



Planning Commission Staff Report

November 8, 2006
Item 6.a.

- SUBJECT:** PDR-561/PV-158
- APPLICANT:** John Miller Architects/Saint Elizabeth Seton Church
- PROPERTY OWNER:** Catholic Community of Pleasanton
- PURPOSE:** Applications for: 1) design review approval to modify the Saint Elizabeth Seton Church Master Plan to construct an approximately 22,296-square-foot parish center building with gymnasium and related site improvements on the existing church site located at 4001 Stoneridge Drive; and 2) a variance from the Municipal Code to allow the proposed parish center building with gymnasium to be approximately 34-feet tall, where 30 feet is the maximum height limit.
- GENERAL PLAN:** Medium Density Residential
- ZONING:** The subject property is zoned A (Agriculture) District.
- LOCATION:** 4001 Stoneridge Drive
- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. Exhibit A: Proposed Plans, Written Narrative, Letter from St. Elizabeth Seton Church Regarding Parking Agreement with 2174-2186 Rheem Drive, Church Parking Count Results, Church Parking Survey Results, LEED Green Building Checklist, and Tree Report
 2. Exhibit B, Recommended Conditions of Approval
 3. Location Map
 4. Exhibit C, Comments from the October 5, 2006, Neighborhood Meeting
 5. Letter from Pleasanton Village Association dated September 28, 2006

6. Emails from Jeff Green, Helen Whitaker, Clayton and Susan Woo, Helen and Dick Martin, Greg Hodges, Nancy Silva, Barbara Choy, Dom and Susan Pietro, and Marguerit Zanatta
 7. 1989 and 1998 Church Master Plans
 8. Public Notice Map
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I. BACKGROUND

The subject application is the latest of several applications dating back to the original 1989 master plan approval. In 1989, the church was granted conditional use permit approval of a master plan for the construction of approximately 70,985 square feet of building area which included: a 11,165-square-foot chapel and parish office building; a 14,140-square-foot sanctuary addition to the chapel/office building; a 13,920-square-foot classroom building; a 11,900-square-foot multi-purpose/gymnasium building; a 15,000-square-foot elementary school building; and a 4,860-square-foot rectory building. The master plan would be constructed in several phases. A total of 360 parking spaces would be constructed at buildout. A 48,000-square-foot retail building was also proposed at the west end of the site, but was not approved by the Planning Commission. At that time, the church also received design review approval of its first phase: the 11,165 square foot, 200-seat chapel/office building and a 140-space circular parking lot around it. The first phase was completed in 1991. The conditional use permit granted church and related uses on the entire parcel, except that separate conditional use permit approval was required for the future elementary school use. The church was required to return for design review approval of all subsequent buildings.

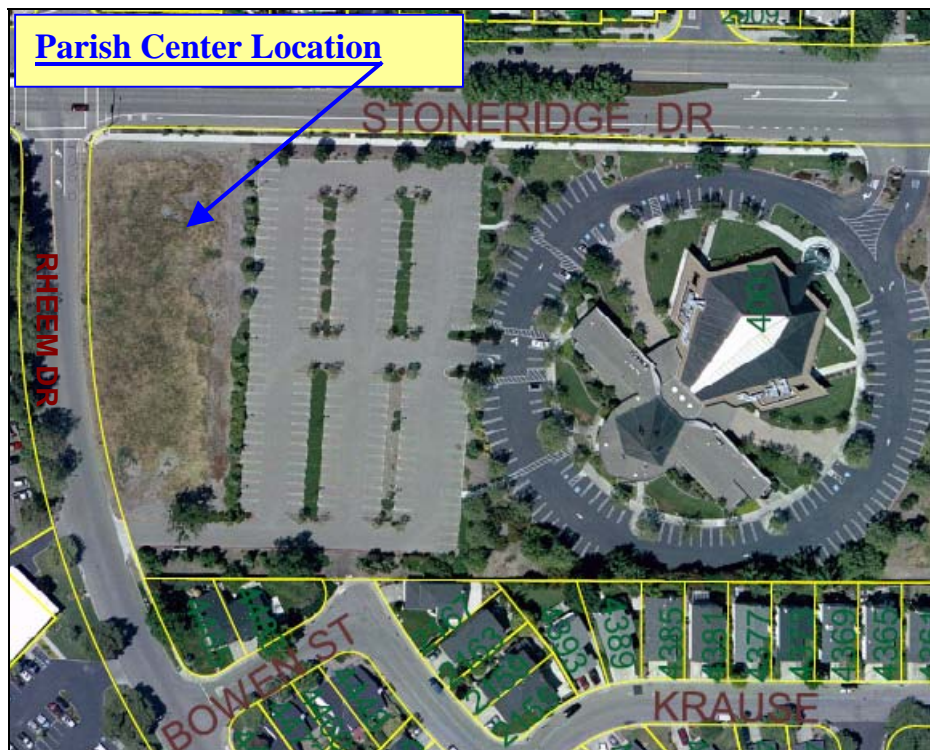
In 1998, the church received design review approval to construct the second phase of their master plan, which consisted of a 14,725-square-foot, 800-seat sanctuary building addition to the existing church/office building and a 180-space parking lot on the west side of the sanctuary building. At that time, the church also received design review approval to revise their master plan to include a future 25,000-square-foot elementary school building at the west end of the site and a 13,920-square-foot classroom building, a 11,900-square-foot multi-purpose/gymnasium building, and a 4,860-square-foot rectory building on the east end of the site. The buildout building area was increased to 81,570 square feet. Two future parking lots, totaling 113 spaces, were also shown on the east side of the site, resulting in a total of 435 spaces at buildout. The sanctuary building and 180-space parking lot were completed in 2000.

