A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, was held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, on Monday, July 21, 1969, at 2:00 o'clock p.m., with Mayor John M. Belk presiding, and Councilmen Fred D. Alexander, Sandy R. Jordan, Milton Short, John Thrower, Jerry Tuttle, James B. Whittington and Joe D. Withrow present. 141

Absent: None.

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INVOCATION.

The invocation was given by Councilman Milton Short.

MINUTES APPROVED.

Upon motion of Councilman Jordan, seconded by Councilman Tuttle, and unanimously carried, the minutes of the last Council Meeting, on July 7, 1969, were approved as submitted.

RESOLUTION OF CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA, APPROVING A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND THE FEASIBILITY OF RELOCATION FOR NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM NO. N.C. A-3, PROJECT NO. N.C. A-3-(1).

Mr. Vernon L. Sawyer, Executive Director of Redevelopment Commission, stated this is a hearing on the fourth amendment to the Redevelopment Project No. 2 which comprises most of the Governmental Center. That there are two changes proposed in this plan. One is a text change in the Plan and the other is cost adjustment. The change in the text removes the parking requirement that is presently a blanket requirement on the entire Governmental Center area; this removes the requirement from that portion below Second Street, between Second Street and Independence Boulevard where the Second Ward High School is located, or the future Metropolitan High School.

Mr. Sawyer stated this amendment removes the requirement that they construct parking in a structure by January 1, 1974; this was a commitment that the Redevelopment Commission made at the public hearing at the time it was approved because at that time the location of the Educational Center was in doubt; that once that site was sold and nailed down, it was agreed this requirement would not operate against the school.

The other change is in the financing plan which increases the cost to catch up with the normal increase in construction to take care of the increased requirements and higher standards for the construction of McDowell Street. From the beginning this was just to be re-surfacing, the final decision was to widen it and improve it as it is being done at the present time. He stated there are other costs and increases which result from additional credits that the Redevelopment Commission has re-calculated in the light of more recent events, some credit flowing to the Governmental Center from the fact that the Post Office is going to be located just across the street and they are including this for technical reasons as part of the Governmental Center in order to give the City more credit. All in all, it does not increase the cost to the City beyond the amount of money that is presently in the proposed bond issue, which is \$1.8 million.

Mr. Sawyer stated he has furnished a list of the changes with an explanation to the Council.

No opposition was expressed to the proposed change in zoning.

Councilman Tuttle moved the adoption of subject resolution, which was seconded by Councilman Short, and carried unanimously.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolutions Book 6, beginning at Page 348.

HEARING ON AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN, REDEVELOPMENT SECTION NO. 4, BROOKLYN URBAN RENEWAL AREA, PROJECT NO. N.C. R-43.

Mr. Vernon Sawyer, Executive Director of Redevelopment Commission, stated this project contains the area that has become known locally as "blue heaven"; that Council has been forwarded a list of the changes. That the first change is a change in the text, referring to the section where the Redevelopment Commission reserves the right to approve plans for development they are merely changing the wording there to up-date it and to clarify it. He stated to up-date it because in the architectural profession the words concept drawings means more than schematic drawings, design development plans clarifies preliminary plans and final construction plans substitutes for final architectural and engineering working drawings and specifications. That it is recommended by their architectural and planning consultant, Dean Harlowe McClure, Dean of the School of Architecture at Clemson University. On the basis of his recommendation and because they have encountered some difficulty in interpretation of the kinds of plans they receive at different stages, they recommend the changes.

He advised the other change is in the grade of the proposed streets; there was a minimum grade of .5 of 1% and a maximum grade of 5% but because the State Highway Commission has found it necessary to increase the grades of the off-ramp from the expressway to a maximum of 8%, they recommend that change, together with a minimum of .8 of 1% to meet highway department specifications.

Mr. Sawyer stated the other land use is illustrated on the four maps which are included with the plan and legally form a part of it. He pointed out the four maps and noted the uses to which the land would be devoted.

