



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

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TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

Planning Board Meeting of September 18, 2025

Case No./Petitioner:

SDP-90-064/ Vestry of St. Mark's Church

Project Name:

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

DPZ Planner:

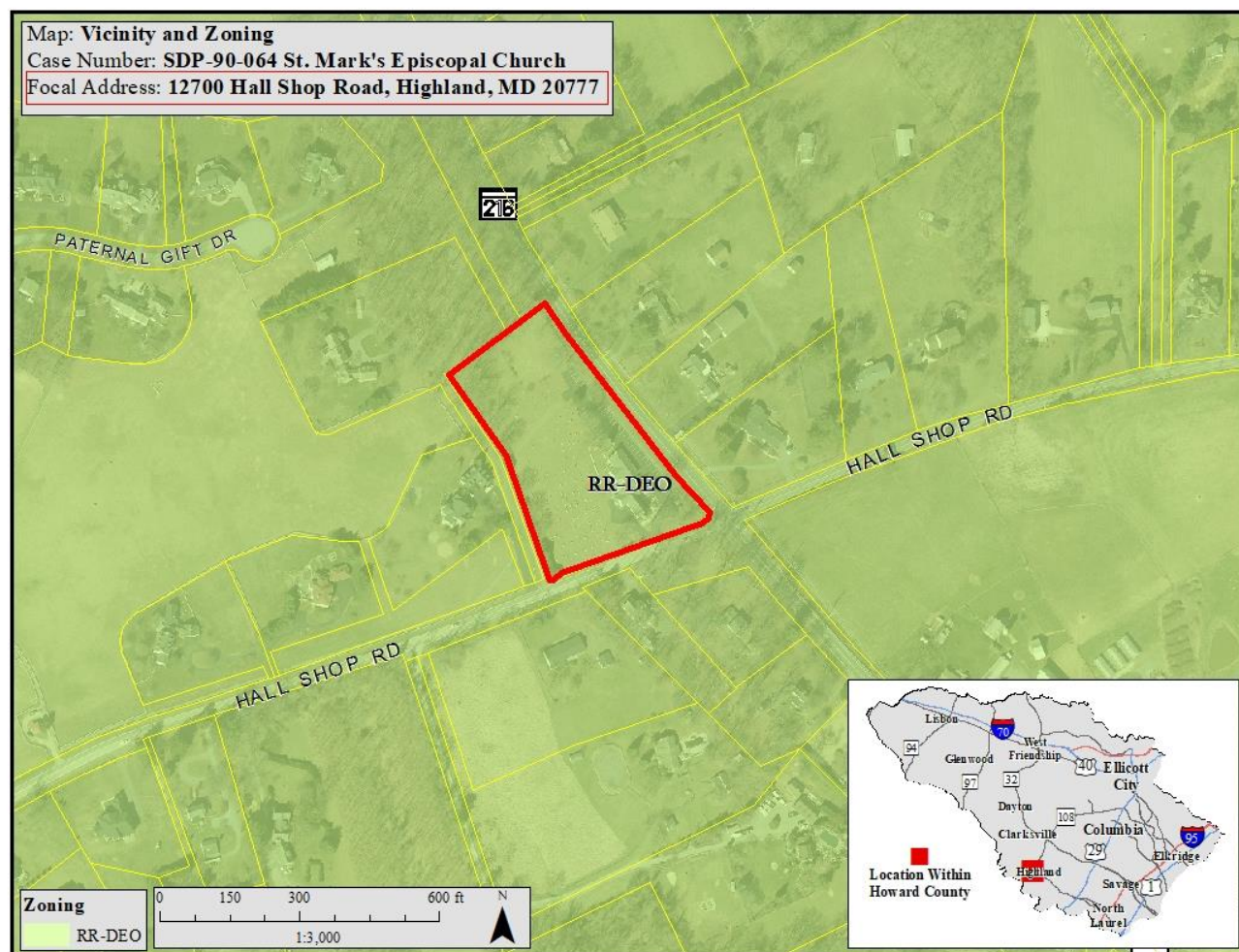
Kathryn Bolton, Planning Specialist I

Request:

Cemetery boundary documentation and accommodation plan review. A request for advisory review of a cemetery accommodation plan in accordance with Section 16.1304 of the Howard County Code for development on land with a cemetery as documented of the Cemetery Inventory Map.

