

5500 Old Chapel Hill Road

Concept Plan Application

26 July 2021

Developer's Program

The project includes a 90-unit 4-5 story apartment building with 126 parking spaces. The building will be an urban style apartment with access through a central lobby space and units accessed off interior corridors. The design will include a mix of materials such as brick and aluminum storefronts on the ground level, and a mix of fiber cement board and batten siding along with metal on the upper floors. The building will be 4 stories facing Old Chapel Hill Road and will take advantage of slope to add a lower level on the north side of the building. That lower level will be the location for the leasing office and indoor amenities. The project will also include exterior site amenities such as a pool, dog park, disc golf, and walking trails. The residential units will all be accessed from interior corridors on the top four floors.

The project is accessible to public transit and also close to I-40 for easy access for commuters. The service functions (for example trash collection) will be handled inside the lower level of the building.

The northeastern portion of the parcel fronts the highway (I-40) - that portion of the site is intended to remain undeveloped but will be used for recreation, and the full 100' wide landscape buffer will be satisfied with retained tree coverage. The development will be contained in the southern portion of the site, accessible from Old Chapel Hill Road. The site frontage is almost 360 lf, and two driveways are planned on that frontage.

The site is served by a Chapel Hill Transit route which will carry passengers into downtown Chapel Hill.

The property is a rectangular parcel approximately 6.5 acres in size with a stream and related buffer running west to east through the center.

The current concept includes plans for the development of the approximately 4 acres south of the stream and related buffer zone. There are no current plans to develop the 2.5 acres of buildable area north of the stream but that may be developed in the future in a compatible use, or as adjacent parcels develop and provide access. As part of the current development plan, nature trails or a disc golf course may be incorporated into the forest area north of the stream, and would be field located to avoid grading, large tree removal, and tree clearing in general. Pedestrian creek crossing would be made by stepping stones or by low flow crossing strategies.

A pond stormwater management facility will be constructed to handle runoff from the development and will meet the current storm management requirements.

The RCD zones will remain forested and the minimum requirement of 30% tree coverage will be exceeded by existing forest to remain. It is expected that approximately 35% of the site will remain forested, and additional canopy and understory trees will be added in the design. West, south and eastern required buffers would be 10'-20' wide and the project design includes constructed buffers to meet the internal buffer requirements. The buffer along the I-40 frontage would be 100' wide and is expected to remain in forest.

Statement of Compliance with Comprehensive Plan

The proposed residential project is being designed to comply with the Chapel Hill Comprehensive Plan, and with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

The main applicable concepts from the Comprehensive Plan are Community Choices, and Sustainability.

Community Choices:

The project will provide small apartments in an urban style building. This gives Town residents a choice of apartment style living which is not garden-style walk up, but a more urban framework. The building will be an urban style corridor loaded facility with interior amenities as well as site recreation facilities. This facility will be marketed to young professionals and empty nesters. Because the majority of units are 1-bedroom, it is unlikely to attract families or student populations.

Sustainability:

This apartment project will take advantage of dense development to concentrate site disturbance and allow for a greater amount of forest to remain, as well as staying out of RCD zones on site.

Charting Our Future Guiding Principals

The following principals are identified in the Town's Land Use Initiative published in December 2020.

1. Demonstrate the Town's commitment to effectively respond to the threats associated with climate change as well as environmental stewardship and resiliency.
2. Ensure equitable planning and development.
3. Encourage a diversity of housing types.
4. Promote distinctive, safe, and attractive neighborhoods.
5. Cultivate a vibrant and inclusive community.

6. Direct investment along key transportation corridors and promote construction of transit and multi-modal transportation options in concert with the Town's regional transportation partners.
7. Support and facilitate economic development, including the development of flexible and varied types of retail and offices spaces; job creation; innovation; and entrepreneurship, through redevelopment and infill development, in order to expand and diversify the Town's tax base to enable the Town's fiscal resiliency.
8. Provide appropriate transition between land uses and buildings of different scales.
9. Preserve and maintain Chapel Hill's appearance and create the quality of design and development the Town desires.
10. Cooperate and collaborate with all of the Town's regional partners especially the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and UNC Health.

