Maddry Meadows
Urban Designer Comments 04-10-25
Submitted by Brian Peterson, AIA, Urban Designer, Town of Chapel Hill

The following comments are in reference to plans and elevations dated 02-17-25. Several meetings have been held with the applicant team during the design process.

Site Plan

1. The building site is challenging, as a good portion is not developable. The building is placed so that the "front" is located near the street frontage, with the building entrance visible from the site entrance, and the street. Admirably, an existing tree is to be preserved near Homestead Road at the front of the site. As noted on the Landscape Protection Plan, several other trees have been identified for tree protection efforts, pending further study.

2. The parking area consists of relatively small groupings of parking, arranged in a triangular form. There is a triangular shaped open area in the middle, which could be considered for a special landscape feature, or some kind of visual element, such as site art, for example.

3. Parking has been kept back away from the long side of the building, which allows a lawn space between the building edge and the drive area. During an initial meeting with the applicant, it was suggested to place some trees in this lawn space to provide shade and to veil views of the parking area from inside the apartments-this suggestion has been incorporated in the current plans.

4. The SCM pond has the potential to be a pleasant amenity to be viewed from the apartments. Consider a planting strategy along the pond edges to enhance this effect.

5. The proposed trail along the edge of the stream/RCD area provides a link to Homestead Road (with the Seymour Center across the street). Consider ways to connect this trail to the trail being built to the north, as part of the Stanat's Place development.

Building Massing and Articulation

6. The building features a linear plan organization and is arranged as a "head and tail" composition with the "head" up front along Homestead and includes a clearly articulated building entrance. This massing element is broken down into smaller house-like units with a subtle vertical emphasis, which helps reduce the scale along the Homestead Road frontage.

7. The "tail" is angled slightly away from the front of the building, which is helpful in visually reducing the impact of the length of this mass.

8. Previous discussions with the applicant team identified potential strategies to help articulate this mass to help break down the scale along the length: this iteration of the elevations includes some of these suggestions. Ideally, the façade would have physical breaks (such as vertical module setbacks), but cost implications may limit the feasibility of that method for this project. The articulation is employing other strategies to address this aim:

    a. An asymmetrical roof line, with off-center gables provides some visual interest and helps to establish vertical modules along the façade. A regular series of downspouts correspond with the gable modules and serve to reinforce the definition of verticality.
    b. Windows aligned under the peak of the gables have been grouped into vertical bands by differentiating the spandrel panel (the area between the 2nd and 3rd floor windows) to provide a secondary vertical rhythm in the articulation.

9. Color changes on portions of the building also assist in enhancing scale in the articulation, as does the inclusion of a masonry base element, which helps "ground" the building while providing a base/middle/top reading to the overall mass.