He stated these maps illustrate the boundary, the present land use, the futur land use and the proposed development scheme, titled Preliminary Site Plan. The land uses that were already listed in the plan permit parks, commercial uses, office buildings and several other uses which have already been approved. In order to develop this plan to any other particular scheme, it was not necessary to change the land uses. The other change recommended is change in the budget and in order to accomplish the scheme which is illustrated on the preliminary site plan, a combination of commercial land and park land - the park land being dedicated for public use, all costs that are necessary to improve it to create a lake, to grade and landscape the area would be creditable towards the city's 1/3 share of the project cost. The present budget for this project is \$900,539.00; to accomplish this scheme, it would cost the city \$883,469.00, that is below the original budget and would give the city a "pooling credit", a credit which would go over to another project, of some \$145,340.00.

Mr. W. Crutcher Ross, a local architect, reviewed his involvement with the Blue Heaven Project. He stated some years ago, as Chairman of Charlotte Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee, he worked very diligently to see that this area of approximately 40 acres was converted as a park for the people of Charlotte. That his committee and the Chamber Board felt this was a worthy project and a chance for a green finger parkland to extend into the future Downtown Charlotte development. He stated a resolution was passed unanimously by the Chamber Board backing this project for a total park for the people. It was found the Independence Expressway System would eat up approximately 22 acres of public development; this being so, there were two strong factions pushing for development of this area, one being all park and the other being all commercial; since he was involved with the Sugar Creek development with Alvin Groves and Associates, they were asked to see how the development of blue heaven could relate to the Sugar Creek Concept and to suggest a workable concept. That they developed a concept to try to develop a plan whereby they could accomplish two things. One, create a park atmosphere with open spaces and people places with asthetic values and two, establish a plan which would be attractive to commercial developers that would help to defray cost of the land. If this design was approved by the Council and the Redevelopment Commission, they were directed to prepare a plan with this basic concept in mind, staying within a budget of approximately \$900,000.00. At the time, they were told

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the Redevelopment Commission proposed to place the creek flowing through the property into a concrete culvert, at a cost of approximately \$500,000.00 Their approach then was to develop this park-like lake, dam, sidewalk paving, etc., staying within the \$500,000.00.11mits. Their estimates for the lake area included: (a) Excavation and Site Grading; (b) Concrete Lining of the Lake; (c) Dam and Watefall; (d) Pedestrian Bridges and Walks, and Plazas. Their estimated cost was approximately \$400,000.00; this being so, they felt if the Redevelopment Commission had already budgeted \$500,000 for this stream to be put into a concrete box, then we were \$100,000 under their budgeted estimate and they recommended the concept which is before Council today.

Mr. Ross pointed out the Independence Expressway as it comes through the property, taking up the land by the Post Office; there will be a ramp off Independence Expressway coming across the road and back down by the Post Office. That since Pearl Street Park is already located as a park, they would extend the finger of park land through the blue heaven area over to McDowell Street. He stated their concept at all times was a compromise to give the people of Charlotte as much park and open land as possible. They proposed to place the lake, and at the same time place a dam with approximately 20 feet of fall so there would be a dam and waterfall to take the water back down to the existing Sugar Creek.

Mr. Ross stated their concept was to take the whole area which was not commercial sites - No. 4, No. 1 and No. 2 - would be envisioned as parkland, with the lake being a part of the parkland; they felt to get interest in a park you have to have activity. They proposed small shop type arrangements within the concept and within the lake area; some kind of shop interest had to be introduced into this area so there was shopping around the lake. That to make the area accessible to the people, there should be parking. So they put parking off McDowell Street in such a manner to get it out of the main park area with only 3.5 minutes walking into the center of the whole project. They propose that each of the commercial developments have its parking at this point; and also at this point more parking would be for the public, so that the citizens could drive into the area and be able to shop in the area, to be able to mill through, and just give the whole area a lot of excitement.

Mr. Ross stated their first concern was for a total park in this area which started with his Committee in the Chamber of Commerce; the compromised solution presented was exactly that - the compromise for park, land and commercial development. The Commission has now proposed a solution based no on the original concept of a completely open park but based on the compromise that he has outlined - this compromise of a compromise disregards the original idea which was to provide a badly needed open park for the people of Charlotte. From what he can see the open spaces are not readily accessible for people who are not connected with the commercial development; elimination of public parking deprives the public of easy access. He stated if this plan by the Redevelopment Commission is our only alternative, then we need to restudy the whole area, and evaluate its use for more open spaces and also for people places.