The applicants propose to relocate the siting of the multi-purpose/gymnasium and classroom buildings and combine them into one parish center building with gymnasium, obtain a height variance for the gymnasium, and gain approval for the architectural design of the parish center. The church's previous master plans were approved by means of the City's design review process. Therefore, the request to modify the master plan requires design review approval by

the Planning Commission. There is no modification to the church uses that requires a modification of the existing conditional use permit.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

The Saint Elizabeth Seton Church occupies an approximately 12-acre site at the southeast corner of Stoneridge Drive and Rheem Drive. Existing improvements include the sanctuary/chapel/office building, two paved parking lots, and landscaped areas. Existing driveways off Rheem and Stoneridge Drives provide access to the parking lots. The western and eastern portions of the site are undeveloped. The site topography is generally flat.



2005 Aerial of Subject Site



Site Viewed from the Stoneridge Dr./Rheem Dr. Intersection

Properties immediately adjacent to this site include: the Belvedere neighborhood and Gatewood Apartments to the north, on the opposite side of Stoneridge Drive; light industrial/office buildings to the west, on the opposite side of Rheem Drive; the Pleasanton Village neighborhood to the south; and a City park (Nielsen Park) and the Mohr Park neighborhood to the east and southeast, respectively.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Master Plan

The applicants are proposing to modify their 1998 master plan to allow construction of a 22,296-square-foot parish center building with gymnasium for its third phase of construction. The parish center building would be located at the western end of the site where a future 25,000-square-foot elementary school building was shown on the 1998 master plan. The future elementary school building (noted as Building E on the site plan) would be relocated to the eastern end of the site. The parish center building would replace the 11,900-square-foot multi-purpose/gymnasium building and the 13,920-square-foot classroom building that were shown on the eastern end of the site in the 1998 master plan. The 4,860-square-foot rectory building would remain as a future option on the eastern end of the site. The revised master plan would result in a total of approximately 78,046-square-feet of building area on the site, which is a 3,524-square-foot reduction from the 1998 master plan.

The following table compares the proposed master plan with the previously approved 1998 master plan:

1998 Master Plan	Proposed Master Plan
<p>Existing Building Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings A and B (Chapel/Parish Office) = 11,165 sq. ft. • Building E (Sanctuary) = 14,725 sq. ft. 	<p>Existing Building Area: No change</p>
<p>Future Building Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building C (Classrooms) = 13,920 sq. ft. • Building D (Multi-purpose & Gym) = 11,900 sq. ft. • Building F (Elementary School) = 25,000 sq. ft. • Building G (Rectory) = 4,860 sq. ft. 	<p>Future Building Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building D (Parish Center with Gym) = 22,296 sq. ft. • Building E (Elementary School) = 25,000 sq. ft. • Building F (Rectory) = 4,860 sq. ft.
<p>Total Building Area @ Buildout : 81,570 sq. ft.</p>	<p>Total Building Area @ Buildout : 78,046 sq. ft.</p>
<p>Existing Parking: 311 spaces</p>	<p>Existing Parking: 311 spaces</p>
<p>Future Parking: 113 spaces</p>	<p>Future Parking: 113 spaces</p>
<p>Buildout Parking: 424 spaces¹</p>	<p>Buildout Parking: 424 spaces</p>

¹The approved master plan indicated 435 spaces at buildout. However, because 11 fewer parking spaces currently exist on site compared to the 322 spaces that were shown on the 1998 master plan, staff reduced the buildout parking figure by 11 spaces.

The church would like to start construction of the parish center building in the spring of 2007. Plans for the elementary school and rectory buildings have not been included as part of this application and would be subject to separate City approvals at a later date (conditional use permit and design review approvals for the elementary school and design review approval for the rectory building). The church is uncertain when the application(s) for the elementary school and rectory buildings would be submitted to the City.

Parking

Users of the proposed parish center building would utilize the existing parking lots, which currently have a total of 311 spaces. The proposal would eliminate 20 spaces to create a drop-off area in front (east side) of the parish center and to create a pedestrian pathway through the existing parking lots. The applicants would replace all 20 of these spaces by restriping some of

the existing standard-sized spaces to compact-sized spaces and by creating seven new parking spaces within or adjacent to the existing parking lots, resulting in a total of 311 parking spaces. The two future parking lots, totaling 113 spaces, would remain at the eastern side of the site as shown in the prior master plan, resulting in a total of 424 spaces at buildout.

Uses

The parish center building would be used for a variety of church-related uses, including:

- Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) basketball practices and games
- Meetings for church programs
- Youth group center
- Religious education classes
- Nursery for infants and toddlers during Sunday services
- Religious guest speakers and seminars
- Religious conferences
- Funeral receptions
- Banquets, benefits, and dances
- After Sunday-service brunches

Please see the attached written narrative for additional use details, including the number of attendees and the timing and frequency of the uses.

The religious education classes, religious guest speakers and seminars, funeral receptions, nursery, and church program meetings currently occur in the main church building and would be moved to the parish center building. CYO basketball, comprised of boys and girls from 3rd through 8th grades, would hold practices/games in the gymnasium from October through February. One game or two practices would occur at one time with 10 members and two coaches per team and some parents attending (a total of 40 people would present). The church indicated that it has scheduled the activities such that no major events would occur simultaneously in the main sanctuary/chapel and proposed parish center building.

Sunday services held in the sanctuary building would remain unchanged: four services start at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 4:00 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. and last from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes each. The services are currently attended by 200 to 835 people.

