WOOLLEY ENGINEERING

October 16, 2023
Revised: January 15, 2024 & February 27, 2024

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Syd Shoaf, Senior Planner
County of Albemarle, Virginia

From: Mr. Eric Woolley, PE
Woolley Engineering

Regarding: **PREAPP202300090 Charlottesville Climbing Gym (TM 60 P 46C)**
Amendment to SP201200001
2200 Old Ivy Road
Special Use Permit Amendment Narrative

Introduction:

The proposed climbing gym will provide a safe, clean, and modern facility, focused on providing the benefits of the sport of rock climbing to the community. A focus of the gym will be on introducing the sport rock climbing to children, young adults and at-risk youth. The benefits of rock climbing include physical fitness, mental strength, stress reduction, improved confidence, fun and enjoyment, social interaction, and outdoor adventure. It's written in Rock Revolution's Mission Statement that their goal is to create a thriving community where climbers of all levels feel included, inspired, and supported.

In addition to offering rock climbing, the gym will have a yoga studio, strength and conditioning space, a small group meeting space for birthday parties and a dedicated kids climbing zone with 30 foot tall walls to develop the previously listed benefits of rock climbing. The nearest climbing gym that offers these amenities is located over an hour away in Richmond. Currently, members of the Charlottesville community, including the UVA climbing team, drive to Richmond for this experience. Our goal is to provide a facility with these amenities for individuals of the Charlottesville community in Charlottesville.

Project Proposal:

The developer would like to remodel the existing building located at 2200 Old Ivy Road. This request is to expand the building and provide additional square footage of the structure to be utilized as an indoor athletic facility. The zoning for the property is Commercial Office (CO) which allows for indoor athletic facilities by Special Use Permit. The existing building on the subject parcel is currently mixed use with office space, retail and a portion of the building used for an indoor athletic facility by Special Use Permit SP201200001. The current Special Use Permit was approved for use of up to 2,000 square feet (sf) of the building to be used as an

indoor athletic facility. The proposed request is for up to 6,125 square feet of indoor athletic facility use.

Description	Net Area (sf)	Percentage of Site	Percentage of Building
Entire Site	40,809	100	-
Existing Building	13,400	32.8	100
Proposed Office Space (associated with gym)	250	0.6	1.9
Proposed Recreation Area	6,125	15.0	45.7

The intended use for the proposed new building addition would include: climbing, bouldering, a strength and fitness area, yoga space, kids zone, retail space, locker rooms, storage, a group fitness room, and a small office associated with the gym use. The gym's hours of operation would be from 6am – 9pm daily. The gym will offer drop-in opportunities, memberships and youth programs.

The subject parcel is located within the Entrance Corridor (EC) overlay district. Due to the change in elevation across the site and split floor building entrances, there are two existing parking lots each with their own drive entrances onto Old Ivy Road. The parcel abuts the CSX Buckingham Branch Railroad line to the south. Access to the western portion of the property is possible through an access easement with the adjacent parcel to the west. No other improvements are located on the abutting western property. Office buildings and the Old Ivy Inn Restaurant are located a little further to the west. A small portion of the northern property line is located across from Ivy Garden Apartment complex. The majority of the northern property boundary is across the road from University of Virginia facilities and athletic fields.

Existing vegetation and wooded areas are currently present along most of the property boundaries. A thick planting of bamboo is located along the western and southern boundaries. A few mature trees and ornamental trees are located along the northern boundary. There are shrubs between the northern parking lot and Old Ivy Road. There is an existing 10' easement dedicated to "VA Telephone and Telegraph Co." running along the entire northern boundary of the property. Additional trees are proposed outside of this easement as shown on the concept plan. Shrubs are proposed on the concept plan to screen the southern parking lot from Old Ivy Road.

A building remodel of the existing structure is intended with this concept plan. The proposed improvements will raise a portion of the existing building to a three-story structure. The proposed building height with this remodel will be thirty-two feet and four inches (32' – 4"). This is measured from the mean finished grade at the street to the top of the proposed roof deck. The existing building measured in the same fashion is sixteen feet and one inch tall (16' – 1"). For additional information, see the attached sheet titled "Building Height Calculation" within the concept plan package. The total existing parking for the property is 49 parking spaces. The total parking spaces include two (2) employee parking spaces and forty-seven (47) visitor parking spaces. There are two (2) ADA handicap accessible parking spaces located on the site – one within each of the two parking lots. The two existing parking lots on the subject parcel are proposed to remain unchanged with this Special Use Permit.

A portion of the site (approximately 143 sf) is designated by the County of Albemarle to be within the "Steep Slopes – Managed Overlay". The steep slopes are located in the southern-most corner of the site. This area of the site is not proposed to be disturbed with this project.

