



PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Item No.: G.1

Date: May 25, 2010

CASE NUMBER: PHG 10-0006

APPLICANT: Escondido Seventh Day Adventists Church and School

LOCATION: Escondido Adventist Academy (approximately 14.5 acres) generally located at the northern terminus of Deodar Road, west of Interstate 15, addressed as 1301 Deodar Road (APNs 228-020-30, -32, -35, -37 and -60).

TYPE OF PROJECT: Variance

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Variance from Article 66 (Sign Ordinance) for the Seventh Day Adventist Church and School (Escondido Adventist Academy) to allow a two freestanding signs to exceed the height limits of three feet within the front-yard setback, and to allow two wall signs (approx. 85 SF in area each) to be located on the southern and eastern facing walls of the two-story school building where one sign up to 20 SF would be permitted.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION/TIER: Estate II, Country Club Neighborhood - Tier 1

ZONING: RE-20 (Residential Estate, 20,000 SF min. lot size)

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF ISSUES:

A Conditional Use Permit (Case No. 2005-84-GE/CUP) was approved for a church and school facility on the subject site. The facility consists of a two-story, approximately 64,165 SF school (K-12) on the eastern portion of the site and a two-story, approximately 57,692 SF church building on the western portion of the site. The school currently is in operation and the upper floor of the church building has been completed to allow services. The Escondido Seventh-Day Adventist Church has operated in Escondido since the founding of the City in 1888, and recently built the new church/school complex on the 14.5-acre Deodar property after moving from their Ninth Avenue property to accommodate the new Lexus dealership.

The Church/School has requested a variance from the sign code for the Seventh Day Adventist Church and School (Escondido Adventist Academy) to attach signage to existing landscape features (rock formations) located at the two entrances to the facility. One would identify the school and the other the church. The rocks are located within the 25-foot front-yard setback and signs or other structures are limited to a maximum of three feet in height within the setback. The request is to allow signage to be attached to the face of the rock features, which exceed three feet in height, which would eliminate the need to install separate freestanding structures at the entry to the facility. The Variance request also includes a proposal to allow two wall signs (approx. 85 SF in area each) to be located on the southern and eastern facing walls of the two-story school building where one sign up to 20 SF is permitted.

Staff feels the issues are as follows:

1. Appropriateness of design of the proposed signs and whether the necessary findings can be made for approval.

REASON FOR STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

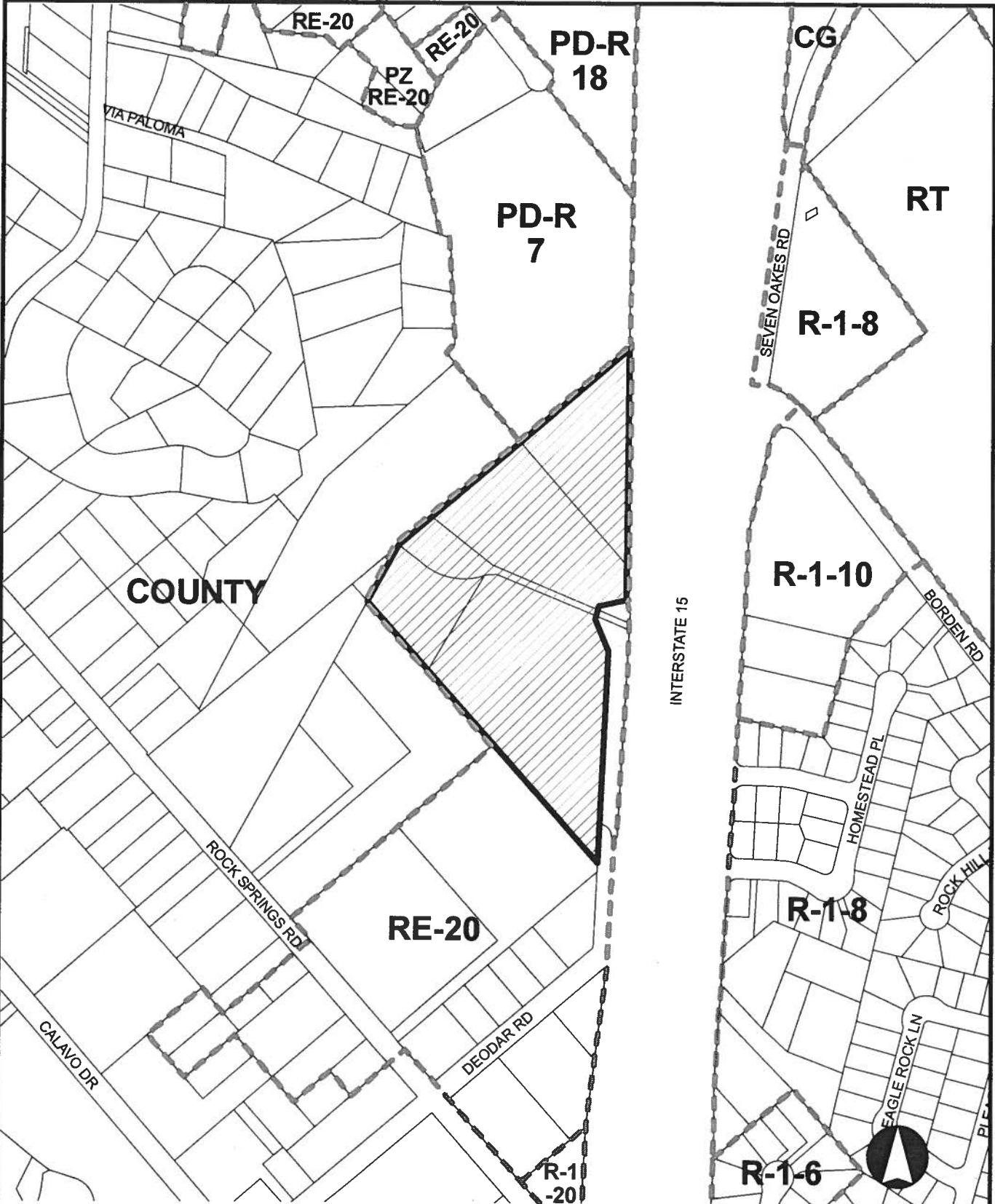
1. Staff feels there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances applicable to the property involved based on the location of the site and its intended use that would justify approval of the Variance request. Granting the Variance for the additional wall signage and height of the monument type signage is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right possessed by other public schools throughout the

city in similar zones. Without the Variance it would be difficult for the facility to adequately promote its location/use to potential students, and granting the Variance for additional signage would not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Paul', written over a horizontal line.

