

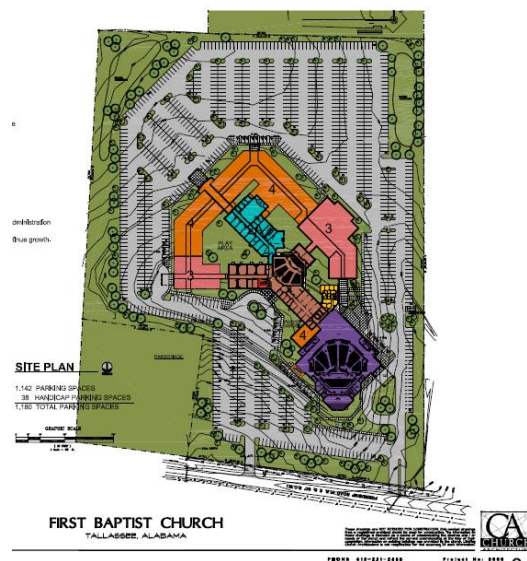
Reasons for a Master Site Plan

What is a Master Site Plan?

A Master Site Plan is a map depicting the plot of land on which your existing church building sits and, taking into considerations such factors as the topography of the land and zoning requirements, it shows where future buildings and parking lots will be placed. Such plans include public utility connection points for electricity, water, and sewer, where to place the dumpster, etc. It plans the current building while keeping in mind future additions.

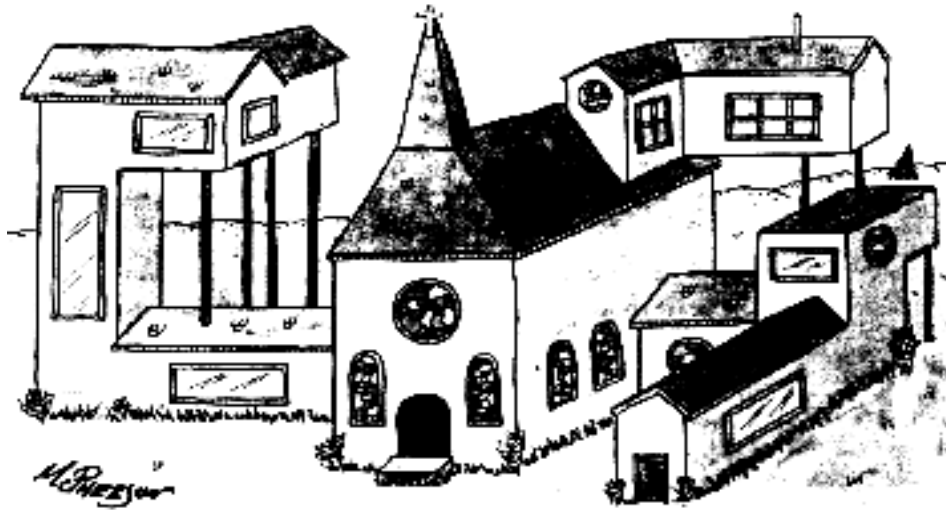
What Does a Master Site Plan Look Like?

As you meet with your architect, what you may see at first is a rough, hand drawn map of your property, showing where your future buildings will sit on your campus. Then, you will receive a map and, possibly, a rendering (an artist's conception in a computer-generated format).



Why a Master Site Plan is Important

Many churches solve one building need at a time. Some would even react against this idea of a master site plan: “We don’t need no master site plan! All we need to do right now is to build this building.” However, in this way, many churches end up painting themselves into a corner and, in the long run, cost themselves money and grief.



The Milton Springs Church was desperately in need of a master plan.

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Advantages of a Good Master Site Plan

1. To provide a road map for future growth for a site.

There is no way a church can provide for all its various age groups and provide adequate parking without a plan. You don’t want adults and teenagers walking through your preschool hall for example. However, if you don’t have a plan to extend your preschool wing, and everything is done hodge-podge, then you may end up with such less than ideal arrangements. A good master site plan will provide for the maximum amount of growth with space balanced between the age groups.

2. To plan wise stewardship for the property, avoiding costly mistakes.

You don’t want to have to tear up a parking lot or relocate field lines for your septic system to build a future building. It’s wiser to plan ahead.

Church architect Gary Nicholson says, “A good master plan will save you more than it costs to get the plan done.”

3. To arrange parking to be well-distributed around the buildings.

Since security has become more of an issue in our churches, we are thinking more of funneling people through a limited number of entrances – where the safety team can get a good look at who is entering – rather than having people entering through many entrances. So, making parking as convenient as possible and, at the same time, providing the best security possible, requires a good master site plan. Such a plan would also take into consideration the placement of drive-throughs, especially for senior adults and families with preschoolers – and locating those closer to their classes.

4. To provide a growth-driven strategy for facilities.

Keeping the types of space for the various age groups in balance has already been mentioned. This is important because the lack of growth space for any one age group can become a bottleneck for the entire church. If you lack space for youth, for example, you also lose their parents and their siblings who are still in the children’s ministry.

5. To allow room for each kind of space to grow.

Imagine having a preschool wing where, as the church grew, all you had to do would be to add four classes to the end of the wing. That’s the kind of possibility a master site plan will provide.

6. To anticipate the facilities that the church’s growth will demand.

One example: Few consider the addition of church staff members. As a church grows, they must add staff, or it will hinder growth. They will need offices.

7. To consider traffic flow through the halls as you grow.

As a church grows, the traffic in some hallways will increase as people pass from a new building through an older building on the way to the worship center. You don’t want to build those hallways wide enough only for the present phase in your building program, you also want to take

into account the additional traffic flow which will be coming from a future building. A good master site plan will factor this in.

8. A site plan should be reviewed before each phase of construction.

Churches, communities, ministries, and zoning requirements change over time. So, when engaging in your next major building project, you will want to have your architect review your site plan and discuss any needed changes with you.

9. Who should prepare the Master Site Plan?

Civil engineers and architects prepare master site plans. Generally, these are done as you are preparing to build your next building. So, you secure a floor plan for your next building, along with the master site plan, at the same time. You will want to strongly consider securing the services of a church architect – one who understands what we do inside our church buildings. You will want someone who understands your *style of church*. For example, if you have Sunday School at your church, you want an architect who understands that Sunday School means everyone and not just children. You want someone who understands the manner in which baptism is administered in your church – will you need a baptismal fount or a baptismal pool?

10. Two-Day Planning Events

Often, floor plans and master site plans are conceived in a visit from the architect. On his first visit, he will tour your existing facilities with you and listen to your team describe your goals. He will then draw up some rough plans to be discussed on day two – either the next day or on a second visit. The architect then listens to your feedback, discusses it with you, and adjusts the plans accordingly. You can then use the floor plan, the master site plan, and the renderings in your capital campaign.