

August 27, 2019

Re: University Place Concept Plan

PROJECT LOCATION

University Place is an existing commercial development located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Fordham Blvd and S. Estes Drive in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. University Place is situated on 39.4 acres of land currently zoned CC, Community Commercial District. Approximately 29 acres is located within the RCD, Resource Conservation District, due to the location of floodplains and floodway associated with the adjacent Bolin Creek.

NATURAL FEATURES

Bolin Creek is located across S. Estes Drive to the south of the property. The floodplains and floodway associated with Bolin Creek are located on the parcel of the University Place development. Otherwise, the property has been developed for commercial uses and is occupied by structures and associated uses.

ACCESS, CIRCULATION, AND MITIGATION OF TRAFFIC IMPACTS

The development is currently accessed via 3 full-movement driveways off of Willow Drive, 4 access points off of S. Estes Drive and a right-in / right-out access to Fordham Boulevard. The proposed concept plan illustrates potential new access points to Willow Drive and S. Estes Drive; these driveway connections will be installed subject to approval by NCDOT and the Town of Chapel Hill.

Pedestrian access will be provided internal to the development and these private pedestrian facilities will connect to existing and proposed public facilities within the surrounding public rights-of-way, including the proposed sidewalk and multi-use path improvements along Willow Drive, S. Estes Drive and Fordham Blvd.

A traffic impact analysis will be conducted based on the intended development program for the parcel. Any improvements necessary to mitigate the impacts of the traffic generated by the University Place development will be constructed as recommended by the Traffic Impact Analysis.

ARRANGEMENT AND ORIENTATION OF BUILDINGS

The redevelopment University Place involves modifications to existing structures as well as the construction of new structures on the subject parcel.

A portion of the existing mall structure will be removed and replaced with a central gathering area and pedestrian access. New structures, potentially including a structured parking facility, are proposed along Willow Drive. Where new buildings are constructed, the intention is to bring these buildings closer to the surrounding street to be more compliant with the Town of Chapel Hill's form-based standards.

NATURAL VEGETATION AND LANDSCAPING

University Place is an existing development and the parcel is essentially covered with man-made impervious surfaces. The proposed redevelopment of this parcel will include the removal of portions of the existing mall as well as impervious surfaces in some areas. Where impervious areas are removed, they will be replaced with landscaping or improved central gathering areas for use by future residential tenants and shoppers. Improvements, such as larger landscape islands and increased landscaping, will be installed in the existing surface parking areas.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBORING PROPERTIES

University Place is an existing development and has been at its current location since 1973. The proposed redevelopment of the University Place Mall will not have a detrimental impact on surrounding properties. The proposed improvements will help create improved gathering spaces, upgraded landscaping, and more modern facilities and uses which should be beneficial to the surrounding properties and the Town of Chapel Hill as a whole. New structures within the development will be constructed to modern energy efficiency standards. The redevelopment of University Place will not have a negative impact on the floodplains located on the parcel.

EROSION, SEDIMENTATION AND STORMWATER

University Place is an existing development and has been at its current location since 1973. The proposed redevelopment of the University Place Mall may have the potential to incorporate some stormwater treatment devices. The site location relative to the existing floodplain will make it difficult to incorporate significant surface or subsurface facilities. Other creative stormwater treatment options will be considered.

Erosion and sedimentation controls will be utilized in accordance with the requirements of Orange County UDO and the Town of Chapel Hill LUMO. Phased redevelopment projects typically allow for limiting the exposure to sediment laden run-off due to the smaller areas being disturbed, the surrounding areas remaining stabilized and the sites having already been graded have minimal topographic challenges.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH DESIGN GUIDELINES

The University Place redevelopment will be consistent with the Town of Chapel Hill Design Guidelines.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

University Place is located within the North 15-501 Future Focus Discussion Area. The North 15-501 Future Focus Discussion Area contains 5 Key Considerations for development and redevelopment in this area. The 5 Key Considerations, and how the proposed redevelopment is in compliance with them, are listed below:

1. Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian connections could link existing and new residential and commercial uses in this area.

Applicant's Response: The redevelopment of University Place will include the construction of improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities internal to the development, as well as improved connections to existing and proposed public facilities.

2. Redevelopment opportunities exist in this area, which currently has underutilized commercial capacity.

Applicant's Response: This concept plan illustrates the redevelopment potential of an existing enclosed commercial mall. The proposed redevelopment will include additional commercial square footage, as well as new residential and/or hospitality uses.

3. The Ephesus Road / Fordham Blvd Small Area Planning and Traffic Analysis was adopted in 2011 and will affect redevelopment in this area.

Applicant's Response: University Place is not identified as part of the Ephesus Church Road / Fordham Boulevard Small Area Planning and Traffic Analysis.

4. The area has been identified for investment of expanded transit services to provide improved mobility within and along US 15-501 and Fordham Blvd.

Applicant's Response: Redevelopment of this parcel will include facilities for transit services as requested or required by the Town of Chapel Hill.

5. The area also include access to the proposed light rail transit service between Durham and Chapel Hill.

Applicant's Response: The proposed light rail transit service does not impact the redevelopment of University Place.

Sincerely,
MCADAMS



Charlie Yokley, AICP