TITLE: Casabella Commons

FILE NUMBER: SP-06-04, AP# 16307

REQUEST: Concept Site Development Plan Approval
The Applicant is requesting Concept Site Development Plan approval for a Village Center mixed use development of four structures (expansion of 2 existing buildings and construction of 2 new buildings) to include 12,600 s.f. of office, dance studio, and restaurant uses, a 4,400 s.f. nursery school, and two residential apartments (3,600 s.f. total) located on a 2.3-acre site.

PROJECT INFORMATION:
ADDRESS/LOCATION: Located on the west side of Urbana Pike adjacent to, and south of, Urbana Elementary School in Urbana
TAX MAP/PARCEL: TM 96; Parcels 28, 96, 97, & 98
COMP. PLAN: Village Center (VC)
ZONING: Village Center (VC)
PLANNING REGION: Urbana
WATER/SEWER: W-4; S-4 (P.96, 97, & 98) W-5; S-5 (P. 28)

APPLICANT/REPRESENTATIVES:
APPLICANT: CasaBella LLC
OWNER: - same -
ENGINEER: N/A
ARCHITECT: N/A
ATTORNEY: N/A

STAFF: Denis Superczynski

RECOMMENDATION: Conditional Approval

ATTACHMENTS:
EXHIBIT 1- Concept Site Plan
EXHIBIT 2- Site Renderings
Development Request
The Applicant is requesting Concept Site Development Plan approval for a mixed use development consisting of the expansion of 2 existing structures and the construction of 2 new structures to be used for office/retail/nursery school and 1 apartment on a 2.3-acre parcel. The proposed plan includes:

Concept Plan Details:

- Building 1 (Parcel 97) - Adaptive re-use of existing 2-story residential structure with new addition (building footprint of 1,500 s.f.) to include 3,000 s.f. of restaurant uses
- Building 2 (Parcel 98) – New 1-story structure (building footprint of 4,400 s.f.); for use as a childcare center/nursery school (pre-k)
- Building 3 (Parcel 96) – New 2-story structure (building footprint of 3,600 s.f.); 1st-level use as medical clinic/office professional (physical therapy) or office business 2nd story use office business
- Building 4 (Parcel 28) – Adaptive re-use of existing 2-story residential structure with new addition (approx. 3,000 s.f. footprint); 1st level for restaurant or dance studio; 2nd level for one (1) residential apartment

The Applicant is working to finalize the proposed land uses as the project moves forward. The land uses included on the concept plan would be categorized as restaurant, childcare center/nursery school, medical clinic, office professional, office business, dance studio and residential apartment per §1-19-5.310 Use Table in the Zoning Ordinance. All proposed uses are principal permitted uses in the VC Zoning District subject to Site Development Plan approval. The land uses will be finalized at the time of the Type I Site Development Plan application and Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance review.

The Applicant proposes to utilize the addition plat process to combine the four existing parcels into a single 2.3-acre parcel concurrently with the Type I Site Development Plan review process.

As required by Zoning Ordinance §1-19-7.500(D), Site Development Plan proposals in the VC Zoning District are required to submit plans to the Planning Commission (or its representative) for Concept Site Development Plan Approval. This Concept Site Development Plan must demonstrate how the proposed activity will meet development standards listed in §1-19-7.500(C).
BACKGROUND

Development History
In April 2015, the current Applicant received Concept Plan approval for a 3-structure, 9,500 s.f., mixed use development (office/retail/residential) on Parcel 98(AP 15003). The Applicant is returning to Planning Commission for review of the current Concept plan that would replace the approved Concept Plan from 2015.

Existing Site Characteristics
The Site is currently occupied by one older home (late-19th century) and three relatively new single-family detached homes (1963, 1984, & 2002) and several large specimen trees. The Site is currently served by individual driveways providing direct access onto Urbana Pike, a state roadway with Collector status as shown on the County Comprehensive Highway Plan. The land slopes gradually toward the rear of the site with a small number of small trees and shrubs at its westernmost and southern edges. All parcels are currently served by existing wells and septic systems which would be abandoned under this proposal in favor of the extension of public water and sewer lines to the site.

The total area of the four parcels – all zoned Village Center (VC) - is approximately 2.3 acres (see Figure 1 below).
Surrounding land uses include: Urbana Elementary School north of the Site, single-family residential uses along Urbana Pike (east and west sides), a church, and several small retail and office uses within a few hundred feet of the subject Site. A small former church sanctuary and historic cemetery are located southeast of the Site on an adjoining property.

