Publix gets variance for new Clemson location

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — Six variance requests proposed for Publix have been approved by the Clemson Board of Architectural Review.

Board Chairman Russ Hebert III said he felt the topographical uniqueness of the Freedom Drive site led to the board's approval.

"The design team worked diligently and did a professional job of offering an alternative given the uniqueness of that site," Hebert said.

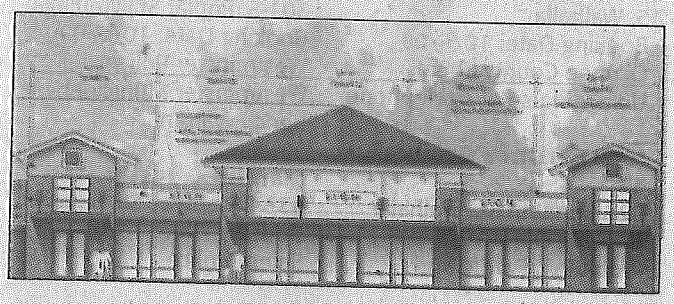
The six variances requested by the Hamilton Property Group included: Decreasing tree canopy coverage; Modifying the site plans to allow portions of the service routes to overlap with customer circulation; modifying the parking lot design to be relieved from the smaller lots within the larger lot in certain areas as shown on the site plan; relief from the glass coverage requirement of 40 percent at street level; allowance for smooth block on the rear elevation of the store; and Increasing the height of the light fixtures within the vehicle use area to 33 feet.

Bob Vecchio, zoning director for the City of Clemson, commended the Hamilton Property Group for realizing that "one size fits all" regulations don't apply to developments such as Freedom Drive.

Architect Lisa Lanni sais the store would feature trees and vegetation to screen the store's view, lighting and multiple retaining walls from nearby residents. She added that another variance request, increasing the height of the light fixtures from 18 to 33 feet would lessen hot spots and glare.

Not everyone was thrilled with the variance requests. Paul Schliefer, a Rippleview Drive resident, said he is disappointed in the process.

"They (Hamilton Property Group) knew what they were getting into," said Schliefer, who is concerned about the impact the development will have on his townhouse. "Every variance we grant is one more concession that our rules really don't count. The simple truth is we can vote what we want."



FOR THE JOURNAL

A rendering is shown of the proposed Publix store, the anchor for Gateway Village, a 77,540-square-foot commercial complex to be located on Freedom Drive between U.S. Highway 123 and S.C. Highway 93.