to say to the church that they should only grow to the amount that can be handled by the site or, if you cannot, go find another site. It is more difficult to say that the church is a vital and important member of the community that we should find solutions that allow for an expansion that will meet their needs, and they should provide the amenities that will make it fit into the fabric of the community. All of this also should realize that the proposal should not negatively impact either the community as a whole and specifically the neighborhood adjacent to it. Both the City and the church should be players that work together to create a very creative and useful gateway for the community.

Staff recommendations for conditions to any approval:

1. That a Traffic Management Plan is done and its recommendations included in the Final Development Plan if accepted by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
2. That a landscaping plan be prepared for the Final Development Plan that incorporates improvements to the property in front of the building. This shall include the moving of existing trees located on the site that are suitable for moving and would otherwise be removed.
3. That the southernmost row of parking be redesigned in order to preserve what is believed to be an ash tree located just in front of the existing shed.
4. That the new entry drive area be redesigned at the first access drive to the parking area to block access to this entry drive from the main drive. This will allow for additional vehicle queuing exiting the site.
5. That the applicant investigate the replacement of the existing parking lot lights on the south and west side parking area and incorporate the same bollard lighting that will be utilized on the east side.
6. That the white three rail fence be continued along the entire length of the frontage except where driveways and sidewalks come out to the pathway.
7. That the existing ditch along Powell Road from the eastern entry drive to Valley Run Drive be piped for ease of installation of the pathway, mounding, landscaping and fencing.

8. That appropriate landscaping is installed on the north side of Powell Road, as approved by those property owners opposite of the driveways that screen vehicle lights from shining onto their properties.
9. That architectural recommendations from the Architectural Advisor be implemented in the Final Development Plan.