Jay Paul
Associate Planner

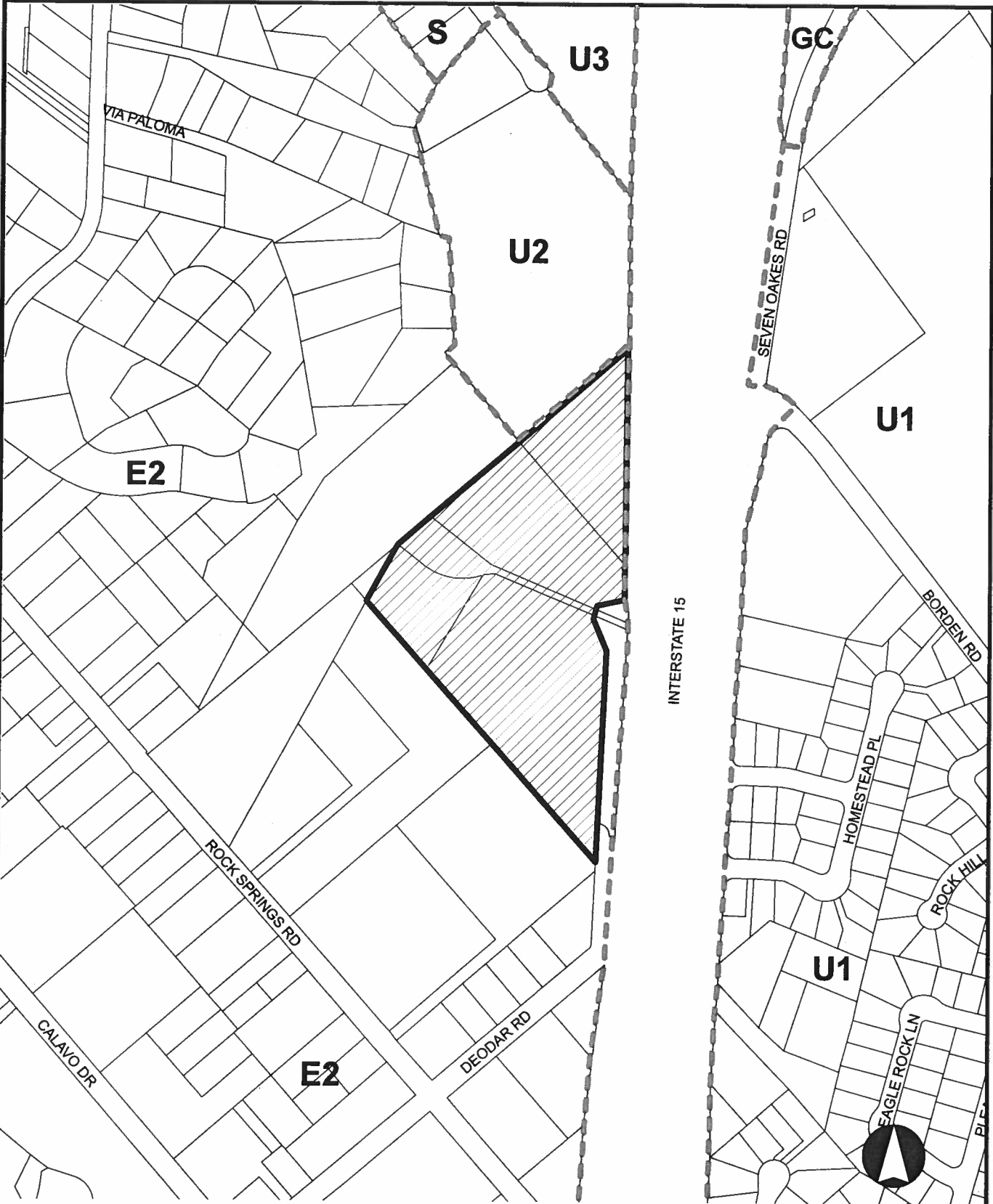


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**PROPOSED PROJECT
PHG 10-0006**



