

IN RE: APPEAL NO. 674 - PETITION OF THE HANDMAIDS OF THE SACRED
HEART OF JESUS FOR A SPECIAL EXCEPTION IN ORDER TO ERECT AN
ADDITION TO EXISTING PREMISES SITUATE 2025 CHURCH ROAD, WYNCOTE,
PENNSYLVANIA

REPORT AND DECISION OF THE
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF CHELTENHAM

On November 2, 1954, the petitioner, The Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, filed its petition to the Board of Adjustment requesting a special exception as provided in Article 3 Section 301 Paragraph 3 of the Cheltenham Township Zoning Ordinance of 1941, as amended. The petition sets forth that the petitioner desires to add to the present building situate on premises owned by the petitioner at 2025 Church Road, Wyncote, Pennsylvania, in order to provide accommodations for novices and sleeping quarters for sisters as well as an additional kitchen and refectory facilities. The Board of Adjustment fixed Tuesday, November 23, 1954 at 7:30 p.m. at Curtis Hall, Church Road and Greenwood Avenue, Wyncote, Pennsylvania, as the time and place for a public hearing. On said date the petitioner appeared through its counsel, Alexander F. Barbieri, Esquire, and there also appeared two residents residing in the immediate neighborhood.

FINDINGS OF FACTS

From the testimony presented to the Board at the hearing held November 23, 1954, and from an inspection of the premises, the Board makes the following findings of fact:

1. The petitioner is known as The Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which is a religious congregation not

associated with or a part of a diocesan organization.

2. The petitioner is the owner of premises situate in the Township of Cheltenham, known as 2025 Church Road, Wyncote, Pennsylvania, and said property is classified as a "AA" Residence District under the provisions of the Cheltenham Zoning Ordinance of 1929, as amended.

3. The improvements upon the petitioner's property consist of a large mansion which has been converted to a convent, together with a gardener's cottage situate on the rear portion of the tract which has been converted into a kindergarten school. The entire property is between eight and nine acres in size.

4. The petitioner desires and presented plans to the Board of Adjustment for an addition to the convent building to be used for housing novices, sleeping quarters for sisters, and for additional kitchen and refectory facilities. Subsequent to the hearing, the petitioner submitted to the Board of Adjustment supplementary plans which differ from the original plans in that the proposed addition will be smaller in size than originally intended.

5. The proposed addition to the building consists of approximately eighty-eight feet by thirty feet and will be two stories in height.

6. The additional structure will be used for the housing of nuns. Some of them will teach in the school now being conducted upon the premises. Others will be used by nuns who are, themselves, being instructed.

7. The petitioner presently conducts upon the present premises a school consisting of a kindergarten, first, second and third grades and the proposed addition which will house the nuns will make available classroom space in the original building.

8. The proposed addition complies with all the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance as to setback, side yards.

9. The proposed addition will be used for the same purposes for which the petitioner has been using its property heretofore.

10. The proposed use for educational and religious purposes is a permitted use under Article 3 Section 301 of Cheltenham Township Zoning Ordinance of 1929, as amended.

DISCUSSION

The petitioner, The Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is the owner of a tract of ground known as 2025 Church Road, Wyncote, Cheltenham Township, Pennsylvania. For many years the petitioner has used its premises for and as a convent and educational purposes. There is presently being conducted by the petitioner on the premises a small school consisting of a kindergarten, first, second and third grades. To provide better facilities both for the school and the convent, the petitioner desires to construct an addition to its main building. That addition as shown on plans submitted to the Board of Adjustment, consists of a structure approximately eighty-eight feet in length by thirty feet in width. In the structure there will be facilities for sleeping quarters for the nuns and other activities. The addition will be used for the same purposes as petitioner has been using its property heretofore. The structure is so situate as to comply with all the requirements of the Cheltenham Township Zoning Ordinance of 1929, as amended. There

is sufficient area to the property of the petitioner to warrant the proposed addition. There is no reason why the proposed use by the petitioner should not be granted. The size of the ground owned by the petitioner is sufficiently large so that the proposed addition will in no way violate the area requirements as provided in the zoning ordinance. Article 3 Section 301 of the Cheltenham Township Zoning Ordinance, as amended, permits educational and religious use of property in a "AA" Residence District in which the petitioner's property is situate. As this Board has said heretofore, there must be potent and strong reasons to justify refusing such a use. No such reasons exist in connection with the present application and the request of the petitioner represents a normal growth of the convent and school.

DECISION

AND NOW this 23rd day of February, A. D. 1955, the petition of The Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to erect an addition upon their premises known as 2025 Church Road, Wyncote, Pennsylvania, to be used for religious purposes and to house nuns living upon the premises, is herewith granted, provided that the addition is constructed in accordance with the plans presented which were prepared by Edward J. Fleming, registered architect, under date of December 27, 1954.

Earl R. Wagner

Norman Harper

George F. Wertz