



## ***OCEAN PARK BAPTIST CHURCH***

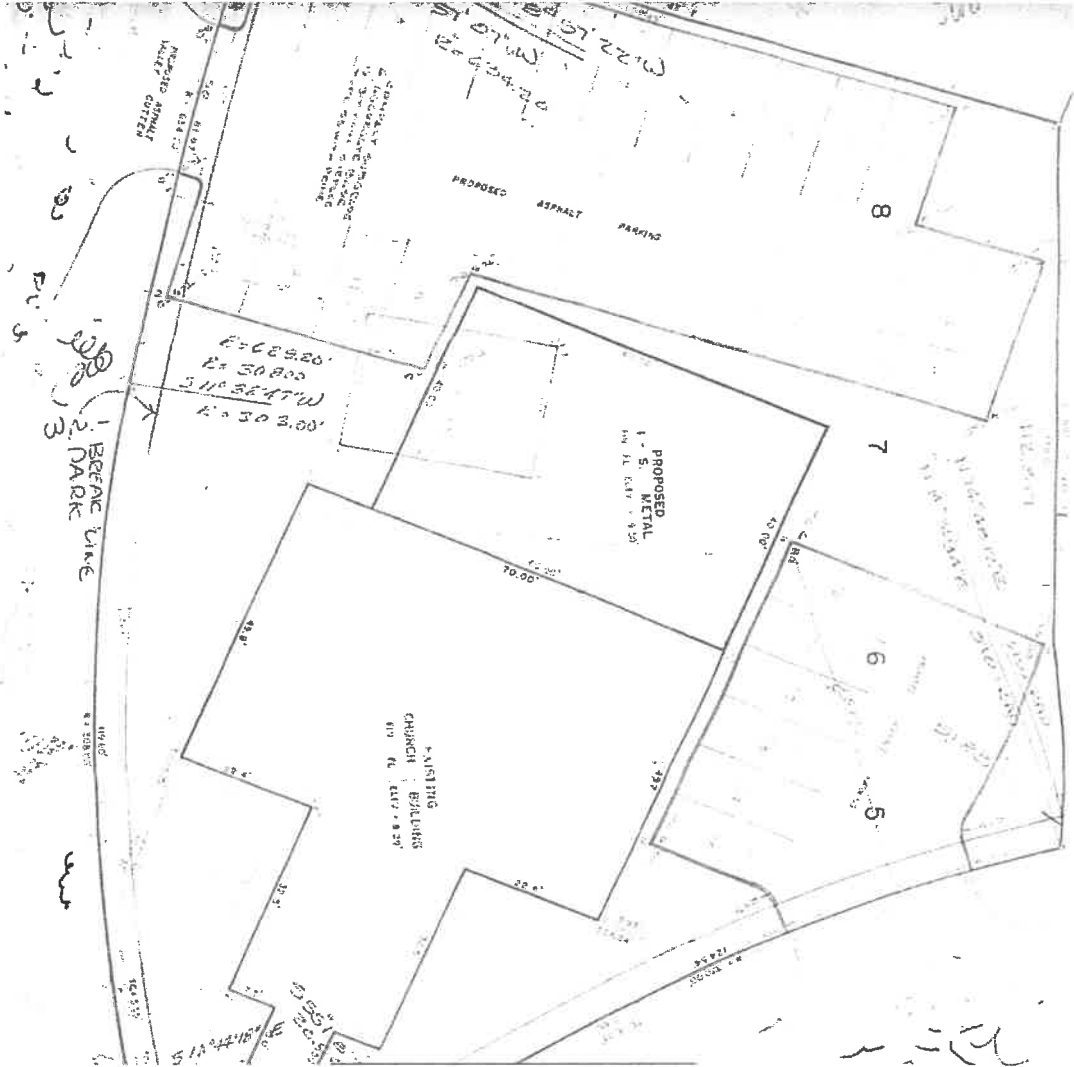
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Our project proposal: To save Ocean Park Baptist Church and by doing so, promote saving the last remaining historical section of Ocean Park

Ocean Park, for those who might not know, is a small beach community on the West side of the Lesner bridge in the Bayside borough of Virginia Beach. Ocean Park Baptist Church (Circa 1949), the building we are attempting to save, is one of the last remaining pre 1950 buildings standing in Ocean Park. It sits prominently on a corner intersection. The other three corners are also occupied by pre 1950 structures. Its location and past history make this area unique. It is the last remaining intersection of the Bayside area that maintains all of the original buildings from the immediate post World War II era. This small community church, which seats approximately 120 people, has been home to a congregation which has been integral to and as a meeting place in the Ocean Park community for 75 years.