The proposed multi-family project complies with the majority of these guidelines and does not contradict the others. Multi family use has been identified as a primary desired use in this zone (Sub Area A of the North 15-501 Corridor) in the Charting Our Future report. The 4-5 story height falls in the range of typical height and transitional height desired in this area.

The project will implement sustainable design measures to promote environmental sustainability. Many recreational amenities will involve low impact use of stream buffers and retained forest area. The stream buffer on site will be protected, and the retained forest on site will exceed Town codes. Additional plantings will be included in the design to provide parking lot shade, hardscape shade, building shade, as well as aesthetic benefit. Stormwater runoff from new impervious surfaces will be treated on site for both peak flow and for water quality improvement.

The project will offer urban style apartment living new to this part of town. Sidewalks will be added to the street frontage.

Statement of Compliance with Design Guidelines

The portion of the site to be developed is a rectangular 4-acre piece fronting Old Chapel Hill Road. Located in Durham County, the parcel is within the limits of the Town of Chapel Hill.

The Town has a Design Manual which provide guidance for the design of new projects, intended “to assure that new designs remain in continuity with the Town’s existing design ‘successes’ and at the same time inspire exciting and creative additions to the community’s blend of distinctive buildings from many eras” (p.1)

These guidelines regulate site design as it relates to services, utilities, and landscaping.

Stormwater Treatment - The project will meet stormwater quantity and quality controls at the time of final plan development and approval. A surface pond is anticipated which will treat for both water quality and peak flow. The approximate size of this facility has been accommodated on the proposed layout plan.

Landscaping and tree protection - The project will meet most parts of this guideline including but not limited to: total tree coverage, parking lot screening, perimeter landscape buffers, landscaping around the building, and storm pond plantings. Because of the multiple overhead and underground utilities along Old Chapel Hill Road, and due to the large and irregular distance of the property line from the street edge, the applicant would expect to ask for a modification to reduce the street buffer planting or modify the location of the plantings.

It is expected that the retained tree coverage on site will be about 35%, exceeding the minimum requirement.

There is no current plan for development of the site north of the stream buffer. Though it is possible that mulch trails and disc golf would be incorporated into the plan, these are uses which would be accommodated without tree removal or grading.

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. Street frontage is approximately 360 LF, and the applicant expects to have 2 driveway entries along this frontage. There is no current opportunity for connection to other public streets, but the project could accommodate a future connection to potential development on the parcel to the west. As the west portion of the site will include an access drive, and parking on site

will exceed minimum requirements, it would be easy to accommodate off-street connections to future adjacent development.

Parking and loading - The LUMO calls for 1-1.25 parking spaces per 1 bedroom unit, and 1.4-1.75 spaces per 2-bedroom unit. Total required parking for this project would be a minimum of 100 spaces and maximum of 126 spaces. The concept plan accommodates 126 parking spaces total. Bicycle parking will meet Town codes, and the majority of bicycle parking will be located inside the building. Electric charging stations will be provided on site as well as bike storage and bike wash station to encourage alternative transportation usage.

Street lights, signs and markings - It is not anticipated that public street improvements will be required.

Utilities and easements - There is electric service along the parcel frontage. There is also water service along the frontage.

Sanitary sewer will involve some extension of a sanitary main, and possible a pump station within the project.

New easements will be recorded as necessary for utility mains and stormwater mitigation facilities on site, and also to recombine the two existing parcels.

Solid waste management - A trash compactor will be located in the lower level of the building. A recycling and cardboard dumpster collection facility will be located at the end of the surface parking area. Access to the collection areas will meet Town and County requirements, or will accommodate private pickup.

Affordable Housing Plan

This concept plan proposes multi-family housing at the east edge of Town. Of the 90 proposed units, some portion will be offered for affordable housing. These units will be located within the main building and will be constructed and leased concurrent with the market rate units.

The developer is currently working with Town staff to formulate an affordable housing plan offering.