Parish Center Building

The parish center building would contain several rooms to accommodate the various church uses. The gymnasium would be located on the southern end of the building and would accommodate one regulation-size basketball court the length of the gym or two reduced-sized

practice courts across the gym. Three-level bleacher seating for up to 85 people would be located along a portion of western gymnasium wall. A 264-seat conference room would be located at the northern end of the building. Other rooms include a kitchen, several meeting rooms, youth room, nursery, storage rooms, and restrooms. Although not needed for the church's activities, the church is proposing to install three women's and three men's showers to allow the building to be used as an emergency shelter. Entry and regular (non-emergency) exiting from the building would generally occur on the east (parking lot) side of the building.

Outside activities would be limited to a small fenced play area without play equipment on the east side of the building that would be used for the nursery during services and a patio area at the northwestern corner of the building that would be used as a break or refreshment area during events in the main conference room. There would be no outdoor basketball practice.

The contemporary styled building contains architectural elements similar to the existing church building. A feature unique to the proposed building is the eastern and western gymnasium walls, which would tilt inward at the top and slightly undulate in and out and up and down. The parish center would utilize the same brown- and tan-colored split-face concrete block and stucco materials/colors of the existing sanctuary building. The existing sanctuary building has a standing-seam copper roof. Due to stormwater quality concerns, copper materials are no longer desired in new construction. Therefore, the applicants are proposing to utilize a brown-colored standing-seam metal material on the sloped roofs that is similar in color to the existing oxidized copper roof. The standing-seam material would also be utilized on the eastern and western gymnasium walls and northern conference room wall. A color/materials board will be available at the hearing. The parish center building would have maximum height of 34 feet at the top of the gymnasium walls. This height requires a variance from the required 30-foot maximum height.

Existing Trees and Tree Removal

A tree survey and analysis for this project site has been prepared by HortScience, Inc. The report describes the species, size, health, and location of the existing trees near the proposed parish center building and also recommends special precautions necessary for trees worth preserving. There are 12 existing trees over six inches in diameter near the proposed development, including two of which are defined as "Heritage Tree" by the Municipal Code (i.e., a tree which measures 35 feet or greater in height or which measures 55 inches or greater in circumference). The 10 non-heritage trees are located along the western end of the existing parking lot and were planted at the time the parking lot was installed. These healthy trees vary from six to seven inches in diameter and are Deodar cedar and London plane species. The arborist recommends that these trees be removed due to their location within the proposed area of development. A heritage-sized English walnut tree is located just north of the church's driveway off Rheem Drive. The walnut tree is in poor health and the arborist recommends that

this tree be removed. A heritage-sized California black walnut tree is located in the planter area along the church's southern property line. This tree is in fair health and the arborist recommends that this tree be preserved.

Landscaping

The applicants are proposing to install a variety of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers around the proposed building. Evergreen laurel (bay) trees, viburnum, euonymus, and dwarf escallonia shrubs, and a variety of groundcovers would be planted on the north end and northwest side of the building. Evergreen African sumac trees, New Zealand flax and Laurustinus shrubs, and a variety of groundcovers would be planted along the western side and south end of the building. Deciduous crape myrtle and evergreen cajeput trees, viburnum and heavenly bamboo shrubs, and dwarf plumbago groundcover would be planted on the east side of the building. A new separated sidewalk would be installed along the Rheem Drive frontage of the site. Deciduous Chinese hackberry trees and pink knotweed groundcover would be installed in the planter strip between the sidewalk and street. The applicants would also install two Canary Island pine trees and seven pittosporum shrubs in the unplanted area of the planter along the southern property line. This area has been used as a pedestrian access from the Pleasanton Village neighborhood to the church or Stoneridge Drive. The neighbors had indicated that this is a nuisance and requested the fencing be constructed to prohibit pedestrian access. A condition has been added for the fencing and the landscaping.

Variance Application

The proposed gymnasium, the southerly portion of the parish center building, would be approximately 34-feet tall, as measured from the finished grade adjacent to the building to the top of the gymnasium walls (the tallest part of the structure). The Municipal Code limits structures in the Agriculture District to 30 feet. Therefore, a variance must be granted to exceed the 30-foot height limit.

The project architect indicated that the building height is set by the CYO basketball league's 25-foot interior height requirement for a basketball court. The additional height above 25 feet is required for the deep beams required to span the large gymnasium space; the ductwork, conduits, and pipes; a minimum roof slope to allow proper drainage; and a parapet to hide any equipment on the roof, possibly future photovoltaic panels. The project architect has indicated that every effort will be made to reduce the building height during the detailed construction design stage.

IV. NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

On October 5, 2006, Planning Department staff conducted a neighborhood meeting for residents

of the adjacent properties to comment on the proposed plan and to determine any issues they had with the proposed application. Fourteen residents attended this meeting and commented on the proposed plans. Comments from this meeting are detailed on Exhibit C, attached.

Neighbors from the Pleasanton Village neighborhood (south of the subject site) wanted adequate parking to be provided on the project site in order to prevent parishioners from parking in front of their homes, which they indicated currently occurs during Sunday services. It was noted that the parishioners who park in the Pleasanton Village neighborhood walk to the church via the area described above between Bowen Street and the church parking lot that provides a short cut. It was suggested that resident only permit parking be established in the Pleasanton Village neighborhood. Noise impacts, safety/security, and screening concerns were also raised.

