

COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
CONDITIONAL ZONING COMMENTS
- Starpoint Refuel Center -

January 24, 2023

The Community Design Commission (“CDC”) conducted a review of the Conditional Zoning application for the Starpoint Refuel Center at their meeting on January 24, 2023. With the consent of the Town Planning Department, the Conditional Zoning application was submitted to the CDC prior to the conclusion of staff technical review. The CDC has significant concerns regarding the design of the proposed project. However, rather than recommending that the Town Council deny the proposed project, the CDC chose to share comments with the applicant, the Planning Commission and the Town Council. The CDC will request that the Planning Commission review their comments and consider the extent to which they are addressed by the applicant. Below is a summary of comments made and concerns of the Commission:

1. Located at the southernmost point of Chapel Hill, the project site sits at a significant gateway to the Town as well as the more rural area via Smith Level Road to the west. Any development on this site should be designed with a level of architectural quality and interest that reflects the site’s prominent location and that is sensitive to the context of surrounding properties. As presented to the CDC, the proposed project does not meet this expectation. The applicant should consider improvements to the building design that (1) provides visual interest to the east, west, and south faces; (2) includes sloping roof forms; (3) includes visually open facades; and (4) incorporates materials that reflect the visual character of Chapel Hill.
2. The retaining wall to the southwest of the proposed building should be reduced in height or eliminated. The applicant should consider a modified grading plan for the site that reduces the need for the proposed retaining wall and ramp along the front of the property. This would provide much more flexibility for appropriately siting the improvements on the land related to this prominent corner. Regardless of the height of the retaining wall, the applicant should also consider options for reducing the wall’s visual impact by considering other façade materials for the wall such as brick and by adding mature landscape materials.
3. Sidewalks should be added to the site in order to accommodate future growth in the area.
4. Electric vehicle charging stations should be installed on the site.