

COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION

SUMMARY OF CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW

**Meadowmont Village Center – Residential Initiative
December 19, 2001**

OVERVIEW

Prior to submittal of a formal development application, all major development proposals are required to be reviewed while they are still at a “conceptual” stage. In particular, it is the intent of the “Concept Plan” review process that citizens and members of the Community Design Commission have an opportunity to review a site analysis and a conceptual plan in order to evaluate the impact of a major development proposal on the character of the area in which it is proposed to be located. This process is intended to take into consideration the general form of the land before and after development as well as the spatial relationships of the proposed structures, open spaces, landscaped areas, and general access and circulation patterns as they relate to the proposed development and the surrounding area.

BACKGROUND

The Community Design Commission conducted a Concept Plan Review for this potential development on Wednesday, December 19, 2001. The Concept Plan proposes to modify the Meadowmont Master Land Use Plan and the Meadowmont Village Center Special Use Permit.

The Meadowmont development is generally located along NC Highway 54, between the UNC Friday Center and the Oaks neighborhood. The Meadowmont Master Land Use Plan was approved in 1995, and allowed a total of 1,298 dwelling units on the 435-acre site. The Meadowmont Village Center Special Use Permit was approved in 1997, and allowed retail and office floor area, and 24 dwelling units.

The applicant is proposing to relocate 74 approved dwelling units from other portions of the Meadowmont development to the Village Center. This would not represent an increase in the total number of dwelling units (1,298) approved for the overall site.

The site is located in the Mixed Use Residential-1 (MU-R-1), Residential-5-Conditional (R-5-C) and Residential-1 (R-1) zoning districts. The overall site is located in both Orange and Durham Counties. The property is identified as Chapel Hill Township Tax Map 52, Lot 20. This proposal would require Council approval of a Master Land Use Plan Modification and a Special Use Permit Modification application.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON CONCEPT PLAN

There were no citizen comments on the conceptual development plan.

CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW

The Community Design Commission reviewed the conceptual development plan submittal and discussed the following topics:

1. The Commission expressed support for the proposed addition of residential units to the Village Center. One Commission member encouraged the applicant to add even more residential units to the Village Center.
2. Several of the Commission members noted that innovative architecture and quality building materials would play a key role in the success of this proposal, particularly with regard to the appearance of Buildings A and K from NC Highway 54.
3. One Commission member recommended that Building K include a variety of facade materials. Another Commission member noted that the appearance of this building was very important because it would define the western edge of the Village Center.
4. The Commission concurred that Building A must be an “architectural gem.” Several Commission members encouraged the applicant to develop this building on all four facades, and develop an anchor building at this corner which is visually interesting 24 hours a day. One Commission member noted that the current appearance at this corner is “institutional” in nature, and that additional diversity and variety (particularly with regard to height), would be desirable.
5. One Commission member expressed concern about truck access to Building K.

Prepared by: Weezie Oldenburg, Chair, Community Design Commission
Rob Wilson, Staff

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PARKING SUMMARY
S.U.P. APPROVED MAXIMUM - 107 SPACES
PROPOSED S.U.P. MODIFIED MAXIMUM - 107 SPACES
TOTAL PARKING PROPOSED - 107 SPACES

DRIVE ENTRY INTO LOWER LEVEL STRUCTURED PARKING

REFUSE AREA TO BE EXPANDED

ADD BUILDING 10'
48 RESIDENTIAL UNITS ON 8 FLOORS, 5700 SF OF RETAIL AND STRUCTURED PARKING FOR 200 CARS/ SURFACE PARKING FOR 200 CARS
In place of current approved SURFACE PARKING FOR 200 CARS

DRIVEWAY ENTRY INTO UPPER LEVEL STRUCTURED PARKING

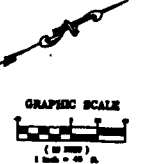
BARRE CHAPEL ROAD EXTENSION

MODIFY BUILDING 1A'
SUBSTITUTE 20 RESIDENTIAL UNITS ON 8 FLOORS, 5700 SF OF RETAIL COVERED PARKING FOR 20 CARS/ SURFACE PARKING FOR 20 CARS
In place of current approved 4000 SF OF RETAIL SPACE (2200 SF RELOCATED TO BUILDING 10) AND SURFACE PARKING FOR 40 CARS

MODIFY BUILDING 7'
DISCONTINUE BUILDING 7A FROM 5700 SF TO 1700 SF
4000 SF RELOCATED TO BUILDING 10

MEADOWMONT LANE

12/19/01 CONCEPT PLAN



SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION CONCEPT PLAN PROPOSAL COMMENTS

Subject: Meadowmont Village Center Special Use Permit - Concept Plan Proposal

Meeting Date: September 17, 2003

Recommendation: That the comments of the Commission be forwarded to the applicant and the Town Council.