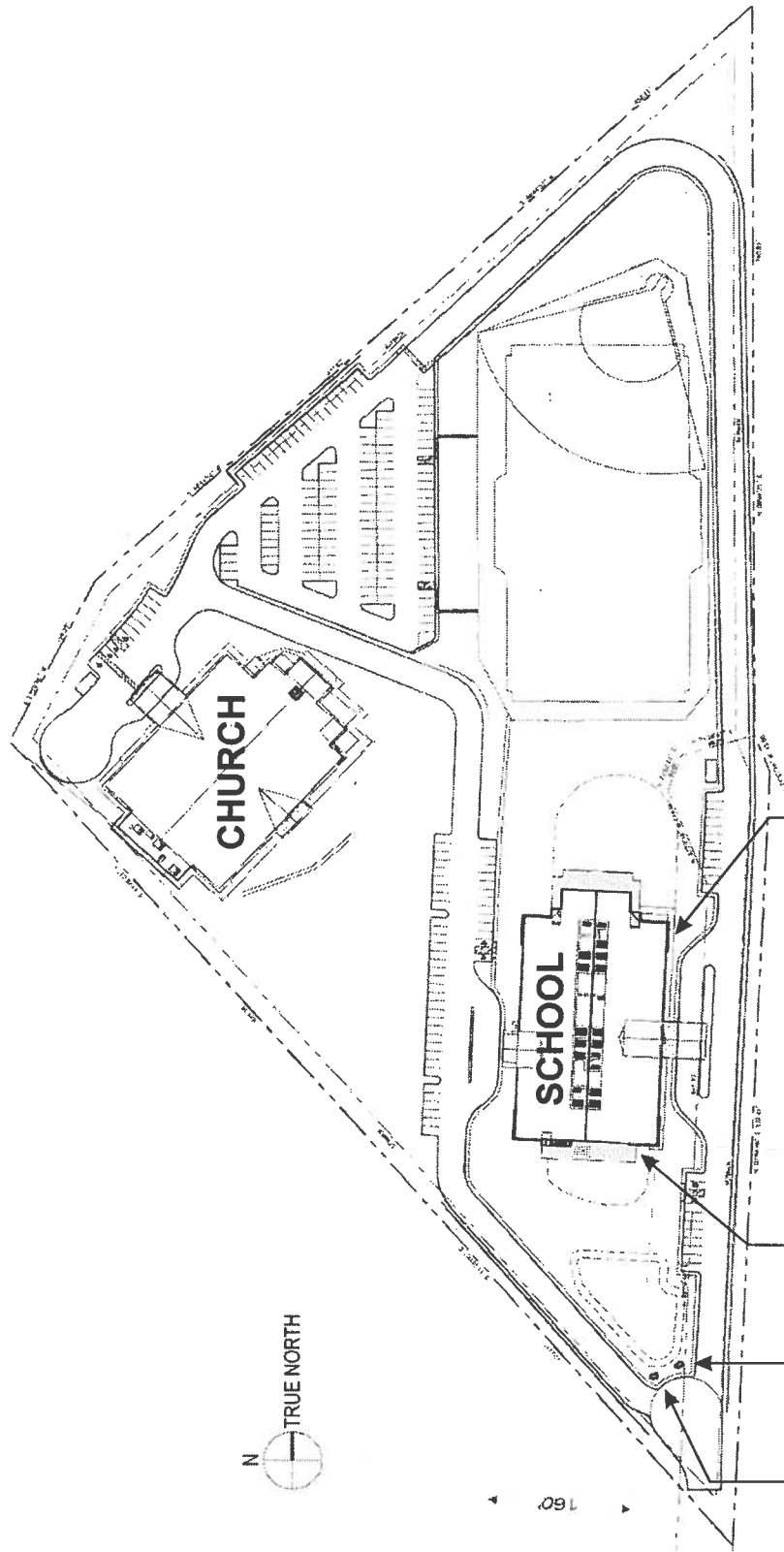
LOCATION/ZONING



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**PROPOSED PROJECT
PHG 10-0006**





15 - Escondido Fwy

Sign D

Sign C

Sign B
On Existing
Rock Face

Sign A
On Existing
Rock Face

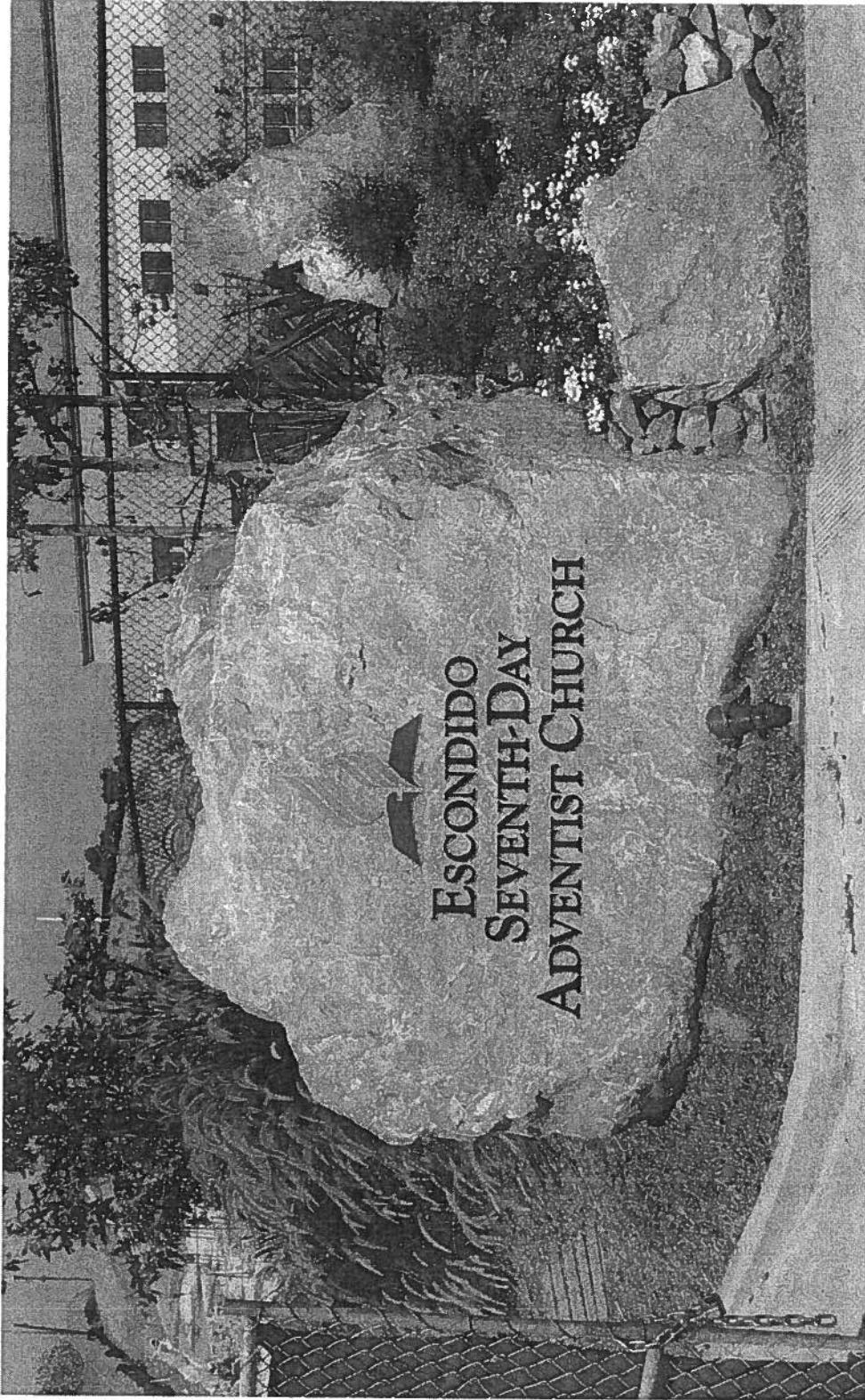
245'