The neighbors mentioned several traffic-related concerns that they were currently experiencing in their neighborhood, including speeding along Rheem Drive, difficulty making left turns from Rheem Drive onto Stoneridge Drive after church services end, and aggressive driving by parishioners. The neighbors were concerned that the parish center would increase these problems. A representative of the Pleasanton Village homeowners association indicated that it had previously had asked the City to stripe a centerline down Rheem Drive and to install a flashing speed limit sign. Neighbors also questioned if the church's existing Rheem Drive driveway could be eliminated and a new driveway be installed along Stoneridge Drive or another location away from residents.

Some neighbors requested that the parish center building be relocated to the eastern end of the site on the other side of the church or "flipped" at its present location so that the taller gymnasium portion of the building would be located further away from their homes. Some neighbors also felt that the building was too tall and requested that its height be lowered.

The neighbors' questions/comments/concerns have been addressed within the "**Analysis**" section below.

V. ANALYSIS

Parish Center Use

Uses on the church site are governed by the 1989 conditional use permit which granted church and related uses on the entire site, except that separate conditional use permit approval was required for the future elementary school use. Because the parish center building with gymnasium would be used for church related uses, no modification to the existing conditional use permit is required.

Site Plan

As shown on the table below, the proposed parish center building would comply with the site development standards of the Agriculture District with respect to FAR and building setbacks, but would not comply with the height limit. As noted above, the applicants have applied for a variance to allow the building to exceed the 30-foot height limit.

SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARD:	CITY REQUIREMENTS:	PROPOSED:
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	No FAR limit	9.2% (with parish center) 14.8% (at buildout)
Building Height	30 ft. max. Note: Height measured from average grade covered by the structure to the highest point of the structure.	34 ft. max. Note: Height measured from average grade covered by the structure to the top of the gymnasium wall.
Setbacks: Front (Stoneridge Dr.) -	30 ft. min.	31 ft.
Sides -	30 ft. min. street side (Rheem Dr.) and 100 ft. combined side yards	30 ft. street side (Rheem Dr.) and 850 ft.± combined side yards
Rear (south) -	60 ft. min. ¹	77 ft.

¹The Municipal Code requires that the standard 50-foot rear yard setback in the Agriculture District be increased by 10 feet (60-foot total setback) when non-residential uses adjoin a residential district.

The applicants had originally proposed to locate the building with a 67-foot rear yard setback to the southern property line. A few neighbors at the neighborhood meeting had requested that the church move the building to the north, farther away from their homes. In response to the neighbors’ request, the church moved the building 10 feet to the north. Staff believes that there will be adequate separation between the homes to the south and the proposed building.

A neighbor on Bowen Street had also questioned if the building could be “flipped” so that the taller gymnasium portion of the building would be located further away from her home. Staff believes that the proposed 77-foot rear yard setback to the closest residential properties on Bowen Street would provide an adequate buffer to minimize building massing impacts on the Bowen Street neighbors and would provide adequate light and open space between the church and residential properties. Staff also notes that the taller gymnasium walls are located on the east and west sides of the building and are located an additional 28 feet from the southernmost end of the building wall, resulting in a 105-foot rear yard setback from the Bowen Street neighbors’ rear property line to the taller gymnasium walls.

Neighbors had also questioned if the church could locate the parish center building on the eastern portion of the church property. The church indicated that it originally considered keeping the parish center building on the eastern side of the site where the classroom and multi-purpose/gymnasium buildings were shown on the 1998 master plan, but decided against it as the western location allows the existing parking lots to be shared by both the existing chapel/sanctuary building and the proposed parish center building and the church wouldn't need to construct new parking lots. The church also indicated that relocating the elementary school building from the west side of the site to the east side of the site as proposed would allow it to be located further away from the existing residences to the south.

Regarding site coverage, the Agriculture District does not have a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The proposed 48,186 square feet of building area with the current development phase and 78,046 square feet of building area at buildout of the church site would result in 9.2% and 14.8% FARs on the 12.07-acre site, respectively, both of which are considered very low FARs. Staff finds the site coverage to be acceptable.

Overall, staff believes that the proposed parish center building has been appropriately located on the site and that there will be adequate separation between the building and the surrounding properties.

Architecture/Design

Staff believes that the proposed parish center building is attractive and contains design features which add interest to the elevations. The colors and materials of the building will complement the building architecture and would match the existing sanctuary/chapel building on the site, with the exception of the existing copper roof material that has been substituted with a similar-looking metal roof material to address stormwater concerns. In general, staff believes that the proposed building would be an attractive and compatible addition to the neighborhood.

Although a height variance is required for the building to exceed the 30-foot height limit by four feet, staff believes that the building mass has been minimized as a result of the side gymnasium walls angling in towards the top and because the taller side walls don't wrap around to the front and rear of the gymnasium. The gymnasium walls would also slightly undulate in and out and up and down to add interest and reduce the mass of the building compared to a flat building wall. Additionally, the 34-tall gymnasium walls would be located along a 110-foot long portion of the approximately 302-foot long building. The remainder of the building would be well below the 30-foot height limit with only the very top ridge of the roof over the conference room reaching a maximum height of 29 feet 3 inches.

As noted earlier, the specific design of the future elementary school and rectory buildings would

be subject to design review approval by the Planning Commission prior to their construction.