The Villages of Urbana PUD is located across Urbana Pike to the rear of the existing facing structures, approximately 250 feet from the subject Site.
ANALYSIS
Summary of Development Standards Findings and Conclusions

Form and Layout
The Applicant proposes to develop two new structures on the Site, situated between the two older existing structures slated to remain as part of the redevelopment. The two existing homes will increase their footprints with building additions proposed for the rear of these structures. A new single entrance driveway – located between Parcels 97 and 98 - will serve the entire site and place the vast majority of parking spaces at the rear of the buildings. Careful placement of public plaza space and landscaping will effectively minimize the appearance of parked vehicles from Urbana Pike while offering convenient access to all of the structures. Some on-street parking is anticipated in keeping with the County’s preferred street section on this segment of Urbana Pike. Semi-public spaces (café seating, small entrance plazas) are proposed along the frontage of at least three of the buildings. These spaces also provide access to the rear parking and activity areas while meeting the standards for green space and public plaza areas in the Village Center District.

Figure 2- Zoning of Site and vicinity in Urbana.
Proposed structures - from west to east within the Site (refer to Exhibit 2-Elevation Renderings):

**Building 1** – This 2-story, 1,500 s.f. (existing building footprint with proposed rear addition) structure faces Urbana Pike and is typical of houses constructed in Urbana in the late 19th and early-20th centuries. A semi-public cafe seating area is proposed for the building’s front yard providing an inviting space in close proximity to the building’s main entrance. The proposed use is restaurant (2 levels).

**Building 2** – This proposed new 1-story, 4,400 s.f. (building footprint) structure constitutes a significant portion of the mixed-use complex and faces both Urbana Pike and the interior of the parcel. The building is designed to appear as two separate building forms being joined by a recessed and shorter central entry space. This design approach allows a structure of nearly 5,000 s.f. to visually approximate (as viewed from the street) the scale of other structures in the older village of Urbana without the lost efficiency of a larger structure. The traditional hipped roof and dormer window elements also assist in the effort to design a structure that is compatible with more modest buildings in the neighborhood. The central building employs a subtle but effective recess of the structure’s primary façade which serves the purpose of further diminishing its perceived mass when viewed from Urbana Pike. The proposed use is a pre-school.

**Building 3** – This proposed new 2-story, 3,600 s.f. (building footprint) structure is an architectural reflection of similarly-designed homes in the village. Again, the Applicant has used roof elements to imply the existence of two structures where only one exists. The proposed uses are physical therapy on the first level and offices on the second level. A small semi-public plaza along the street front (shown with a cafe seating area) provides additional open space that creates a bridge to the public realm. The need to maintain as much of the critical root zone of the adjacent specimen tree may serve to ultimately reduce the massing of this structure along Urbana Pike, resulting in a building much closer in size to the older structure on Parcel 97 (Building 1).

**Building 4** – This existing two-story structure, constructed in the early 1980’s, doubles in size in the proposed Concept Plan with a significant addition to the rear of the house. The original portion of the house will remain, but will be modified architecturally to more closely align with the form and style of older structures in the village. The proposed building - with approximately 6,000 s.f. of gross floor area (building footprint of 3,000 s.f.) - would provide space for a restaurant or dance studio on the lower level and a residential apartment on the 2nd level.

The scale of all structures shown on the Concept Development Plan is compatible with the general scale and form of buildings throughout Urbana’s Village Center District-zoned areas as well as with much of the approved single-family detached housing developed nearby in the Villages of Urbana PUD. Additionally, the street facades of the two new structures will closely match the width of the two structures planned for re-use. While Building 2 is likely to remain the largest structure of the four, Buildings 1, 3, and 4 will appear similar in scale as seen from the public street or sidewalk.

As seen from the street, the proposed development would be not unlike many commercial structures in the County’s rural villages and would provide an appropriate “filling out” of the area situated between the larger school and fire station structures and the burgeoning commercial buildings under construction on the southern edge of the Village Center District. The new structures, while slightly larger in width than either of the two existing homes on the site, are not significantly broader as to be visually out of scale with commercial, residential, and institutional buildings nearby. In the Concept Plan for Parcel 98, approved in April 2015, nearly 10,000 s.f. of gross floor area (in three structures) was proposed distributed from the frontage along Urbana Pike to a point nearly 250 ft. from the street. In the current proposal, most of the building mass is situated within 120 feet of the edge of the existing street pavement. Figures 3 and 4 provide a visual indication of the relationship between existing structures on the site.
Access and Parking
The proposed centralized driveway would provide direct access onto Urbana Pike and leads to what would be a common central parking/loading area to be located to the rear of the structures. The placement of the parking area would meet the design criterion of placing parking and drive aisles to the side or rear of structures in the VC District. The applicant has also provided for a potential future transportation connection to parcels located to the east of the Site. An interim T-turnaround is provided on the northern edge of the paved vehicular area – reaching into Parcel 97 – and is adequate to serve emergency and other longer vehicles on the Site. In concept form, the driveway appears to be approximately 34 feet wide between Buildings #1 and #2. Staff will work with the Applicant to reduce the driveway width, especially at the front of the site, to 24 feet to reduce the amount of pavement.