**PROPOSED PROJECT
PHG 10-0006**



SITE PLAN

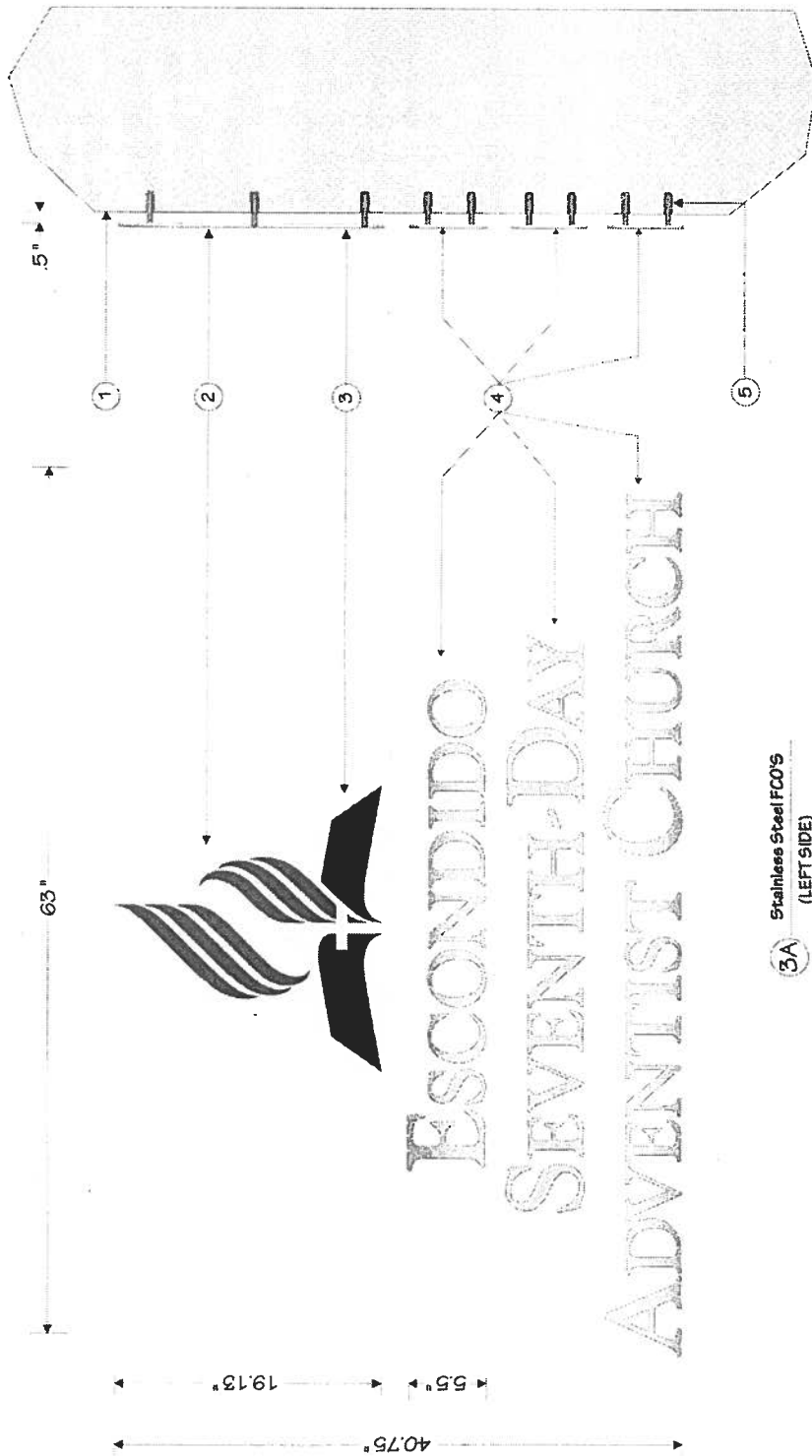


4A ELEVATION
PHOTO NTS. FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.