Green Building

The City's Green Building Ordinance requires projects containing 20,000 square feet or more of conditioned floor area to meet a LEEDTM "certified" level, which is equal to a score of 26 or more credit points on the LEED Green Building Checklist. Since the proposed building is 22,296 square feet, it is required to meet a "certified" rating. The applicants have proposed to incorporate green building measures into the project to allow the project to qualify for at least 26 credit points and meet a LEED "Certified" rating as required by the City's Green Building Ordinance. Some of the proposed green building measures include: installing high efficiency toilets, urinals, and shower heads to reduce water consumption; exceeding the minimum Building Code energy efficiency standards by 10%; using rapidly renewable building materials; using Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood; and utilizing low volatile organic compound (VOC) emitting materials. Staff notes that the applicants have claimed an "Innovation and Design" credit for utilizing the metal roofing as a substitute for copper roofing. Staff notes that credits cannot be claimed for not using materials that cause environmental harm; credits are awarded for using green building products (e.g., if the metal roof was constructed using recycled materials). Therefore, the applicants will be required to obtain another credit to maintain a certified level. A condition of approval addresses this item.

Noise

The only outdoor activities proposed would be an outdoor play area for the nursery on the east side of the building and an outdoor patio at the northwest corner of the building that would occasionally be used as a break and/or refreshment area. There would be no basketball practices or games outside of the building. The trash enclosure would be located at the northern end of the building, which would minimize noise impacts on residences. Principal noise sources from inside the proposed parish center building would include live bands and DJ's during the banquet/benefit/dances and basketball practices/game. The applicants have noted that the building would be insulated, which should help prevent interior noise levels from disturbing the nearby residents. In order to further reduce potential noise impacts on the surrounding neighbors, staff is recommending the following noise-related conditions: 1) requiring that the parish center doors remain closed when not being used for ingress/egress purposes; 2) requiring that self-closing door mechanisms be utilized on all exterior doors; and 3) requiring that any operable windows remain closed during basketball practices/games and banquet/benefit/dances. In addition, since the City's Noise Ordinance does not establish noise limits for properties zoned Agriculture, staff has included a condition that requires that the parish center activities not exceed the City's Noise Ordinance limits for commercial properties that operate after 10:00 p.m. and are located adjacent to residences.

At the neighborhood meeting, a neighbor stated that she was concerned with noise impacts from the parish center's air conditioning units. The applicants have indicated that most of the air conditioning units would be located on the roof on the north side of the gymnasium building, but that two units would need to be installed at the south end of the building in order to provide efficient ventilation in the gymnasium. All of the air conditioning units would be located below the roof parapet, minimizing noise impacts. Furthermore, staff has included a "standard" condition of approval that requires all mechanical equipment, including heating and air conditioning units, be constructed or installed in such a manner that noise emanating from it will not be perceptible beyond the property plane of the subject property in a normal environment for that zoning district.

Therefore, as proposed and conditioned, staff believes that it is unlikely that noises generated by activities in the parish center would significantly impact the nearby residences or businesses. However, because the site is governed by a conditional use permit, the applicants can be required to mitigate future noise issues, should they arise.

Construction Hours and Activities

Short-term construction noise would also be generated during construction of this site. Staff has recommended that construction activities for the site be subject to construction hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, as neighbors indicated a preference for no Saturday construction at the neighborhood meeting. Staff is also recommending a condition that would allow the Planning Director to approve earlier construction "start times" for specific construction activities (e.g., concrete foundation/slab pours) if it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Director that the construction and construction traffic noise will not affect nearby residents.

At the neighborhood meeting, a resident had requested that the construction staging and storage area be located at the north end of the western parking lot to reduce potential noise impacts on the residents to the south. The neighbor also requested that construction vehicles be required to park on the church site and that the construction haul route use Stoneridge Drive via the church's Stoneridge Drive driveway and not use Rheem Drive or the Rheem Drive driveway. Conditions of approval have been included to address these requests.

Traffic/Circulation

The church is located on Stoneridge Drive, a main thoroughfare through the City. A traffic signal exists at the intersection of Stoneridge and Rheem Drives to help regulate vehicles approaching and leaving the proposed site. No new employees would be added with the proposed expansions to the church. Furthermore, the parish center would experience peak periods of usage on weekends and on evenings, thereby reducing the likelihood for any peak

hour traffic problems in the area.

Traffic for the buildout of the church's 1998 master plan was included in the City's traffic model. Also, the proposed master plan modification would reduce the total square footage of the master plan by 3,524-square feet. Therefore, no traffic report is required for the proposed parish center building.

The church site currently has one improved access drive off Stoneridge Drive and one off Rheem Drive leading to the two parking areas. The applicants would not modify the existing driveways. The western parking lot currently has a gate located at both of its entries. A condition of approval from the 1998 master plan required that these gates be installed and that the parking lot be gated when it was not needed for church parking. With the current application, staff believes that this requirement should remain in order to prevent people from parking in the lot late at night and potentially disturbing the neighbors. Staff has included a condition of approval to address this item.

As previously noted, residents in the Pleasant Village neighborhood had requested that the City install centerline striping along Rheem Drive between Stoneridge Drive and Kamp Drive in order to define/narrow the travel lanes and reduce speeds and to install centerline striping along the "S-Shaped" turn at Rheem Drive/Bowen Street/Alexander Way/Krause Street in order to deter vehicles from "cutting the corners." The City Traffic Engineer believed the striping to be an acceptable tool to try to reduce speeds on Rheem Drive and to deter traffic from making dangerous turns, and authorized the striping projects. The striping, consisting of two centerlines with reflectors, will be installed by the City either this winter, weather permitting, or next spring, well before the parish center building would be completed. In addition, Pleasant Village residents also indicated that on Sundays after the church services let out, the northbound left turn lane at the Rheem Drive and Stoneridge Drive intersection can get congested as the signal only lets a few cars turn left from Rheem Drive to Stoneridge Drive. The City Traffic Engineer has indicated that the signal timing will be changed on Sundays to allow more vehicles to make this left-turn movement.