The Site fronts along Urbana Pike (former MD 355) which will be turned over to County ownership in the near future. The County and SHA are cooperating on interim designs that allow for a reduced road section more appropriate to the planned village scale and function of the roadway. No elements of the proposed Concept Site Development Plan interfere with expected County improvements being considered as part of the ultimate street section imagined for this segment of the road. Staff will work with the Applicant as the project moves through the process to ensure that these improvements are integrated into the proposed plan.

Areas available for both on-site, and off-site (on-street) parking as well as loading space capacity appear generally adequate to meet the requirements of the mix of uses planned for this development. Detailed parking plans and calculations will be required at the time of Site Development Plan application. Careful consideration of on-site vehicular and pedestrian circulation will be given by Staff at the time of Type I Site Development Plan review to insure that the proposed pre-school drop-off and pick-up will function adequately during peak times.
Development Density
Non-residential density in the VC district is not limited explicitly other than by practical site, circulation, design, dimensional regulations, and infrastructure constraints. The residential development density of this proposal is approximately 1 dwelling/acre (net). VC-zoned parcels may not exceed 5 dwellings per acre in a Community Growth Area. If the Applicant moves forward with the combining of these four parcels, the inclusion of multiple structures on a single lot would necessitate that at least one residential dwelling be included to meet the requirements set forth in Section 1-19-7.500(B)(4).

Since the overall project includes 4 parcels totaling 2.37 acres, a maximum residential yield for all three projected phases could include up to 11 dwellings. The Applicant proposes a single residential apartment in the Casabella development which is well below the dwelling unit maximum and meets the intent for the inclusion of a residential component in the project.

Mixed Uses
Pursuant to Section 1-19-7.500(B)(4) regarding the encouragement of mixed use development in the Village Center Zoning District, the Applicant is including one residential dwelling (2nd floor apartment) in Building #4. The mixed use/multiple structure provisions for development within the Village Center zoning district require that a mix of integrated residential and commercial uses are provided. As a second story dwelling unit, the residential use is a component of the overall development and integrated into the proposed commercial portion of the project. In addition the Concept Plan submitted by the Applicant reflects a layout that can be expected to meet the 6 requirements listed in Section 1-19-7.500(B)(4) of the Zoning Ordinance at the time of Type I Site Development Plan review.
Service entrances, utilities, and other shared site infrastructure is more efficiently provided by grouping the proposed structures along the street frontage adjacent to the two structures that will remain. Creating a continuous building frontage along the roadway provides a separation between the common plaza/green area and site infrastructure.

The provision of at least 7,478 s.f. of common plaza/green area is accommodated in the layout of the Site Plan. However, a portion of the common plaza/green area appears to fall within the potential ultimate Urbana Pike right-of-way. Therefore, the Applicant shall identify additional common plaza/green area on-site to fulfill the minimum square footage requirement as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plaza/Green Area Required:</th>
<th>7,478 s.f.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(726 s.f. green area per 2,000 s.f. of GFA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Floor Area Proposed:</td>
<td>20,600 s.f. GFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaza/Green Area Proposed:</td>
<td>approx. 8,800 s.f.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the Applicant has specifically identified a total of approximately 8,800 s.f. of common plaza/green area with a portion that may need to be adjusted, many more square feet are available on-site. At least some of this square footage shall be incorporated into the common plaza/green area square footage calculation as the project moves forward through the development process.

Multiple public walkways separate the four buildings and provide access between the front building entrances and the parking areas. Approximately 30,000 s.f. of undeveloped area is also available at the rear of the site, primarily part of the existing Parcel 98. Some of this area will be dedicated to stormwater management systems or FRO easement areas.

Parking is illustrated as a shared resource in the proposed development. Staff will work with the Applicant as the project moves through the development process to ensure that this requirement is met. Specific parking details will be provided at the time of Type I Site Development Plan review.

