

# TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

## CONCEPT PLAN APPLICATION

### *Applicant Information*

Name: Jack L. Smyre, The Design Response, Inc.  
Address: 1014 High House Road, Suite 100  
City: Cary State: North Carolina Zip: 27513  
Phone (Work): 469-2080 FAX: 469-6633 E-Mail: jsmyre@thedesignresponse.com

### *Property Owner Information (include as attachment if more than one owner)*

Name: Harris Teeter Properties, Inc. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: P.O. Box 10100  
City: Matthews State: North Carolina Zip: 28106

### *Development Information*

Name of Development: Residential Component of Chapel Hill North  
Tax Map: 17 Block: - - - Lot(s): 45 Parcel ID#: 9880-36-1885  
Location: North of Perkins Road & East of Chapel Hill North Shopping Center  
Existing Zoning: MU-OI-1 New Zoning District if Rezoning Proposed: n/a  
Proposed Size of Development (Acres/Square Feet): 12.74 / 554,905  
Permitted/Proposed Floor Area (Square Feet): 382,880 (per master plan) / 240,000  
Minimum # Parking Spaces Required: 304 # Proposed: 329  
Proposed Number of Dwelling Units: 190 # Units per Acre: 14.9  
Existing/Proposed Impervious Surface (Square Feet): 0 / 208,000  
Is this Concept Plan subject to additional review by the Town Council? Yes

The undersigned applicant hereby certifies that: a) the property owner authorizes the filing of this application; b) authorizes on-site review by authorized staff; and c) to the best of his/her knowledge and belief, all information supplied with this application is true and accurate.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit **20 sets** of all materials, or **30 sets of all materials including reduced (8 ½" by 11") copies of all plans if the Concept Plan is subject to additional review by the Town Council**, no later than the first day of the month. Materials must be collated and folded to fit into a 12" x 15" envelope.

The Community Design Commission meets regularly on the third Wednesday of each month. Meetings with the Town Council will be scheduled after the Community Design Commission meeting. For confirmation of meeting dates and the placement of your request on the agenda, please call the Planning Department at (919) 968-2728.

# Residential Component of Chapel Hill North

## CONCEPTUAL PLAN INFORMATION

Prepared by:  
*Crosland*  
*The Design Response, Inc.*  
*JDavis Architects*

**June 2003**

# **Residential Component of Chapel Hill North**

## **Outline of Conceptual Plan Information**

- I. Applicant / Developer Information
- II. Name and Address of Property Owner
- III. Background
- IV. Developer's Program
- V. Statement of Compliance with Town Design Guidelines
- VI. Statement of Consistency with the Town's Comprehensive Plan

## **I. Applicant/Developer Information**

### ***The Developer***

The developer for the Residential Component of Chapel Hill North will be Crosland Development, Inc. Crosland is one of the Southeast's leading diversified real estate companies, with experience building and managing residential, office and commercial developments.

Crosland's stated mission is to design, develop and manage properties that make communities better places to live, work and shop. Originally founded by John Crosland, Sr., in 1937, Crosland has a long-term commitment to community-oriented development, responsible stewardship, and to the provision of affordable housing. Consistent with this commitment, Crosland developed the affordable Dobbins Hill Apartment development in Chapel Hill during the 1990s, and most recently completed the Apartments at Meadowmont.

Crosland operates out of a home office in Charlotte, North Carolina, and does business in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. In 2000, Crosland opened an office in Raleigh to help better serve the Triangle area.

### ***The Consultants***

Jack Smyre, PE, AICP, is serving as the lead applicant on behalf of Crosland Development, Inc. Jack Smyre is the principal for The Design Response, Inc., a local land planning and consulting firm, and he has been working with various developers in the Chapel Hill area for approximately two decades. He has previously been actively involved with several projects in Chapel Hill that have included an affordable housing component, including Vineyard Square (formerly known as The Homestead) and Dobbins Hill Apartments.