Some neighbors have requested that the church's existing Rheem Drive driveway be relocated to the north along Rheem Drive or along Stoneridge Drive. As originally proposed by the church with the 1998 master plan, the driveway to the proposed western parking lot was located at the southern boundary of the church property at the "elbow" where Bowen Street and Alexander Way intersect. However, due to concerns by the neighbors, it was relocated to its present location on Rheem Drive. Demolishing the existing driveway and constructing a new driveway on Rheem Drive closer to Stoneridge Drive would reduce the driveways efficiency at delivering traffic to the Rheem Drive/Stoneridge Drive intersection, possibly require that the parish center building be redesigned as two separate buildings, and possibly result in a new building being located closer to the Bowen Street residents than is currently proposed unless the church was to

reduce the size of the building or construct a two-story structure. Furthermore, demolishing the existing driveway and installing a new driveway at Stoneridge Drive would be undesirable from a traffic flow perspective as parishioners wanting to travel westbound on Stoneridge Drive from the church would first have to turn right (eastbound) onto Stoneridge Drive and then make a U-turn in front of the church's existing Stoneridge Drive driveway where there is a median break. This would also lead to internal queuing and congestion issues at the church's eastern parking lot as parishioners wanting to turn left from the existing Stoneridge Drive driveway would have to compete with the eastbound U-turn traffic from the church's western Stoneridge Drive driveway. Based on the above discussion, staff feels that the existing Rheem Drive driveway remain as currently constructed.

Parking

Users of the proposed parish center building would utilize the existing parking lots, which currently have a total of 311 spaces. The proposal would eliminate 20 spaces to create a drop-off area in front (east side) of the parish center and to create a pedestrian pathway through the existing parking lots. The applicants have proposed to replace all 20 of these spaces by restriping some of the existing standard-sized spaces to compact-sized spaces and by creating seven new parking spaces within or adjacent to the existing parking lots, resulting in a total of 311 parking spaces.

Staff notes that the five proposed parallel spaces along the northern end of the western parking lot would not meet the Municipal Code and fire truck access requirements as they would reduce the width of the adjacent drive aisle from 26 feet 9 inches to 18 feet 3 inches, where a 20-foot minimum is required, and would not provide adequate fire truck turning radii. Therefore, a condition requires that these five spaces be removed from the plan. As a result, a total of 306 on-site parking spaces would be available to accommodate the existing and proposed church-related activities.

The Municipal Code requires that auditoriums, churches, private clubs and lodge halls, community centers, mortuaries, sports arenas and stadiums, theaters, auction establishments and other places of public assembly, including church, school, and college auditoriums provide one parking space for every six fixed seats or one space for each sixty square feet of floor area usable for seating if seats are not fixed in all facilities in which simultaneous use is probable as determined by the Zoning Administrator. In this instance, one space for each six seats would apply to the 835-fixed-seat sanctuary and one space for each 60 square feet of floor area would apply to the 13,502 square feet of usable seating area in the proposed parish center without fixed seating.

As shown in the table on the following page, the church's 306 parking spaces would not meet the Municipal Code parking requirements for the 835-fixed-seat sanctuary (139 spaces) and the

13,502 square feet of usable seating area in the proposed parish center (225 spaces) if both buildings were to be used simultaneously to full capacity (364 spaces total). However, since the church is not proposing to schedule uses in the sanctuary and parish center buildings at the same time, the Municipal Code parking requirement would be based on the higher individual parking requirement, which in this case is the parish center (225 spaces). Therefore, the church's 306 proposed parking spaces would comply with the Municipal Code parking requirements for this phase of the master plan.

Parking Requirements for St. Elizabeth Seton Church

Use:	
• Sanctuary (with 835 fixed seats) -	139 spaces required
• Parish Center (with 13,502 sq. ft. of useable space for seating) -	225 spaces required
Total number of parking spaces required by Municipal Code:	225 spaces ¹
Total on-site parking spaces proposed:	306 spaces ²
Off-site parking spaces available Sunday evenings at 2174-2186 Rheem Drive:	95 spaces ³
Approximate number of existing/proposed on-street parking spaces along the church's frontages:	
• Rheem Drive (existing) -	10 spaces
• Stoneridge Drive (proposed) -	28 spaces
Total Parking Spaces On- and Off-Site:	439 spaces

¹Parking requirement based on the greater parking requirement since uses in the sanctuary and parish center would not occur simultaneously.

²Based on the staff-recommendation to eliminate the 5 parallel parking spaces that are proposed in the western parking lot.

³Based on staff parking space count conducted on November 2, 2006.

Staff notes that the Municipal Code's one parking space per six fixed seat requirement is an optimistic assumption and believes that in reality most parishioners' vehicles would contain fewer than six people. The church's parking counts that were conducted for seven Sunday services in April and October 2006 (see attachment #1) support this theory as there were up to 413 vehicles present for the services, exceeding the church's 311 on-site parking spaces. Parking surveys conducted by the church indicate that overflow parking is occurring in the adjacent Pleasanton Village, Belvedere, and Gatewood Apartments neighborhoods and in the adjacent Santa Rita Office Center parking lot to the west at 4431-4495 Stoneridge Drive. The church also indicated that some church members park in non-designated parking areas on site. Since staff believes that the church should provide adequate parking for its activities without impacting the surrounding neighbors and businesses with overflow parking and without needing

to park in non-designated parking areas on site (which could impede fire truck and other emergency vehicles), staff had requested that the church construct more on-site parking spaces at the eastern side of the church site. Since the additional parking is only needed once a week during the 4:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Sunday services, staff informed the church that it would support a gravel parking lot rather than a paved one in order to save the church money.