SIGN A

**PROPOSED PROJECT
PHG 10-0006**

SIGNS

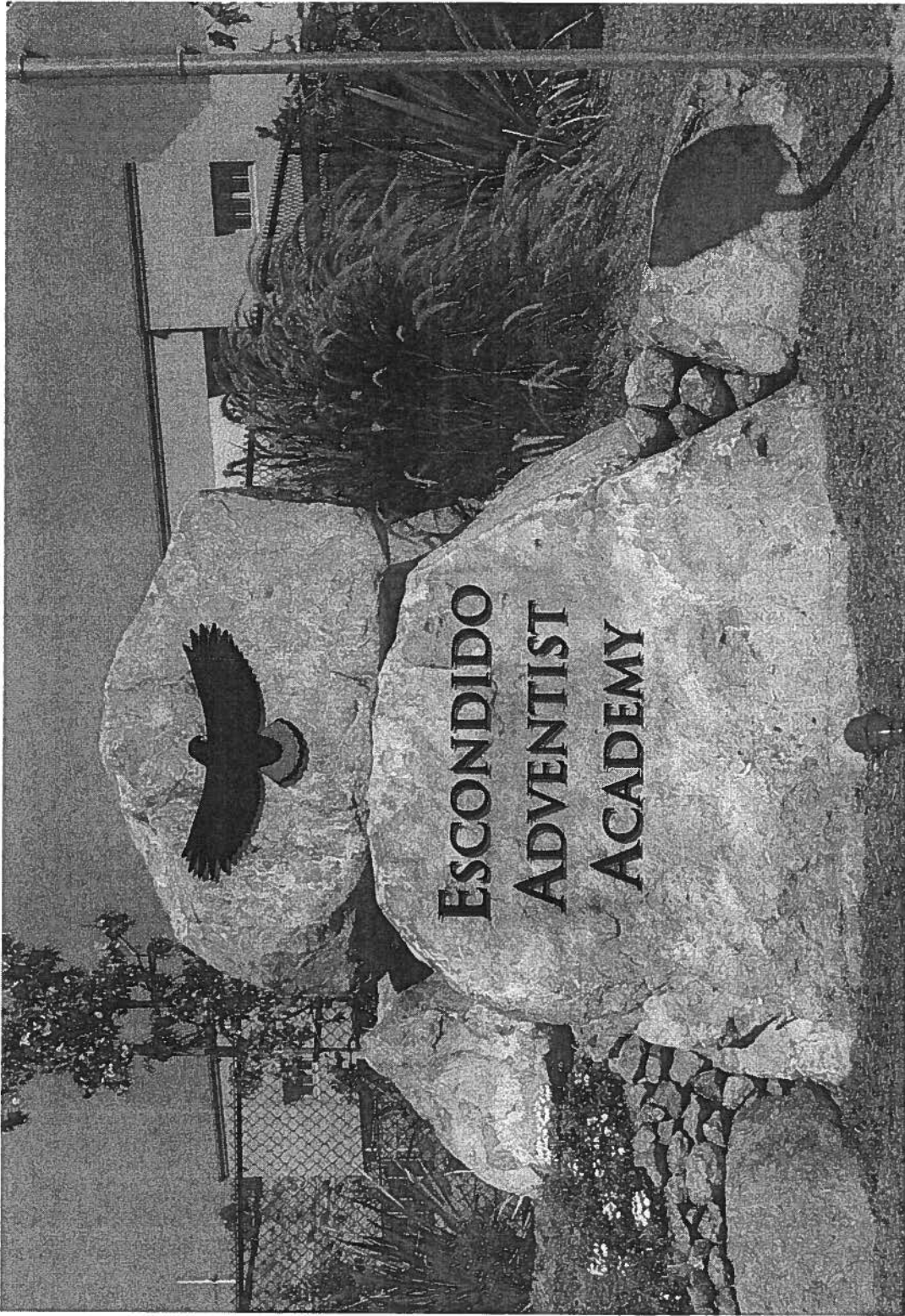


SIGN A

SIGN A

**PROPOSED PROJECT
PHG 10-0006**

SIGNS

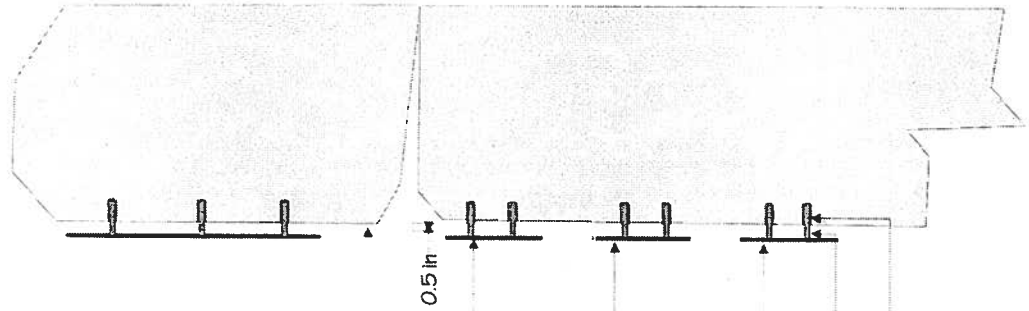


2C ELEVATION PHOTO NTS. FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.

