

## Staff Report

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**File #:** LN-797

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ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
Meeting Date: OCTOBER 16, 2025

### VARIANCE - ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI ST. GABRIEL CHURCH

<b>Request:</b>	Variance
<b>P&amp;Z#</b>	25-11000018
<b>Owner:</b>	Archdiocese of Miami St. Gabriel Church
<b>Project Location:</b>	731 N Ocean Blvd
<b>Folio Number:</b>	484331000110
<b>Land Use Designation:</b>	CF (Community Facilities)
<b>Zoning District:</b>	RM-20 (Multiple-Family Residence 20)
<b>Commission District:</b>	1 (Audrey Fesik)
<b>Agent:</b>	Eric T. Slazyk
<b>Project Planner:</b>	Scott Reale

### Summary:

The Applicant Landowner requests a variance from the Pompano Beach Zoning Code to allow for the construction of a new detached church tower on the property, located within the RM-20 Zoning District. The request includes relief from the following code sections:

1. **Section 155.3210(C) - Dimensional Standards for the RM-20 District:**
  - **Height:** The proposed tower will have a height of **53 feet**, which exceeds the maximum permitted height of **35 feet**, resulting in a requested variance of **18 feet**.
2. **Section 155.3210(C) - Dimensional Standards for the RM-20 District:**
  - **Front Yard Setback:** The proposed structure will be set back **14 feet 11.5 inches** from the front property line, where a minimum front yard setback of **25 feet** is required.
3. **Section 155.4302(B)(2)(g) - Standards for Accessory Uses and Structures:**
  - This section prohibits accessory structures from being located in front of the principal structure. The proposed tower is situated in front of the existing church building, which is considered the principal structure on the site.

The property is located on the barrier island along west side of N Ocean Boulevard (A1A), between NE 7<sup>th</sup> Court and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Court.

**ZONING REGULATIONS**

**[ARTICLE 3: ZONING DISTRICTS]**

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**PART 2 RESIDENTIAL BASE ZONING DISTRICTS**

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**155.3210. MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE 20 (RM-20)**

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**C. Intensity and Dimensional Standards**

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- **Height, maximum (ft): 35**
- **Front yard setback, minimum (ft): 25**

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**[ARTICLE 4: USE STANDARDS]**

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**PART 3 ACCESSORY USES AND STRUCTURES**

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**155.4302. GENERAL**

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**B. General Standards for All Accessory Uses and Structures**

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**2. Prohibited Location of Accessory Uses and Structures**

Unless otherwise provided for in Section 155.4303 (Standards for Specific Accessory Uses and Structures), accessory uses and structures shall not be located within the following:

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- **g. In front of the principal structure**

**PROPERTY INFORMATION AND STAFF ANALYSIS**

1. The applicant proposes to construct a detached architectural tower on a developed site currently occupied by St. Gabriel's Catholic Church, established in Pompano Beach in 1967.
2. The property has no open code violations and no active building permits. The church is oriented toward North Ocean Boulevard (A1A), with the proposed tower located between the church building and A1A. The remainder and majority of the site, extending west to North Riverside Drive, consists primarily of surface parking.
3. The proposed tower is intended to function as a symbolic and architectural element of the church campus. To accommodate this structure, the applicant is requesting variances from three provisions of the Zoning Code: maximum building height, minimum front yard setback, and placement of an accessory structure in front of the principal building.
4. Regarding height, the proposed tower would reach 53 feet, exceeding the RM-20 district's maximum height of 35 feet. The structure will include a crucifix at the top. The requested additional height is intended to enhance the church's visibility, which the applicant contends is currently diminished by surrounding high-rise residential buildings, trees, and utility infrastructure. Staff notes that the proposed tower will not contain usable floor area or conditioned space, which helps mitigate potential impacts on surrounding properties.
5. The reduced front yard setback -- 14 feet 11.5 inches in lieu of the required 25 feet -- is driven by site constraints, including the location of the existing church building, internal circulation patterns (existing drive aisle), and visibility limitations from the street. The applicant seeks to locate the tower closer to the sidewalk to improve the visual prominence and pedestrian access to a proposed landscaped

reflection area.

6. The third variance pertains to the placement of the tower in front of the church. While this is typically prohibited for accessory structures, religious architecture commonly features steeples or towers prominently at the front of worship facilities. Unlike other accessory structures such as garages or storage sheds, the proposed tower serves an aesthetic and symbolic role consistent with ecclesiastical design traditions.
7. The proposed structure is non-commercial, non-residential, and intended solely for architectural and symbolic purposes. There is no indication that the tower will be illuminated or used to project sound, which reduces potential compatibility concerns with adjacent residential properties.
8. In summary, the requested variances are driven by a combination of site-specific physical constraints, traditional architectural intent, and religious symbolism. Non-habitable nature of the tower, its placement within a developed religious institution, and the context of adjacent high-rise buildings suggest that the request meets the spirit and intent of the Zoning Code. Based on these factors, staff finds that the request may satisfy the criteria for a hardship as outlined in the City's variance standards.