Jeff Davis, who is principal for JDavis Architects, is serving as the architect for this project. Jeff Davis has been involved in many office, commercial and residential developments throughout the Triangle area. In Chapel Hill, Davis has been involved with several projects including the Meadowmont Village Center, where commercial space and residential units are vertically mixed. As part of his involvement in Meadowmont, Davis also donated his time to the Orange County Housing Development Corporation and assisted with the architecture for the Meadowmont Affordable Townhomes, helping to ensure that this important housing element was compatible with the rest of the development in terms of scale, materials and quality of design.

Since the conceptual plan review process is a preliminary step towards the preparation of a formal development submittal, the services of an engineering firm have not been engaged at this time. After benefiting from the comments and recommendations offered as part of the conceptual plan review process, we intend to enlist a reputable engineering firm that is familiar with the Chapel Hill area, in order to assist with the development of appropriate studies and materials for a formal Special Use Permit application submittal.

## **II. Name and Address of Property Owner**

The Residential Component of Chapel Hill North proposal consists of one property that is identified by owner as follows:

TM # 7.17..45  
Parcel ID # 9880-36-1885  
Harris Teeter Properties, Inc.  
P.O. Box 10100  
Matthews, NC 28106

### III. Background

In the 1970's, NC Highway 86 was a narrow, winding two-lane road that meandered north from Chapel Hill towards Hillsborough. Many people knew NC Highway 86 as Airport Road, because it was the road that went from downtown Chapel Hill out to the Horace Williams Airport. Interstate 40 had not been constructed, and there was not a lot of development north of Estes Drive. In the 1980s, growth and development began to march northward however, with the emergence of several new neighborhoods north of Estes Drive, and the construction of the Timberlyne Shopping Center.

It also became clear in the early 1980s, that Interstate 40 was going to soon be constructed, providing new interstate interchanges on two of the primary entranceways into Chapel Hill – NC Highway 86 and US Highway 15-501. Recognizing that these interstate interchanges would eventually bring growth and development pressures that would have a major impact on Chapel Hill, the Town sought to take steps to ensure that appropriate and desirable development would occur at these key interstate interchanges.

The Town of Chapel Hill's 1986 Land Use Plan and 1989 Comprehensive Plan, recognized the arrival of Interstate 40 (which indeed opened in the late 1980s), and sought to articulate the type of development that the Town desired in these locations. Generally speaking, the Town envisioned land uses that served the internal needs of the Town, rather than land uses that would attract traffic from and serve the needs of people traveling on Interstate 40. The Town described this desirable type of development with the term "mixed use," and sought to establish a zoning district that would help to achieve the Town's goals.

As noted in the Town's Land Use Management Ordinance, the Town's Mixed Use zoning districts were thus created and implemented for the following purpose:

*"To provide for the coordinated development of office, commercial, and residential uses and their necessary support functions in the vicinity of key highway intersections and transit corridors in Chapel Hill. They are designed to facilitate stated public policies to encourage design which emphasizes lively, people oriented environments and compatible, visually interesting development. This district provides areas where moderate scale mixed use centers can locate with an emphasis on development of a balance of residential, office and commercial uses.*

*It is further intended that the Mixed Use Districts shall encourage development within which mutually supporting residential, commercial and office uses are scaled, balanced and located to reduce general traffic congestion by providing housing close to principal destinations, and convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation systems and mass transit to further reduce the need for private automobile usage. Mixed Use Districts are intended to encourage development that allows multiple destinations to be achieved with a single trip. These standards encourage a design such that uses within a Mixed Use District are arranged in a manner that encourages internal vehicular trip capture and the development patterns that encourage walking, transit and bicycling as alternatives to automotive travel."*

The approved Mixed Use zoning districts were intended to encourage the construction of office uses in concert with retail and/or residential uses. Thus, the Mixed Use zoning district regulations prescribed that at least 60 percent of the floor area must be devoted to “office-type” business uses. Accordingly, the zoning district limited retail and/or residential growth to a maximum of 40 percent of the floor area for the development.