SIGN B

**PROPOSED PROJECT
PHG 10-0006**

SIGNS



44.83 in

ESCONDIDO

6.5 in

ADVENTIST

26.25 in

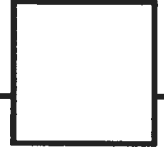
ACADEMY

1C Stainless Steel FCO'S
(RIGHT SIDE)
SIGN B

16 in

SIGN B

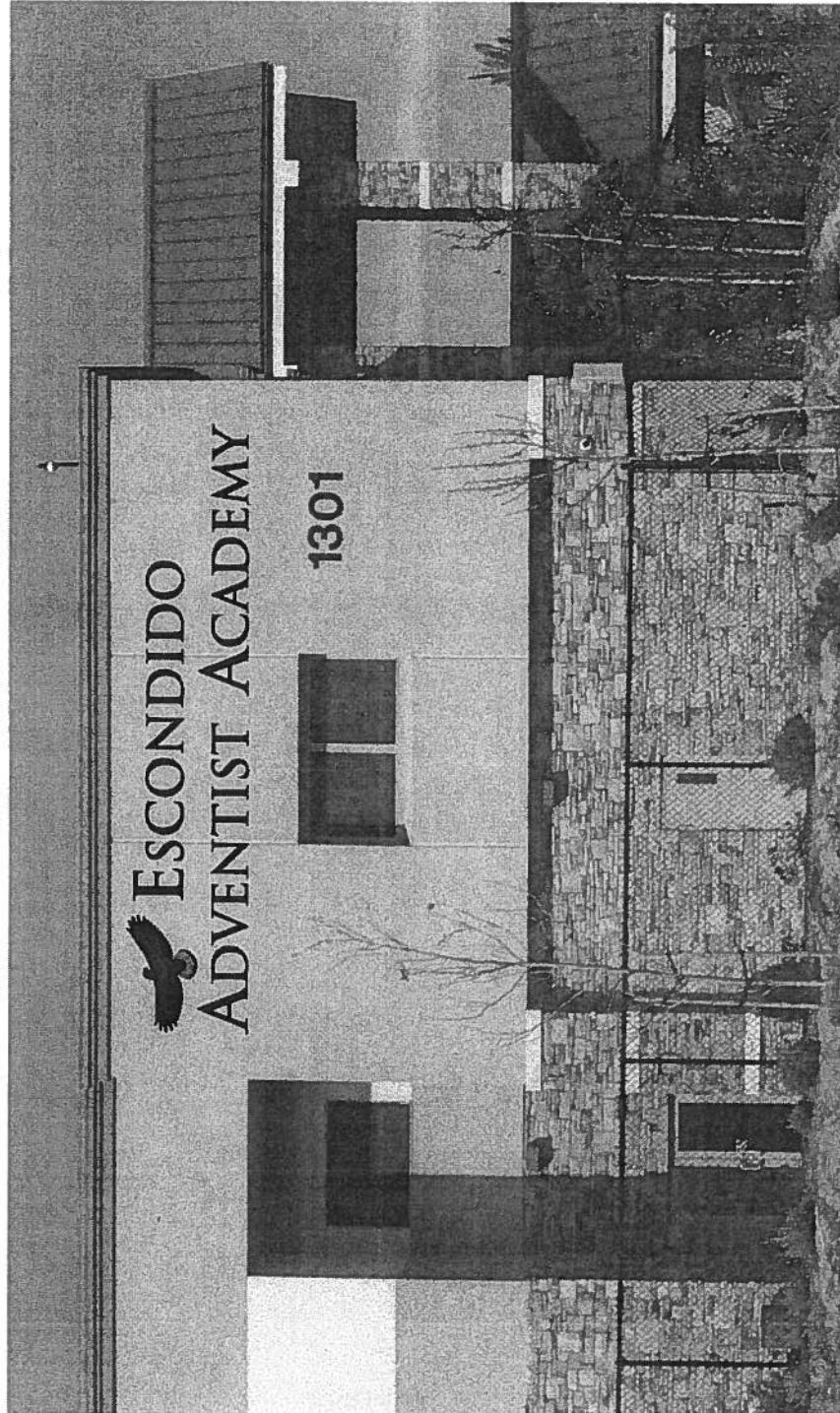
**PROPOSED PROJECT
PHG 10-0006**



SIGNS

160' - 0" FRONTAGE

31' - 6"



West Elevation

Scale: 3/16" = 1'

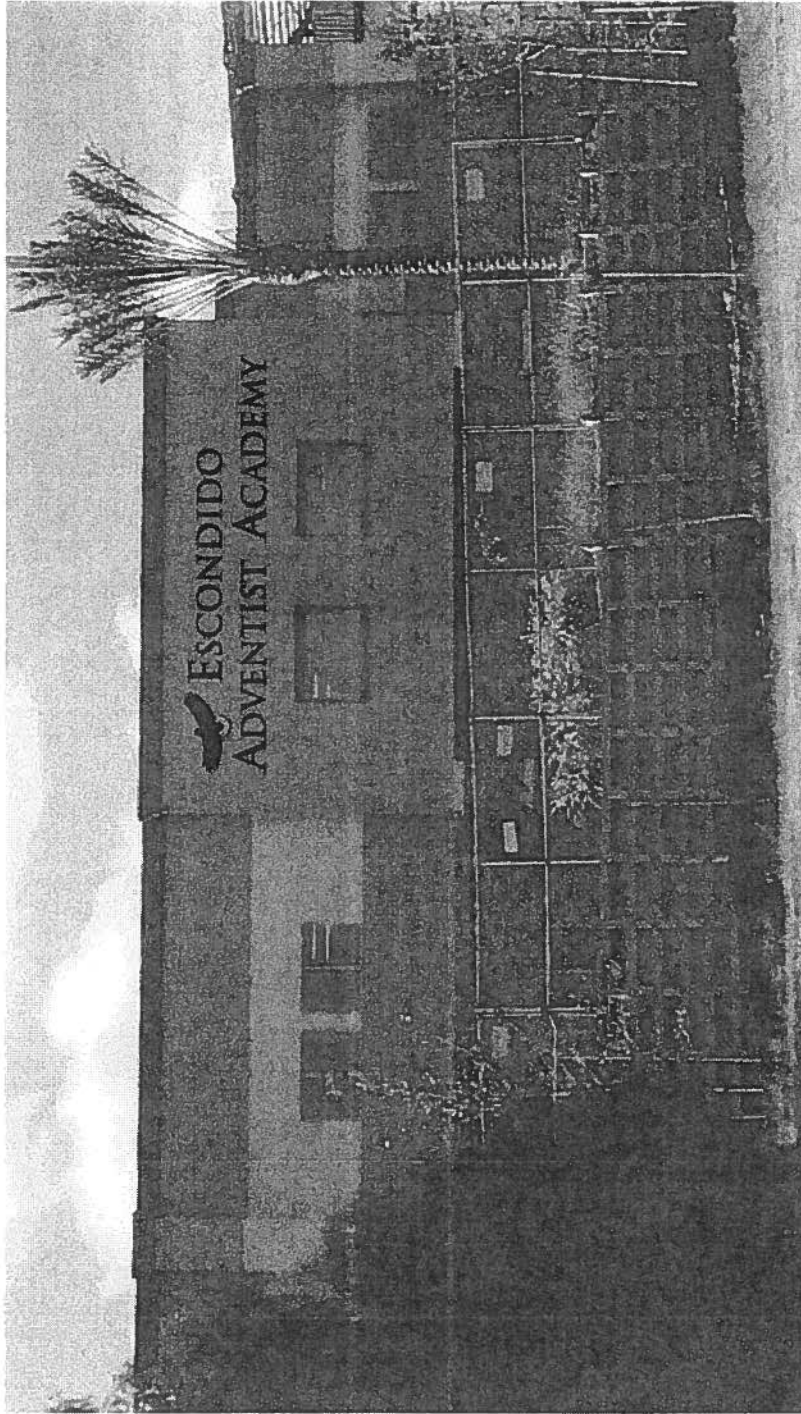
SIGN C

**PROPOSED PROJECT
PHG 10-006**

SIGNS

245' - 0" FRONTAGE

31' - 6"



South Elevation

Scale: 1/8" = 1'

SIGN D

**PROPOSED PROJECT
PHG 10-0006**

SIGNS

ESCONDIDO
ADVENTIST ACADEMY



352"

191"

26.5"

65"

Profile View

FCO Letters & Graphic - South & East Elevations

SIGN C & D

SIGN C & D

PROPOSED PROJECT
PHG 10-0006

SIGNS

ANALYSIS

A. LAND USE COMPATIBILITY/SURROUNDING ZONING

NORTH - PD-R-7 zoning (Planned Development-Residential, 7 du/ac) / A 82-unit multiple-family residential development is located north of the project site. Open space for the planned development is located immediately adjacent on the north, including a 300-foot-wide SDG&E easement.

