



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

UNIVERSITY ARCHITECT AND DIRECTOR
FACILITIES PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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AGENDA #3a1

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June 19, 2006

Mayor Kevin Foy &
Chapel Hill Town Council
Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514-05705

**Subject: Request for Expedited Review of a Special Use Permit
North Carolina Botanical Garden Visitor Education Center**

Dear Mayor Foy and Council Members:

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill requests an expedited review of the Special Use Permit application for the Visitor Education Center at the North Carolina Botanical Garden. The Special Use Permit is required by the expansion of the existing facility.

We believe this project meets Council's criteria for expedited review because the expansion of the facility is in the public interest and fulfills a public objective.

The North Carolina Botanical Garden was established as part of the University to serve the citizens of North Carolina through its commitment to excellence in research, university instruction, conservation, plant collections and public programs. The Visitor Education Center will provide a welcoming gateway into the NC Botanical Garden that exemplifies a positive union between natural and built environments. It will also set a new standard for environmentally friendly public buildings in Chapel Hill.

While the North Carolina Botanical Garden is already a highly respected and appreciated public facility, as a LEED platinum building, the new Visitor Education Center will support the University and Council's environmental goals for environmentally sensitive building practices for this region. It will serve as a demonstration site for new technologies in the areas of stormwater management, energy efficiency, and water conservation. All water that falls on the building roof will be collected in cisterns for use in irrigating the gardens, the parking lot will also mitigate stormwater runoff through the use of porous paving and bioswales. A portion of the building's electrical needs will be provided by photovoltaic panels. Geo-thermal wells will further decrease the buildings energy consumption by taking advantage of the constant temperature of the earth to heat and cool the building. In addition, interior spaces in the building will be designed to maximize natural light through controlled "daylighting" techniques.

Two themes of the town's Comprehensive Plan are "conserve and protect the natural setting of Chapel Hill" and "encourage desirable forms of non-residential

development”. The Visitor Education Center project will be a leading example of strategies suitable for residential, commercial and public facilities to conserve and protect the natural setting of Chapel Hill.

In light of the public and educational nature of the facility, and given the Botanical Garden and Town’s shared environmental objectives, we request that you consider and approve a request for expedited review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna A. Wu". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anna A. Wu, AIA
Director of Facilities Planning

cc: Pat Crawford
Diane Gillis
Peter White
Mary Jane Felgenhauer