

W. Rosemary St. Hotel Project

Concept Plan Application

12 September 2019

Developer's Program

The proposed W. Rosemary Hotel project will redevelop a site currently dominated by surface parking and non-descript single story buildings and replace that with a high quality, custom-designed hotel in downtown Chapel Hill. The hotel will front on West Rosemary Street and wrap around the historic Town Hall building to S Columbia Street. Site improvements, including a pocket park, will add a "Gateway" quality to the project. A rooftop terrace will invite visitors and residents to enjoy the downtown view. The developers, Smart Hotels and The Olympia Companies, develop sustainable hotels tailored to the unique context of each campus community.

The parcel has frontage for potential vehicular access to both West Rosemary Street and South Columbia Street. It is within walking distance of downtown amenities and the UNC campus.

The property is an L-shaped composite of 6 separate lots. The project assumes and requires a parcel exchange with the Town in order to develop the hotel while including an appropriate buffer to the adjacent neighborhood to the north, and enhancing the space around the historic Town Hall building. In the parcel exchange process, the Town would convey the surface parking lot located at 110 W Rosemary Street to the Developer, and the Developer would convey to the Town a parcel of comparable size comprising the majority portion of the 208 Pritchard Avenue parcel, including a house of historic construction.

The current concept includes plans for an L-shaped hotel building with approximately 140 guest rooms, and building massing varying in height between 4 and 7 stories. There will be some underground and surface parking, approximately 70 spaces, with an additional 18-20 spaces in an adjacent parking lot on the Town-owned parcel to the east. The project is intended to include streetside improvements to West Rosemary Street, and improvements to the existing Town-owned parking lot west of the historic Town Hall to include a pocket park for public gathering.

Stormwater mitigation will be accommodated in an underground facility, thereby meeting storm management requirements.

We look forward to working with the town in obtaining approvals of this exciting new downtown hotel facility to serve the UNC and Chapel Hill community.

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Statement of Compliance with Comprehensive Plan and Small Area Plans

2020 PLAN

The proposed West Rosemary Hotel project is being designed to comply with the Town's 2020 Comprehensive Plan. We believe the development will meet the 6 goals identified.

- **A Place for Everyone**

The proposed hotel project will provide hotel rooms and public gathering amenities in a site that has the potential to serve as a Gateway to downtown Chapel Hill. It will provide full time and part time employment opportunities, and will complement business, retail and dining uses already existing downtown. The project will include enhancement of Rosemary Street for pedestrians, and will also include enhancement of the space around the historic Town Hall building by creating a public gathering space. At the interior of the ground floor, meeting room space will be provided for public use. (PFE.5)

- **Community Prosperity and Engagement**

The West Rosemary Hotel development will increase revenues for the town by creating employment opportunities, increasing the real estate tax valuation, and by bringing visitors who will support local businesses and the university. Further, it will provide hotel accommodations, meeting spaces for downtown businesses and their neighborhood groups, a rooftop terrace for public gathering, and a public pocket park. (CPE.1, CPE.2)

- **Getting Around**

The hotel project will be located within walking distance of all the downtown businesses, and also within walking distance to the UNC campus. It is located at a principal intersection that serves as an entryway into downtown, and resides on multiple bus lines so that many non-car transportation alternatives are available. (GA.1, GA.6) Bicycle parking will be available on site for employees and guests.

The project proposes to improve the pedestrian experience on W Rosemary Street and S Columbia Street by the improvement of the sidewalk, reduction of driveway curb cuts to one on W Rosemary and two on S Columbia, addition of street plantings, and the creation of a public gathering space at the historic Town Hall building. (GA.2)

- **Good Places, New Spaces**

The proposed hotel project will provide a pedestrian friendly vibrant space for visitors and residents. It will provide a space for people to work and socialize. (GPNS.2) It will be an infill project in the downtown area, located where infrastructure already exists, and will provide active interior and exterior spaces on properties that are currently surface parking. (GPNS.1, GPNS.8) The project will improve the pedestrian experience on W Rosemary street by enlarging the sidewalk, reducing curb cuts in this area from three to one, and adding street-side plantings.

