

PRE-HEARING STAFF ANALYSIS

Rezoning Petition No. 2007-151

Property Owner: RBC Corporation c/o Childress Klein Properties

Petitioner: RBC Corporation

Location: Approximately 1.29 acres located on the northwest corner of S. Tryon Street and W. 1st Street

Center, Corridor or Wedge: Center

Request: UMUD-O, uptown mixed use district-optional to UMUD-O S.P.A., uptown mixed use district-optional, site plan amendment

Summary

The request is for a site plan amendment for UMUD-O in order to allow relief from the requirements regarding street walls and the appearance of building first floors, as it relates to the proposed Bechtler Museum.

As currently designed, the building's south elevation (facing West First Street) will have a blank wall approximately 64 feet in length. The site plan amendment is being requested in order to maintain the artistic vision for the building.

Consistency and Conclusion

The policy document for this site is the *Center City 2010 Vision Plan* (adopted in 2000), which envisions the Uptown as having a variety of living, entertainment and cultural activities. The *Center City 2010 Vision Plan* urges that "...Charlotte be aggressive in finding an architecture that is distinctly its own." The request does not meet the "blank wall" requirements of the UMUD District, the intent of the proposed site plan amendment is to support the city's vision with respect to adding unique architecture to the Uptown area. It should be noted that a plaza and sculpture are proposed in the area in front of the subject elevation, which should lessen the visual impact of having the expanse of blank wall at the street level. Based upon the above, staff can recommend support of this request.

Existing Zoning and Land Use

The site is surrounded by mixed use developments zoned UMUD and MUDD-O.

Rezoning History in Area

The most recent rezoning in the area was rezoning petition 2004-129, a site plan amendment requesting relief from the UMUD requirements in affiliation with the Wachovia mixed use project.

Public Plans and Policies

The policy document governing this request is *Center City 2010 Vision Plan* (adopted in 2000), which envisions the Uptown as having a variety of living, entertainment and cultural activities. The *Center City 2010 Vision Plan* recommends that "...Charlotte be aggressive in finding an architecture that is distinctly its own."

Pursuant to Section 9.906 of the City of Charlotte Zoning Ordinance, architectural and streetscape elements should be incorporated into the design of first floor of street walls to encourage and complement pedestrian-scale interest and activity. Methods of achieving this appearance include utilization of transparent windows and doors and other architectural/streetscape features such as ornamentation, molding, changes in material color, works of art, street furniture, fountains and pools, etc. Where necessary, blank wall expanses are not permitted to exceed 20 feet in length. Further, the city's ordinance defines a *blank wall* as:

"...a façade, which does not add to the character of the streetscape and does not contain transparent windows or sufficient ornamentation, decoration or articulation..."

Proposed Request Details

As currently designed, the building's south elevation will have a blank wall approximately 64 feet in length. The site plan amendment is being requested in order to maintain the artistic vision for the building. A plaza and sculpture are proposed in the area in front of the subject elevation, which should lessen the visual impact of having the expanse of blank wall at the street level

Public Infrastructure

Traffic Impact / CDOT Comments. CDOT has reviewed the petition and indicates there should be minor impacts to the transportation system resulting from this petition. In addition, CDOT has provided comments regarding the following:

1. Transferring site plan and development standards from Rezoning Petition 2004-129 to this conditional plan.
2. Removal of proposed mid-block crossing locations and decorative pavement treatments from this plan as they not being reviewed or approved through the rezoning process.

CATS. CATS has no comments on this petition.

Connectivity. The main building entrance is South Tryon Street, with pedestrian and vehicular connectivity provided via S. Tryon and W. 1st Streets and sidewalk systems. In addition, pedestrian connectivity will be provided between the Bechtler Museum and Knight Theater.

Storm Water. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services (SWS) has reviewed the petition and identifies downstream complaints consisting of flooding, and indicates the site drains to a stream listed as impaired by the NC Division of Water Quality. No additional storm water requirements are needed.

School Information. CMS has not submitted comments on this non-residential petition.

Outstanding Issues

Land Use. The proposed request is in keeping with the *Center City 2010 Vision Plan*, which supports distinct architecture in Charlotte's Uptown area.

Site plan. Site plan items have been addressed.