Mrs. Marie Wonsey, President of League of Women Voters, stated the League urges the Mayor and Council, as leaders of Charlotte, to do anything possible to see that we have park areas downtown; that we are fortunate to have downtown acreage vacant and waiting to be developed into something vital, exciting and stimulating to the downtown economy - a place residents and visitors will want to visit. She stated we lost the Rose Garden to highways; we lost the proposed zoo and the stadium area off Irwin Creek and West Trade to highways. This area was designated as a Park in the Master Plan presented as part of the last bond issue. Now will we lose this area too and face the danger of the people losing faith in future plans presented to them? That State Legislator Art Jones said: 'We urge you to reject the idea that our citizens are slavishly materialistic and insensitive to the deeper realities of better living. Charlotte is adding hourly to its fundamental tax base. But if we are not to build a

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tax-based Frankenstein that will eventually destroy us, then let us give balance to our lives by providing for soul food, for beauty, for culture, for delight of open space that can give us renewed faith in our destiny and in ourselves."

Mrs. Wonsey stated parks cost too much only for cities that think small. That parks are an investment, the very best investment Charlotte can make. They will pay unlimited dividends to us and to our children for years and years to come.

Mr. Hugh Casey, Attorney and former Assistant Solicitor of the Mecklenburg County Superior Court, stated his remarks will be aimed at two points -(1)- the cost of having a park and (2) the cost of not having a park.

He stated some may say to dedicate the land to parks will cost a loss of tax base. But it is not acreage that determines tax revenue but the use of land; it is hard to imagine that subtracting 22 acres of vacant land from hundreds of acres of vacant land, which lie in the center area of the City of Charlotte, will have any effect on the tax base. If the land is not used for a park, will it be used commercially? Why do not the investors use the hundreds of vacant acres which surround this little 22 acre tract; if the area is suitable for a motel, why do not the investors buy and finish the eyesore of a motel which lies between the creek and King Drive, along the border of this 22 acre tract. Is it logical when there is literally hundreds of acres, all privately owned in the intercity of Charlotte, that suddenly 22 acres will be developed commercially? Is it not more logical that this 22 acres will remain vacant land, and if we are lucky, may have a motel one day; or is it more likely that it will be carved up into bits and pieces and perhaps used as another car sales lot?

Mr. Casey stated thousands of people use Freedom Park every day; and these people do not all come by cars; you can see scores and scores of children coming - some on foot, some on bicycles - coming from quite a distance if you judge by the ragged clothes many of them wear. That these children should be considered. Some will ask how much the park will be used? He asked of what use is a park and what are its possibilities in the years and generations to come? That he can counter with question of Old Ben Franklin - "Of what use is a new born baby?" Mr. Casey stated if this land is used only as a park, it will cost the City approximately \$2.0 million; if it is used as a park and water side development, it will cost the City about \$900,000 or \$1.0 million. These figures represent 1/3 of the actual cost; the other two-thirds being borne by the federal government That these figures are all estimates but to use this principally as park will cost the city approximately \$1.0 to \$2.0 million.

Mr. Casey stated turn the coin over and examine the other side - what will it cost the City of Charlotte if there is not a park in the Blue Heaven area? What type of human enviornment will we choose in Charlotte? All of us in Charlotte want to live in a clean, safe and pleasant enviornmental neighborhood with a feeling of community and security; but is this the kind of city we are to have? Will our city be one where a handful of air conditioned buildings rise like dead slabs, surrounded by thousands of acres of squalored residential areas, become chief commercial districts, used car lots with the only green living plant life to be found in weedchoked vacant lots filled with refuse and all this prinkled over with empty beer cans, broken bottles, and abandoned cars. In this city a maze of highways which crosscross and breakups what neighborhoods once existed so that the whine and roar of traffic deadens the air while a fog of pollution chokes the lungs. That this cannot be Charlotte, but Charlotte is already approaching this picture. What of those people who are trapped in the City by lack of education or by the lack of money with the misery of their existence being made more horrible by the knowledge there is a better life; and this life is kept ever out of reach. In this tale of the cities, society breaks down; social disorganization is the order of the day, and crime increases at a fantastic rate. Crime is increasing at

