



PLANNING
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**CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY MINUTES
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2009, 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson George Cianciolo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Commission members present were Mark Broadwell, Kathryn James, Laura Moore, Geordie Selkirk, Polly Van de Velde, and Staff members present were Senior Planner Kay Pearlstein, and Administrative Clerk Renee Moye.

WESLEY HOUSE, MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT
212, 214, & 220 W. Rosemary Street, File No. 9788-27-5353

The University of North Carolina Wesley Foundation is proposing a mixed use development at 212, 214, and 220 W. Rosemary Street. The site is located on the northeast corner of W. Rosemary Street and Church Street, west of Pritchard Avenue. The applicant is proposing to demolish three buildings and construct a 4-story building with a basement for a total of 76,770 square feet of floor area. Housing for 144 students including on-site parking for 35 cars and 66 bicycles is also proposed. Approximately 4,000 square feet of retail floor area is also proposed on the ground floor. Vehicular access is proposed from Church Street. The 0.72 acre site is located in the Town Center-2 (TC-2) zoning district and Northside Neighborhood Conservation District and identified as Orange County Parcel Identifier Numbers 9788-27-5353, 9788-27-6326, and 9788-27-6387.

CONCEPT PLAN PRESENTATION

The design team comprised of David Taylor and Mike Hammersley and applicants Jim Peacock and Jan Rivera presented a proposal for a mixed use development primarily for student housing.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

1. Kim Hoppin lives at 207 Short Street and helped craft the Northside Neighborhood Conservation District guidelines and did not feel this proposal was protecting the neighborhood, especially since the proposal included tearing down three, gorgeous old houses, not protecting them. She is not in support of a retail use in the building.
2. Chip Hoppin is concerned about windows on the north side of the new building that would look directly into his backyard and could ruin his family's privacy. The building will also block his view of the downtown. He just finished constructing a new deck to his house and will be in view of the residents of the new building all the time. He stated that living next to Pantana Bob's and La Residence he is use to noise, parking, and litter that those uses bring

but with a potential of 144 new students, he is alarmed. He believes that this proposal is the antithesis of what the Town should be moving toward for Northside.

He is also concerned with the safety of the old trees on Short Street and wants the landscaping and tree protection as well as proposed tree plantings and architecture of the building to be reviewed. He noted that he and his family are in the minority as homeowners and most of the houses are rentals.

3. Francis Goultieri, owner of La Residence, stated that she is encouraged about the changes proposed for the block. She supported the development and offered to help Wesley House with the Rosemary Street sidewalk, a combined dumpster space, and a 1-way connector between the two properties.
4. John Goultieri grew up in the house where Los Patrillos restaurant is currently located. He is attached to the neighborhood and noted that revenue will be lost on the block with the development. He wanted to know how the building will engage the street and neighborhood. He questioned the appropriateness of the type of development in this location. He felt that the building could dominate and tower over the street and neighborhood. He wanted to know more about the substance-free housing being proposed.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

1. Commissioner Mark Broadwell asked why the church was going into housing. The applicant replied that they have been in the same location for about 40-50 years and they have grown since then and need a new live/learn environment. They plan on keeping their house on Pittsboro Street. They want to keep conversations going with neighbors.
2. Commissioner Kathryn James did not want to see a rectangular box for a building. She suggested that perhaps the building appear as several separate buildings to cut down on the mass. She noted that a transitional building would be needed since historic homes were being replaced.
3. Commissioner Polly Van de Velde was concerned about the character of the neighborhood and that there is a reason the campus is separated from the Town. She noted that there are already two big apartment buildings located on W. Rosemary Street and that it appeared that there was too much “gown” and not enough “town.” She felt that building being proposed would be too tall and monolithic.

She thought that multiple retailers were more appealing than a single retailer.

She wanted the old trees protected and the houses to be relocated. She did not want the focus to be on the students.

4. Commissioner Geordie Selkirk thought the building to be lacking in scale and needed more detail to understand what was going on. He thought the overall height was too tall and would be more successful at 2 to 3 stories tall. Commissioner Selkirk thought that so long

as the proposal was not driven by a return on an investment, focus could be on other things such as making the building fit into the area.

5. Commissioner Patric Le Beau wanted to know what was being proposed for W. Rosemary streetscape and expressed concern for the large trees. He recommended that the applicant ease off the footprint to create something that better fit the site.
6. Commissioner George Cianciolo wanted a smaller footprint to provide more “breathing room” for the neighbors. He felt that it was a fairly substantial change going from an area that is 1 to 2 stories tall to one that is 4 stories tall. He felt that it was important to meet with the neighborhood and look at the scale to make the project more palatable.

He suggested that instead of retail use, that small studio space for artists would be beneficial to the area. The project could include a gallery that people could walk to.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS SUMMARY

The Commission’s summary comments are listed below:

- Interested in hearing neighbors comments on the proposal.
- The architecture of the building needed to be more in scale with the neighborhood and more information on the architecture was needed.
- The mass of the building needed to be reduced and broken up into smaller parts and the height reduced.
- The area was changing into student-oriented housing area rather than uses to support the Town.
- Protect the neighborhood and street trees and relocated the existing buildings on the site.
- Transitional architecture needed from W. Rosemary to Northside Neighborhood.
- Retail use should be expanded or include artist space with a gallery.

Prepared for: George Cianciolo, Chair
 Prepared by: Kay Pearlstein, Staff