The church informed staff that it does not wish to construct additional parking at the eastern side of the church site at this time. Instead, the church negotiated with the property owners of 2174-2186 Rheem Drive to use their 95-space parking lot on Sundays (see letter from church, Attachment #1). The applicants indicated that they have obtained a verbal parking agreement from the property owner and that they should have the written parking agreement in time for the Planning Commission hearing. Staff believes that church use of the adjacent 2174-2186 Rheem Drive parking lot is a feasible solution to provide extra parking for the church. Staff notes that the church's use of the parking lot would not conflict with the tenants' use of the parking lot since the businesses are closed on Sunday evenings. However, staff notes that there is no guarantee that the church could use this off-site parking lot indefinitely. Therefore, staff has included a condition which requires that should the parking agreement with the 2174-2186 Rheem Drive property owner ever be terminated, the church must find another suitable off-site parking area, subject to the review and approval of the Planning Director, or construct an on-site gravel parking lot on the east side of their site.

Additionally, the church requested that on-street parking be allowed along its Stoneridge Drive frontage during its 4:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Sunday services. There is currently a 12-foot wide bike lane along the south side of Stoneridge Drive that could be converted to a four-foot wide bike lane and an eight-foot wide parking lane which staff estimates could accommodate 28 parallel parked vehicles. Staff believes that it would be acceptable to allow parking along Stoneridge Drive during the church's busiest afternoon/evening services in order to avoid parishioners parking in the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses. A condition of approval requires that the church install the necessary parking signage and striping along the Stoneridge Drive frontage. Staff notes that approximately 10 vehicles could park along the church's Rheem Drive frontage, where on-street parking is currently allowed.

In total, 439 on- and off-site parking spaces would be available for the church on Sundays, meeting the maximum parking demand of 413 spaces that was observed during the church's parking surveys. Staff has included a condition which requires that the church regularly inform its members to utilize the overflow parking at the 2174-2186 Rheem Drive property and along the church's Stoneridge and Rheem Drive frontages rather than use on-street parking in front of the residences or the other light industrial/office developments along Rheem Drive. A condition also requires that the church place a few temporary A-frame signs along the Rheem Drive separated sidewalk planter south of the church site during its Sunday services which state something similar to: "St. Elizabeth Seton Church members, please don't park in front of

residences during Sunday services.” The church has agreed to install the signs.

A neighbor had inquired about implementing residential parking permits to prevent church patrons from parking within the Pleasanton Village neighborhood. Staff feels that measures should be taken to ensure parking would not overflow onto adjacent residential properties rather than rely on permit parking, which can be inconvenient for the residents and their guests. As noted above, staff feels that on- and off-site parking would be sufficient to accommodate the church’s peak parking demand during Sunday services. Furthermore, in order to reduce the attractiveness of off-site parking along the adjacent residential streets to the south, staff is recommending that the church install a five to six-foot tall fence in its southern planter area near the “elbow” of the Bowen Street and Alexander Way intersection to prevent people from using this “short cut” to reach the church. Staff believes that a fence would be more effective than the church’s proposal to install landscaping to block the short cut. The church has agreed to install the fence.

At the neighborhood meeting, a neighbor questioned if parking could be prohibited along the Rheem Drive frontage of the church site. Staff believes that on-street parking should remain permitted along the church’s Rheem Drive frontage in order to reduce the chances of parishioners being “forced” to park further south on Rheem Drive in front of the residences.

With the additional on-street and off-site parking discussed above, staff believes that there would be adequate parking to meet demand for this phase of the church’s development. In addition, because the site is governed by a conditional use permit, the applicants can be required to mitigate future parking problems, should they arise. However, if the Commission feels that the church should install additional parking on their site rather than rely on a parking agreement for off-site parking and/or on-street parking in front of the church site, then the Commission should modify the staff-recommended conditions of approval accordingly.

With regard to buildout of the master plan, two future parking lots, totaling 113 spaces, are shown at the eastern side of the site, matching the parking shown in the prior 1998 master plan, resulting in a total of 419 spaces at buildout (this figure includes the staff recommendation to eliminate the five parallel parking spaces). Since no details on the future elementary school and rectory have been provided with the current application, the exact number of parking spaces that would be required for buildout would be determined when the future elementary school and rectory are proposed. In addition, similar to the 1998 master plan, the revised master plan shows access to the future parking lots via the existing circular church parking lot and a new driveway off Oakland Avenue. Access to the future parking lots are not being approved as part of the subject application, but would be determined when the future elementary school and/or rectory are proposed. Staff anticipates that the Oakland Avenue driveway may receive neighborhood opposition and it may be necessary to relocate this driveway.

Grading and Drainage

The lot is relatively flat and the applicants' are proposing to generally maintain the existing grades on the property. Staff finds the proposed grading to be acceptable. With respect to drainage, the applicants are proposing seven bioswales in the planter areas along the north and west sides of the parish center building that would filter contaminants from some of the roof drainage before entering the arroyos and, ultimately, the bay. Vegetative bioswales is a type of stormwater runoff measure strongly supported by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and local agencies like Pleasanton implementing the urban clean water runoff program. However, staff notes that the proposed bioswales are small in size and are not consistent with engineering sizing standards for bioswales. Furthermore, several of the proposed bioswales have been located in the proposed walkways on the west side of the building. Staff also believes that some of the western parking lot area should drain to the bioswales, if feasible. A recommended condition of approval has been included to address these issues.

