



January 22, 2014

**Mayor Bill Terry
Commissioner Pamela Baldwin
Commissioner Michael Fiocco
Commissioner Jay Farrell
Commissioner Bett Wilson Foley
Commissioner Beth Turner**

Re: Cornwallis Commons

Cornwallis Commons is a “Pocket Neighborhood” being proposed on a 3.36 acre tract at the current terminus of E. Cornwallis Street, east of the intersection with Windsong Drive. At the time of this narrative, the site contains three lots; one previously developed single-family residence, a second single-family residence currently under construction, and a third larger lot which is undeveloped and will be sub-divided as part of this project. The proposed development will consist of a total of 12 single-family residences, common open space and community amenities, a twenty-seven space parking area, and all associated utilities and storm water facilities.

Orange Communities, LLC introduced this conceptual preliminary plan to the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners in 2012, and in June of that year the BoC approved the “Pocket Neighborhood Ordinance” under which these construction drawings are submitted. Pittsboro’s PNO allows and encourages smaller, closer neighborhoods that will enhance the character and livability of our community. The housing units prescribed by the ordinance and planned for this development provide a smaller alternative to those typically being offered in new conventional subdivisions.

Our thoughtful, collaborative approach to this project has resulted in a plan that captures both the spirit and letter of the ordinance. Our emphasis on low-impact development techniques, sustainable design and construction, and beautifully landscaped and functional spaces is evidenced and detailed in these construction drawings, and we are proud and pleased to present them for your approval. This project is designed in accordance with all Town of Pittsboro requirements, as well as any other regulatory agency requirements. The intent of this project narrative is to give an overview of the project and identify the aforementioned design requirements, as well as how they are being met. The standards have been broken into groups for ease of review.



Land Use

The Pocket Neighborhood designation is a “Use by Right” within the parcel’s R-10 zoning. This project meets the Goals & Vision of the Land Use Plan by creating a community that is compact and pedestrian oriented, integrates principles of sustainability into both the site and building design, and protects sensitive lands and water all while keeping the small, rural, & natural feel that Pittsboro cherishes.

The project meets all requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations including lot size, density, building setbacks, max built upon area, open space requirements, tree save requirements, parking, signage, landscaping, and site lighting.

Site Amenities

The project includes a variety of on-site features and amenities intended to enhance both the functionality and sense of community with which the project is focused. Covered parking spaces will be provided for residents in three separate carports. Residents and visitors enter the common space thru a covered gateway that will house mailboxes, a community bulletin board, and small carts for transporting groceries and other items. A network of sidewalks and pathways will link the homes with the landscaped rain gardens and the natural protected areas. A large covered shelter will be anchored in the rock outcropping at the northern end of the main commons. A small area will be set aside for a community garden. A walled-off corner of the parking lot will house the household waste and recycling area.

Site Access

The project proposes improvements to E. Cornwallis Road, making it a paved, public roadway, built to Town and NCDOT standards, along the project frontage. A paved, private entrance road and parking area, built to Town standards, are also proposed. All internal roadways and parking areas are designed to allow full access for Fire, EMS and First Responders, as well as for Town maintenance vehicles.

The site is also very pedestrian oriented. As a major tenet of the Pocket Neighborhood, all the parking for the community is on the periphery of the site, with access to the living and community spaces being accessed via sidewalks and paths. The project also proposes the dedication of a greenway easement along the western boundary, which would allow for future extension of a greenway trail that could connect with the existing Robeson Creek Greenway system.



Utilities

The project proposes to tie to existing Town utility infrastructure, both water and sewer, to serve this site. Water will be provided to the site via tapping the 8” water main that was extended as part of constructing the first residence in this project. A Town maintained, public waterline will be extended up to the water meters, with the water service lines after that being privately maintained per Town Standards. Since a portion of the public waterline will be in a private roadway, the required public utility easements have been coordinated with Town Staff and are being provided.

Sewer will be provided to the site by tying to the existing 8” sanitary sewer main that runs directly to the treatment plant. A public-private system that has proven effective for developments of this size and nature, and has been permitted jointly through NCDENR and municipalities in the past, is being proposed. A Town maintained, 8” public sewer line will tie to the existing sewer outfall and run up along the northern portion of the developed area. Smaller, privately maintained sewer services will tie into the public main. The sewer is designed in a manner that minimizes cost, impact, and maintenance, while properly serving residents. The proposed design has been discussed with Town Staff, and all were in support.

Stormwater Management, Riparian Buffers, & Floodplains

The site is in the Jordan Lake Watershed, Haw River sub-watershed, and is designated as a Water Supply Watershed (WS-IV PA). Runoff from the site discharges to Robeson Creek. This project is subject to regulations written by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Division of Water Quality (NCDENR-DWQ) as well as the Town of Pittsboro. The proposed development is required to meet all sections of these regulations including water quality and water quantity.

The design uses Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater practices to help meet the stormwater requirements. The site incorporates three bio-retention cells, also known as “rain gardens”, into the community open space areas, as well as a level spreader with vegetated filter strip near the northern portion of the developed area in the Robeson Creek corridor. The benefit from using these practices is many-fold. First, it mimics natural hydrology by capturing and treating run-off near the source, rather than piping it to a larger pond. Second, the features are landscaped and integrated into the project so that they become an integral part of the space. Most people don’t even know that they are stormwater features. Lastly, since they are integrated into the developed area, they allow for more sensitive and natural area to be left as is, without the need to take up additional land for stormwater ponds.

This project is also subject to the Town of Pittsboro’s Flood Prevention Ordinance and the Riparian Buffer Protection Ordinance. There is a FEMA mapped floodplain on site per FIRM Panel 3710974100J, dated February 2nd, 2007. A small amount of work is to be done in the floodplain in order to construct the public sewer outfall, the dam for bio-retention cell #3,



and the level spreader. All are allowable uses, and based on the required grading there is actually a net decrease in fill in the floodplain. In addition, all habitable dwellings are a minimum of 10' above the floodplain elevation. All proposed work is outside of the required riparian buffers, and the site design actually leaves an average of roughly 50' of additional undisturbed buffer along the Robeson Creek corridor.

I am hopeful that this project narrative has helped to clarify the vision of the project and that approval is forthcoming. These plans reflect the thoughtful and much-appreciated input from both Town staff and the Planning Board, and all of them are satisfied with the numerous revisions that have been made and fully support this project proceeding. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me directly at 919.530.9511 or mike.dasher@orangecommunities.com.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Dasher", written over a faint, light-colored circular stamp or watermark.

Mike Dasher
Managing Partner
Orange Communities, LLC