

April 12, 2022

Judy Johnson
Town of Chapel Hill Planning Department
405 Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

Re: 710 N Estes Drive Modifications to Regulations

Due to site constraints and peculiarities of the Land Use Management Ordinance, modifications to required standards are necessary to create a townhome and multi-family development that meets the Town’s vision and intent for such developments. The requested modifications are necessary to allow for a cohesive and well-designed project that achieves the goals of the Chapel Hill Comprehensive Plan. Modifications include floor area ratio, buffers, and steep slopes.

FLOOR AREA RATIO

Permitted FAR (maximum): .303

Proposed FAR (maximum): .615

The Land Use Management Ordinance Article 3.8.2 sets forth floor area requirements for the 710 N Estes development.

Under the proposed R-5 zoning district, the maximum floor area ratio is 0.303. This equates to roughly 106,445 square feet of allowed floor area. Lock7 intends to have a mix of one-, two-, three-, and four-bedroom units with a variety of square footages to meet the needs of a wider range of home buyers. Unit sizes will range from roughly 1,000 square feet to 2,500 square feet to provide multiple price points for a large buyer pool. Consequently, to provide this wide range of different product types, a larger FAR is requested. The Future Land Use Map and Central West Small Area Plan call for multifamily development of three and four stories, and in order to fulfill the designated land use, a higher FAR is warranted.

The applicant is proposing an increased floor area ratio of .615 to allow for a variety of townhomes, 2 over 2 stacked products, and triplexes in the development.

BUFFERS

The Land use Management Ordinance Article 5.6.6 and Design Manual Section 3.1 sets forth perimeter buffer requirements for the 710 N Estes Development. The following modifications to required perimeter buffers are proposed. Please see site plan associated with the CZP for the specific modifications.

LOCATION OF REQUIRED BUFFER	REQUIRED BUFFER	PROPOSED BUFFER
Northern Buffer	10' Type B	10' Type C
Southern Buffer	30' Type D	10' Type A
Eastern Buffer	20' Type C	10'-20' Type C
Western Buffer	15' Type B	0'-10' Modified Type*

*Please refer to CZP Plan Set for buffer details

With the desired form and density on this parcel, reduced and modified buffers on the southern and western sides of the project will contribute to the urban streetscape and provide a cohesive transition to the neighboring Aura project. The intention is to provide a more continuous streetscape transition along Estes Dr from Aura to the 710 N Estes project. Additionally, a modified buffer is proposed between the two projects to allow for enhanced connectivity and provide a greater sense of walkability. While it is difficult to quantify the exact type of buffer in the chart above given the varied width, the CZP plan set may be referenced for details of the proposed buffers.

While the southern and western buffer are requested to be reduced, the project proposes an enhanced buffer along the northern property line in response to neighbor concerns. Increased opacity and number of plantings will create greater separation between the two neighborhoods and preserve trees along the northern boundary.

STEEP SLOPES

Permitted Steep Slopes Disturbance: No more than 25% of slopes greater than 25% may be disturbed.

Proposed Steep Slopes Disturbance: No more than 90% of slopes greater than 25% may be disturbed.

The site contains a minimal amount (1,328 SF) of natural slopes over 25% in the center of the property and in the stream buffer. To grade the site for the development of infrastructure and buildings pads, the existing slopes in the center of the property must be modified. On the 7.3 acre property, the total proposed disturbance of natural slopes over 25% is 1,194 SF. Although this amount is small, it accounts for roughly 90% of the total. Steep slopes in the stream buffer will not be disturbed. Erosion control measures will meet or exceed requirements per the approved plan throughout the length of construction.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the requested modifications remain in the spirit of the goals of Chapel Hill and align with the future land use of the Comprehensive Plan. As noted above, providing density on this site requires modifications to the R-5 zoning district, including increasing floor area ratio permitted, reducing buffers to align with the adjacent Aura development, and increasing steep slope disturbance permitted given the challenging topography of the site.

Thank you for your consideration of these requested modifications for the R-5 zoning district as a part of the 710 N Estes CZP application.

Sincerely,

MCADAMS



Jessie Hardesty
Planner II, Planning + Design