at four times the population growth. In Charlotte the areas with the high crime rate are to the west side, First Ward and beyond as the slums spread out ever further. Mr. Casey stated he speaks from being a prosecutor in Superior Court; and you can talk to any Detective and he can tell you the same. Last year according to the budget, \$4,294,990 was spent for the Police Department; according to Superior Court Judge Allen Quinn, in 1960 the expense of keeping one prisoner in jail was \$1400 a year, and the cost of crime in North Carolina was \$500 million.

Mr. Casey stated if Charlotte is allowed to become like Chicago or Los Angeles, we may likely have a riot - what does a riot cost. Just the question alone evokes a scene of hundreds of thousands in a frenzy of violence - killing, burning,looting; and all this is inflicted upon those who can least protect themselves; those who have been condemned to live in the city. He stated when the enviornment of the City becomes so inhuman that the city becomes abandoned with block after block of decaying buildings,what happens? The entire tax base of the city crumbles - not just a mere 22 acres but millions upon millions of dollars of once fine real estate rots away. This is the cost of not having a park. Does the park seem so expensive now; just a fraction of the cost of one year's operation of the Police Department.

Mr. Casey told of Sergeant Black, a policeman in Charlotte, who many years ago started a small park just big enough for a ball field in North Carolina and over a period of many years he met and coached the boys of one of the roughest sections in Charlotte. How many boys he kept from becoming criminals is not known; in our society we only calculate the losses and not the gains when it comes to crime. That he is sure Sergeant Black, with his little park did more to prevent crime than any heavy-handed judge, prosecutor or jail. That Sergeant Black saw a need and took the need to be his duty. Mr. Casey stated here the need of a park is clear. He asked if it is Council's duty to answer that need? He stated one little park will not change our society - no more than one Sergeant Black kept our society free from crime; but is not every Sergeant Black and every park we can get needed?

Mr. Casey concluded by saying that we spent almost \$5 million dollars to catch criminals in Charlotte last year and we spend more millions to house and feed them where we turn them into even worse criminals. He asked if a fraction of that amount cannot be spent for a park to prevent crime? That Council has the power to determine what kind of city Charlotte will become and this decision is theirs and will indicate the course which they wish to follow; the future lies within their hands. If the leaders are without vision, the people perish.

Mrs. Rufus Jones stated she is deeply interested in running a day care center on the street along side Earle Village; the credit for starting this belongs to the Welfare Department and Mr. Sawyer; they have 35 children and it is for them and their friends that she wants to make the plea for a downtown park. The parents of these children lived in Blue Heaven and Brooklyn and have migrated from force to the area of Earle Village - they need a downtown park; the houses have everything except good yards; they look out on little dark yellow clay yards. When they cannot stand the apartments another minute, they pick them all up and take them to Freedom Park; they need a park downtown. Mrs. Jones stated their older brothers and sisters bring the little children in the mornings and pick them up in the afternoons - that when school is out they stand around in little bunches in front of coca-cola places, in front of stores or go in droves hunting something, they don't know what. They need a park. She said they can furnish their children food, some safety, teach them how to get along with each other and how to get along with others, but they cannot give them a park.

Mrs. Irene Haim presented the following four points in favor of turning Blue Heaven into a park:

- (1) An excerpt from a speech of Governor Luther Hodges at a C & D Board Meeting in Charlotte some years ago: "Too often ugliness is a by-product of mushroom growth; don't let this happen to Charlotte." He stressed the importance of planning to make Charlotte one of the most beautiful cities in America as well as the largest in the Piedmont Crescent. She stated a Blue Heaven park could be a step in this direction.
- (2) Mr. R. W. Gamble, another important visitor to Charlotte some years ago, commented very highly on the beauty of Charlotte and its surrounding area; that he was particularly impressed with the wealth of beautiful trees and Charlotte's preservation of them; that of all the cities he had visited in the southeast none could overshadow Charlotte's beauty; from a business standpoint, that Charlotte's growth was responsible in a large degree for its amazing industrial and residential growth since location desirability from a living standpoing carries a lot of weight in selecting sites for expanding enterprises in both business and manufacturing.
- (3) Charlotte's lack of outward response to the Blue Heaven redevelopment project today has left the impression of disinterested public. She stated they have made a poll which proves this is a false impression; it also proves that Charlotteans almost 100% favor a blue heaven park. The poll, although brief, represents a cross section of Charlotte and they did not poll teenagers.
- (4) Tax-wise. This beautiful area converted into a downtown park could be a far greater long range asset than the limited number of small non-governmental businesses that this area would accommodate.

