The site plan can accommodate 1,700 parking spaces which includes the handicap spaces. The handicap spaces would have masonry ramps to gain access to the path comprised of masonry pavers. The spaces closest to the church would be reserved for the minister, guest ministers, and other key church officials.

A limited amount of landscaping has been incorporated into the site to help lessen the visibility of the enormous parking lot. Most of the landscaping is along the project axis with the intention of shading the path in the summer months. Additional trees and various species of shrubs and flowers are required to help make the exterior area desirable of being inhabited.

At a minimum two roads would be required to gain access to and/or to exit the site. An earlier scheme suggested one path to gain access to the property and another to exit from it as shown in Figure 70. The noticeable concern was that both paths terminate at the same destination which is Old Hopkins Rd.

The expanding role of today’s church would include a commercial and separate recreational building. Both of the new structures would be intentionally detached from the church so as to maintain a hierarchy amongst the buildings. The building which contains the sanctuary must remain as the most significant on site.
The amount of traffic generated by one church and two additional buildings in the future would undoubtedly impose a strain on the existing infrastructure creating legitimate traffic concerns. Upon review of the site plan, the town Permit and Planning reviewers may insist on a new road that connects the church directly with Route 29 which is approximately two miles away. All traffic lights on Rt. 29 are being phased out in Howard County and replaced with ramps and traffic circles. At best this predicament would require the Developer, (the Church in this instance), to obtain easements from the local property owners for the new two mile private road with a merging lane onto Rt. 29 South. The worst case scenario would require the Developer to buy parcels of land to accommodate the new road, a new traffic circle, and to fund any fees associated with creating new subdivisions and revised plats.
SITE

Figure 117, Photograph of Site
SUMMARY

Determining the appropriate structural components to span over a sanctuary without intermediate columns for support is a complicated proposition when the distances are vast. The search requires an understanding of structural engineering, the materials being used, and the aesthetically appropriate use of form. Form should be an indication of function rather than an organic sculpture of sorts. The process is one of trial and error requiring patience, experience, vision, and the drive to create the most appropriate structural solution for each project.

The requirements of the building program were incorporated in the design of the building. The primary objectives of the First Baptist Church were also successfully addressed. The role of Baptism was returned to a visual element thus increasing its prominence in the church and significance within the church body. The role of Communion was addressed by designing spaces which allowed various elements to maintain a visual independence and simultaneously interact with other spaces. The altar is easily accessible by both the choir and congregation allowing the pastor unrestricted mobility throughout the service. The close proximity of the altar to other spaces will allow the choir, ministers, and congregation to worship as one body as opposed to doing so as independent groups. As part of the Master Plan, specific areas were set aside for the construction of two future buildings. The new buildings would address the needs of the Community. Sufficient space was left on the site to accommodate the addition of the structures. The recreational and commercial buildings would be constructed on site linked by a central axis, while being diminutive in scale and purpose in relation to the church.

The use of exposed concrete on any building type presents an opportunity to create Structural Art. Exposed concrete structures are not restricted to commercial buildings, cathedrals, or residential dwellings. Based on the infinite applications of the material, the opportunities for its use as structural art on various building types is without limit. The thermal and fire protection offered by the use of concrete are superior to both wood and steel. Exposed steel in a church is not as desirable due to its cold nature, painting, and the lack of pristine edges when sprayed with fire proofing. The alternative is to encase the material in gypsum which also requires a degree of maintenance that is never required with concrete. The plasticity of concrete is an appropriate material for use as an exposed structure in a church.

Concrete is a viable material for religious buildings. Its use has been successfully demonstrated by numerous architects throughout the world. The limited use of exposed concrete on smaller churches throughout the United States could be attributed to financial constraints and the lack of the design expertise to create religious structures with the material. However with the advances in precast concrete technology, construction duration times could be greatly reduced which would offset a considerable amount of the construction cost.

In the creation of a church, there are those who would argue that while serving the present and looking to the future, one should build on tradition. However a church need not merely be a replica of a previous model. The search for structural expression in a Baptist church has yielded an ideal prototype with architectural attributes that has ecclesiastical applications. The attributes include geometry, light, texture, structure, and the ordered principles.

A geometric synthesis was used to determine the intervals at which things exist, occur, and/or terminate. Geometry was used to govern the relationship among the forms and space within the building’s organization. Natural and artificial illumination was employed to create patterns of light and shadow. Various materials and textures were selected to differentiate the functions of elements as it relates to their implicit or implied purpose. The vault bestows a sense of enclosure. The columns dictated virtually all design decisions in the building which resulted in a cohesive and unified assembly of elements. The columns, window frames, sculpted cross, tapered walls, structurally articulated columns, guard and hand rails are examples of translation, or the maintenance of an element even after a refined manipulation has occurred. The vault and column combined to exemplify the essence of the building framework. The structure was the single element from which all other elements were derived.