### **LAND USE PATTERNS**

Subject property (Zoning District | Existing Use):

- RM-20 | St. Gabriel's Catholic Church

Surrounding Properties (Zoning District | Existing Use):

- North: RM-20 | multi-family dwelling (Gabriel Towers)
- South: RM-20 | parking lot (entitlements for a 12-unit multifamily development)
- West: RM-45 | multi-family dwelling (Costal Winds Co-Op)
- East: RM-45/HR | multi-family dwelling (Admiralty Towers Condo)

### **VARIANCE REVIEW STANDARDS**

A Variance application shall be approved only on a finding that there is competent substantial evidence in the record that all of the following standards are met:

- a) There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions (such as topographic conditions, narrowness, shallowness, or the shape of the parcel of land) pertaining to the particular land or structure for which the Variance is sought, that do not generally apply to other lands or structures in the vicinity;
- b) The extraordinary and exceptional conditions referred to in paragraph a., above, are not the result of the actions of the landowner;
- c) Because of the extraordinary and exceptional conditions referred to in paragraph a., above, the application of this Code to the land or structure for which the Variance is sought would effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the utilization of the land or structure and result in unnecessary and undue hardship;
- d) The Variance would not confer any special privilege on the landowner that is denied to other lands or structures that are similarly situated.
- e) The extent of the Variance is the minimum necessary to allow a reasonable use of the land or structure;
- f) The Variance is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this Code and preserves its spirit;
- g) The Variance would not adversely affect the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood, be injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood, or otherwise be detrimental to the public welfare; and
- h) The Variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

**Staff Conditions:**

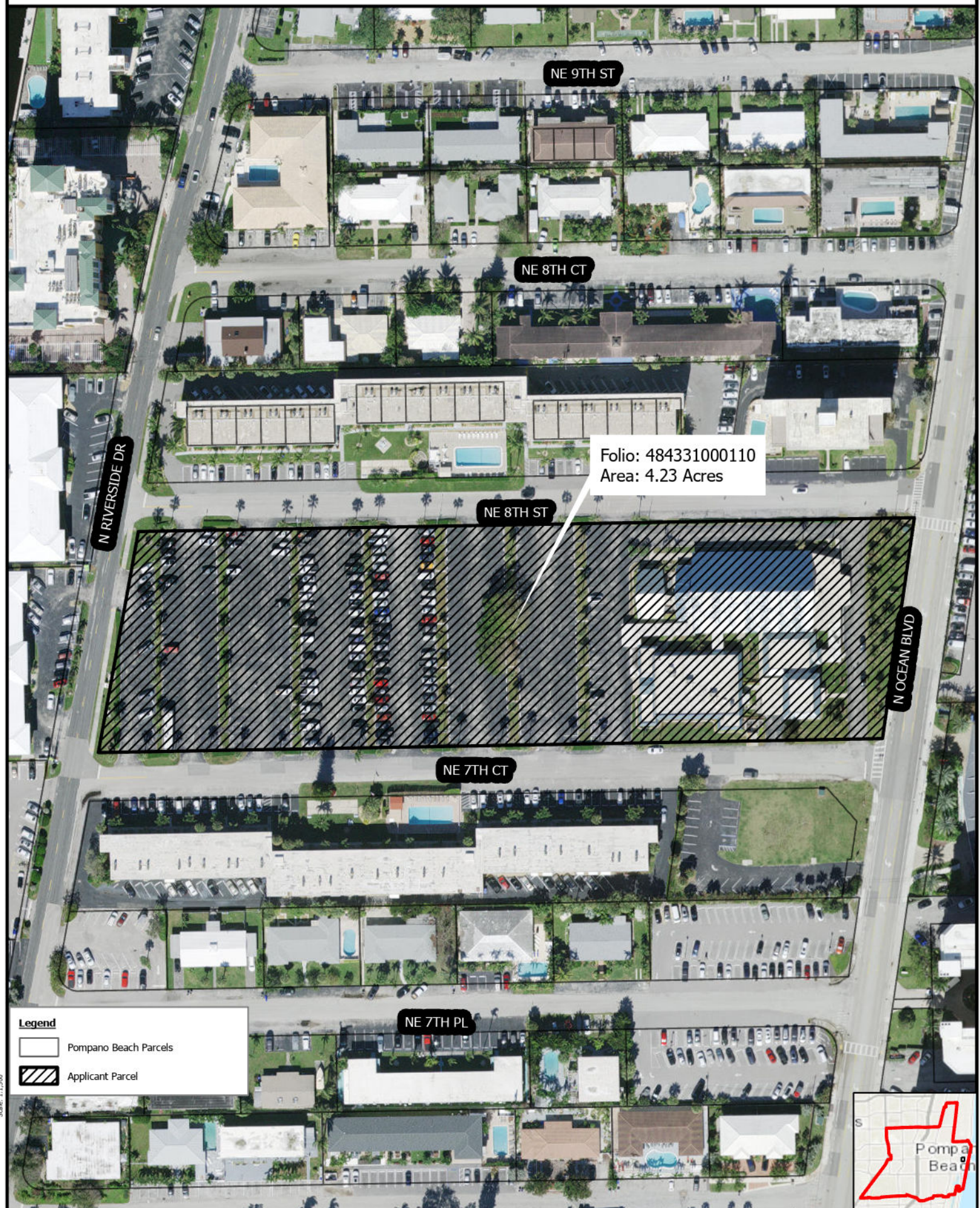
Should the Board determine that the applicant has provided competent and substantial evidence demonstrating compliance with the eight variance review criteria, staff recommends the following conditions be incorporated into the Board's Order of Approval:

1. The applicant shall obtain all required permits and approvals from the City, including but not limited to Building and Zoning Compliance permits, prior to commencement of construction.
2. The tower structure shall be constructed in substantial conformance with the plans and elevations submitted as part of this application. Any increase in height, footprint, or additional dimensional encroachments beyond those specifically approved shall require further review and approval.
3. The tower shall remain non-habitable and shall be used exclusively for architectural and aesthetic purposes. No conditioned space or occupiable space shall be permitted.
4. No exterior lighting or sound projection equipment shall be installed on or within the tower unless such features are approved through a separate review and permitting process.



# CITY OF POMPANO BEACH

## AERIAL MAP



**Legend**

- Pompano Beach Parcels
- Applicant Parcel

Scale:  
1:1,500

ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI ST GABRIEL CHURCH

731 N Ocean Blvd

Variance

Created by:  
Department of  
Development Services