Following the approval of the Mixed Use zoning district, the Council approved a Master Plan in 1990 for a mixed use development southeast of the intersection of NC Highway 86 and Interstate 40. The 44.0-acre mixed use development was known as Chapel Hill North. The Master Land Use Plan approval prescribed that a maximum of 374,300 square feet of office-type land uses could be constructed on the site, and a maximum of 259,200 square feet of retail-commercial type land uses could be constructed on the site. Overall, the approved Master Land Use Plan floor area included 59.1 percent office-type business uses, and 40.9 percent retail uses. This deviation from the ordinance-required 60-40 percent ratio was approved through a modification of the requirements of the Development Ordinance in 1990. No residential development was proposed as part of this Master Plan approval.

In 1991, the Council approved a Special Use Permit for Phase I of Chapel Hill North. The Special Use Permit for Phase I (31.5 acres) included a large amount of the retail commercial floor area (approximately 150,000 square feet) and a small portion of the office-type floor area (approximately 106,000 square feet) from the approved Master Plan.

Based on Town records, it appears that approximately 80,000 square feet of office space and 110,000 square feet of retail have been constructed as part of Phase I of Chapel Hill North, at the present time. Thus, the present mixed use development at Chapel Hill North is about 60 percent retail-commercial uses and 40 percent office-type uses.

#### IV. Developer's Program

The developer of the Chapel Hill North Residential Component will be Crosland Development, Inc., a North Carolina developer that is experienced in multifamily residential development, including the affordable housing apartment community known as Dobbins Hill. Subsequent to input from the Community Design Commission and surrounding property owners, Crosland plans to file a Master Land Use Plan Modification application and a Special Use Permit application for this development proposal.

The overall site consists of approximately 12.74 gross acres that are bordered to the west by the Chapel Hill North Shopping Center. Interstate 40 runs along the site's northern border. An undeveloped tract of land, which also has Mixed Use – Office Institutional - I zoning, is located immediately east of the site. Perkins Drive is adjacent to the southwest corner of the site, while Old University Station Road is adjacent to the southeast corner of the site. Two smaller lots, which also are zoned Mixed Use – Office Institutional – I, are located directly south of the subject site. The Timberhill office buildings (which are part of the Chapel Hill North development) are located southwest of this site, on Perkins Road.

The applicant believes that the existing Chapel Hill North mixed use development does not achieve the intended purposes of the Town's Mixed Use zoning districts. In particular, the applicant does not believe that the existing development provides “mutually supporting **residential**, commercial and office uses” that “are scaled, balanced, and located to reduce general traffic congestion by providing housing close to principal destinations.” Furthermore, the applicant does not believe that the existing development provides an arrangement of uses “that encourage walking, transit and bicycling as alternatives to automotive travel.” Accordingly, the applicant believes that the addition of a residential component to the Chapel Hill North Master Plan would be an improvement that would help the overall mixed use development better achieve its originally intended purpose.

The developer's program reflects a context that spreads beyond the limits of the Chapel Hill North mixed use development, however. When one looks at the bigger picture and reflects on the uses surrounding the Chapel Hill North development, it becomes clear that there are many other retail-commercial and office-type uses are located in the immediate vicinity of this subject site. Several of these uses are briefly highlighted as follows:

- **Timberlyne Shopping Center** – with a grocery store, many restaurants, a hardware store, a dry cleaners, a dentist office, a veterinary office, a cinema, banks, and a recently-approved automobile service facility, there are many retail-commercial and service-oriented uses in this center that are in close proximity to the subject site.
- **Movies at Timberlyne** – this large 6-screen movie theater is a major entertainment destination for residents in northern Chapel Hill, and it is within walking distance of the subject site.
- **UNC Office Building**– a University employment center that is located at Kinston Drive & Weaver Dairy Road, there are many employees who commute to this destination. The



subject site could provide local housing for some employees in close proximity to their place of work.

- **The Campus at Vilcom** – this large office development also includes some space for clinical and retail uses. In addition to the original building on the site, a new large office building has been constructed on this site, in close proximity to Weaver Dairy Road and Interstate 40. Two additional office buildings have been approved for this site, but have not yet been constructed. A major employment destination and service center on Weaver Dairy Road, this development is in close proximity to the subject site, and could serve as a place of work and/or a location with necessary services (eye doctors, dentists, physicians, therapists, etc.) for residents who live nearby in Chapel Hill North.