Landscaping

Staff feels that the proposed landscape plan contains sufficient landscape area around the perimeter of the building and along the street frontages and includes an adequate variety of plant species. However, staff does believe that the landscape plan should be modified in a few areas: 1) replace the Chinese hackberry street trees along Rheem Drive frontage with an evergreen species as requested by a neighbor; 2) install tall-growing evergreen shrubs in the existing planter area along the southern property line adjacent to 4483 and 4485 Bowen St. where there currently are a few bare dirt areas; 3) add another African sumac tree in the planter at the south end of the building where there is a gap between the proposed trees; and 4) eliminate the proposed groundcover within the Stoneridge Drive planter between the sidewalk and street as there is currently healthy groundcover in this planter area.

A neighbor in the Stoneridge Orchard neighborhood requested that the Stoneridge Drive median between the church's Stoneridge Drive driveway and Kamp Drive be fully landscaped (only approximately 90 feet of its 785-foot length is currently landscaped) by the church as part of this project. Landscaping of this median is not currently funded as a future project in the City's capital improvement program. In addition, no previous development in the area was required to fund the landscaping of this median. With respect to the church's current application, staff notes that it is not uncommon for a developer to be required to install median landscaping along its project frontage. However, given that the proposed parish center would be located at the western end of the church site, there does not appear to be a nexus to require the church to landscape the median as part of this phase of its master plan.

Tree Removal and Mitigation

The arborist has valued the 11 trees to be removed at \$11,000. Staff does not have a concern with the removal of these 11 trees as they are either in poor health (the English walnut tree) or are small trees that were previously planted by the applicants with the last phase of development. Staff feels that the 44 new trees to be planted by the applicants, as proposed and conditioned, would adequately mitigate the removal of the 11 trees.

VI. VARIANCE FINDINGS

Any variance must be reviewed in light of the three specific findings required by state law. The variance is granted not by degree, but based only upon specific facts and site conditions which support the findings. The applicants must demonstrate:

- 1. That because of special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, the strict application of the provisions of this chapter deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zoning classification;**

Part of the reason the building needs to exceed the 30-foot height limit is to accommodate the minimum interior height of the basketball court and the necessary structural, ventilation, and drainage requirements of the building. The other reasons are to improve the building design and to help screen any future roof-top equipment. The top of the proposed gymnasium roof measures approximately 31 feet in height. The applicants have extended the side walls of the gymnasium three feet above the top of the gymnasium roof in order to improve the aesthetics of the building and avoid the unattractive, “box-like” design commonly found on gymnasium buildings. The extension of the side walls would also help to screen any future roof-top equipment, such as photovoltaic panels. Staff believes that these are special circumstances applicable to the property and staff believes that the first finding can be made for the height variance.

- 2. That the granting of the variance will not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitation on other properties classified in the same zoning district;**

In order for this finding to be made, there must exist a relationship between the special circumstances applicable to the property and the variance in question. As stated above, staff feels that there are special circumstances applicable with respect to the gymnasium use of the building and the desire to make the gymnasium design attractive and to provide screening of roof-top equipment. Only the gymnasium portion of the building would exceed the 30-foot height limit. For height comparison purposes, the newer public school

gymnasiums at Harvest Park Middle School, Pleasanton Middle School, and Thomas Hart Middle School measure approximately 38 feet, 37 feet 8 inches, and 38 feet, respectively. Staff notes that the Pleasanton Middle School and Harvest Park School gymnasiums exceed the height limits of their respective zoning districts. However, variances were not required for the school gymnasiums because public school buildings are not subject to City review or zoning regulations such as height limits.

Therefore, staff believes that approving the height variance for the gymnasium portion of the building would not be precedent setting and staff feels that the second finding can be made for the height variance.

3. That the granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity.

Staff believes that the proposed 77-foot rear yard setback to the closest residential properties on Bowen Street would provide an adequate buffer to minimize building massing impacts on the Bowen Street neighbors and would provide adequate light and open space between the church and residential properties. Staff also notes that the taller gymnasium walls are located an additional 28 feet from the southernmost end of the building wall, resulting in a 105-foot rear yard setback from the Bowen Street neighbors' rear property line to the taller gymnasium walls. Staff also finds that the building mass has been minimized as a result of the side gymnasium walls angling in towards the top and because the taller side walls don't wrap around to the front and rear of the gymnasium. The gymnasium walls would also slightly undulate in and out and up and down to add interest and reduce the mass of the building compared to a flat building wall. Additionally, the 34-tall gymnasium walls would be located along a 110-foot long portion of the approximately 302-foot long building. The remainder of the building would be well below the 30-foot height limit with only the very top ridge of the roof over the conference room reaching a maximum height of 29 feet 3 inches. Staff also notes that it would be difficult to perceive the height difference between a 30-foot tall building and a 34-foot tall building.

Therefore, staff believes that the granting of the variance would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or general welfare or materially injurious to properties in the area, and this third finding can be made.

VII. PUBLIC NOTICE

Notices for design review and variance applications are normally mailed to property owners and tenants within 1,000 feet of the subject property. In this case, staff expanded the notice area to include all residents in the Pleasanton Village, Mohr Park, Sycamore Place, and Stoneridge

Orchard neighborhoods (see Attachment #8). As discussed above, staff held a neighborhood meeting to receive public input on the project. Staff also received a letter from the Pleasanton Village Homeowners Association (see Attachment #5) and emails from several residents (see Attachment #6) commenting on the proposed project.

VIII. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project is categorically exempt (Class 5, Section 15305, Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations and Class 32, Section 15332, In-Fill Development Projects) from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Make the Variance Findings as listed in the staff report; and
2. Approve Cases PDR-561 and PV-158, subject to the conditions listed in Exhibit “B”.

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