

PLANNING APPROVAL STAFF REPORT

Date: July 7, 2016

NAME Azalea City Montessori

LOCATION 4 North Ann Street and 1260 & 1262 Dauphin Street
(Northeast corner of Dauphin Street and Ann Street).

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT District 2

PRESENT ZONING R-1, Single-Family Residence District and B-1, Buffer Business District

AREA OF PROPERTY 1 Lot / 2.2 ± Acres

CONTEMPLATED USE Planning Approval to allow a school in an existing church in a B-1, Buffer-Business District.

TIME SCHEDULE FOR DEVELOPMENT Immediately.

ENGINEERING COMMENTS No Comments.

TRAFFIC ENGINEERING No adverse traffic impacts are anticipated by this request.

URBAN FORESTRY COMMENTS Property to be developed in compliance with state and local laws that pertain to tree preservation and protection on both city and private properties (State Act 2015-116 and City Code Chapters 57 and 64).

FIRE DEPARTMENT COMMENTS All projects within the City Limits of Mobile shall comply with the requirements of the City of Mobile Fire Code Ordinance (2012 International Fire Code).

REMARKS The applicant is requesting Planning Approval to allow a school in an existing church in a B-1, Buffer Business District. Planning Approval is required for schools in B-1 zoning districts.

The review required for Planning Approval examines the applicant’s location and site plan with regard to transportation, parking and access, public utilities and facilities, traffic congestion and hazard, and to determine if the proposal is in harmony with the orderly and appropriate development of the district.

It is very important to note that the Planning Approval review is site plan specific; therefore *any* future changes to the site plan, as approved, by current or future applicants must be submitted for Planning Approval.

The applicant states:

This application is for approval to use 2 existing classrooms, 3 bathrooms and a hallway in the Central Presbyterian Church Sunday School Building for a small-scale Montessori preschool and elementary school and childcare program not to exceed 49 children. Improvements to the property include the installation of a floor sink in a mop closet, exhaust fans in 3 bathrooms, and the painting of 2 classrooms. All improvements are interior for the purpose of complying with health department regulations and do not affect the exterior of the building. All improvements are scheduled to be completed by July 2016 with operation to begin as soon as possible upon receipt of the necessary permits and licenses, for the operation of the 2016-2017 school year beginning in August 2016.

Azalea City Montessori was founded by a group of parents who wanted progressive options for their children's education that do not currently exist in midtown and downtown Mobile. Our mission is to provide Montessori education programs that are affordable and welcoming to a diverse swath of the community. After two years of searching, we finally found Central Presbyterian Church which offers the facilities we need in an affordable and welcoming environment. We believe our small school will thrive here and provide parents with a much-needed service while becoming a harmonious, elevating force in the neighborhood.

It should be noted that the site is within what the Map for Mobile Comprehensive Plan considers a Traditional Corridor, wherein the intent for development emphasizes the following:

- emphasize retaining historic buildings and creating appropriate, denser infill development;
- encourage mixed housing types including small multi-family structures along the corridor;
- retail and neighborhood services at intersections;
- combine and close driveways to create a continuous pedestrian friendly environment;
- auto, bicycle, transit and pedestrian traffic are accommodated;
- more dense mixed-use development to include neighborhood services and residential above retail

The site is surrounded by properties also zoned B-1, Buffer-Business District to the East, South and West; and by properties zoned R-1, Single-Family Residence District to the North. Most of the developed properties in the vicinity contain single-family residences; however the Alabama School of Math and Science operates directly to the South of the subject site, it too being the subject of Planning Approval in 1998 to operate a school in a B-1, Buffer-Business District.

The site plan illustrates an existing building and 85 parking spaces. The building does not meet setback requirements for structures on a corner lot in a B-1, Buffer-Business District; however,

Side and Rear Yard Setback variances were granted by the Board of Zoning Adjustment at its May 02, 1952 meeting, followed by a 6-month extension at its November 13, 1953 meeting. Additionally, at its November 6, 1962 meeting, the Board approved Front and Side Yard setback variances.