An integrated mix of commercial and residential uses is provided. The layout, architecture, and scale of the structures and open areas will provide flexibility in future years as new users seek to locate in the mixed use complex.

No extant historic resources within the boundaries of the Site Plan area will be adversely impacted by development as proposed. The location of proposed Building #3 is identified as the site of the former Windsor House (Baker House) which was listed as a non-contributing structure on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Places inventory form F-7-63 prior to its demolition at some point after 1993.

Public Facilities
The Applicant proposes to extend public water and sewer service to the site by constructing connection lines north to the Villages of Urbana. At such time as public water and sewer is available to the site, the private well and septic system will be properly abandoned in compliance with Health Department regulations. The Site is currently classified S-4/W-4 in the County’s Water and Sewer Plan with the easternmost parcel (P. 28) currently S-5/W-5. A water and sewer plan designation change application has been submitted and is under review by the County.
Detailed Analysis of Development Standards

Concept Plan Approval for VC projects is required as provided in §1-19-7.500(D) of the Frederick County Zoning Ordinance.

Site Development §1-19-7.500 (D): Development requiring site development plan review, as provided in §1-19-5.310 Use Table, shall receive concept plan approval from the Planning Commission or its authorized representative as the first step in the development review process. The concept plan, submitted in conformance with §1-19-3.301.2 (B) shall demonstrate:

(a) The manner in which the Village Center Design Standards have been met by the proposed development;

- **Site Development and Layout** –
  - Every effort has been made by the Applicant to ensure that the proposed buildings face the public ways and internal, semi-public spaces.
  - The Applicant makes good use of the traditional village building form – multi-story structures with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses in the upper level.
  - On-site vehicular parking areas and associated drive aisles will be located to the side or rear of the structures.
  - The overall design of the project as a cluster of mixed use buildings in a village setting is served well by the shared parking regime proposed in the Concept Site Plan. The opportunity remains for on-street parking spaces as frontage improvements are reviewed and approved for the reconfigured Urbana Pike.
  - The proposed development has been designed around a simple internal driveway that facilitates efficient movement through and within the Site. The Applicant has proposed one full movement driveway onto Urbana Pike to occur in conjunction with the development. Secondary access to the site via Urbana Church Road could be accommodated if desired or required by the future development of the adjacent parcel on the eastern boundary of the Subject Site.
  - The proposed layout allows for both vehicular and pedestrian interconnections between the various uses on the property as well as the surrounding neighborhood. Short segments of sidewalk have been constructed across Urbana Pike in conjunction with recent site development on various lots. The construction of the new Urbana Elementary School later in this decade will result in a sidewalk connection immediately adjacent to the Casabella site (north side).
  - Refuse and recycling can be accommodated at a location on the Site with limited visibility from Urbana Pike. The specific location and required visual screening will be determined at the time of Type I Site Development Plan review.

- **Building Massing and Bulk** –
  - Village Center Footprint Thresholds §1-19-7.500(C)(4)(d)

Since Urbana is a growth area the following building footprint thresholds for non-residential uses would apply:

- Base Footprint Allowance – 5,000 s. f. within a community growth area.
- Interim Footprint Allowance – 8,000 s.f. w/ planning commission approval
- Maximum Footprint Allowed – 10,000 s. f. subject to additional criteria w/ planning commission approval
The proposed footprint of the largest of the four buildings shown on this Concept Site Plan is 4,400 s.f. and thus does not require special consideration by the Planning Commission.

- All of the buildings in this project are oriented to show their access/entry features to the public street and private internal drive where applicable. The concept plan maintains human-scaled architectural elements as illustrated in the conceptual architectural elevations for the renovations.

- Although specifics regarding materials and finishes will be determined at the time of Site Plan review, the visualization material submitted for the Concept Plan provides details of the proposed building shape, height, massing and window/door placement. The Applicant has submitted elevations and several three-dimensional renderings of the proposal. Staff has been working with the Applicant to ensure building design and finishes that are internally cohesive and respectful of the structures in the vicinity of the Site.

**Dimensional Regulations (Height and Setbacks)**

Per §1-19-7.500(B)(3) the VC district provides for the establishment of dimensional standards on a site-by-site basis, using adjoining and facing buildings as a guide. The building heights proposed at a maximum of 30’ and no more than 2 stories are intended to match/complement the existing house on Parcel 97. The proposed setbacks, were calculated based on the averages of existing and facing buildings as required by the VC district provisions and will serve to reinforce a more pedestrian-friendly local streetscape. The Concept Plan includes an indicator (red line) of the approximate location of the ultimate right-of-way as determined in previous applications for redevelopment of this site (AP 15826).