- **Nurturing Our Community**

The proposed hotel project will redevelop land that is currently mostly surface gravel parking lot. The project will be designed to reflect local architecture, and the addition of public gathering amenities including a rooftop terrace and a pocket park adjacent to the historic Town Hall will enhance the opportunities to repurpose that local historic structure.

The West Rosemary Hotel project is being developed by Smart Hotels and The Olympia Companies, which share a commitment to support local business and to develop and operate in an environmentally responsible way. (NOC.1) The project will efficiently use the site by incorporating parking under the multi-story building, and by using valet service so that some of the parking can be double loaded spaces, thereby reducing the impervious footprint. The developer will also enter into agreements to utilize offsite shared parking opportunities with local businesses and the Town. The project will meet Town standards in the treatment of stormwater runoff. (NOC.2)

- **Town and Gown Collaboration**

The project will provide a hotel with local flavor located within walking distance of downtown Chapel Hill and the UNC campus. The hotel will provide employment opportunities and will also provide short-term accommodation for university related visits. Smart Hotels and Olympia specialize in projects that serve both campus and community. (TGC.6)

WEST ROSEMARY DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

The West Rosemary Development Guide was adopted by the Town May 2017.

The proposed project may not strictly meet all guidelines but clearly meets the intent of the guidelines in the following ways:

- The building height transitions from the street frontages down toward the residential uses to the north. The building height is greater on W Rosemary Street where other taller buildings already exist, and lower on S Columbia Street.
- The building architectural design and materials will reflect local spirit
- The non-residential uses increase daytime activity
- The project provides public green spaces and meeting spaces
- The project improves the pedestrian experience and increases pedestrian safety along the street frontage
- The project includes enhancement of the historic Town Hall building setting
- The project leaves the R-3 zone intact at the existing residential uses in the northwest corner of the parcel where the hotel use does not extend
- The project incorporates many of the sustainability recommendations such as a higher density and more efficient use of the land, non-surface parking, underground stormwater management, and promotion of alternative forms of transit

Additionally, the project does not encourage negative intrusion into the Northside neighborhood:

- The use is not geared toward student housing
- The project does not increase pedestrian access from W Rosemary Street into the residential neighborhood
- The project directs vehicular traffic toward W Rosemary and S Columbia Streets and not toward the smaller residential streets. Valet service will control the flow and placement of vehicles.

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Statement of Compliance with Design Guidelines

The project site is an irregular group of 5 parcels adding up to a little over 1 acre with frontage on both W Rosemary Street and S Columbia Street. The site is located at the central north part of downtown Chapel Hill, and wraps around the historic Town Hall site. The parcel development will be affected by the West Rosemary Development Guide, by the Northside Neighborhood Conservation District document, and by the Town's overall design guidelines as defined in the Design Manual.

West Rosemary Development Guide

The West Rosemary Development Guide was adopted by the Town in May 2017. The project meets the intent of this plan.

Northside Neighborhood Conservation District

The Northside NCD plan was adopted by the Chapel Hill Town Council in early 2004, with amendments in early 2012. It is a set of land use regulations applied to the development of properties within the district. The proposed development parcel is located at the southeast corner of this district which in this area is bounded by Rosemary Street and South Columbia Street.

Town Design Guidelines

Stormwater Treatment - The project will meet stormwater quantity and quality controls at the time of final plan development and approval. It is expected that an underground storage/treatment facility will be required and this facility has been accommodated on the proposed layout plan.

Landscaping and tree protection - The project will meet tree coverage requirements, and will meet landscape buffer requirements against the residential properties at the northwest corner of the parcel. Otherwise we will be requesting landscape buffer modifications.

Access and circulation - The project will be designed to comply with Town standards for circulation, parking, emergency access, and access for services such as utility maintenance and trash collection. We have started discussions with the Town Fire Department to ensure adequate fire coverage.

Parking and loading - The LUMO has no minimum parking requirement for hotels in the TC-2 zone. The parking provided on site will not exceed the maximum allowed by the LUMO. There will be underground and surface parking, approximately 70 spaces on site with an additional 18-20 spaces in an adjacent parking lot on the Town-owned parcel to the east.