With regards to parking, the site plan indicates the number of existing parking spaces, but they are not illustrated. As such, Staff cannot verify the parking spaces meet requirements of the Zoning Ordinance regarding stall length and width; also, Staff cannot verify the provision of any van accessible parking spaces, or if the widths of existing drive aisles accommodate two-way traffic. Photographs provided by the applicant do prove existing parking spaces are paved with asphalt, and are equipped with wheel stops where vehicles could extend beyond the parking facility; and aerial photographs suggest adequate two-way drive aisle dimension; but, revisions to the site plan must illustrate the dimensions of each parking stall, existing wheel stops, compliance with ADA regulations regarding van accessible parking, and the dimensions of existing drive aisles.

The applicant indicates the church has a seating capacity of 700, thus requiring a minimum of 175 parking spaces given that one (1) parking space must be provided for every four (4) seats within a church sanctuary. As such, considering only 85 parking spaces are provided, the site does not comply with current off-street parking requirements. Furthermore, with the use of the structure expanded to include a teaching facility, additional one and one-half (1 1/2) spaces per teaching station would be required. The applicant does not mention the number of teaching stations by which parking will be affected, but it should be noted that Staff has received application to the Board of Zoning Adjustment to allow the site to operate with fewer parking spaces than the Zoning Ordinance requires.

The site plan does not completely illustrate existing landscaping and trees; and aerial photographs suggest the site is not in compliance with current landscaping and tree regulations. However, given there are no proposed exterior improvements to the site, such compliance is not required. Nevertheless, if the current application is approved, revisions to the site plan illustrating existing landscaping and trees should be required.

A dumpster is not illustrated on the site plan, and one is not visible in recent aerial photographs. If approved, revisions to the site plan illustrating compliance with current dumpster enclosure and sanitary sewer connection requirements of Section 64-4.D.9. of the Zoning Ordinance will be required; or, the applicant may place a note on the site plan stating curbside waste removal will be utilized.

Because the site is commercially utilized and abuts R-1, Single-Family Residence Districts to the North, East and West, a protection buffer is required per Chapter 64-4. D.1. of the Zoning Ordinance; the site plan does not illustrate such a buffer. Therefore, if approved, revision of the site plan to illustrate an appropriate protection buffer in the form of a wall, wooden privacy fence, or the inclusion of a screen planting strip where the site abuts residentially-developed properties is required.