We will be requesting that this property be allowed to maintain its grandfather status. We would like to request a variance for the existing onsite parking and parking lot so that we maximize the amount of parking for use of this historical structure as a community gathering/ assembly place and boutique wedding venue/ chapel.

In the attached documents, you will see our vision for the future of the church, historic photographs, maps, surveys and examples of other historic chapels that have also been converted into event spaces.



1980s survey of Ocean Park Baptist shows 25 parking spaces

Virginia Beach Historical Aerial Viewer



1958 Ariel photograph. Ocean Park Baptist is outlined in red. Please note the existence and location of buildings on the other three corners of the intersection. 2023 photograph follows.

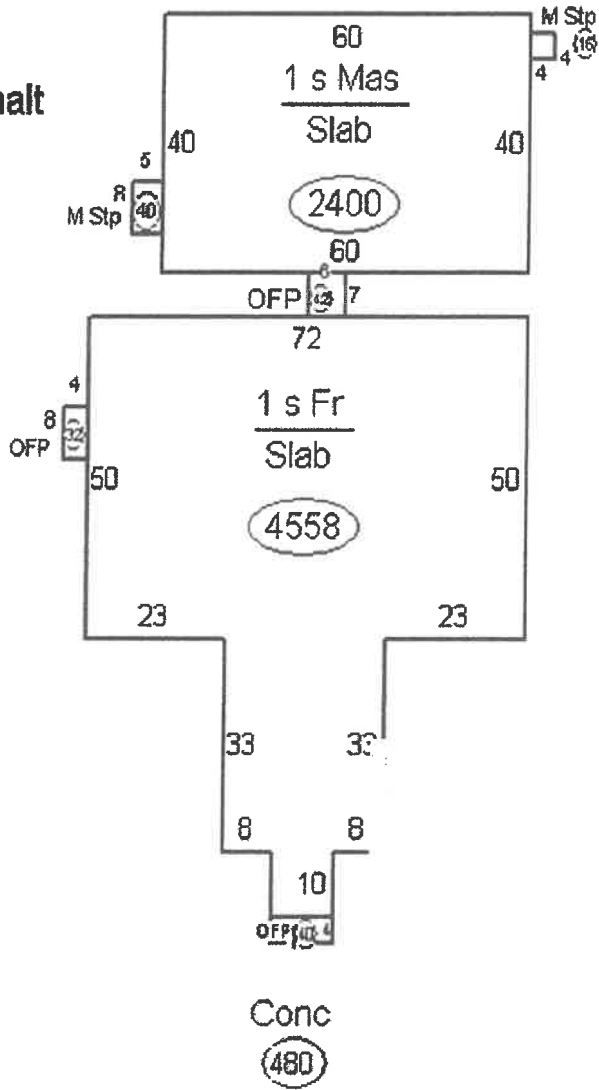
Virginia Beach Historical Aerial Viewer



Ocean Park Baptist as it stands today



02 Asphalt



3624 Dupont Circle

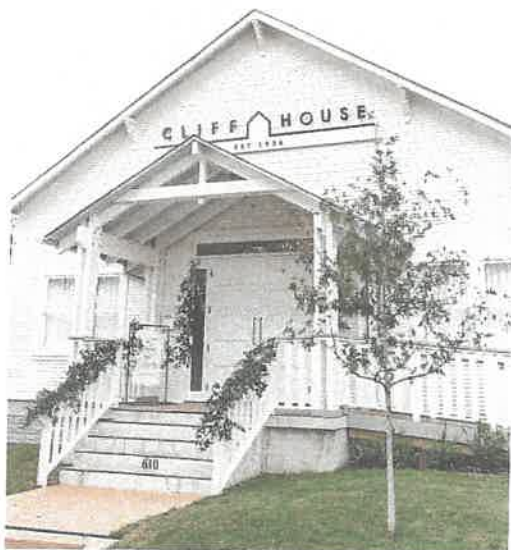
We have come to the conclusion, due to the cost of this purchase, that the only way to save this chapel, while also paying respect to the existing building, is to be allowed to utilize it as a community gathering place as well as a boutique wedding venue. Our ultimate goal is to maintain the church building as it currently sits. There is no reason why this chapel can't be utilized in its existing footprint. To allow a developer to eliminate it would be a significant loss to this community.

The following documents will show you our concept for the future use and preservation of Ocean Park Baptist.



In addition, it is the desire of the Pastor and remaining members of the congregation, to see the church saved and utilized as a community space/ wedding venue; a use in keeping with its original intent.

