

CONCEPT PLAN COMMENTS  
The Flats  
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION

February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

The Community Design Commission conducted a Concept Plan review for The Flats on MLK Jr. Blvd near Stephens Street at a meeting on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. The project proposes an apartment building with around 200 units and 600-650 beds.

*\*Key points made by members of the Commission about the Concept Plan are listed below.*

- Multiple Commissioners voiced concern about the height of the building, which would cast shadow on townhomes to the north, and be out of character with the surrounding residential areas..
- Multiple Commissioners voiced concern about the size of the building footprint (400 feet), which would be out of character with its residential surroundings. One Commissioner noted that for comparison, the building is longer than what is allowed in the Blue Hill District.
- Multiple Commissioners voiced concern about the large building setback on MLK Jr Blvd., and how that could lead to a more suburban feel. Commissioners encouraged designing the ground floor to engage the public realm, activate the street, and promote pedestrian activity. The use of stoops and techniques shown in the applicant's precedent images were noted as a good approaches.
- Multiple Commissioners advised the applicant design a building which transitions to the adjoining single-family neighborhoods on all the sides... Commissioners felt that having buildings that fit with the topography and stepping down in height, would be a better approach than using a landscape buffer. They advised the applicant to pay close attention to how the building feels from the back, and there was interest in seeing a street level view of the proposed building from Stinson and Isley Streets to better understand its visual impact.
- Multiple Commissioners also noted the potential for traffic impacts on Stinson and Isley Streets, since the streets provide access to the parking deck. One Commissioner felt the developer should be responsible for paving Stinson Street, improving Isley Street, and extending a sidewalks to N Columbia St in an area with lots of pedestrian activity
- Multiple Commissioners expressed interest in opportunities to reduce the size of the parking deck.
- One Commissioner voiced concern about traffic conflicts from left turns out of the parking deck onto MLK Jr Blvd.

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- One Commissioner felt the pedestrian connector needed more thought. The applicant should avoid having it become a dark alley down the side of the building.
- One Commissioner expressed interest in seeing the existing homes retained or moved, since they contribute to the historic character of this older section of Chapel Hill.