

To: Dublin Ohio – Planning and Zoning Commission
From: Meyers + Associates Architecture
Project: 4000 W Dublin-Granville Road
Project #: 2021-15
Issue Date: Wednesday, December 1, 2021

4000 West Dublin-Granville Road (21-128CP, Concept Plan)
Dublin, Ohio

The Design Team and Planning and Zoning Staff presented a Concept Plan for the project located at 4000 West Dublin-Granville Road (WDG Road) at the October 7, 2021 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. The team received several constructive comments from Planning and Zoning Members that we feel will result in the best possible project along this developing corridor. The resultant of the meeting was to table the case, allowing the design team an opportunity to address Planning and Zoning Member concerns. Please see listing below for comments received and Design Team consideration/responses to each.

Summary of Comments related to 21-128CP during October 7th Planning and Zoning commission Meeting:

1. Ms. Fox stated that this Concept does not improve pedestrian friendliness of the street. It is auto-oriented. She would not object to a portion of the front of the building being one-story; however, there is a need to add some height. Rather than one long building, a pedestrian tunnel could allow people to walk through the building from the parking lot. The hope is that, one day, the pedestrian traffic along SR161 will be similar to that in Bridge Park. That will not happen here if the orientation is to the rear of the site. There is an opportunity to have one-story wings on the end, add height in the middle, and take advantage of the streetscape and patios. The Plan currently does not provide a sufficient number of pedestrian-friendly elements. She understands the deed restrictions but believes there is potential to create more pedestrian friendliness. Using up all the space for buffering does not permit pedestrian facilities.

Response: We agree that the site layout and building placement/massing as previously submitted appeared unbalanced in its efforts to address the principal frontage street (West Dublin-Granville Road) and pedestrian friendliness, with more emphasis on the rear of the building, being more technical in its approach to parking facilities and pedestrian access.

In consideration of Ms. Fox's statement, we have adjusted the placement of the building on site with a slight rotation to allow opportunity for more walkability, open space and pedestrian engagement with the building along WDG Road. We have also shifted the building to West to allow more buffer space between parking lot and existing roadways. We appreciate Ms. Fox's suggestion of introducing pedestrian access from the front of the building to the back via a 'pedestrian tunnel', and were excited to explore this as an option.

We have incorporated a concept that allows this access through the building by separating Tenants B and C in a way that we feel is both open and inviting and have taken additional steps to allow further pedestrian access through the parking lot towards the rear of the site.

The updated site layout and building placement places the highest priority on pedestrian access (as opposed to vehicular) around the building and through the site with primary building entrances along WDG Road, open space and pathways along the WDG Road frontage, pedestrian access through the site from front to rear with a tree-lined path and open space, as well s additional open space offerings that were not present previously.

2. Mr. Schneider reiterated Ms. Fox's comments regarding the need to create pedestrian-friendliness. A drivethru and pedestrian friendliness seem to be mutually exclusive, but perhaps they need not be. He also likes the cut-through idea, which is common on Grandview Avenue and in Clintonville. He is not opposed to this being a one-story building on a unique site and unique circumstances. The goal is to create the best project possible along SR161, and he remains open-minded.

Response: We appreciate Mr. Schneider's comment. While the site plan indicates a drive thru component related to the Tenant C space, this component is not provided as the only means of the tenant's business. Site and building adjustments put much more emphasis and activity on the front of the tenant space, pedestrian access, and prominent seating areas with no pedestrian interaction of the drive thru component. Our goal is to provide a vehicular component for the tenant without diminishing the pedestrian experience within and around the overall site. Addition of a tree lined path from the front of the property to the rear offers pedestrian friendly access through the site and an open space with seating provided along the path. While on this path and in the open space, as depicted in provided renderings, one does not feel connected to the parking lot or drive thru.

3. Mr. Fishman stated that the goal of the Bridge Street Corridor is to create a walkable community, and every application in this area has been expected to encourage that. That is the challenge for this site.

Response: We appreciate Mr. Fishman's comment and his reminder of the emphasis on walkability within the community. We believe this concept reflects the shared goal of walkability.

4. Mr. Grimes stated that he appreciates all the work invested on this site during the past year. It is a great plan, but in order to be true to the vision for that corridor, it does not yet "fit." There are many other parcels in this corridor yet to be developed. It is important to be consistent with the successful projects than making exceptions.

