

COVER LETTER
Calvary Christian Academy
Variance

February 29, 2024

REQUEST

On behalf of the Petitioner, Engineering Design & Construction, Inc, would like to request approval of a Height Variance to allow for the construction of a 49-foot and 1-inch-tall school building. The subject site known as Calvary Christian Academy is located at 5545 NW St James Drive in Port St. Lucie, Florida.

Parcel ID	Address	Acreage	FLU	Zoning
3408-602-0004-000-7	5545 NW St James Dr	3.85	CG	CG

SITE CHARACTERISTICS & PROJECT HISTORY

The subject property has a Future Land Use designation of General Commercial (CG) and is located in the General Commercial (CG) Zoning District. The maximum allowable building height within the General Commercial Zoning District is thirty-five (35) feet. Additionally, Section 158.215 of Port St. Lucie's Code of Ordinances states that "Utility penthouses, scenery lofts, towers, cupolas, steeples, domes, flag poles, airplane beacons, broadcasting towers, antennas, chimneys, stacks, tanks, roof mounted solar energy systems, non-roof installed solar energy devices integrated into the architecture of the building, and roof structures used only for ornamental or mechanical purposes may exceed the permissible height limit in any district by not more than twenty-five (25) percent.". As shown in the architectural elevations provided, the proposed building would have a maximum building height of 49-feet and 1-inch. This maximum building height includes a 7-foot and 1-inch roof structure of which the purpose is to conceal mechanical equipment. As such, this roof falls within the 25 percent threshold outlined above. The existing building was previously approved to be two (2) stories in height with 14-feet dedicated to each story. In order to remain consistent with what was previously built, this third story addition is being proposed at 14-feet as well. In order to maintain consistency across each story, this new addition is being proposed at 14-feet in height as well. As such, a height variance of **7 feet** is requested. Following submittal of this variance application, Applicant will be submitting a site plan amendment for this requesting, among other modifications to the site, approval of a three (3) story school building.

The subject property is occupied by the existing educational institution known as Calvary Christian Academy.

To the north of the subject parcel lies the 95-foot right-of-way of NW Peachtree Blvd followed by 6.87 Acre church known as Calvary of Port St. Lucie. This property has a Future Land Use designation of Institutional (I) and lies in the Institutional (I) Zoning district.

East of the subject property lies the 165-foot right-of-way known as St James Dr followed by Southern Oaks Middle School. This property has a Future Land Use Designation of Institutional (I) and is located in the General Use (GU) Zoning District.

South of the subject property lies Canal No. 104. This parcel has a Future Land Use designation of Utilities (U) and is located in the General Use (GU) Zoning District.

West of the subject parcel lays the same canal located to the south. This portion of the canal has

a Future Land Use Designation of Open-Space Conservation (OSC) and is located within the General Use (GU) Zoning district.

RESPONSES TO VARIANCE CRITERIA

Please find the responses below in ***Bold Italics*** for this variance as outlined in section 158.295 (C) 1-7:

1. Please explain special conditions and circumstances that exist which are peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district.

Response: Calvary Christian Academy is a private educational institution located within the General Commercial (CG) Zoning District. The existing two-story building was built dedicating 14-feet to each story. A height variance of 7 feet is required in order to maintain a consistent architectural appearance across all three stories.

2. Please explain if these conditions and circumstances result from actions by the applicant
Response: Since approval of Applicant's previous site plan growth in the City of Port St. Lucie has continued thereby increasing the demand for private educational institutions such as Calvary Christian Academy. This request is in an effort to keep pace with this demand. The granting of this height variance would allow this institution to add an additional story of classroom space thereby serving additional prospective students in the area while maintaining an attractive community.

3. Please explain how granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant special privilege that is denied by this chapter to other lands, buildings, or structures, in the same zoning district

Response: There is no special privilege conferred on the applicant that is denied to other lands, buildings, or structures in the same zoning district. As stated in Section 158.124 of Port St. Lucie's Code of Ordinances, the maximum allowable height for General Commercial Zoned structures is 35 feet (not including the additional 25 percent extension granted for roof structures concealing mechanical equipment). However, consideration must be made regarding the educational use associated with Applicant's property. Additionally, the requested height variance is not great enough as to negatively impact the surrounding area.

4. Please explain how a literal interpretation of the provisions of the chapter would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the chapter and would work unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant

Response: It is unreasonable to subject the applicant to unnecessary hardship by denying this height variance. Due to size limitations of applicant's parcel, they must increase building capacity by adding height rather than increasing their footprint. This is in an effort to meet the growing demand for private educational institutions in the area. A height variance of 7 feet is required in order to maintain architectural consistency across all three stories of the building. The roof structure falls within the 25 percent of the approved height afforded in Section 158.215. Furthermore, the height at which applicant is seeking to build is not so great as to negatively impact the surrounding area.

5. Please illustrate and explain if the variance requested is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building, or structure.

Response: The Variance requested is to seek relief from the minimum height needed to accommodate this three-story school building. The building that was previously approved included two 14-foot stories. This third story is being proposed at 14-feet as well. This is in an effort to remain consistent across all three stories of the building. Section 158.215 of Port St. Lucie's Code of Ordinances states that "Utility penthouses, scenery lofts, towers, cupolas, steeples, domes, flag poles, airplane beacons, broadcasting towers, antennas, chimneys, stacks, tanks, roof mounted solar energy systems, non-roof installed solar energy devices integrated into the architecture of the building, and roof structures used only for ornamental or mechanical purposes may exceed the permissible height limit in any district by not more than twenty-five (25) percent." A height Variance of 7-feet is the minimum Variance required to accommodate three 14-foot stories. The additional height needed for the building's roof structure which conceals mechanical equipment falls within the 25 percent height exclusion outlined above.

6. Please indicate how granting variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the chapter and that granting the variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.

Response: The granting of this Variance will not be injurious to the area involved. The additional height afforded by this variance would enable Calvary Christian Academy to serve a greater number of students located in the respective area. This Variance would not be great enough as to negatively impact the identity or scale of the surrounding area.

7. Please indicate that there will be full compliance with any additional conditions and safeguards which the Planning and Zoning Board or Zoning Administrator may prescribe, including but not limited to reasonable time limits within which the action for which variance is required shall be begun or completed, or both.

Response: The applicant is currently seeking to be in full compliance with the conditions and safeguards that the Planning and Zoning Board or Zoning Administrator may prescribe. The applicant will be in full compliance with any additional conditions the Planning and Zoning Board may request.

Based on the above and attached information, the applicant respectfully requests approval of the proposed variance

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