



TORTI GALLAS AND PARTNERS

Architects of Community

March 3, 2009

Mark Chura
Citizens for Responsible Growth
Wilmington, DE

RE: Barley Mill Plaza Mixed-Use Design Principles

Principals

John Francis Torti, FAIA

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Dear Mark:

The redevelopment of the Barley Mill site presents a tremendous opportunity for the community as a mixed-use development that can create a walk-able community and that has a unique sense-of-place. Nevertheless, the programming, site plan, and architectural design will play a determining role as to whether a truly wonderful place is created that the community can be proud of or something that detracts from the quality of the community. As planners and architects of walk-able mixed-use developments, at your request, we have taken the opportunity to review the New Castle County Comprehensive Plan, as well as zoning ordinance, as it relates to mixed-use and the currently proposed Barley Mill site plan. While there are different uses incorporated into the plan, the current site plan does not create a well integrated, walk-able neighborhood using the best mixed-use design principles being used in the marketplace. Below is a list of site specific principles that can be incorporated to create the type of neighborhood that is discussed in the Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance:

- The “Sea of Parking” that lines Centre Road is close to a half-mile in length and is the predominant view to the surrounding neighborhood along this street. Buildings should be located along Centre Road in order to screen the parking from Centre Road
- Loading and service functions should not face Lancaster Pike or Centre Road
- The retail component should create a “Main Street”, a sense of place, a sense of arrival, and a pedestrian friendly street. This can be accomplished by creating this street perpendicular to Centre Road
- Blocks should be created with parking located at their centers in order to create a walk-able pedestrian friendly environment – There should be a continuity of the streetscape without gaps between buildings that expose parking lots to the pedestrian-friendly streets
- The quantity of structured parking could be reduced, and the land area dedicated to program that uses structured parking could be reduced
- Some office should be vertically integrated into the retail, in what is likely a first phase.
- Some office program should be surface-parked in order to increase the likelihood of being built in one of the initial phases.
- An increase in the residential program (and accompanying reduction in commercial program) would make it possible to reduce structured parking and would make it possible to program and locate building types that will provide a more sensitive transition to the scale of the surrounding communities
- Smaller scale residential buildings to the east would be a better transition to the adjacent residential communities
- Public spaces such as plazas and squares should be included and integrated into the plan to provide public open space



- The Wetlands/Woodlands along Lancaster Pike can create a public park space, but buildings should “front” this space so that it is not a residual space and so that there are “eyes on the street/park” making it a monitored and safer space.
- A “place” should be created in the first phase that contains a mix of uses, walk-able streets, and public spaces
- Given the context of the surrounding area, appropriate building heights would be four stories or less.
- Pad sites should be located and oriented to contribute to the making of blocks.

As noted above, the redevelopment of the Barley Mill site presents a tremendous opportunity to create a neighborhood that is in keeping with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The programming, site plan, and architectural design will be instrumental in determining the quality of the mixed-use neighborhood. If you have any questions, or if we may be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Erik J. Aulestia, AICP
Associate Principal