Mrs. Haire stated if Charlotte cannot afford to develop the area right now, then why not earmark it for development at a later date; there is not another available site in downtown Charlotte that comes close to blue heaven as a beautiful and desirable site for a public park.

Mrs. Mary Gillett stated you come away from Mexico City thinking what a beautiful city it is; and you think that because there are two parks beginning at the 400-year old City Hall and going up the beautiful street to the end of the city; that they do not worry about parking as they do not have cars, and they get to these parks by the thousands every Sunday and holidays; they come on public transportation and bring their families; students come, tourists come and old people come just to sit out their days - they enjoy the park. That Salt Lake City, Utah has the most beautiful trees she has ever seen, and it is because they care; they brought water down from the mountains and irrigated it and along the streets have a greater varity of hardwoods than any city in America has.

Mrs. Gillett stated Abbott Park which was given to Charlotte as a gift is suddenly gone and is going under concrete. That a year or so ago the papers had an article about our leaders going to San Antonio, Texas; that she was delighted as she thought there is a river no bigger than Sugar Creek, and think what we could do for Charlotte with that; but something happened, they got the two trips, but we did not get the park. That she thinks the City owes the people something for taking the roses and trees and turning them into highways. She stated they are also owed compensation for Earle Village - that drab, tree-less area that sticks out like a sore thumb right in the middle of Downtown. That she does not know why housing must always end a blight.

She stated the Council works hard; it gives a good government, an honest government and spends long hours, and it is appreciated, but she asked that one more thing be given - "give us a little space, a little beauty downtown."

Councilman Short stated for the record that the Council Members paid their own expenses to San Antonio.

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Mr. Jack Pentes, Designer, stated last night and this morning the world and mankind, for a rare moment in history, were united, witnessing a single act. In the Sea of Tranquility on the surface of the moon, all mankind felt closer seeing our astronauts there. Mr. Pentes requested Council to set aside the plans that have been discussed today, and to appoint and fund adequately a special commission to explore the question of blue heaven and to include on that Commission, an architect, member of the Park and Recreation Commission, attorney, banker, member of the Redevelopment Commission, representative from the Chamber of Commerce, minister, doctor, teacher, writer, musician and an artist, and charge this group of citizens with studying this question and presenting to Council for its consideration, a plan, or alternate plan, for turning the entire blue heaven area into a park. He requested further that Council so move that this park be called "Tranquility Park", for tranquility is a state of being; it is to have a quieting effect; he requested further that the Mayor communicate with the President of the United States and request from him at the conclusion of the use of our scientist a portion of the moon surface to enshrine in the Park Tranquility to be located in the blue heaven area of our city.

Mr. Peter Gerns, Attorney, stated he does not think there should be a need to debate this subject of a park; that many people think Charlotte is a city without soul; he asked that this not be proven right; our standard of living is not a high standard of living; it depends on what you count - whether you count television sets, bath tubs or automobiles or whether you count the mode of living in the way of life. That we in Charlotte have not that much to be proud of. He mentioned Tivoli Park in Copenhagan, English Park in Munich, and the parks of Canton, Ohio and stated they were built by far-sighted men who knew that someday the citizens of those cities needed those few spaces of recreation, which we do not have in Charlotte. He stated Council has this burden to provide this city with this park regardless of cost, and he joins with Mr. Pentes in saying this matter should be re-submitted to a committee of Council's creation to be re-studied to where it can become a useful park.

Also speaking for the park was Mr. George Cole, a designer and Mr. Tommy Robinson, representative of the Inter-City Residents Committee.

