

**CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY MINUTES
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2007 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson Jonathan Whitney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Commission members present were Mark Broadwell, Mary Margaret Carroll, Gretchen MacNair, Laura King Moore, Amy Ryan, and Robin Whitsell. Staff members present were Senior Planner Kay Pearlstein and Administrative Clerk Renee Zimmermann.

WOODMONT OFFICE DEVELOPMENT (File 491.05.011)

A request for a Concept Plan Review to construct an office/retail development proposed to be located on the south side of Stancil Drive Service Road, between Barbee Chapel Road and Little John Road. The proposal includes 581,400 square feet floor area and 1,635 parking spaces. Office space is proposed to comprise 82% or approximately 479,400 square feet of floor area; 60 dwelling units are proposed to comprise 18% or approximately 102,000 square feet of floor area. A total of 11 buildings are proposed on the 33.23-acre site. The proposal also includes the demolition of several existing buildings including a warehouse and several residential structures. The site is located in Durham County, in the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning district, the Residential-2 (R-2) zoning district, and the Watershed Protection District. The site is identified as Durham County Property Identifier Numbers: 9798-04-92-0911, 9798-94-92-0436, 9798-04-71-8729, 9798-04-82-0071, 9798-04-81-2815, 9798-04-93-2025, 9798-04-92-4362, 9798-04-92-0097, 9798-04-92-4166, and 9798-04-82-6431.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

The design team presented their project proposal as a Master Plan in 3 phases. The team was comprised of Capital Associates, Ballentine Associates, GGA Architects, and Radway Design Associates. The plan includes 60 residential units with 9 being affordable units and 479,400 square feet of office space.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

1. Downing Creek Property Manager, Rebecca Board, provided a handout to the Commission and spoke in favor of the proposed bicycle and pedestrian trails and improvements to ingress/ egress onto Hwy. 54. She also approved of the improvement to the appearance of the proposed development from Barbee Chapel Road and Stancell Drive that in her opinion would be more visually pleasing than the existing appearance.

She was not concerned that the applicant was not proposing commercial/retail space. She did hope that the service building proposed along Barbee Chapel Road would contain a pediatrician's office.

Traffic was a concern but the proposed phasing of a master plan was believed to help disperse the traffic.

2. The business owner for Moondance Gallery in Meadowmont Village distributed two

handouts from the President and Manager of the Meadowmont Community Association. He stated that the project addressed the Meadowmont Villages' merchants concerns, providing a shuttle from the proposed development to Meadowmont Village in order to support and not compete with them.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

1. Commissioner Robin Whitsell appreciated the changes from the last Concept Plan review of the project and that the neighbors and Commissioners concerns were addressed. She approved of the connectivity and underground parking. She thinks that traffic will be the biggest challenge. She was not convinced that not providing commercial space was appropriate.

She asked how tall the buildings were proposed to be. The applicant replied that they are proposed to be 3 stories along Hwy. 54, 5 stories in the middle of the site, and down to 3 stories at the edges of the property. At the driveway onto Barbee Chapel Road the building is proposed to be 2 stories. Commissioner Whitsell noted that the tallest buildings were proposed at the high point of the property.

2. Commissioner Amy Ryan asked what the finished floor was of the buildings along Hwy.54. The applicant replied that the highway is lower than the buildings.

She noted that the applicant is proposing: more floor area than is currently allowed under the existing zoning, a rezoning, a Master Plan, and a Special Use Permit for the first phase of the project.

She approved of the buildings stepping up in height from Hwy. 54.

She did not approve of the 5-story buildings on top of the site. She stated that they appeared to loom down on Hwy. 54 and felt that there was too much building at the center of the site. She felt that the floor area should be scaled back.

She believed that traffic is the ultimate problem.

She recommended larger buffers adjacent to the residential areas, especially the section adjacent to Barbee Chapel Road.

She approved of extending the greenway and thought that the shuttle to Meadowmont was an interesting idea, especially since she believes that people will not walk to Meadowmont from the site.

3. Commissioner Laura Moore recommended that the buildings in the center of the site should be located on the downhill side of the slope. That way the parking for the eastern building is in a dip.

She asked how the phasing for the construction would affect Hwy. 54 traffic. The applicant replied that they did not know what the current Hwy.54 study would show. The entire Hwy. 54 corridor is being studied.

- 4. Commissioner Gretchen MacNair supported the comments of the other Commissioners.
- 5. Commissioner Mary Margaret Carroll noted that the development was not attractive to families with children. Commissioner Carroll suggested that at least one area contain green space where children could safely play.
- 6. Commissioner Mark Broadwell believes that there is too much density. He stated that when he sees applications requesting floor area in excess of what the zoning allows, he expects to see traffic thoroughly addressed. He believes that the applicant should go further to minimize traffic.

At the entrance off of Hwy 54 he would like to see public art that continues and supports the natural landscape rather than have something that resembles a landscape and sculpture more appropriate to Research Triangle Park.

- 7. Commissioner Jonathan Whitney asked if the applicant has talked with NCDOT. The applicant replied that they had and that a superstreet along Hwy 54 could be a suggestion in the Corridor Plan. Hi indicated that if that is a recommendation, the developers would participate. He further explained that Phase 1 of the proposed Master Plan will have minimal impact on traffic as the connection to Barbee Chapel Road will not be constructed.

Commissioner Whitney asked why they were proposing 3 different Special Use Permits. The applicant replied because they do not know how traffic impacts will be addressed in the future. The first part of their application will be for approval of a Master Plan. Phase 1 will be submitted following the Master Plan application.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

The Commission supported revisions to the concept plan that had included the adjacent property owners' concerns. They supported the need for greater pedestrian connectivity and underground parking. They also expressed concerns with traffic on NC 54, building height, and development intensity. Other concerns included appearance along NC 54's entrance into Chapel Hill, greater buffers adjacent to residential development, and safe play areas.

Prepared for: Chairperson Jonathan Whitney *KP for JW*
Prepared by: Kay Pearlstein, Senior Planner

Attachments: Letter from the President of the Meadowmont Community Association
Letter from the Manager of the Meadowmont Community Association