Response: We appreciate Mr. Grimes comment. Our hope is to develop a project that can achieve the goals of the City/Community, Owner and Tenants alike without veering from the consistency in character of the surroundings while being able to fit in with future development through an open space network, walkability, and general aesthetics.

5. Mr. Way stated that there appears to be a vision that is ahead of itself. There are so many pieces along this corridor that are fighting against that vision that we cannot change. He does not believe having property sit vacant, making no contribution at all, is the right approach. The challenge is SR 161, a 45- mph roadway and no on-street parking. What the applicant is attempting to do to animate the existing walkway and add frontage to the street is very valid. Until Lowes goes away at some distant point in the future, the vision cannot be achieved. The applicant has come up with a good way to place an active use here at this point in time. Although he would like to see the drive thru done differently, he supports the applicant's direction within the existing conditions of the corridor. The walkable street that is desired is a long-term vision. This is a short-term solution for achieving some activity on the site.

Response: We appreciate Mr. Way's comment. We believe that the updated concept provided offers the activity, walkability and development that will successfully contribute to the long-term goals of the City. The pedestrian pathways along and through the site, and provided public open spaces are placed in ways that work with the current 'big box' retail adjacency (and is sufficiently screened from such), but also allows itself to interact with future development in the longer-term.

6. Mr. Supelak stated that Commission members recognize the difficult situation for the applicant. We keep referencing places like Grandview Avenue and Clintonville. Are pedestrian friendliness and vehicle drivethrus mutually exclusive? Every example that we can recall confirm that they are, do that is the issue that needs to be resolved first. At present, it seems that this is not the right location for the proposed drive-thru. While he agrees that at this point, we are a long distance from the vision for this corridor, we do want this eventually to become like Grandview Avenue; that will take some time. It would be good to start with something to prime the energy, but he is skeptical that the energy should come from a drivethru. The design and material palette are attractive. The idea about creating a pedestrian pass-through could be appropriate. The deed restrictions are an interesting problem, and the applicant has been trying to work out a solution with Lowes and the City. Lowes is a large corporation, but money can be convincing. It is the economics that matter, and he believes Lowes will budge, if the conversation is right.

Response: We appreciate Mr. Supelak's comment. We do not believe that pedestrian friendliness and a drive thru component are mutually exclusive on the same site but do feel that the two should have a sense of separation to allow for the two realms to be harmonious without hindering the experience of either. While a drive thru is present in the current concept, we feel the building and site is much more adapted for and focused on pedestrians and general building users with the drive thru being secondary in nature. With the current concept, the drive thru component has no effect on the general use of the building and the site which allows for this harmony to occur.

Summary of Adjustments

Adjustment: Building repositioned on site by rotating counter clock-wise and shifting West

Goals: 1. This rotation and shift allows the building to better address the RBZ along WDG Road at the West and creates a larger buffer between WDG Road and the building at the East. The buffer has been used for public open space, promoting pedestrian engagement with the building, more formal access to tenant entrances and allows the Tenant C patio to wrap towards the front of the building, activating and engaging this corner.

Adjustment: Parking Lot layout adjustments and parking lot shifted to the West

Goals: 1. Parking layout has been adjusted to incorporate a pedestrian pathway through the parking lot without having to utilize sidewalks at the perimeter of the site. This pathway will be landscaped and tree lined with a public open space and seating in the center. Pathway creates a natural separation between general parking lot and drive thru component as well as offers visual screening between the two uses.

2. Shifting the parking lot to the West allowed more buffer between the Lowe's access drive and the parking lot. This buffer has been utilized for additional landscape screening between the access road and parking and has also provided space for a large public open space near the corner of Banker Drive and Lowe's Access Drive.

Adjustment: Separation at building between Tenant B and Tenant C

Goals: 1. A passthrough has been incorporated between Tenant B and Tenant C for pedestrian access to the rear of the building and to the tree lined pathway through the parking lot to Banker road. As opposed to incorporating a tunnel through the flat building façade, we chose to separate the two tenants into separate massings, maintaining a connection between the two with the use of an overhead canopy/trellis. This passthrough offers a clearer path for pedestrians without engagement of the drive thru component. We have also located the rear entrance to Tenant C space off of this passthrough.

Adjustment: Additional Renderings Provided

Goals: 1. Additional visuals have been provided to continue dialogue related to site layout, building massing and open space locations/functionality.
2. Visuals added for comparing existing and proposed street view perspectives.