



**CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY MINUTES
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2006, 7:30 P.M.**

Chairperson Jonathan Whitey called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Commission members present were Mark Broadwell, George Cianciolo, Eleanor Howe, Gretchen MacNair, Laura King Moore, Charlotte Newby, Scott Nilsen, Glenn Parks, Amy Ryan, and Robin Whitsell. Staff members present were Development Coordinator Gene Poveromo, Senior Planner Kay Pearlstein, Planning Technician Kay Tapp, and Assistant Town Manager Bruce Heflin.

West Franklin St/West Rosemary Street (Parking Lot 5) Mixed-Use Residential/Retail Development

The Town has received a Concept Plan Proposal for a Mixed Use Development proposed to be located between West Franklin Street and West Rosemary Street (Parking Lot 5) at the intersection of Church Street. The Lot 5 site is approximately 1.7 acres with a surface parking lot of 173 spaces. The proposed plan includes the construction of an underground parking deck with approximately 375 spaces, 124 residential dwelling units and 24,000 square feet of retail floor area in three buildings. The site is located in the Town Center-2 (TC-2) zoning district.

CONCEPT PLAN PRESENTATION

The 6-member design team presented a concept plan representing three firms: Klein Design, GGA, and Duany Plater-Zyberk. The presentation included the public review process up to the present for the two projects and announcement of the artist chosen to work with the Public Arts Commission, McKim for the inclusion of public art in the developments. A power point overview of the two projects was presented.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

1. Commissioner Eleanor Howe thought that this was exciting to see and was looking forward to seeing the projects as they progressed. Commissioner Howe asked how much taller was the 9 story building proposed on Lot 5 than the Nations Bank building. The applicant replied that there would not be a significant difference in height.
2. Commissioner Scott Nilsen asked why there was an alley parallel to Church Street. The applicant stated that the alley was necessary for the residence to enter and exit the parking deck and that the entrance off W. Franklin Street will be one-way in and in and out on W. Rosemary Street. He asked if this plan would produce more vehicular traffic. The applicant stated that they were trying to keep additional vehicular traffic off Church Street and better separate the pedestrian and vehicular movements.
3. Commissioner George Cianciolo asked about the width of the sidewalk at Lot 5. The applicant stated that the sidewalk was wider than it needed to be, about 12 feet wide, 2.5 times the existing sidewalk width. He also asked how tall the building was proposed to be. The applicant replied that the building would be about 100 feet tall.

4. Commissioner Laura King Moore liked the streetscape details but expressed concern about alley width not being wide enough to prevent traffic jams. She asked how the refuse would be collected. The applicant replied that a goal was to accommodate both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The proposed design required refuse trucks to pull in and back out into Rosemary Street. She expressed concern with the sidewalk width and use of street trees. The tree placements had potential to impede pedestrian flow. She believed that confusion might arise as to who has the right-of-way, cars or pedestrians. She expressed concern with the space between buildings being shaded and the lack of air movement. The applicant responded that a Shade Analysis is planned as part of being LEED certified. Commissioner Moore supported the plaza but was concerned about the pedestrian traffic at the Church Street and W. Franklin Street corner. The applicant stated that they planned to use removable bollards to help direct the pedestrian traffic. Commissioner Moore asked about the height of Lot 5 in reference to Granville Towers. The applicant said that she thought it would be about the same height. Commissioner Moore expressed concern for determining the division between public and private space and maintenance of the plazas and alleys. The applicant replied that the alleys would be owned by the Town.
5. Commissioner Chris Culbreth was both excited and nervous by the projects. He stated concern with the density. He also said that he believed that a grocery was necessary. He asked that the vent stacks and HVAC be located on future drawings. Commissioner Culbreth wanted to see a better marriage between the existing surrounding building styles and what is proposed. He wondered what the demographics of the residences would be. The applicant said that they were planning on having year round fulltime residency.
6. Commissioner Charlotte Newby especially appreciated the applicant's images that showed the new buildings inserted in the streetscape. She asked if Lot 5 would have 151 dwelling units. The applicant stated that they thought they would have 150. Commissioner Newby felt that it was important that a grocery be included that would be used by residence on a daily basis, not a specialty food store. She asked if the Northside neighborhood had been asked for input. The applicant replied that they had met with Doris Bailey 6 or 7 times. Commissioner Newby asked if there was a roof garden and if they were applying for LEED certification. The applicant said that there was a roof garden and that they were LEED accredited.
7. Commissioner Gretchen MacNair was concerned about the density. She asked if moving vans, trash trucks, and loading docks would tie up W. Rosemary Street and would there be enough area in the alley to accommodate service uses. The applicant stated that they were still working on the design, however a competent property manager would be able to schedule those type of uses during non peak times.
8. Commissioner Amy Ryan stated that comparisons between heights of Granville Towers and buildings on Lot 5 cannot be made because of the greater Granville Towers setback from W. Franklin Street. She thought that there was too much density. She supported

the plaza and that use of bollards to control pedestrian flow. Commissioner Ryan was concerned that there may be a cavernous space created between the plaza buildings.