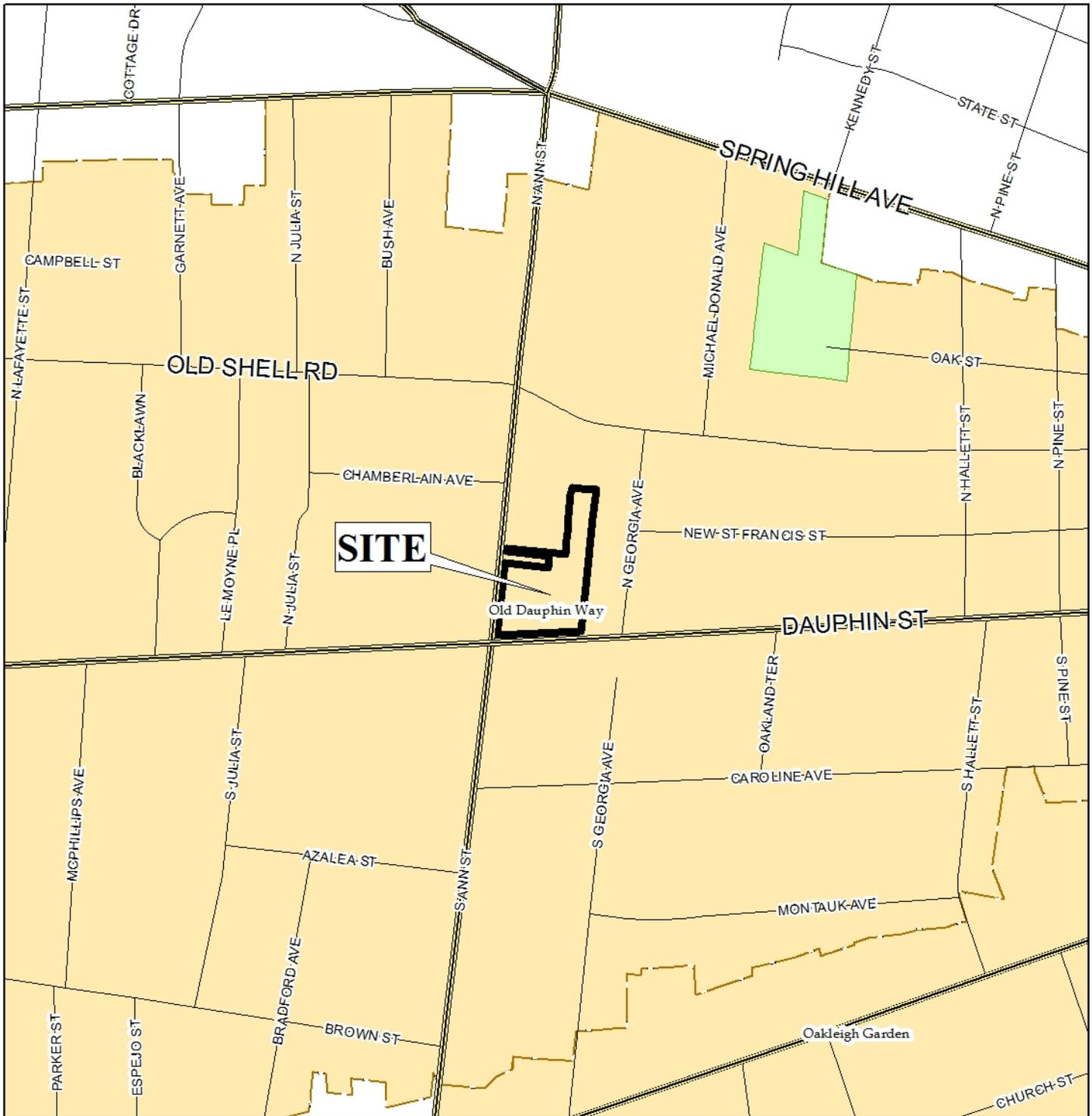
Given the limited scope of operations and improvements, the fact that the site abuts other B-1, Buffer-Business Districts, and that the site is within proximity to another school also subject to Planning Approval, approving this request may be appropriate. Additionally, with respect to the Map for Mobile Comprehensive Plan, the proposed improvements maintain what may not be an historic building, but a building within an historic district, a portion of which has existed since at least 1960 according to aerial photographs. Also, by expanding the use of the existing church to include a school, denser mixed-use development of the site will be achieved.

It should be noted, however, that the site is composed of various metes-and-bounds parcels, a condition which would require subdivision of the property into a legal lot of record to accommodate Planning Approval. It should also be noted that subdivision of the property would result in split-zoning as an R-1, Single-Family Residence District and a B-1, Buffer-Business District. Staff has received applications for subdivision and rezoning of the property, both of which will be heard at the July 21, 2016 meeting of the Planning Commission. As such, holdover of this application may be appropriate to allow all three applications to be heard at the same meeting to better gauge the nature of the proposed requests, and to better address any concerns that may arise from such requests.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Approval: Based upon the preceding, this request is recommended for Holdover until the July 21st meeting to facilitate the consideration of Planning Approval, Subdivision and Rezoning requests at the same time.