Initial feedback from contiguous property owners and civic league members has been very positive. The community would like to see the church saved and to our knowledge do not object.



We believe that the appeal and potential for the church to be successful as a wedding venue is not just because of the size and visual appeal of the chapel, but also due to its location. Ocean Park sits on a peninsula surrounded by The Chesapeake Bay to the North, The Lynnhaven River to the East and Pleasure House Creek to the South. The entrance to the Brock Environmental Center, which intermittently utilizes the church parking lot for its overflow parking needs, is only 500 feet away. The Brock Center's close proximity makes it a convenient place for couples and families to take photographs together [REDACTED] The Bayfront, which is just across Shore Drive, can also be utilized for outdoor weddings. All that is required is a temporary permit. The chapel could then be used as a reception space or could be used for indoor weddings.



Ocean Park Baptist is outlined in a **RED**

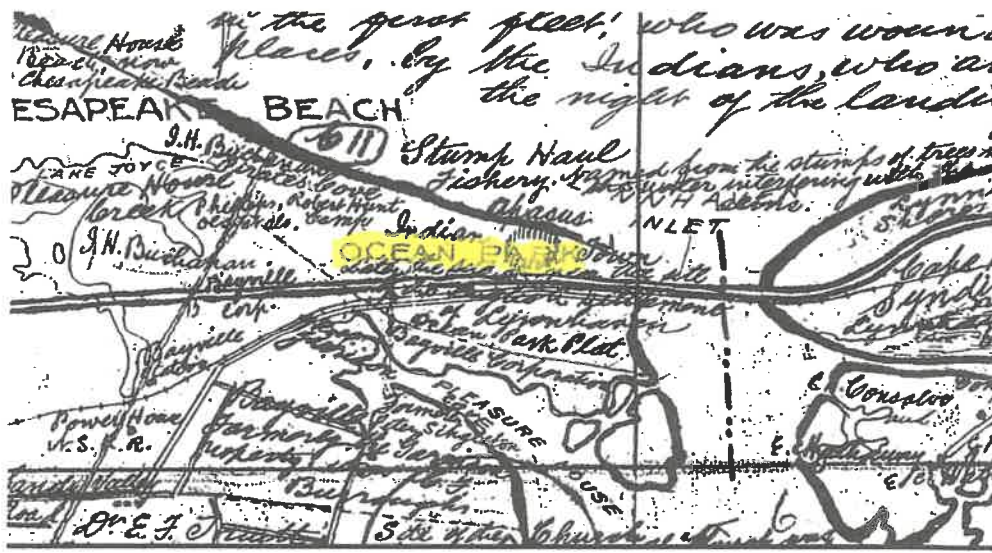
The Entrance to the Brock Center and Pleasure House Point is outlined in **ORANGE**

City of Virginia Beach public parking outlined in **GREEN**

Chesapeake Bay indicated by a **BLUE** strip



The history of the Ocean Park area dates back to pre-Colonial America with documentation of a native American Village named ASPASUS in the vicinity. Ocean Park was part of Adam Throughgoods original 1634 land grant, was the location of a civil war battery and was the home of a hotel, casino and Boardwalk in the 1920s. Almost all the original structures in Ocean Park built before 1950 have been demolished. The Ocean Park Church and the houses surrounding the intersection where it is located are remaining remnants of this historical neighborhood.



