

COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
CONCEPT PLAN COMMENTS
- Aura South Elliott -

February 28, 2023

The Community Design Commission conducted a review of the Concept Plan application for the Aura South Elliott project at their meeting on February 28, 2023.

Comments made by members of the Commission are summarized below:

1. An initial comment was made that the proposed residential structure and parking deck of 5 to 6 stories and 400 feet in length facing Elliott Street was unlikely to be an asset to the area or be an improvement on the already completed projects of the Berkshire and the Elliott.
2. If this massing is pursued, wherever possible, the building should include additional design elements to break up its perceived mass. The form of the building(s) should not be based on the property lines and their setbacks. Rather, the form should take account of the natural landscape, site constraints and connections to the surrounding uses.
3. The site should include more pedestrian connections to surrounding retail.
4. The applicant should consider including ground-floor retail or other uses which contribute to an activated street frontage.
5. Given the site's proximity, the applicant should consider how the proposed building will be perceived from Franklin Street.
6. Because it is well-served by transit, the site should minimize parking and add additional housing.
7. Stormwater runoff will be an issue and needs to be addressed as the project moves forward. In particular the building(s) should be separated, or bridge over, the park to allow the water to more easily flow and to allow pedestrians access to the park.
8. A final comment addressed the incompatibility of the proposed residential structure and parking deck with this side of Elliott and on Franklin and suggested a For Sale Townhouse design with affordably priced units as well as "affordable" units. This approach would be more in keeping with the Character of Chapel Hill Guidance Principles.