Location:

The property address is 12700 Hall Shop Road, Highland, MD 20777 as referenced on Tax Map 40, Grid 11, Parcel 168.



Legal Notice:

The property was posted and certified by DPZ pursuant to legal requirements.

Site History:

- **HO-116:** Historic site designation for the church, built in 1874, notable for its white Gothic Revival frame structure, gable roof, and original tiffany-stained glass windows.
- **BA-88-061E:** A special exemption and variance request to reduce the setback for proposed additions to the existing historic church and attached parish hall. The 75' setback was reduced along Route 216 to 51' for an addition to the church building and to 43' for an addition to the parish building. The request was granted March 1, 1989.
- **SDP-90-064:** A site development plan for a building addition to the Historic St. Marks Church which was signed by the Department of Planning and Zoning on July 10, 1990.
- **BA-24-018C:** A request to modify an existing religious facility conditional use by replacing the parish hall with a larger structure. The request was granted January 30, 2025.
- **SECP St. Marks:** A simplified environmental concept plan for the proposed modifications to the existing parish hall. The plans were granted approval on May 2, 2025.
- **SDP-90-064 Redline:** A redline revision to replace the parish hall with a larger structure, reflecting the changes approved under BA-24-018C. The revision is currently under review.

Vicinal Properties:

- **North** – Deeded parcels developed with single family detached dwellings zoned RR-DEO
- **East** – Lot 4 of the Eugene D. Souder & Wife subdivision, Plat Book 7, Folio 17.
- **South & West** – Paternal Gift Farm subdivision, Plat No. 11965

Regulatory Compliance:

This cemetery accommodation plan shall comply with the Howard County Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and the Zoning Regulations.

Analysis:

This request is for a recommendation by the Planning Board concerning the "Cemetery Boundary Documentation and Accommodation Plan" for a documented cemetery located at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 12700 Hall Shop Road, Highland, MD 27027. The property consists of the cemetery, the historic church, and a parking lot. The cemetery is owned by St. Mark's Episcopal Church and is proposed to remain in its current condition. No existing graves will be disturbed or removed, and no disturbance is proposed within the cemetery boundary.

The original church was constructed in 1874 on a one-acre parcel intended to serve both as the church site and associated burial grounds. Over time, four additional parcels were conveyed to the church, bringing the total property size to 3.5 acres. As the congregation grew, the church expanded its facilities to meet evolving needs; a parish hall was added in the 1950s, followed by building additions and a parking lot expansion in the 1990s. All existing improvements were constructed prior to the adoption of cemetery regulations. Currently, the church is seeking to improve its facilities within their limited footprint. Working with an architect, they have developed a design that respects the site's historic character while addressing its physical constraints.

The proposed structure will be located approximately 10 feet from the nearest grave site and edge of the cemetery. However, limited construction activity, including the building foundation work, installation of a drainpipe, and minor grading for drainage, will be necessary within that 10-foot setback. Grading will extend seven feet from the building footprint, leaving a three-foot buffer from

individual graves. In some areas, due to the building's corner, this buffer will be reduced to two feet. The proposed disturbance is largely contained within the previously approved limits of disturbance established on SDP-90-064.

On March 11, 2025, the Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board (CPAB) reviewed the proposal and provided advisory comments regarding the parish hall expansion. During that meeting, the Board acknowledged the church's efforts to maintain accurate burial records and confirmed that no graves exist within 10 feet of the proposed building footprint. Extensive survey work and ground-penetrating radar were used to verify the burial grid and cemetery boundaries. Of the three anomalies identified, two were outside the cemetery boundary, and no remains were discovered upon investigation. The CPAB acknowledged the church's documentation efforts and did not raise concerns about potential impacts to burial sites or the cemetery boundary.

Attached for review and consideration is the Cemetery Documentation provided by the applicant in accordance with Section 16.1304(a)(3) of the Howard County Code.

Planning Board Criteria:

In accordance with Section 16.1304(e) of the Howard County Code, the Planning Board shall consider the design proposal for the cemetery accommodation at a public meeting and make a recommendation to the Department of Planning and Zoning on the applicant's plan.

DocuSigned by:  <small>4220B635863042E...</small>	9/4/2025
_____ Lynda Eisenberg, AICP, Director	_____ Date

Please note that this file is available for public review by appointment at the Department of Planning and Zoning's public service counter, Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.