

**SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
CONCEPT PLAN COMMENTS**

Subject: Castalia at Meadowmont

Meeting Date: December 15, 2004

Recommendation: That the comments of the Commission be forwarded to the applicant.

Vote: Unanimous to forward comments by members present: Mark Broadwell, George Cianciolo (Chair), Chris Culbert, Thatcher Freund, Glenn Parks, Scott Radway, John Runkle, Amy Ryan, Jonathan Whitney

Architecture and Visual Presence

1. A majority of Commissioners expressed disapproval with the proposed building and the building's relationship to the hilltop site and the overall Meadowmont community. Repeated comments centered on the prominent visibility of the building from NC 54 and how the architecture was not harmonious with the overall Meadowmont architectural flavor.
2. Commissioners stated that the proposed site is one of the most visually prominent locations in Chapel Hill. Describing the placement of a building on this site as "the crown on the hill," one Commissioner reminded the applicant of the site's prominence and their responsibility to the community in designing a building for this location.
3. Several Commissioners noted that the proposed building did not fit in with the architectural character of the residential townhouses located north of the site. Other Commissioners stated concerns about the height. It appears that the proposed three story structure will be substantially higher than the Hilltop Condominium development across West Barbee Chapel Road.
4. Other Commissioners expressed concern with the appearance of the building from the Hilltop Condominiums development.
5. Two Commission members stated that the proposed building architecture seemed more akin to the UNC Wellness Center building.
6. Stating that the NC 54 "meadow" appeared more like a corporate lawn instead of the naturalized landscape anticipated with the Meadowmont Master Land Use Plan, one Commissioner did not believe that the proposed architecture and suburban building style was envisioned or anticipated when the Council approved the Master Land Use Plan.
7. Although a Commissioner stated that they were excited to see a building style that seemed modern and pushed the edges of architectural style, they did not feel the proposal worked well with the topography of the site and encouraged the applicant to redesign the building.
8. A Commission member suggested that the applicant attempt to break up the building mass.
9. One Commission member referenced the Community Design Commission Concept Plan comments from January 2002 and stated that the current proposal did not seem to respond to the previous Commission comments.

Parking and Site Design

10. Several Commission members expressed concern with the applicant's proposal to locate parking along the site's frontage on West Barbee Chapel Road. One Commissioner suggested that the applicant consider a redesign that moves the building towards Barbee Chapel Road and relocate the parking along the edge of the meadow by work with the existing topography. Commission members recommended that the applicant redesign the site and work with the topography to better screen the parking.
11. One Commissioner felt that a redesign that moves the building close to the street will result in a project that relates better to the streetscape on West Barbee Chapel Road. The Commissioner also stated that if necessary, an earthen berm could be incorporated to provide additional parking lot screening along the meadow's edge.
12. Citing the Meadowmont mixed-use concept and the development's goal promoting alternate modes of transportation, a Commissioner member suggested that the applicant consider reducing the number of on-site parking spaces.
13. Another concern expressed by a Commission member involved lighting from the parking lot along West Barbee Chapel Road spilling onto the residential Hilltop Condominium development.

Residential Component

14. Although one Commissioner supported the applicant's proposal to incorporate residential units into the third floor of the proposed building, another Commissioner did not believe that a mixed-use development consisting of residential and office use would be as successful as a mixed-use incorporates retail/commercial with the residential component.
15. One Commission member commented that the proposed architecture on the third floor did not appear to have a residential visually quality.
16. Another Commissioner commented that the illustrative elevation in front of the NC 54 meadow did not appear to be very pedestrian friendly.

Application

17. The Commission recommended that the applicant prepare several cross-section details through the site in order to better convey the intended visual objective of the proposed project. The Commission also recommended that the applicant prepare an elevation rendering from the perspective of the Hilltop Condominiums.
18. Noting the absence of visual exhibits, one Commissioner recommended that the applicant submit greater site plan information and illustrative renderings. In particular the Commissioner suggested that the applicant provide information on landscaping and the use of vegetation to screen parking along West Barbee Chapel Road.
19. A Commission member suggested that the applicant submit a concept plan that better outlines the applicant's vision for the project.

Prepared for George Cianciolo, Chair
 Prepared by Gene Poveromo, Staff