**Findings/Conclusions**

Based upon the review and analysis as provided above, Staff finds that the Concept Site Development Plan meets the intent of the Development Standards within the VC zoning district. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant as the project moves through the Type I Site Development Plan process to address all outstanding items as discussed within the Staff Report. Staff anticipates that the application will meet the site plan review criteria as set forth in §1-19-3.300.4 including items related to site development, transportation, parking, public utilities, natural features, and common areas.
Other Applicable Regulations

**APFO – Chapter 1-20:**
The Applicant will be required to meet all Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) at the time of Type I Site Development Plan review.

**Forest Resource – Chapter 1-21:**
Concept Site Plan review triggers the submission of a Forest Stand Delineation (FSD), which identifies areas for reforestation, afforestation, and priority areas for conservation, including retention of specimen trees (trees over 30 inches in diameter at breast height). The Applicant has submitted two FSDs and Combined Preliminary/Final Forest Conservation Plans, one for each of the previous project phases.

Parcels 28 and 96 (FRO AP 15820), where proposed building #3 and #4 are located, contain no forest. Two specimen trees (45” Kentucky Coffee Tree and a 31” Silver Maple) are located in the front of the property, between Buildings #3 and #4 and are proposed to be saved. The required 0.12 acres of afforestation will likely be met by purchasing forest banking credits.

Parcels 97 and 98 (FRO AP 15828), where Buildings #1 and #2 will be located, contain 0.28 acres of forest. This forest is located in the rear “triangular” portion of the site. A 36” Black Walnut specimen tree is located within this forest stand. The FRO plan proposes to retain all of the 0.28 acre forest stand as well as the specimen tree, which will meet all FRO mitigation requirements for these parcels. However, the most recent submittal of the concept plan illustrates a stormwater management facility within a portion of the proposed forest easement and within the area of the specimen tree. The concept plan must be revised to match the FRO plan.

Condition:
The two Combined Preliminary/Final FRO plans must receive approval prior to site plan approval, and FRO mitigation must be provided prior to applying for grading or building permits, whichever is applied for first. The Applicant will continue to design the development to limit impacts to the three specimen trees noted above.

**Historic Preservation – Chapter 1-23:**
No existing historic or cultural resource is adversely affected by the proposed Site Plan. The site proposed for Building #3 is identified as the site of the former Windsor House (Baker House) which was listed as a non-contributing structure on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Places inventory form F-7-63 prior to its demolition at some point after 1993.

**Findings/Conclusions**
The Applicant will be required to address these other applicable regulations as part of the Type I Site Development Plan approval process moving forward after this Concept Site Development Plan has been approved.
RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve this Concept Site Development Plan with the following conditions to be addressed at Site Development Plan application.

1. Applicant will work with Staff to finalize the design of the common plaza and green areas so that they provide maximum functionality for proposed and future users of the Site.

2. The Applicant shall maintain a clear area along the eastern boundary of parcel 28 such that a future interconnection can be made between the parking area of this Site and Urbana Church Road.

3. Prior to signature approval of the Concept Site Development Plan the Applicant shall identify additional areas to be utilized to meet the minimum 7,478 square foot common plaza/green area requirement.

4. Planning Commission approval of the maximum footprint for Building 1 (1,500 sf), Building 2 (4,400 sf), Building 3 (3,600 sf), and Building 4 (3,000 sf) with the number of stories as presented and a maximum height of 30’

5. Planning Commission approval of the setbacks as proposed on the Concept Plan and as established based on existing structures to remain on Parcel 28 and 97.

6. Care shall be taken by the Applicant to maintain the architectural integrity of the existing structure on Parcel 97.

7. No Type I Site Development Plan which is based on this approved Concept Site Development Plan may be approved by the Planning Commission until such time as DUSWM and the Health Department concur that all water and sanitary sewerage issues have been addressed adequately by the Applicant.

8. The two Combined Preliminary/Final FRO plans must receive approval prior to site plan approval, and FRO mitigation must be provided prior to applying for grading or building permits, whichever is applied for first. The Applicant will continue to design the development to limit impacts to the three specimen trees noted in the Staff Report.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

MOTION TO APPROVE
I move that the Planning Commission APPROVE Concept Site Development Plan #SP06-04 (AP-16307) for the proposed Casabella Commons with conditions as specified in the Staff Report.
EXHIBIT 2 – Project Renderings