

SUMMARY OF A CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW
125 East Rosemary-Parking Structure
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION

April 2nd, 2020

The Community Design Commission conducted a concept plan review for 125 East Rosemary Parking Structure at a virtual meeting on April 2nd, 2020. The project proposes a new parking structure replace the current parking deck and gravel lots. Key points made by members of the Commission about the concept plan are listed below.

- Multiple commissioners expressed the desire for the applicant to provide more information on the surrounding site context and how the project relates to it.
- Multiple commissioners were concerned that the Commission was asked to review only a portion of the overall project in piecemeal fashion. One member stated a concern that the design of the lab/office building is informing the design of the parking deck.
- Multiple commissioners encouraged the applicant to provide maps of the local and National Register historic districts and to review the historic district standards and how those could shape the design of the proposed structure. The impact of the project on the local and National Register districts is a concern.
- Multiple commissioners were concerned about the building height, massing, and footprint, and its effect on the adjoining residential neighborhoods of North Street and Cobb Terrace. A solid north-facing wall was a concern. In addition, the sheer size of the 320-foot façade along Rosemary Street will have a very substantial impact and does not provide a human scale environment. More information needs to be provided about the height of the building as seen from adjoining residential areas.
- Multiple commissioners expressed the desire to see more underground parking to reduce the footprint and height of the building
- Multiple commissioners wanted to see additional building articulation, asymmetry, and detailing in the façade, both vertical and in the elevation plans, to create interest and break up the mass of the long facade. Multiple commissioners supported the applicant reviewing the skin of the structure to add some play to the façade.
- Multiple commissioners expressed a desire to see public art included in the project. Members wondered how the existing murals might be protected. A member asked if there a way to make sure there would be a mural on the west wall facing Columbia Street.

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- Multiple commissioners were intrigued about the idea of a pop-up retail porch but were concerned the potential for it being ‘dead’ space. Commissioners suggested a need for active programming of the space.
- Commissioners also noted the design of the pop-up space needed more attention, particularly the view of the car ramp on the inside wall, and the need to mitigate heat from the south-facing orientation. The space needed to be welcoming, inviting, and broken up into smaller spaces.
- Multiple commissioners wanted to see more greenery on and around the structure. They supported the idea of green trellises on both the front and rear of the deck. A commissioner mentioned reviewing and keeping trees of value on site.
- Multiple commissioners felt the project would not create a pedestrian-oriented environment along Rosemary Street.
- Multiple commissioners supported addressing the need for additional parking downtown.
- Two commissioners referenced the Green Square parking structure in Raleigh as a good example of interesting architecture that could be used here to break up the facade.
- One commissioner was concerned that the 90-foot high corner pedestrian ingress/egress towers at the edges of the project negatively impact the North Street neighborhood and would direct foot traffic away from the retail porch. A pedestrian access should be placed in the middle of the site.
- A commissioner suggested using a step back provision like that in the Northside Conservation District on West Rosemary Street as a guide to designing the how the deck interfaces with the adjacent residential neighborhood on North Street.
- One commissioner expressed a desire to keep a pedestrian bridge over Rosemary Street; another commissioner expressed a desire to remove the current pedestrian bridge that exist over Rosemary Street so that there would be more foot traffic at the street level.
- One commissioner recommended that there be adequate opportunities for additional public comment on this project to engage the community.

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- One commissioner supported the placement of PV solar arrays on the roof and the reduction in impervious surface.
- One commissioner supported replacing the current structure with a like use.
- One commissioner suggested a taller façade on Rosemary, with a lower façade on the north side facing the residential neighborhood.
- One commissioner felt the deck design was being influenced by the current 136 Rosemary building, and questioned that direction.
- One member requested a breakdown of the components of the 1100 parking spaces, and wanted to learn how that number was determined.
- One commissioner expressed the belief that the Wallace Deck did a great job of engaging the pedestrian, and its scale and articulation would be useful to study for this project.
- One commissioner suggested the sketch provided of the future view from the Porthole Alley as the grand entrance to downtown for visitors is an important piece of the overall context.