SOUTH - RE-20 zoning (Residential Estate, 20,000 SF min. lot size) / Rock Springs Elementary School is located to the south of the project site.

EAST - Interstate 15 is located immediately east of the site at a lower elevation. Single-family homes and a mobile home park are situated along the eastern side of the freeway.

WEST - County RS4 zoning (Single Family Residential, 10,000 SF min. lot size). / SDG&E transmission lines are located on a 300-foot-wide parcel(s) which parallel the northwestern property line, with low density residential development beyond in the unincorporated area. Two single-family residences are located southwest of the project site on relatively large lots, with residential development beyond on one-half to one-acre lots.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

The project is exempt from environmental review in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15311 "Accessory Structures."

C. CONFORMANCE WITH CITY POLICY

General Plan

The General Plan land use designation on the site is Estate II, which allows single-family residential development and non-residential uses such as schools and churches through the Conditional Use Permit process. A Conditional Use Permit was approved for the development of a school and church facility on the site, and the proposed Variance to allow additional signage would not conflict with General Plan policies. The proposed Variance also would not diminish the Quality-of-Life Standards of the General Plan.

Whether the Proposed Variance Meets the Required Findings for Approval

Zoning Code Article 66 governs the size and design of allowable signage. Section 33-1396(f) of the code allows limited signage for non-residential uses within residential zones, which includes one freestanding sign per street frontage, not to exceed 24 SF in area, and one wall sign per parcel not to exceed 20 SF. The applicant feels a wall sign of only 20 SF in area permitted by the sign ordinance would be ineffective given the overall size of the building, limited visibility from adjacent roadways and lack of drive-by traffic along Deodar Road. The school building is located approximately 140 feet west of Interstate 15 and approximately 10 to 13 feet above the travel lanes. The proposed size and location of the proposed signs generally are intended to be visible from the freeway lanes and some limited surrounding views. The Design Review Board considered the proposed request on April 22, 2010, and unanimously recommended approval. They felt the design and size of the signage would appropriate for the size and location of the building, and would not result in any adverse visual or compatibility impacts with adjacent uses.

Variances are intended to be used in cases where there is a unique hardship or when conformance with the development standards would result in an inability to use a property in a manner consistent with other properties in the same zone. The granting of variances is regulated by both state law (Government Code Section 65906) and the Escondido Zoning Code (Section 33-1220 et.seq.). According to Zoning Code Section 33-1224, four findings must be made in order to approve a Variance. There shall be exceptional or extraordinary circumstances applicable to the property or the intended use of the property that do not apply generally to a property or class of use in the same zone or vicinity. Granting the proposed Variance shall not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or injurious to the property or improvements. Granting the Variance shall be necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant, which is possessed by other property in the same zone or vicinity. Lastly, granting the Variance will

not adversely affect the General Plan. In general, a Variance shall not be granted if it would adversely affect the interests of the public or other residents or property owners within the vicinity, and it should not grant a "special privilege" inconsistent with the limitations on nearby properties. In order for a Variance to be granted, all four of the required findings must be met.

Staff feels the request for the variance to increase the allowable height within the front-yard setback and to allow additional wall signs on the school building meet the required findings for approval of a Variance. The property is situated in an area at the end of a cul-de-sac where generally there is no pass-by local traffic and visual identification of the current use of a school and church facility is limited. Granting the Variance would be appropriate, since the proposed increase in signage would allow the facility to provide adequate identification to the public and also would allow parity with existing signage that public schools currently are allowed to install on their sites throughout the City. The amount of signage requested would be in line with the type and amount of signage allowed at public schools located in similar zones throughout the City, which are not subject to the limits of the City's sign criteria. Granting the proposed Variance would not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or injurious to property or improvements in the area. The Variance for an increase in sign height within the front-yard setback would not result in the construction of any additional structures since the signs would be located on existing rock features. Therefore, the proposed signs would not create any sight distance issues at the end of Deodar Road at the entrances to the project. The proposed freestanding signs would not result in any visual impacts since they generally only would be visible to visitors of the site, and the design, size and scale of the proposed lettering and logos are compatible with surrounding landscape features. The proposed wall signs would not be visibly obtrusive since they would not be internally illuminated and the size of the lettering would be in scale and context with the existing two-story, 64,165 SF building. Therefore, staff supports the Variance request and necessary findings required for approval.

SUPPLEMENT TO STAFF REPORT/DETAILS OF REQUEST

A. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The project location is the approximately 14.55-acre campus site of the Escondido Adventist Academy. The site has frontage on Interstate 15 and takes access from Deodar Road. The site has been recently developed, including a 57,692 SF church building, a 64,165 SF school building, a multi-purpose ballfield, and paved parking areas. The school and ballfield are completed, while the church is under construction. The buildings are located on a stepped footprint with the church located approximately 50 feet higher than the school building and the ballfield located approximately 20 feet higher than the school building. A large portion of the site contains slopes of 25% or greater. There is a retaining wall along the eastern property boundary along Interstate 15, ranging in height from 0 to 20 feet.