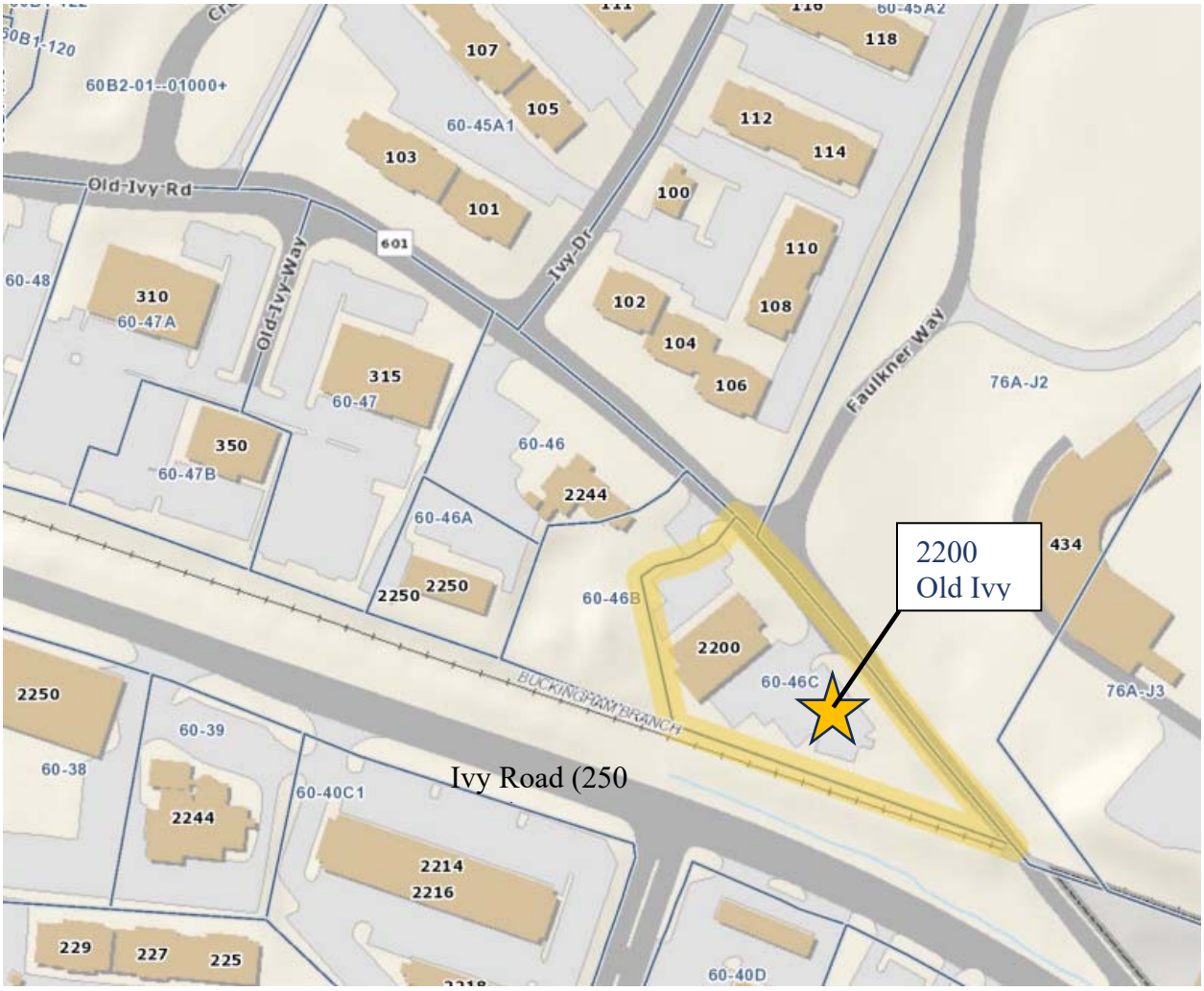


Figure 1: Project Location Map
Source: Albemarle County GIS Web Mapping

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:

The Comprehensive Plan area for the subject parcel is development area Neighborhood 7. The Comprehensive Plan land use designation for the parcel is Community Mixed Use. The primary use for this designation is for retail and service uses and office uses serving the community. Other recommended uses in this district are townhouses, apartments, and attached housing units, places of worship, public and private schools, early childhood education centers (day care centers and pre-schools), public uses and institutional uses. A maximum single-building footprint of no greater than 60,000 sf is recommended in the Comprehensive Plan and the existing building footprint is proposed to remain.

The Comprehensive Plan land use recommendation for this parcel allows for a mix of retail and service uses serving the community. The proposed use of the property offers an additional indoor athletic facility option for nearby residents and office users. The proximity of the surrounding community to the subject parcel allows for patrons living nearby the option of an easy commute or walkability to the facility.



Figure 2: Comprehensive Plan Designation Map
Source: Albemarle County GIS Web Mapping

Impacts on Public Facilities & Public Infrastructure:

Minor traffic increases are anticipated during the most active gym days. Previous traffic volumes experienced with the existing use suggest that the existing parking illustrated on the attached concept plan would likely not be exceeded. Improvements are proposed to the existing bicycle parking facilities. These improvements include additional bicycle storage and bicycle capsule storage.

Impacts on Environmental Features:
Existing site vegetation is proposed to remain. Tree protection measures will be used during construction to preserve existing vegetation. Screening buffers are proposed to be maintained and enhanced between the subject property and the existing roadway. The landscape to the north shall consist of double staggered rows of select vegetation and screening vegetation. Landscape screening to the east will consist of preserved existing vegetation and trees. The landscape screening material will be chosen to maintain the character of the surrounding area.

We look forward to working with you and County staff to bring this plan to realization.

Sincerely,

Eric Woolley, PE

Attached: (1) Special Use Permit Comment Response Memo

Cc: Mike Kinnick, Developer
Robert Nichols, Formworks Architecture