Street lights, signs and markings - It is not anticipated that public street improvements will be required beyond the standard sidewalk and street plantings along the W Rosemary Street frontage.

Utilities and easements - Utilities are available to the site.

Solid waste management - Trash and recycling collection facilities will be provided on site in an underground space accessible to collection trucks through the north 2-way driveway. It is expected that the project will utilize a trash compactor and private trash collection service.

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Response to Project Summary Questions

Would this project demonstrate compliance with the Comprehensive Plan?

The project site is located in a Neighborhood Conservation District (Northside) and on W Rosemary Street. The applicable small area plan is the West Rosemary Development Guide, and there are also special considerations detailed in the LUMO for the NCD overlay.

The West Rosemary Development Guide was adopted by the Town in May 2017. It indicates non-residential redevelopment of the site and does not preclude a hotel use. The massing of the project is proposed to be higher at the primary street frontages (W Rosemary and S Columbia) and decrease adjacent to the residential neighborhood. To accommodate the lower massing of the building near the residential areas, the building is proposed to rise at the site interior. The project would not include affordable housing, but would offer to convey a parcel and historic home fronting on Pritchard Avenue to the Town who may elect to use the property for this use. The project would provide employment opportunities and will provide street-side improvements and public spaces. The building will consist of vertical articulation, ground floor accessibility, and variable setbacks so the development does not read as one large building against the street. The proposed design allows for the preferred street profile providing 20' public space from back of curb to face of building to allow for sidewalks and plantings.

The project is located at the southeast boundary of the Northside Neighborhood Conservation District. The land at W Rosemary Street is already zoned TC-2 and this proposal would involve extending that more intensive zone further north into portions of OI-1 and R-3. The project would need a modification to allow for increased building height.

Would the proposed project comply with the Land Use map?

The property is made up of six smaller parcels and there are three different land uses indicated. The land use map indicates Town/Village Center on the W Rosemary frontage, office use in the northeast corner fronting S Columbia Street, medium residential in the interior portion of the site.

Would the proposed project require a rezoning?

Yes.

What is the proposed zoning district?

The portion of the parcel fronting Rosemary Street and Columbia Street is currently zoned TC-2. The northeast portion of the lot is zoned OI-1. The two lots on the northwest portion of the site are currently zoned R-3. The majority of the site would be rezoned to TC-2 to allow the density and height of the proposed hotel project. The tab extending north, and the portion of the lot with Pritchard Street frontage would remain R-3.

Would the proposed project require modifications to the existing regulations?

The applicant will be asking for modifications to landscape buffers and to building height.

If there is a residential component to the project, does the applicant propose to address affordable housing?

There is no proposed residential component.

Are there existing conditions that impact the site design (i.e. environmental features such as RCD, slopes, erosion and sedimentation, retention of trees and tree stands, stormwater drainage patterns, significant views into and out of the site)?

The existing site slopes downhill to the north. The proposed design makes best use of this change in grade while maintaining connectivity between the W Rosemary Street and S Columbia Street frontages by incorporating structured parking for the hotel into the northern portion of the site. The existing site is primarily comprised of surface parking and there are no distinguishing features that would require protection or retention.

The built project will be visible to traffic traveling southbound on S Columbia Street as it ascends the hill into the downtown area. The project site assemblage is also adjacent to the historic Town Hall property and Town owned surface parking areas.

Has the applicant addressed traffic impact? Traffic and circulation issues?

The applicant will address traffic issues at the Special Use Permit phase of planning and design. The applicant has started discussions with the Chapel Hill Fire Department to ensure adequate emergency access.

Vehicular access is expected to be one way from the entry off W Rosemary to the exit through the Town-owned parking lot onto S Columbia. A third driveway access to the north will be two-way and provide access to a lower level service area for deliveries, trash collection, etc, and will also provide an exit for the parking deck.

Has the applicant discussed the project with adjacent neighbors?

The applicant anticipates meeting with neighbors in the weeks between the Community Design Commission Concept Plan presentation, and the Council Concept Plan presentation.