

Rosemary Columbia Hotel

Responses to Council Questions 6-22-2021

- Can the presentation please include which recommendations from our urban designer have been incorporated into the latest design?
[See next page – we have incorporated almost all recommendations.](#)
- On what part of the site is the applicant proposing to exceed 25 percent of the area containing 25 percent or greater slopes?
[The 25% slopes are basically along existing property lines. As each lot has been developed into parking areas, the main part of the parcel has been terraced, resulting in steep slopes of 3-6' tall between each lot. These steep slopes are all man made. The disturbance of the steep slopes is required to combine the entire project area into a single plane for development.](#)

- To what height would the hotel step down to at the north and north-west corners of the building in the transition zone to the adjacent residential uses of Northside neighborhood?
[The northwest corner steps down one floor to break up the massing of the building at that corner.](#)

- Is there some kind of visual we can get of the proposed building, illustrating its height and distance, relative to the adjacent Northside neighborhood homes?

[This image will be included and described in the presentation at the Public Hearing. The hotel is 5-6 stories in that area \(due to the ground falling away\). The nearest home is on the parcel currently owned by the developer and is 40' from the hotel building. The next nearest home is north of that and will be seeing the step down area at the building corner. It is 60' away from the hotel building and the view of the hotel from that home is toward the corner, not a full façade view.](#)

- What does our Urban Designer think of the proposed modification to the LUMO regulations to allow higher heights adjacent to the Northside Neighborhood Conservation District and the proposed transition zone?

[We did not discuss height issues in our various meetings but I have reached out to Brian subsequently to ask that specific question. He noted that the height can be increased but there should be a stepdown in height at the NW corner to reduce mass. This is what the architect has proposed.](#)



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.

These changes have been made and are illustrated on the site plans.

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.

These brick areas have been added and are shown on the site plans.

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.

These changes have been incorporated and are shown on the site plans.

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.

After discussions with the fire department and with NC DOT, that restricted access drive has been narrowed.

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. We have removed the sidewalk extensions and benches on this façade.

The general feeling by Brian and also by others is that it won't be a hospitable place to sit, and that it would be better to funnel pedestrians toward the park. Shrubs and small trees have been added in this space instead to improve the pedestrian experience along the east side of the building and to soften the transition between the sidewalk and building. As we go through final design and grading work, we will investigate how to add a few small stone retaining walls to create a terraced experience and pull the stone material into the 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.

These elements have been incorporated in concept. The architectural elements in this space will be further developed as the art is selected to ensure that the art and architecture complement each other. It is expected that discussions with the Urban Designer will continue through the ZCP and design development process.

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.

Design and treatment of the garage exit continues to be developed. Narrowing the exit, adding a canopy, and adding brick columns are all still being considered and will also take into account the public art expected to be incorporated at this corner.

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.
Trees proposed to date will be understory/low maturing. Final selection and placement will depend on the artwork chosen.
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.
Currently the removal of structured parking spaces is not feasible, but the incorporation of the small space at the SE corner of the building will continue to be considered through the design development.
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.
The architect believes this is the direction the design has taken.
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.
The glass area has been increased at the Rosemary frontage and along the entry drive.
12. Consider reinstating “pergola” like overhangs for roof terraces and at other canopy locations.
These overhangs have been incorporated to some extent to date, and consideration will be made to incorporate more canopy type space as the design evolves through ZCP.
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.
This entry area is the hotel brand space. The architect continues to work to incorporate these desired architectural elements and balance them with the brand elements acceptable to the hotel.