Looking at the context of the Chapel Hill North mixed use development in concert with the other surrounding office and retail uses that are in close proximity to this site, the developer sees an opportunity to provide residences in this location in a manner that would mutually support these nearby commercial and office uses. Specifically, residences in this location would serve to help reduce general traffic congestion by providing housing in close proximity to principal destinations while also serving to encourage walking, transit and bicycling as alternatives to automotive travel.

Thus, in an effort to complement the existing mix of retail and office uses in the Chapel Hill North, and to also complement the surrounding retail and office uses that are in close proximity to this site, the developer is proposing to develop the remaining 12.7 gross acres of the site with multi-family residential uses. The developer is proposing to construct 190 dwelling units in a courtyard-style design that would offer convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to the office and retail components of the Chapel Hill North development, as well as surrounding retail and office uses.

The proposed multi-family development would consist of four-story buildings that would include structured parking on the first floor, and residential dwelling units on the second, third and fourth floors. The various buildings would be strategically laid out to provide views of various courtyard areas that serve to fulfill aesthetic and recreational needs for the community. The development would also be strategically designed to effectively block noise from nearby Interstate 40 through the placement of building masses and introduction of water features (fountains, etc.) throughout the courtyard areas. A smaller clubhouse/recreational building and pool would be located at the southern end of the site.

Of the 633,400 square feet of floor area approved within the Master Plan for Chapel Hill North, approximately 443,000 square feet remains. The proposed residential component would utilize approximately 240,000 square feet of this available floor area.

The developer recognizes that the following steps would be needed in order to gain approval for a residential component at Chapel Hill North:

- Special Use Permit - The developer would need approval of a Special Use Permit for Phase II of the Chapel Hill North development.

- Modification of Master Land Use Plan – The developer would need approval of a modification of the original Master Land Use Plan for the overall Chapel Hill North site (that was approved in 1990). In particular, this Master Land Use Plan approval would again need to include a modification of the regulations to allow office-type land uses to constitute less than 60 percent of the total floor area on the site (as was originally approved in 1990). The developer is proposing a final combination of floor area such that approximately 55 percent of the overall Chapel Hill North development (Phases I and II) would be residential uses, 25 percent would be retail commercial uses, and 20 percent would be office-type uses.

As part of the Conceptual Plan review process, the developer would like specific feedback from the Town Council and the Community Design Commission regarding the fundamental issue of whether or not a residential component of this nature would be a desirable addition to the Chapel Hill North Master Plan.

## V. Statement of Compliance with Town Design Guidelines

From a site development standpoint, the conceptual plan for the Residential Component of Chapel Hill North complies with the Chapel Hill Design Guidelines in the following manner:

- The proposed land use and architectural program is compatible with surrounding land uses in the context of a mixed use development, in terms of both function and scale.
- A significant existing tree mass is proposed to be preserved in the southwest corner of the site, providing both visual interest and natural green space along Perkins Drive.
- A clubhouse and recreational amenity area is provided in a central location and within easy walking distance of all residential units.
- Through a combination of adjoining courtyard spaces, the site design seeks to create a development that is pleasant in character and human in scale.
- The majority of the site is characterized as Prime Buildable (with slopes of less than 10 percent).
- The site is located near an existing mass transit corridor (Airport Road) and has an existing bus stop and shelter on the site's southwest frontage along Perkins Road.
- Structured parking is proposed to reduce impervious surface on the site, and to help screen parking from the view of adjoining properties.
- A sidewalk network is proposed throughout the site to encourage pedestrian circulation within the site, and to facilitate pedestrian access to off-site locations.
- The site's stormwater management areas are located at natural drainage points for the site, without having to force the site's grading otherwise.
- Impervious surfaces on the site are limited to less than 40 percent of the gross acreage of the site.
- All site utilities are underground with the exception of the existing overhead high voltage transmission lines that traverse the site.
- Buildings have been designed and strategically located so that they provide visual interest and create enjoyable, human-scale spaces.
- Buildings have been located and oriented to create aesthetically-pleasing and functionally useful courtyard areas that can be utilized for a variety of purposes.
- Roof design will minimize the negative impact of roof protrusions and will screen any rooftop mechanical and electrical equipment from the view of the public rights-of-way.

