

Old Chapel Hill Road Apartments
Urban Designer Comments 03/27/25

Submitted by Brian Peterson, AIA, Urban Designer, Town of Chapel Hill

The following comments are in reference to the site plan (C2.0). Several meetings have been held with the applicant team during project development. Discussions regarding the architectural design have not yet taken place. Accordingly, the following comments pertain to site development, and the means of connectivity to other proposed developments in the adjoining areas.

1. The buildings are addressing all of the primary pedestrian frontages in a positive manner. Building are brought up to the street edge, well-defining the street corridor, with most buildings having individual unit entries and sidewalks along the frontages.
2. There is a mix of multifamily apartment buildings and townhouses, which provides some architectural massing variation and unit type variety. The townhouses are situated in a manner that scales down in massing from the multifamily buildings along White Oak Drive, to the neighboring East Lakeview project, and to the open space corridor and park areas.
3. The applicant has coordinated with the East Lakeview and Chapel Hill Crossing team to provide vehicular connections between the projects, which was a feature outlined on the Parkline East Village Development Framework Diagram.
4. Other features of the site plan that are reflective of concepts indicated on the Parkline Framework include the engagement of the stream corridor/RCD areas into a community amenity area and extending a greenway trail through the project area that connects to similar trails on the Meridian Gateway site, and Chapel Hill Crossing. This corridor has the potential to become the central focus for the neighborhood, to be extended west into the Parkline site, if further redevelopment occurs in that location.
5. The site plan indicates sidewalk connections from the dog park areas, northward to the greenway being provided as part of the Meridian Gateway project, enhancing pedestrian connectivity between the developments. Sidewalk connections should also be considered, where feasible, between the White Oak project and the East Lakeview development as well.
6. While it cannot be confirmed as of this writing, the massing of Building 1 should employ a height or articulation strategy to make a transition to reduce scale along Old Chapel Hill Road, in a manner comparable to that of the neighboring Chapel Hill Crossing multifamily building. In addition, the height and massing of Building 4 should balance with and relate to the street wall established across the street at Building 1, so these two building can effectively create “bookends” and help establish a gateway effect where White Oak Drive meets Old Chapel Hill Road.
7. Consider an architectural treatment at the northwest corner of Parking Deck 2, such as a tower, or other focal element or material to mark and address the visual prominence of that part of the garage, especially since this corner will be highly visible as one looks to the west down the main street (“Street A”) of the Meridian Gateway project.
8. Consider preserving some existing trees in the areas where the dog parks are located, to provide some shade and cover for the open areas.