

**CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY MINUTES
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2006, 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson Jonathan Whitney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Commissions attending the meeting were Mary Margaret Carroll, George Cianciolo, Chris Culbreth, Kathryn James, Gretchen MacNair, Scott Nilsen, Amy Ryan, and Robin Whitsell. Staff members present were Senior Planner Kay Pearlstein and Planning Technician Kay Tapp.

**THE RESIDENCES AT GROVE PARK (AKA TOWN HOUSE APARTMENTS)
(FileNo. 9788-49-1706)**

The Town has received a request for a Concept Plan Review proposal to redevelop a site located at 425 Hillsborough Street. The site, located between Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Hillsborough Street is currently occupied by the 111 unit Town House Apartments. The proposed development includes the demolition of the Town House Apartment complex and construction of 332 multi-family units. A total of 524 parking spaces are proposed, including parking areas under some buildings. Existing and proposed access to the site is from Hillsborough Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. The 12.9-acre site is located in the Residential-4 (R-4) zoning district and the Resource Conservation District. The site is identified as Chapel Hill Township, Tax Map 81, Block B, Lots 5, 7, 8, and 15, PIN 9788-49-1706.

CONCEPT PLAN PRESENTATION

The applicant presented a revised Concept Plan that included differences from the June 28 Concept Plan. These differences included a site reduction of 2.7 acres, reduction in the number of dwelling units by 25, reduction in the number of parking spaces by 164, removal of a second driveway onto Hillsborough Street, and a revised layout of buildings and circulation on the site.

The applicant's presentation included a requesting a signalized driveway onto Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd from NCDOT and a single driveway entrance onto Hillsborough Street serving the townhouses.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Landscaping/Open Space

- A Commissioner noted the existing large trees along Hillsborough Street and wondered if the trees were to be preserved. The applicant replied that they were and used as buffering.
- A Commissioner noted that kudzu filled the Resource Conservation District on the site and wondered how that was to be addressed. The applicant replied that it was a problem and did not yet know.
- A Commissioner believed that the courtyard appeared more like a hotel and should be made for parties and get togethers. It was an ideal location for a gym/exercise room. They believed that the townhouses should have their own open space as well. Likes the buffer around the site.

Scale/Mass

- Several Commissioners believed that the scale was too much like a city and not a village scale. The Commissioners wanted the buildings to reflect a Chapel Hill vernacular and thought that 6-story buildings too tall.
- Generally, it was felt that the buildings were too tall, especially adjacent to a historic district.
- Commissioners liked the concept of taller buildings in the middle of the site and lower, 3-story buildings on Hillsborough Street.
- Commissioners supported the emphasis on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. driveway and building orientation rather than that on Hillsborough Street.
- At least two Commissioners believed that the building massing on Hillsborough Street was too great.

Traffic/Parking

- One Commissioner liked the traffic circulation through the site and believed it would not act as a cut through with the redesign.
- Several Commissioners believed that the traffic flow of this revised Concept Plan was improved over the first Concept Plan presented.
- Concern with additional traffic on Hillsborough Street remained.
- A Commissioner believed that it would be difficult to get a street light on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd from NCDOT. They said that they would not support this 2,000 trips per day development without a traffic light.
- A Commissioner believed that the target group of "young professionals" will each want a car. While transit is good in Chapel Hill during the day, it does not have a good regional system. The parking proposed will work for students not professionals.
- The Commissioners supported the underground parking but density still too much for the site. The applicant replied that underground parking allows for more open and green space. Reducing the scale and density of the project may not make underground parking feasible. If density were reduced, the applicant indicated that their design would likely include more surface parking and less green space.

Stormwater

- The applicant responded to a concern about stormwater on the site. Most runoff is proposed with underground storage and filters into the on-site RCD.
- Commissioners expressed concern with the large amount of impervious surface proposed by the parking and buildings.

Rezoning

- Rezoning to a Transit Oriented District (TOD) was a concern. Commissioners pointed out that nothing was there yet to design a TOD around.
- How will this development support downtown? The applicant responded that the target group of young professionals will be an active part of a lively downtown community.

- One Commissioner was concerned about the development will contribute to a "suitcase community."

Housing Types

- Commissioners asked the applicant to describe the housing proposed. The applicant responded that affordable housing was proposed to be 15% of the total and planned for 1 to 2 bedrooms. Commissioners supported affordable units with 3 bedrooms too.
- Commissioners believed that smaller condominium units would be sold to parents for use by their children. The applicant stated that the condominium units were proposed to be about 1200 square feet and the townhouse units about 2400 square feet.
- One Commissioner appreciated the building facades proposed with the building elevations.

Application

- The Commissioners complimented the applicant on the cross sections provided showing the topography in relation to buildings on the site. They felt the drawings provided a good sense of the scale proposed and were helpful understanding the proposal.
- Several Commissioners felt that the best part of the revised Concept Plan was the limited access onto Hillsborough Street.

Prepared by: Jonathan Whitney, Chair *KP for JW*
Kay Pearlstein, Planning Staff