

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(3)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: May 16, 2006

TITLE: Report on Joint Advisory Board Review of Proposed Architectural Standards for Downtown Carrboro

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES _ NO X _
ATTACHMENTS: A. Revised Draft Ordinance B. Excerpt of Minutes from 1/24/06 and 2/21/06 C. Recommendation re: Concept plan review process D. Approval template for plan/policy consistency findings E. Denial template for plan/policy consistency findings	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Patricia McGuire – 918-7327

PURPOSE

The Board of Aldermen held a public hearing on January 24, 2006 and February 21, 2006. The Board of Aldermen referred the draft ordinance for further consideration by several advisory boards. These boards met jointly to review and make recommendations on a revised ordinance.

INFORMATION

On February 21, 2006, the Board of Aldermen closed the public hearing on the draft ordinance, referring it to the Planning Board, Economic Sustainability Commission and Appearance Commission for discussion. The Board requested that a report be presented in three months time. A Joint Review worksession of the three boards was held on March 23rd, during which time the attendees identified those provisions of the draft ordinance that should be retained, modified, or deleted. A subcommittee of the meeting participants met on April 4th to spell out the modified provisions. The larger group met again on May 10th to consider the revised draft ordinance. A copy of the revised draft ordinance is attached (*Attachment A*) that includes strikethrough text for the version that was reviewed during the hearing on January 24th and February 21st. The changes that have been recommended by the advisory board members are described below:

- 1) Revises requirement for a business entry; removes dimensional component.
- 2) Deletes horizontal articulation requirement, similarity requirement, and cornice/parapet requirement.
- 3) Revises requirement for glass surface on percentage of a building's exterior facing a street.
- 4) Deletes requirement for glass surface on percentage of a building's rear façade.
- 5) Deletes requirement for shade free area.
- 6) Revises requirement for percentage of covered parking.
- 7) Deletes requirement for habitable building space.

- 8) Deletes requirement for breaking up the façade of buildings greater than 45 feet in width.
- 9) Deletes the definition of neighboring property (that supported the similarity requirement).
- 10) Retains voluntary alternative review process with the Appearance Commission.
- 11) Retains information requirements change to Appendix A.
- 12) Retains deletion of exterior materials provisions for B-1(g) zoning district.
- 13) Deletes section that would delete the exterior materials provisions for B-2 zoning district.
- 14) Retains section that deletes the exterior materials provisions for CT zoning district.

The subcommittee of advisory board members also discussed the benefits that a concept plan review process might yield in terms of early input by advisory and elected officials on a proposed project. A recommendation to establish an elective process was formalized on May 10th and is attached (*Attachment C*).

Staff has considered these proposed changes and finds that most are clear and enforceable. Staff has also reviewed the request made by the Board of Aldermen in March 2005 to determine whether the revised draft still responds to the concerns and issued noted at that time. In summary, the Board had requested that staff prepare a report on changes to architectural guidelines. Staff provided a report and noted that the areas over which the Board expressed concern could only be formally controlled if regulatory requirements were established. The staff report identified possible ordinance provisions that could be developed to respond to the stated concerns. The areas of interest are noted below, with a note indicating whether the revised draft provides a response.

DESIRED ARCHITECTURAL/SITE DESIGN CONTROL	REVISED DRAFT ORDINANCE PROVISION
Parking in rear – not facing the street	Section 15-178 (a) (3)
Walls broken up by windows, other features that create depth	Section 15-178 (a) (1) and (2)
Consider disallowing wood or vinyl siding on multi-story buildings	Section 15-178 (a) (4). This provision will allow wood-like clapboard or plank- style siding, but will not allow vinyl siding or wood panel products. Metal siding materials with exposed fasteners are also disallowed.
Setbacks for downtown streets – avoidance of canyon effect	Not applicable. Advisory board reviewers propose removal of the “20% shade-free area” that was included in the draft ordinance in response to this issue. Staff recommends that this language be retained.
Specific language about permissible types of metal siding	Section 15-178 (a) (4)
Expand prohibitions on metal buildings to all downtown districts.	“ “
Use design guidelines and VAS commercial center architectural requirements	Not applicable. Provisions modeled on DDG and VAS are deleted in revised ordinance.
Formally reference VAS for B-2 zoning district	Not applicable.

Background. Seven citizens offered comments regarding the proposed architectural standards for downtown Carrboro. These comments were included in the attached excerpt of the draft minutes and correspondence that was submitted on the hearing dates (*Attachment B*). The Board of Aldermen requested that staff report on whether the building located at 605 W. Main Street could be constructed under the current land use ordinance provisions and continued the public hearing. A staff memo responding to the request was provided for the Board’s review on February 21st. This

memo presented staff findings regarding the extent to which the 605 W. Main Street building could be approved under regulations in effect at the present time.

In February 2005, the Board of Aldermen began to discuss possible architectural requirements for downtown building. Existing Land Use Ordinance and Building Code requirements were discussed during a March 8th worksession. A report on possible changes to architectural guidelines was provided in mid-August. It has been noted that Carrboro has used its land use regulations to place limitations on some architectural features in the past, though the practice has not been widespread. Rather, the bulk of the town's regulations are in the realm of site design and dimensional requirements. The draft ordinance considered at the hearing in January and February proposes additional controls on both site design and architectural features. The Board of Aldermen had previously requested that staff distribute the draft ordinance to the Planning Board, Appearance Commission and Economic Sustainability Commission and the draft was distributed. Per the request of the Planning Board, the draft ordinance was also distributed to seven architects and designers who have been involved in recent projects in downtown Carrboro. Advisory board recommendations and citizen comments on the draft ordinance were submitted to the Board of Aldermen in January and February.

FISCAL IMPACT

The addition of a new Land Use Ordinance requirement can increase the cost of preparing and reviewing development plans. Additional staff time may also be required to support the Appearance Commission in its review of projects seeking approval under the alternative design and architectural review provision.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Board of Aldermen consider adoption of the draft ordinance as recommended by the joint review worksession advisory board member representatives, with the retention of the ordinance provision that establishes a 20 percent shade-free area requirement for buildings over 40 feet in height. An approval template (*Attachment D*) has also been provided for the Board's use.