

CONCEPT PLAN COMMENTS  
PORTHOLE ALLEY  
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION

April 26, 2022

The Community Design Commission conducted a Concept Plan review for UNC Porthole Alley Redevelopment at their meeting on April 26, 2022.

*Below is a summary of comments made by members of the Commission about the Concept Plan*

- The proposed massing variation does a good job of creating visual interest. However, the three-story portion may make building appear 'squatty' on Franklin St. Consider more vertical articulation and possible greater height to address that issue.
- The building massing could also do more to invite movement through the site.
- The replacement of the western building is an opportunity to make the alley less narrow, particularly at the Franklin St entry. Consider ways to 'erode' the building and create more outdoor space.
- There was concern that the bridges create a missed opportunity for more street life. Determine whether the bridges between buildings are really necessary for the project budget.
- Consider design elements that invite the public into campus. This should start with a street presentation that welcomes all people who want to connect with the university, perhaps with displays and other glimpses of interior programming. Continue the approach with 'bits of activity' or an 'unfolding experience' along the alley.
- Consider bringing the proposed porch experience onto Franklin Street.
- Consider a gateway feature, similar to Post Office Alley.
- The narrowness of the alley could create a tunnel-like feeling. Measures like those listed above are needed to counteract the width and make the space inviting. Architecture is part of the solution.
- Consider moving the stairwell on the rear of the Hill building into the interior.
- The architecture of the new buildings should respect Franklin Street's character, but not try to recreate history.
- There was concern about having a purely modern structure as opposed to more historic rehab with dynamic uses.