

607-617 MLK Affordable Apartments

Urban Designer Comments 03/06/25

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

The following comments are in reference to the site plan (11-11-24) and massing elevations (12-18-24). A meeting has not yet been held with the applicant to discuss the current submittal, or architectural details.

1. The site design along the MLK frontage should provide elements to add interest to the pedestrian experience by utilizing landscape elements such as a terracing strategy, which could allow for seat walls and stepped planter areas, including street trees, rather than a sloping lawn condition.
2. The elevations seem to indicate a massing strategy that includes projecting elements at the ends of the buildings, which can help to break up the massing. Suggest further breaking up the elevation expanses in between these corners with vertical articulation, such as grouped vertical balconies.
3. Consider opening one of the interior courtyards out to the MLK frontage, to further help break up the massing.
4. Any portion of parking levels that become visible as the building emerges from the sloping site should be treated as integral to the rest of the architectural expression.
5. Consider providing retail or tenant related amenities along the MLK sidewalk level, or near the main building entrance(s), to help provide activation along the MLK frontage.