

Design Review and Comments

Longfellow: Chapel Hill Life Science Development

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Summary of Applicant Meetings and the Review Process

- Numerous design meetings have been held with the applicant over the course of the project. The most recent occurred on October 10, 2023. These comments are based upon drawings and images that were submitted for the Planning Commission review (10-17-23).
- There have been substantial design changes since the previous submittal and review, including the acquisition of an additional property along W. Franklin Street, which allows for several design modifications and improvements as noted in the comments below.

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1. The building is now a singular "L" shaped mass. The parking has been relocated and occurs under the building, instead of in a structure along W. Rosemary Street. The building is also one story lower than before, with the top of the building being roughly equal to the building height of 140 W. Franklin. Both modifications are significant improvements to the design.
2. A more significant public green space/plaza is now proposed along Franklin Street. This new location and configuration will be much better at activating the W. Franklin Street pedestrian frontage and will make for an effective terminal view from Mallette Street. In addition, a small green space, a new element of the plan, is proposed along W. Rosemary Street, which could be utilized to incorporate elements of an accessible route for the pedestrian through-block connection.
3. In the current design, the through-block pedestrian connection consists of walking through or along the two green spaces, which should feel much more spacious than the previous concept of the mid-block connection cutting straight between two building masses.
4. Consider green infrastructure approaches, as feasible, for the two green spaces.
5. An activated edge is proposed along the ground floor for the entire Z-shaped frontage along the W. Franklin plaza and W. Rosemary green. Most of this frontage includes a set back building edge under an arcade, offering a weather-protected zone for either outdoor seating or pedestrian circulation.
6. The building massing along both W. Franklin and W. Rosemary features lower elements along the street edge with setbacks to higher elements behind and above, which is an appropriate massing relationship to the general existing context.
7. The location of the building perimeter edge along W. Rosemary St. has been pulled back from its previous location, giving more room for pedestrian accommodation and comfort along the Rosemary frontage.
8. The ground floor building façade along W. Rosemary should provide an activated pedestrian edge, even if there is no retail space there, possibly utilizing displays of art, or visual elements related to the history and culture of the Northside neighborhood.
9. The entrance to the parking garage is at the west end of the building along W. Rosemary. It is only an entrance/exit; no service functions will occur here, as building servicing is provided in a mid-block service court. The garage entrance along W. Rosemary should be designed to be compatible with the architectural character of other building components. Consider providing an audio alert system for exiting vehicles to enhance pedestrian safety.
10. Articulate the top floor of the building to enhance a sense of transition and termination to the building façade.