B. SUPPLEMENTAL DETAILS OF REQUEST

1. Allowed Signage:

- Wall: 1 wall sign not to exceed 20 SF
- Freestanding: 1 freestanding sign per street frontage up to 3 feet in height within the front-yard setback, max. 24 SF each sign. The project fronts onto two streets (Deodar and Interstate 15)

2. Proposed Signs

- Wall: 2 walls signs, approx. 85 SF each sign (170 SF total) – non illuminated individual metal letters (painted black) located on southern and eastern facing walls of school bldg.
2 rows of letter plus logo (26.5" max letter height; 19.1" typ. letter height; 65" total sign height including logo; 27.7' sign length).
- Freestanding: 2 signs mounted onto existing landscape/rock features, approx. 18 SF and 14 SF.
Individual metal letters (painted black) and logos with exterior directional up lighting.
- Height: Freestanding signs mounted at approximately 6 feet to top of logo (church sign) and approximately 8.5' top of logo (school sign)

3. School Building:

- Size: 64,165 SF
- Height: Two stories, up to 33 feet top of flat roof, and 47' ridgeline of central entry features.
- Length: 217' (eastern elevation) x 209' (southern elevation)

EXHIBIT "A"
FINDINGS OF FACT
PHG 10-0006

Variance

1. There are unusual circumstances applicable to the property that do not generally apply to other properties in the RE-20 zone, other properties in the surrounding neighborhood, or other schools/churches. The property is situated in an area at the end of a cul-de-sac where there generally is no pass-by local traffic and visual identification of the current use of a school and church facility generally is limited due to the lack of visible exposure. Granting the Variance would be appropriate, since the proposed increase in signage would allow the facility to provide adequate identification to the public and also would allow parity with existing signage that public schools currently are allowed to install on their sites throughout the City.
2. Granting the proposed Variance would not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or injurious to property or improvements in the area. The Variance for an increase in sign height within the front-yard setback would not result in the construction of any additional structures since the signs would be located on existing rock features. Therefore, the proposed signs would not create any sight distance issues at the end of Deodar Road at the entrances to the project. The proposed freestanding signs would not result in any visual impacts since they generally only would be visible to visitors of the site, and the design, size and scale of the proposed lettering and logos are compatible with surrounding landscape features. The proposed wall signs would not be visibly obtrusive since they would not be internally illuminated and the size of the lettering would be in scale and context with the existing two-story, 64,165 SF building.
3. The proposed Variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of property rights possessed by other nearby or similar uses in residential zones. Public schools throughout the City of Escondido generally are located within residential zones, and are exempt from the City's sign criteria. Most of the public schools contain a variety of freestanding, wall and electronic signage that exceeds the City's size, number and location criteria. The proposed Variance would allow the school/church to provide adequate signage for the facility while providing parity with signage provided at public schools.
4. Granting the proposed Variance would not adversely affect the General Plan, since the school/church is existing, no new floor area is proposed, and the Variance is not in conflict with any General Plan policies.

EXHIBIT "B"

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL PHG 10-0006

General

1. The developer shall be required to pay all development fees of the City then in effect at the time and in such amounts as may prevail when Building Permits are issued, including any applicable citywide facilities fees.
2. All construction and grading shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Escondido Zoning Code and requirements of the Planning Division, Engineering Division, Building Division, and Fire Department.
3. The legal description attached to the application has been provided by the applicant and neither the City of Escondido nor any of its employees assume responsibility for the accuracy of said legal description.
4. Colors, materials and design of the project shall conform to the exhibits and references in the staff report to the satisfaction of the Planning Division.
5. The Variance shall be for additional wall signs (2 wall signs, approx. 86 SF each sign) and two freestanding signs to exceed the height limits within the front-yard setback (up to 8.5' in height).
6. This Variance shall become null and void unless utilized within twelve months of the effective date of approval.
7. A separate sign permit shall be submitted for the proposed signage, including the required application fee.
8. The City of Escondido hereby notifies the applicant that the County Clerk's office requires a documentary handling fee of \$50.00 in order to file a Notice of Exemption for the project (environmental determination for the project). In order to file the Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk, in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15062, the applicant should remit to the City of Escondido Planning Division, within two working days of the final approval of the project (the final approval being the hearing date of the Planning Commission or City Council, if applicable), a certified check payable to the "County Clerk" in the amount of \$50.00. The filing of a Notice of Exemption and the posting with the County Clerk starts a 35 day statute of limitations period on legal challenges to the agency's decision that the project is exempt from CEQA. Failure to submit the required fee within the specific time noted above will result in the Notice of Exemption not being filed with the County Clerk, and a 180 day statute of limitations will apply.



CITY OF ESCONDIDO
 PLANNING DIVISION
 201 NORTH BROADWAY
 ESCONDIDO, CA 92025-2798
 (760) 839-4671

Notice of Exemption

To: San Diego County Recorder's Office
 Attn: Linda Kesian
 P.O. Box 121750
 San Diego, CA 92112-1750

From: City of Escondido
 201 North Broadway
 Escondido, CA 92025

Project Title/Case No.: PHG 10-0006

Project Location - Specific: Escondido Adventist Academy (approximately 14.5 acres) generally located at the northern terminus of Deodar Road, west of Interstate 15, addressed as 1301 Deodar Road (APNs 228-020-30, -32, -35, -37 and -60).

Project Location - City: Escondido, **Project Location - County:** San Diego

Description of Project: Variance from Article 66 (Sign Ordinance) for the Seventh Day Adventist Church and School (Escondido Adventist Academy) to allow a two freestanding signs to exceed the height limits of three feet within the front-yard setback, and to allow two wall signs (approx. 85 SF in area each) to be located on the southern and eastern facing walls of the two-story school building.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Escondido

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Name Clear Sign & Design, Inc. for Esc. 7th Day Adventists Telephone (760) 736-8111

Address 170 Navajo St, San Marcos, CA 92078

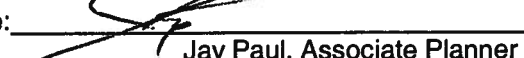
Private entity School district Local public agency State agency Other special district

Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption. Section 15311 "Accessory Structures."

Reasons why project is exempt:

1. The project only involves an increase in the amount of signage allowed on the property. No physical expansion of the site is proposed. The proposed signs are accessory to the main uses on the site (school and church).
2. The site is in an area where all public services and facilities are available to allow for the proposed use.
3. The site is within an area that currently is developed with institutional facilities and structures. The proposed project site is not in an area that is environmentally sensitive and the project would not have any direct impacts to any sensitive or protected resources. Since no ground disturbance is proposed, the project also would not impact any cultural or archaeological resources.
4. The proposed facility would not be hazardous to the health of nearby residents or the general public.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Jay Paul, Planning Division Area Code/Telephone/Extension (760) 839-4537

Signature: 
 Jay Paul, Associate Planner

April 10, 2010
 Date

Signed by Lead Agency

Date received for filing at OPR: N/A