- The architectural character of the proposed buildings is intended to harmonize with other buildings that have been built in Chapel Hill.
- Landscaping is proposed to soften building edges and to help structures blend into the natural landscape.

## **VI. Statement of Consistency with the Town's Comprehensive Plan**

This conceptual plan is proposed in accordance with several of the themes discussed in the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The consistency of the conceptual plan with these individual themes is discussed below.

*Theme: Compliance with the Town's Land Use Plan...*

The Town's adopted Land Use Plan, which is a component of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, identifies this site as being appropriate for mixed use development. This conceptual plan seeks to introduce the missing third component (residential uses) to the existing retail/office Chapel Hill North development, creating a true mixed use development, in accordance with adopted Land Use Plan's designation for this site.

*Theme: Encourage mixed-use development forms...*

In the "Land Use and Development" section of the Comprehensive Plan (which includes the adopted Land Use Plan), the Plan expresses the desirability of encouraging mixed-use development. In simple terms, the Plan defines mixed-use development as the combination of several types of activity, "each of which could function independently, but that would benefit from proximity to each other." The Plan also discusses how effective mixed-use developments "create the opportunity to live, work, and shop in the same vicinity." In addition, the Plan recognizes the Chapel Hill North and Timberlyne Shopping Center developments as a "Community Scale Center" on Figure 12, which identifies existing and potential mixed use centers.

By introducing a residential component to the existing Chapel Hill North development (which presently only includes retail and office uses), the conceptual plan seeks to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan by placing residences in close proximity to a variety of surrounding retail and office uses (Chapel Hill North Shopping Center, TimberHill Offices at Chapel Hill North, Timberlyne Shopping Center, Movies at Timberlyne, UNC Office Building, and the Campus at Vilcom). Accordingly, by location and design, the conceptual plan seeking to create homes in a location where people will be able to live, work and shop in the same vicinity, achieving the essence of a mixed use development.

*Theme: Provide housing to allow citizens to live close to their places of employment...*

The Residential Component of Chapel Hill North conceptual plan seeks to provide housing in close proximity to other office and retail uses in the Chapel Hill North mixed use development. The conceptual plan also seeks to provide housing in close proximity to other surrounding office and retail uses such as Timberlyne Shopping Center, Movies at Timberlyne, and the Campus at Vilcom. The proximity of this residential development to several surrounding employment destinations does provide the opportunity for people to choose to live close to their place of employment, and walk or bike to work if they so choose.

*Theme: Create and preserve affordable housing opportunities...*

The Town's Comprehensive Plan places a high priority on the provision of a variety of housing opportunities to accommodate the needs of the Town's diverse population. In particular, the Town has noted that a majority of all new residential construction over the last ten years has consisted of higher end single-family housing. Accordingly, the Comprehensive Plan places a heavy emphasis on the Town's need to encourage the development and provision of affordable housing opportunities, stating that:

“As a general policy, the Town should encourage developers of residential developments of five or more units to 1) provide 15 percent of their units at prices affordable to low and moderate income households, 2) contribute in-lieu fees, or 3) propose alternative methods so that the equivalent of 15 percent of the units will be available to low and moderate income households.”

The Residential Component of Chapel Hill North conceptual plan seeks to increase the number and variety of affordable housing opportunities in Chapel Hill, in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. In particular, the conceptual plan proposes to provide 15 percent of the units as affordable units that will be made available to families earning 80 percent or less of the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill metropolitan statistical area's median income.

*Theme: Work toward a balanced transportation system...*

The Town's Comprehensive Plan discusses that economic development should be designed and located to ensure that it complements the Town's built environment and promotes transit, pedestrian and bicycle usage.

By location and design, the proposed residential development is intended to foster the opportunity for people to live, work and potentially shop in close proximity to their homes. In particular, residents could choose to easily walk or bike to the surrounding retail and office uses (Chapel Hill North Shopping Center, TimberHill Offices at Chapel Hill North, Timberlyne Shopping Center, Movies at Timberlyne, UNC Office Building, and the Campus at Vilcom). Bus service is also readily available on Perkins Drive (an existing bus stop and shelter is located on this site's frontage) and along Weaver Dairy Road.