Vote: Unanimous to forward comments by members present: Richard Barrett, George Cianciolo, Dale Coker, Chris Culbreth, Terry Eason, Thatcher Freund, Laura King Moore, Scott Nilsen, Charlotte Newby (Vice Chair), Amy Ryan, Polly Van de Velde.

Commission member comments:

DESIGN

General Comments:

1. A Commissioner member stated that the project would be more viable if the applicant would replace residential floor area with retail space on the first floor.
2. A citizen questioned where the affordable units would be located within the proposed residential development. A particular concern is with the architectural appearance of the affordable units, especially if such units were to be located near a major entranceway into the Village Center.
3. In response to the applicant's answer that the applicant is not considering the affordable units as "family" units, and therefore limiting the number of bedrooms, it was recommend that the applicant provide some affordable units with 3 bedrooms in order to accommodate families with children.

Building A (adjacent to Meadowmont Lane near NC 54 buffer):

4. Noting that Building A is adjacent to the future transit corridor, and that the Design Commission previously recommended a buffer between the corridor and the Orange Community Housing project near the Meadowmont Harris Teeter, the Commission recommended that applicant relocate Building A an appropriate distance away from the transit corridor.
5. Another Commission member suggested that the parking area for Building A be relocated away from the NC 54 Entranceway corridor. A particular concern was with the visual impact of the parking area from NC 54. The Commissioner recommended that the parking lot be relocated to the north side of the building along the internal Village Center street or to an underground parking lot.

6. One Commission Member expressed disappointment that the proposal for Building A does not include a retail component as shown with the concept plan proposal presented to the Community Design Commission in 2001. It was noted that the inclusion of a retail component would increase “energy” in this portion of the Village Center and would encourage public interaction across the Village Center and from the meadow area. It was also stated that for the vitality of the village it is important to have some type of public use at this end of the development.

Building K (adjacent to main meadow and Barbee Chapel Rd):

7. Several Commission members expressed concern with the extensive parking area (existing) east of the proposed building. It was suggested that the applicant attempt to accommodate more of the parking needs architecturally (below ground and/or parking deck).
8. In response to several concerns about the close proximity of the building to the parking lot and the lack of landscaping, the applicant stated that one undesirable option would be to relocate the building further west and remove a portion of the existing tree buffer between the Village Center and the main meadow.
9. It was noted by a Commission member that the proposed building would provide a visual buffer between the existing parking lot and the main meadow.
10. One Commission member noted an awkward building corner near Barbee Chapel Road, and recommended that the applicant redesign this portion of the building so it does not “stick out” toward the nearby residential dwellings across the street.

ELEVATIONS

General Comments:

11. Most Commission members voiced general support for the proposed building elevations, however some expressed concern that Buildings A and K need to be designed with “entryway details” on multiple facades.

Building K (adjacent to main meadow and Barbee Chapel Rd):

12. A Commission Member noted that it would be preferred to relocate the long side of Building K along Barbee Chapel Road. It was also suggested that facade of the building proposed along Barbee Chapel Hill Road should include entryway details similar to the front facade of the building.
13. Noting that a portion of the parking for Building K is proposed under the building, and that this parking structure may be visible from the main meadow during the winter months, a Commission Member recommended that the applicant investigate potential screening options. It was suggested that the applicant consider a trellis along the front of the parking structure to visually break up the parking facility.

14. It was recommended that the applicant vary building heights between Building K1 and K2. It was noted that the tops of the buildings look very similar.

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

Building K (adjacent to main meadow and Barbee Chapel Rd):

15. A majority of Commission Members expressed concerns with the proposed pedestrian circulation between the building and the Village Center retail area. In particular the Commission noted the lack of landscaping or buffers adjacent to the proposed central pedestrian walkway across the parking lot. The Commission recommended that the applicant incorporate a stronger pedestrian network system to the Village Center. It was also suggested that the applicant consider a redesign that eliminates the refuse dumpster adjacent to the main pedestrian path in the center of the parking lot.
16. A second issue concerning pedestrian access involved the vehicular driveway into the underground parking area under Building K. Located along the east façade of the building, near the center of the building, it was noted that this main entrance into the parking area bisects a main pedestrian walkway in front of the building. Concerns were also expressed with the steep ramp coming up out of the parking garage and intersecting with the pedestrian path. In general terms this area of the proposal was described by the Commission as not pedestrian friendly.

LANDSCAPING

Building K (adjacent to main meadow and Barbee Chapel Rd):

17. Commission Members recommended that the applicant provide more landscaping in the parking lot between the building and the retail center. In addition to more landscaping and less parking, it was also suggested that additional landscaping be incorporated into the proposed pedestrian network connecting the building to the retail center.

STORMWATER

18. A concern was stated with the proposed increase in impervious surface area. It was suggested that the handling of additional runoff could be accommodated by incorporating a synthetic wetland into the meadow pond.

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

19. A citizen expressed a concern with the potential for increased traffic generated by the proposed 82 additional residential units.

Prepared by: Charlotte Newby (Vice-Chair)
Gene Poveromo, Staff