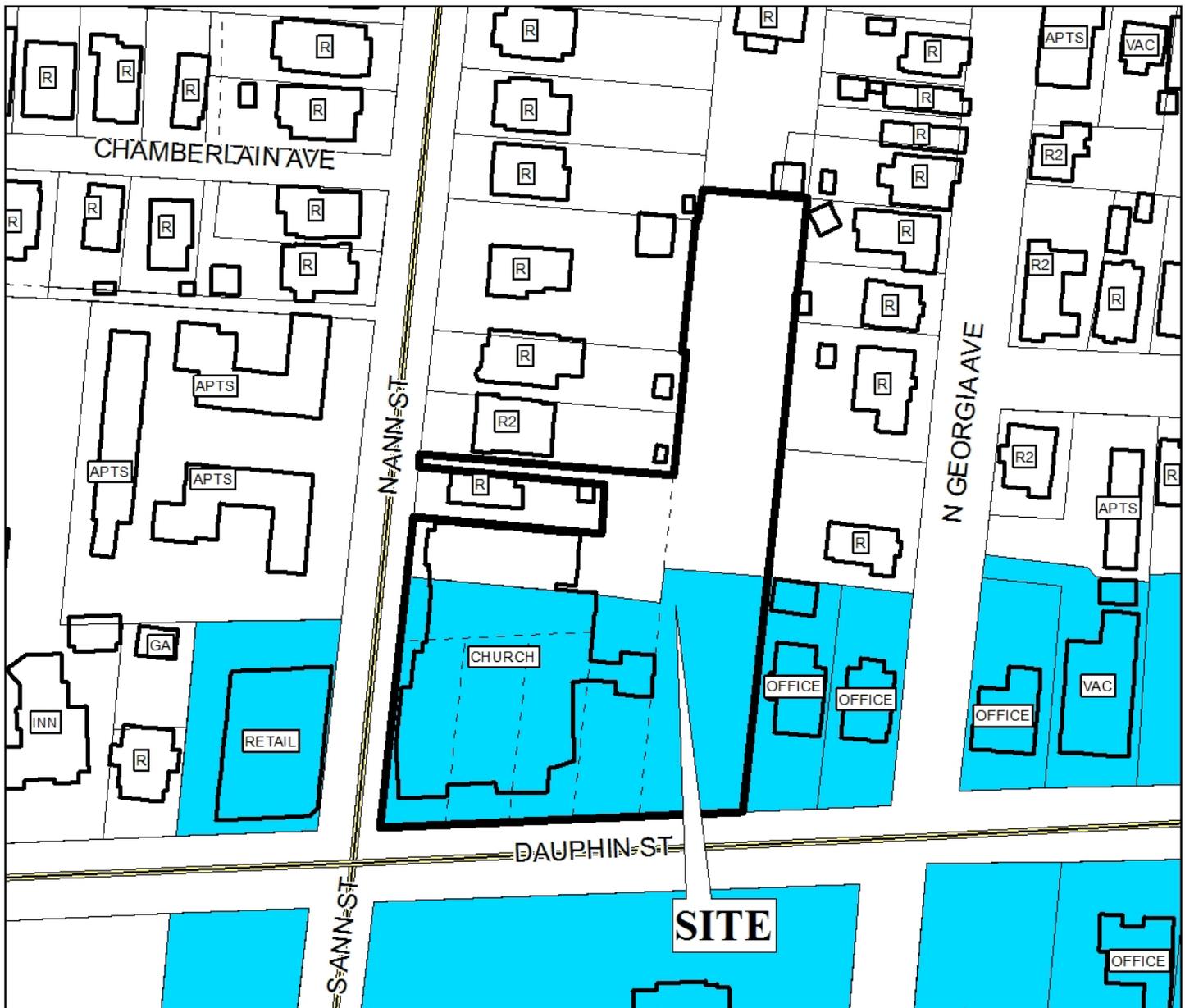
LOCATOR MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER	8	DATE	July 7, 2016
APPLICANT	Azalea City Montessori		
REQUEST	Planning Approval		



PLANNING COMMISSION VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by residential units to the north and commercial units to the south.

