

## **Columbia/Rosemary Hotel**

**Design Discussion: 5/10/22**

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

*Note:* Some of the comments below may not be manifested in current development drawings and may appear in subsequent design iterations.

### **Site Plan (drawings dated 04-28-21)**

1. Suggested extending brick pavers across the service drive to create a more defined crosswalk along Columbia. This also allows the new paving to extend to the existing brick paving along the east side of the Old Town Hall. Similarly, suggest doing the same to create a crosswalk across the parking access drive on the north side of the hotel.
2. Consider widening the brick sidewalk along Columbia on the east side of the hotel and look at what the best balance is between landscaping and paving in this location. Brick paving and landscape improvements could potentially extend north from here as part of future streetscape enhancements.
3. Revise the diagonal pathway across the hotel fire lane to be more implied, consider providing a brick sidewalk behind the Old Town Hall to complete a brick sidewalk network around the building.
4. In consultation with fire and traffic personnel, investigate if the designated fire lane asphalt drive can be narrowed somewhat provided the paved sidewalk can be considered part of the fire apparatus access area.
5. Benches originally proposed along the sidewalk on the east façade to be replaced by stone or brick walls to create a more integrated landscape.

### **Building Design (drawings dated 05-07-21)**

6. East Elevation along Columbia sidewalk: Continued discussions on how to activate this façade for pedestrians and passersby. Per previous discussions a lower zone has been established that blends the building wall with landscape features to help break down the scale of the façade at the pedestrian level. The lower portion now incorporates Chapel Hill stone (continues the theme of the stone walls utilized in the small park space) and the upper portion to serve as a “canvas” for art. The current images depict a large singular wall surface: The upper wall should be further broken down and articulated in a manner that integrates the eventual art piece(s). Options for the art are under discussion, including a potential “kinetic” theme. The artwork should wrap around the NE corner to extend over the wall surface above the parking garage exit, as that corner of the building is a critical design element, and is highly visible as one approaches from the north by foot or car.
7. This corner of the building could further be enhanced by a special architectural feature. Discussed adding a pergola structure to sit across the brick columns above the garage exit. Also discussed changing the brick columns on the corner of the building to stone, to add more visual interest.
8. Trees are being considered along the east façade, they will need to be carefully integrated with the artwork so as not to block views.
9. As an additional means to increase activation, suggested providing a small space at the SE corner of the garage that could be a place for an activity that would be noticeable and interesting to view driving or walking by along the Columbia frontage. For example, suggested a kind of “pop up” or maker space for artists, perhaps on a rotating basis. As in examples elsewhere, the artist/craftsperson may have regular hours working there where people can stop in and see what’s going on and talk to the artist, while at other times, the work in the space is visually interesting on its own. This space could be expressed as a glass area on the SE corner of the building, including a portion of the east façade, with a door into the space from the courtyard side.

10. Building design along Rosemary: Vertical bays have been incorporated at widow openings, as suggested before, to add a sense of verticality. Generally, the building articulation should stress verticality over horizontality, with horizontal expression utilized as a balance to the vertical.
11. Discussed increasing the amount of glass at the first floor along the Rosemary frontage and around the corner along the entrance drive, to help activate the pedestrian experience.
12. Consider reinstating “pergola” like overhangs for roof terraces and at other canopy locations.
13. The “frame” massing element that extends to the top of the building and denotes the main building entrance from the courtyard seems a bit out of scale with the rest of the building. Consider breaking it down with more articulation (joint lines, smaller panel sizes, projecting cornice/”cap” feature, etc.). The same concern for scale could be said for the expanse of glass in the middle. It is a rather large area of glass compared to the articulation of the rest of the building.