9. Commissioner Mark Broadwell asked if outdoor retail area would spill into the outdoor public space. The applicant stated that there would be a defined area around the businesses that the retailers could use. Commissioner Broadwell asked what type of material would be used in the outdoor space. The applicant said that they had not decided but it would probably be hard surface. Commissioner Broadwell thought that there should be as much natural material used as possible to soften the appearance. He felt that the residential terrace could be dark and uninviting on the north side of the building. He suggested that the applicant consider having something on the top of the middle building. The applicant stated that the public art and landscape would help to soften the appearance. Commissioner Broadwell suggested that an underground grocery store be considered. He suggested that the applicant show cross sectional drawings that include the existing buildings.
10. Commissioner Robin Whitsell expressed concern about the height and setback. She suggested that measures needed to be taken to buffer smells from restaurants. She believed that particular attention needed to be paid to safety in the parking areas.
11. Commissioner Jonathan Whitney asked how much of the 3-level parking would be for the public. The applicant said that the amount currently for the public would be the same. Commissioner Whitney pointed out that the new mast arm traffic lights at W. Franklin Street could change the renderings. He was concerned about the buildings on Lot 5 projecting into the right-of-way. There was no way of know what would happen across the street in the future. He wondered if the colonnaded sidewalks would reduce light and air movement.
12. Commissioner Howe said that she would like to see more architectural detail on the stairs at Lot 5. She thought that the building looked much like a bank building instead of a residential building and the arcade opening looked like a mall entrance.
13. Commissioner Whitney commented that a “green” grocery might work well at Lot 5.
14. Commissioner Newby was concerned that it would be difficult to prevent the residential dwellings from becoming student occupied.

Prepared by: Jonathan Whitney, Chair
Kay Pearlstein

**RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM THE CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW
BY THE COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
Wednesday, MARCH 15, 2006, 7:30P.M.**

Comments:

- Commissioner Nilsen asked about the alley parallel to Church Street. *Response: In the current plan the alley has been eliminated to provide better oriented and safer pedestrian access on site, as well as better accommodate the maximum amount of subterranean parking.*
- Commissioner Laura King Moore expressed concerns about determining the division between public and private space. *Response: The design team will seek to use design elements to help define the space such as changes in pavement materials or patterns and other site elements, but still encourage the maximum amount of pedestrian circulation throughout the site.*
- Commissioner Chris Culbreth expressed concern about the density and wanted to see a better marriage between the existing surrounding building styles. *Response: It has been expressed by the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership that residential density is needed and is key to the continuing viability of the downtown area. It is the design team's goal to successfully merge the architectural styles of area as the architecture design process evolves with additional expert input from Dean Malecha of NC State's College of Design. Additional efforts will be made to identify the proper heights and setbacks for the building envelope to provide the density the Town Council wishes for on the site in a manner that respects the surrounding properties.*
- Commissioner Amy Ryan was concerned that there may be a cavernous space created between the plaza buildings. *Response: The design team has examined this concern in the design process with 3-D modeling and now integrated all three previous buildings into one contiguous structure to provide a more open and pedestrian scale environment on the ground level.*
- Commissioner Mark Broadwell felt that the residential terrace could be dark and uninviting on the north side of the building. *Response: The mid-level residential terrace has been eliminated in the current design and been replaced with a more open and community accessible courtyard along Rosemary St. Additionally a roof-top terrace amenity has also been added to the new concept that will benefit from direct sunlight throughout the day and be accessible to all residents.*
- Commissioner Robin Whitsell expressed concern about the height and setback of the building, as well as smells from the retail restaurant tenants. *Response: Based on massing studies conducted of the proposed building and its relationship to the surrounding buildings, the design team feels that the height will be in keeping with the surrounding community. Particular attention will be paid to keeping the*

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traditional height and scale for the main pedestrian corridors along the Franklin St. and Rosemary St. facades. The appropriate distance of building setback for each façade will be determined in cooperation with the Planning Department to lessen the impact of the building's height. The concern regarding restaurant odors is noted and will be considered during the design process so as to properly located exhaust to minimize its impact on the surrounding community.

- **Commissioner Jonathan Whitney was concerned that the building would project into the right-of-way. Response:** *The building will not physically protrude into the right-of-way on any façade.*
- **Other comments made by the Commissioners were answered at the meeting by the applicant and can be found in the minutes.**