

DEVELOPERS STATEMENT OF JUSTIFICATION

FREEDOM HOUSE 104 New Stateside Drive, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27516

Introduction

This is a request for a modification to the existing Special Use Permit on this site. In general it is our interest to add two buildings and replace one building as described herein and shown on the accompanying plans. Freedom House is located on the west side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard in Chapel Hill. This property is within the Chapel Hill Planning District. The proposed use is consistent in use and intensity with the Town's Land Use Development Ordinance. The zoning designation of this property is R-3-C and R2.

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Background

The initial Freedom House facility was designed as a fraternity house and was outside of the town limits. In 1995 Freedom House had the need for men's sleeping quarters and administrative space. In that year Freedom House applied for, and received, a Special Use Permit for this facility on this site. The Special Use Permit granted in 1995 recognized and approved the important service provided by Freedom House on this site. The density approved at that time was materially less than the allowable density under the approved zone. The approval was for 3 separate buildings. Two were built between 1995 and now. Since 1995 a neighboring developer, Centex Homes, generously donated land that they owned and that was located adjacent to the Freedom House Campus. This has resulted in an increase in the size of the Freedom House Campus.

Freedom House has been providing significant and important service to the Chapel Hill Community for 30 years. The campus of Freedom House includes facilities for detoxification and residential services for people suffering from substance abuse. Our method of service and the success of treatment have been recognized by the Chapel Hill Town Council, the Orange County Board of Commissioners, The Orange Person Chatham Division of Health Services, the State of North Carolina Department of Justice and many other organizations with responsibilities for providing health services. Freedom House also participates with

Duke University Medical School, in development of new and more effective treatment methodologies.

Our programs and range of services has matured over the 30 years we have been providing services. Freedom House has recently developed a plan to further enhance its services. This new plan will provide more intense and modern service to our clients. The new plan is also consistent with the "best practice" service model for substance abuse that has been developed by the North Carolina State Department of Human Services. Among other service enhancements we plan to increase the number of beds in our detoxification center, add beds in an intermediate stabilization program (facility based crisis services), and add space in which to hold our very successful outpatient program, We will also be adding appropriate administrative space.

We have been fortunate in having the Kate B. Reynolds Health Care Trust assist us in professional staff development to support these enhanced services. Now Freedom House is planning to further develop its campus to provide a suitable home for these new services.

General Site Description

The existing facility was approved by the Town of Chapel Hill with a Special Use Permit dated October 13, 1997. The site was developed according to that SUP except one residential building which housed 12 men was not built. The existing SUP was approved for 44 individuals to live on site and a total of 14,602 square feet was approved for the campus. The modifications we are requesting do not include an increase in the approved number of residents. This SUP modification will add a new Detox\Stabilization building, A new building to house offices, larger dining facilities, and a community meeting room for local programs. The fourth building will be for expanding programs. This SUP modification will expand existing programs currently being offered by Freedom House. The modification will also add property to the permit that was not part of the Campus at the time the current SUP was applied for. The site is level by Chapel Hill standards with all slopes less than 10%. No water features exist on site and there is no RCD on the site.

FINDING #1:

That the use or development is located, designed, and proposed to be operated so as to maintain or promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

Freedom House is specifically designed to support men and women who have satisfactorily graded from substance abuse treatment programs. It will provide safe and secure housing while these men and women adjust to living and working in a substance-free environment. The site is ideally located to serve both the Town and County. It is served by buses, as the residents are not permitted to have automobiles. Freedom House facilities are currently, and will continue to be, operated by Freedom House. Freedom House is a local, non-profit, organization with a local board of directors.

FINDING # 2:

That the use or development complies with all required regulations and standards of this chapter, including all applicable provisions of Articles 3 and 5 and the applicable specific standards contained in the Supplemental Use Regulations (Article 6), and with all other applicable regulations.

The proposed plans submitted comply with the regulations of the Town of Chapel Hill Land Use Development Ordinance including but not limited to Articles 3, 5, and 6.

FINDING #3

That the use or development is located, designed, and proposed to be operated so as to maintain or enhance the value of contiguous property, or that the use or development is a public necessity.

The proposed buildings and site improvements are designed to minimize adverse impacts on the surrounding properties and uses:

1. Clearing and grading for the proposed Freedom House buildings has been carefully considered. They are oriented and positioned on the site to be accessed off the existing driveway internal to the Campus.
2. Generous buffers have been proposed for the buildings and extensive landscaping is being proposed with this SUP application.

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3. This SUP does not change or add to the way Freedom House currently operates or provides services to its Clients. The new buildings will give Freedom House better facilities and needed space but the function of Freedom House will not change from the way it is being operated today.

FINDING #4:

That the use or development conforms with the general plans for the physical development of the Town as embodied in this chapter and in the comprehensive plan.

The Comprehensive Plan encourages development with a scale and architectural design compatible with adjacent development.

Freedom House buildings are one story residentially-styled structures designed to blend in with, and take advantage of, the natural environs of the site. The units are residential in character and scale in order to replicate the home environment, thus helping potential clients and occupants feel most comfortable.

The buildings are hidden from other surrounding uses as much as possible, thus providing desirable privacy for occupants and house uses.