APPLICATION NUMBER 8 DATE July 7, 2016

APPLICANT Azalea City Montessori

REQUEST Planning Approval

R-A	R-3	T-B	B-2	B-5	MUN	SD-WH	T5.1
R-1	R-B	B-1	B-3	I-1	OPEN	T3	T5.2
R-2	H-B	LB-2	B-4	I-2	SD	T4	T6



PLANNING COMMISSION VICINITY MAP - EXISTING AERIAL

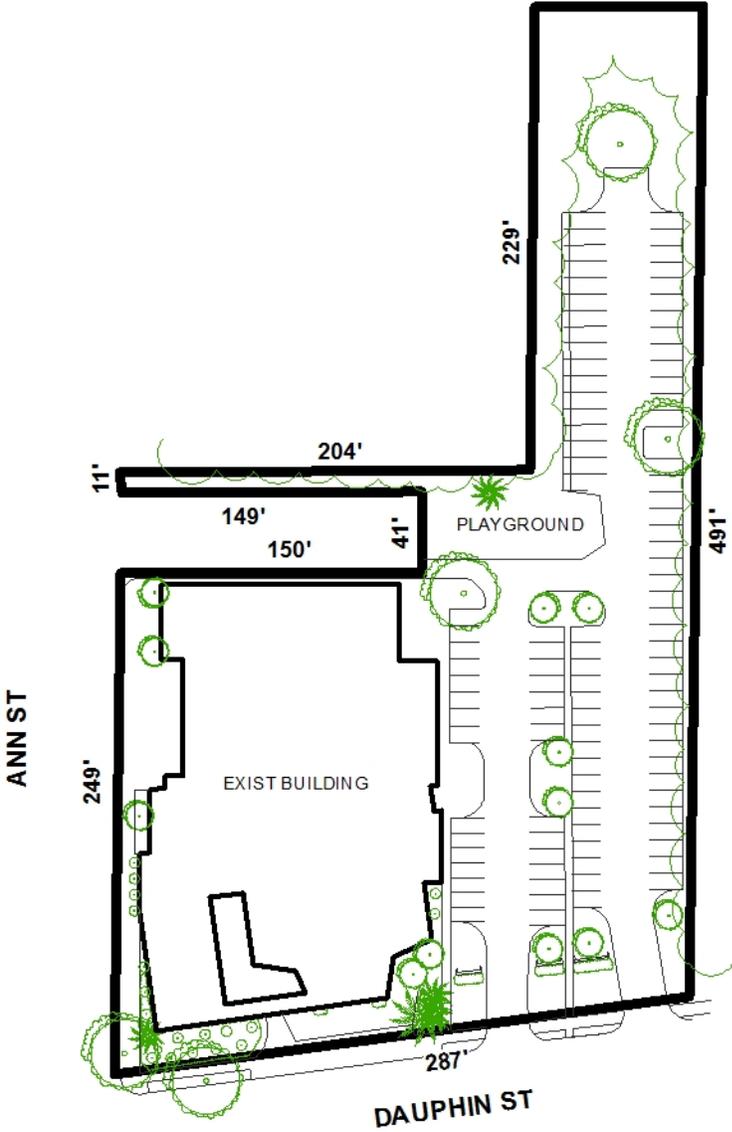


The site is surrounded by residential units to the north and commercial units to the south.

APPLICATION NUMBER	8	DATE	July 7, 2016
APPLICANT	Azalea City Montessori		
REQUEST	Planning Approval		



SITE PLAN



The site plan illustrates the existing building and the parking facility.

APPLICATION NUMBER <u>8</u>	DATE <u>July 7, 2016</u>
APPLICANT <u>Azalea City Montessori</u>	
REQUEST <u>Planning Approval</u>	