Sam's map. 1930



Union reconnaissance map 1862. Note the existence of three cannon at the mouth of the Lynnhaven Inlet near modern day Ocean Park.

Photographs of the other structure in the Ocean Park Baptist church intersection



2209 Dinwiddie. 1934 Craftsman.



3625 Dupont Circle. 1950 vernacular.



3629 Dupont Circle. 1942 Craftsman.



3612 Dupont Circle. 1950 vernacular.



3617 Dupont Circle. 1950 vernacular.



Above :Google street view looking West towards Ocean Park Baptist

Below: Google street view looking North towards Ocean Park Baptist



Original letter to the congregation of Ocean Park Baptist Church: After which they agreed to not sell to a developer and to work with me in attempting to save the structure.

There was at one time, a community here. A true, honest neighborhood where everyone knew everyone and the holiday parties at the fire station were not to be missed. Where forested dunes acted as playgrounds and humble cottages dotted the peninsula underneath the protection of centennial oaks. Under those oaks still sits a tiny church, a remnant of the early post WWII America when families were still recovering from the loss of sons in Europe, Africa and the South Pacific. The cottages those boys likely longed for and called home are long since gone, and with them, most of the canopied oaks. Before that, it was the boardwalk and hotel, then the trolley line and the bridge keepers quarters. One by one, they disappear. Worn down by a century of storms and exhausted from the fight for structural survival. Like the soft mortar once holding them tight, they succumb to the struggle and something new takes their place. This church and the surrounding houses are all that's left of Ocean Park from that time in America.

So what? It's just a building. Not everything is going to last forever. What might be special to one generation inevitably will be discarded by the next. The photos, the ration cards, letters and eventually the homes they loved will be tossed out and replaced by the next best thing. It is just part of the natural passage of time. So many are quick to forget about the past and throw out the old. We believe, however, that there is something left of this neighborhood that is worth remembering and saving. This chapel is worth saving. Unfortunately, without the chapel, there is no Ocean Park.

This intersection, by chance, just happened to survive the demolition and development of the past seventy years. There are very few neighborhood intersections in Virginia Beach with so much historic architectural integrity, potential and charm. I find it sad that there isn't more in our city. This intersection has a significant core of old buildings and a stand of oaks that deserves recognition. Most of the small cottages that dotted the neighborhood might be gone, but when I first saw Ocean Park Baptist and the intersection in which it sits, I knew that the heart of Ocean Park could still be saved.

Unfortunately, this vision I have of saving old structures and preserving them for the next generation often has not been possible. I find that many are receptive to my ideas about historic preservation but still, more often than not, the structures I love and grow attached to, meet the front end of a bulldozer. It is an unfortunate reality of growth and it saddens me that so many in our society are so quick to obliterate the past. Demolition is what I am fighting against and why I'd like your help to save the wonderful place that your congregation loves so much. Please work with me. It's a great building that will make the neighborhood very proud one day.

Renovation would be a huge undertaking but I see such challenges as necessary to preserving the integrity of these oceanside communities.

My first goal will be registering the church on the local historic register. I am confident that the church will be approved. The minimum required age of a building for approval is 50 years. The yellow tiled bathrooms, knotty pine siding and colonial revival symmetric layout would make this a great candidate for the register. This would be the first step to possibly developing a Ocean Park historic district. My goal is to convince the rest of the property owners around the intersection to hold on and

not sell to developers. By putting the church on the local register, I hope this will encourage the homes around the church to do the same. They were built in 1937, 1943 and three from 1950, around the same year as the church was built. This intersection is a great example of a pre and post WWII neighborhood with various distinct architectural styles. The surrounding buildings and the church would make this a great historical district. Eventually this church will become a gathering place for the neighborhood, with civic league meetings, weddings and celebrations.