



## THE DESIGN RESPONSE

1616 Evans Road, Suite 205  
Cary, NC 27513 • (919) 678-8050

August 14, 2012

Gene Poveromo  
Town of Chapel Hill  
405 MLK Jr. Boulevard  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Re: Chartwell Residential, Hotel, & Restaurant Development  
Intersection of MLK Jr. Blvd. and Estes Drive  
ZAA and SUP Application  
PIN 9789-35-9617

Dear Mr. Poveromo:

I am pleased to submit the Chartwell proposed development for town review and action.

It is an application for a Zoning Atlas Amendment and Special Use Permit for a 15.6 acre site that has had severe development restrictions for the past 30± years, the result of the Airport Hazard Overlay Zoning District for The Horace Williams Airport. Because the airport will be closed and its site redeveloped as the Carolina North Campus, the subject site is available for development that will meet the needs and goals of the town as identified in the Chapel Hill 2020 Plan adopted in June 2012 and in the many policy discussions and directions initiated by the Town Council during the past several years.

The Council recognized that even during the one year spent to engage the community as never before in a planning process there would be the need for property owners and businesses to continue to plan for their future and that they could do so in parallel with the 2020 Plan process.

The Chartwell applicant and property owner have been discussing the potential uses for this property upon the closing of The Horace Williams Airport for over 3 years and listened carefully to what the Council said about moving ahead in a parallel manner during the 2020 Planning Process and followed the Town of Chapel Hill required development application steps in the following way:

- Fall 2011 - Jointly agree upon the type and level of new uses that this property can develop that serve the current needs of the town/university and have the best economic impact upon the town and municipal and other public services.
- February 2012 - Concept Plan Submission for Formal CDC and Town Council Concept Plan Review
- March 21, 2012 - Community Design Commission – Concept Plan Review
- April 23, 2012 - Town Council - Concept Plan Review

The ZAA and SUP Applications now submitted have followed the required Town submission process.

The applicant is fully aware of the upcoming Estes Drive Focus Area Study process that will begin with information meetings on August 28 and August 29, 2012. In fact, the applicant has supported the initiation of this study and its timely completion so that property owners and residents in the vicinity of the MLK Jr. Blvd – Estes Drive Intersection and nearby neighborhoods can have a full discussion of the type and level of development that should be located on the subject site. Because of the Airport Hazard Overlay District development limitations, it has been well over 30 years since any significant time and consideration has been given to how this property fits within the MLK Jr. Blvd corridor. The single-family subdivision form of development that might have seemed appropriate in the late 1970s for this location is no longer a reasonable use in this location.

Further, there is a renewed desire for additional consideration of how the transportation system along Estes Drive (vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit) can and will be improved by the applicant and others (UNC-Chapel Hill) that have made commitments to sidewalk improvements along the north side of Estes Drive from Caswell Road to MLK Jr. Blvd.

Please review the attached letter that was originally submitted by the applicant on June 1, 2012 supporting the study about to get underway that will address land use and zoning options for the applicant's property and will look at the Complete Streets needs of Estes Drive.

One of the strengths of the town's development review process is that prior to the submission of a complete Special Use Permit or Zoning Atlas Amendment application several steps must take place. These include the Concept Plan process that took place 4-5 months ago and the preparation of a Traffic Impact Assessment Report (paid for by the applicant, but conducted by a Town consultant under Town control). This full body of information is used by the applicant to consider modifications to any concept plans – and the applicant has used the Council and citizen comments and the results of the TIA to make adjustments to the proposal.

Another strength of the development review process is that specific proposals help the Council, applicant, and affected neighbors focus on how a specific proposal will help meet the goals for the important short and long range community needs and desires as a whole, while respecting the quality of life of the adjoining property owners and neighbors. We believe that this application at this time will help further these types of discussions, not only in the Estes Drive Focus Area Study, but also thru the Advisory Board review process during which many of the issues get studied and considered by neighbors and advisory board members as well as town staff.

We look forward to your in depth review and consideration of this development application during the next nine months.

Sincerely,

*Scott Radway*

*Scott Radway, AICP*