Councilman Tuttle stated back in 1965 he discovered blue heaven; it was a shamble of run-down houses, old cans and filth; but with the filth there was potential beauty for there were trees, greenry, rolling land and a little stream winding its way through weeds, old tires, garbage and debris of every description; it was worthless looking land, and now four years later it is apparently still worthless, considering the lack of interest in it. Back in 1965 there were those who joined him in thinking it was extremely valuable land if put to its best use - a park, a place for people, a place of beauty, a preservation of open space too swiftly disappearing in the metropolitan area; it was argued by opponents to a park that promises had been made to place the land back on the tax books by turning it over to commercial development. Now years keep rolling by with little interest being shown by these developers. Further the picture has changed dramatically in the years since urban renewal came along; Charlotte is ready to burst at its seams and make the necessary concrete plans for the preservation of some open space before we wake up to asphalt and grime. In October, 1965, he proposed that some 44 acres of blue heaven area be converted to a park; blue heaven had dwindled to 22 acres, and now it is down to 18; its value has been put from many millions of dollars down to some three hundred odd thousand dollars - apparently it is not worth very much.

Councilman Tuttle stated on last January 27th, this Council approved a plan whereby we might have a little cake and eat it too. The plan was to allow nine acres to be converted into a park and the remaining land developed commercially. It was hoped that the park atmosphere would enhance the value of the commercial land to the extent that the increased value would partially, if not fully, offset the park project, and it was to be a real park. It included a parking area, lake, beautiful dam and waterfall; it contained walks, people-oriented shops and room for recreation. That was the compromise - from 44 acres down to nine. But this plan before Council today proposes four things. One, reduce the park again, this time to 7 acres. Two, eliminate all public parking. Three, cut out the beautiful dam and waterfall. Four, wind up with a parklike atmosphere with little value to anyone except the commercial developers. It will not be park for the people as was the intent of this Council when it adopted the present concept. The park would cost money, but not \$1,386,000 as reported in the Charlotte Observer on July 17; nor \$883,468 referred to the plan of the Redevelopment Commission, but \$864,073 for the former and \$361,542 for the latter. Someone keeps forgetting that based on the current valuations the city is going to have to pay approximately \$521,927 as its 1/3 share of the loss in this project. In other words take \$521,927 off park estimates - that is already gone, it is already spent. The Redevelopment's escavation estimates for the seven acres of park are \$55,000 higher than those furnished by our consulting engineer and given him by two different Charlotte construction firms; they are \$20,000 higher on bridges; they have included \$100,000 for water filteration system, said to be unnecessary by our engineer; and they have added \$30,000 for culverts not called for by our engineer. The total questionable difference is \$205,000 and entirely too much for either set of figures to be assumed correct at this time. That no one needs to tell him of the acuteness of the financial problems we face; and no one needs to tell him there are priorities to face; nor does anyone need to tell him that 20 years of no real action on the part of this city to provide substantial open land for the future is not too long.

Councilman Tuttle moved that the Mayor appoint a committee composed of an architect, and lawyer and of a character mentioned by Mr. Pentes and they be asked to work with the Redevelopment Commission and come back to Council in 60 days with a proposal for the use of all the blue heaven land - if in the meantime a private developer comes along with an offer that will give us some sort of cake and eat it too plan, then we can re-evaluate the whole situation. Councilman Alexander seconded the motion with the following amendment - "that this Committee be composed of representatives of the poor, both black and white." Councilman Tuttle accepted the amendment and the motion carried unanimously.

HEARING ON AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN, REDEVELOPMENT SECTION NO. 5, BROOKLYN URBAN RENEWAL AREA, PROJECT NO. N. C. R-60.

The public hearing was held on the subject amendment.

Mr. Vernon Sawyer, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Commission, stated this is a hearing on a project for which there is already an approved plan; this is an amendment to that plan. The plan consists of a text change and five maps which are illustrated on boards in the Counci! Chamber.

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Mr. Sawyer stated a change in the text is recommended to wdate and make/ understandable certain references in the plan that the Redevelopment Commission requires to be approved before deeding the land. They are changing the references, schematic drawings, preliminary plans and final