

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2020-14: Regents School of Charlottesville, Inc. – Initial
Review Type	Initial Site Plan
Parcel Identification	07500-00-00-06600 and 07600-00-00-01700
Location	North of I-64, south of Reservoir Rd., west of Trinity Presbyterian Church (Figure 1)
Zoned	Residential (R1), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Regents School of Charlottesville, Inc./Shimp Engineering (Justin Shimp)
Magisterial District	Samuel Miller
Proposal	To construct a private school with associated site improvements on approximately 19 acres.
Context	The subject property is currently wooded and undeveloped. A tributary of Moore’s Creek runs along the south side of the parcels. Foxhaven Farm is across reservoir Road to the north. Low density residential uses are nearby. Trinity Presbyterian Church is to the east. The I64/Rt. 29 Bypass interchange is adjacent to the south side of 76-17.
Visibility	The proposed development is expected to have some visibility from the I-64 and Rt. 29 Bypass corridors. The degree of tree removal required to develop the site as proposed will reduce the wooded buffer that borders the corridors. Some buildings are expected to be seen through the trees, the development may be viewed from a distance on I-64, and illuminated lights in the athletic field may also be visible through trees.
ARB Meeting Date	March 2, 2020
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

PROJECT HISTORY

The ARB has reviewed no previous proposals for this site. The Special Use Permit for the school use was approved in September 2019. Design Planning staff comments were provided during the review of the Special Use Permit. Potential concerns included the visual impacts of athletic field lighting, the amount of grading and retaining walls, and the degree to which the development would be visible from the ECs.

ANALYSIS

Gray highlight = means the guideline can't be reviewed at initial site plan stage, but recommendations can be provided for final

Yellow highlight = means the guideline can only be reviewed for location/configuration at the initial plan stage

Regular text = means the guideline can be reviewed at initial plan stage, can be made a condition of initial plan approval, and can be the basis for denial

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	GENERAL GUIDELINES		
1	The goal of the regulation of the design of development within the designated Entrance Corridors is to insure that new development within the corridors reflects the traditional architecture of the area. Therefore, it is the purpose of ARB review and of these Guidelines, that proposed development within the designated Entrance Corridors reflect elements of design characteristic of the significant historical landmarks, buildings, and structures of the Charlottesville and Albemarle area, and to promote orderly and attractive development within these corridors. Applicants should note that replication of historic structures is neither required nor desired.	Architectural designs have not yet been provided, so the compatibility of individual buildings with local historic landmarks cannot be determined at this time. Given the distance from the streets, building style and details may not have a big impact on the ECs. The size and organization of the overall development, with the athletic field as a primary element (particularly when illuminated), are not reflective of traditional architecture. It is anticipated that the wooded buffer to remain along the ECs will help promote an orderly and attractive development.	Provide architectural designs for review.
2	Visitors to the significant historical sites in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area experience these sites as ensembles of buildings, land, and vegetation. In order to accomplish the integration of buildings, land, and vegetation characteristic of these sites, the Guidelines require attention to four primary factors: compatibility with significant historic sites in the area; the character of the Entrance Corridor; site development and layout; and landscaping.		
	<i>Compatibility with significant historic sites:</i>		
3	New structures and substantial additions to existing structures should respect the traditions of the architecture of historically significant buildings in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area. Photographs of historic buildings in the area, as well as drawings of architectural features, which provide important examples of this tradition are contained in Appendix A.	Architectural designs have not yet been provided, so the compatibility of individual buildings with local historic landmarks cannot be determined at this time. Given the distance from the streets, building style and details may not have a big impact on the ECs.	Provide architectural designs for review.
4	The examples contained in Appendix A should be used as a guide for building design: the standard of compatibility with the area's historic structures is not intended to impose a rigid design solution for new development. Replication of the design of the important historic sites in the area is neither intended nor desired. The Guideline's standard of compatibility can be met through building scale, materials, and forms which may be embodied in architecture		

	which is contemporary as well as traditional. The Guidelines allow individuality in design to accommodate varying tastes as well as special functional requirements.		
	<i>Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor</i>		
5	It is also an important objective of the Guidelines to establish a pattern of compatible architectural characteristics throughout the Entrance Corridor in order to achieve unity and coherence. Building designs should demonstrate sensitivity to other nearby structures within the Entrance Corridor. Where a designated corridor is substantially developed, these Guidelines require striking a careful balance between harmonizing new development with the existing character of the corridor and achieving compatibility with the significant historic sites in the area.	Architectural designs have not yet been provided, so the compatibility of individual buildings with other development on the corridors cannot be determined at this time.	Provide architectural designs for review.
	<i>Compatibility with significant historic sites</i>		
9-16	Structure design	Architectural designs have not been submitted with the initial plan. Buildings are arranged in groups around decking that varies in height from 3' to 12'. A condition of the Special Use Permit limits building height to 2 stories. Although individual buildings may not have a significant impact on the ECs, the overall development is sizeable and, together, the buildings, field and parking could have a significant impact. Updated site sections could help clarify the anticipated level of visibility and degree of architectural review required. (Sections were provided during the Special Use Permit review, but the site layout and grading proposal have changed since that time.)	Provide architectural designs for review. Provide site sections to clarify the anticipated level of visibility of the various components of the development from the Entrance Corridors.
	Accessory structures and equipment		
17	Accessory structures and equipment should be integrated into the overall plan of development and shall, to the extent possible, be compatible with the building designs used on the site.	Information on accessory structures and equipment is not provided on the plan.	Update the plans to include information on accessory structures and equipment.
18	The following should be located to eliminate visibility from the Entrance Corridor street. If, after appropriate siting, these features will still have a negative visual impact on the Entrance Corridor street,		

	screening should be provided to eliminate visibility. a. Loading areas, b. Service areas, c. Refuse areas, d. Storage areas, e. Mechanical equipment, f. Above-ground utilities, and g. Chain link fence, barbed wire, razor wire, and similar security fencing devices.		
19	Screening devices should be compatible with the design of the buildings and surrounding natural vegetation and may consist of: a. Walls, b. Plantings, and c. Fencing.		
21	The following note should be added to the site plan and the architectural plan: "Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated."	The note appears on the cover sheet of the site plan set.	None.
22-31	Lighting	Nine light poles are shown at the parking lot, but details on the fixtures have not been provided. The illumination of the athletic field was an area of concern during the review of the Special Use Permit. The applicants conducted a balloon test to help assess potential visibility of the proposed 70'-tall athletic field lighting and a lighting industry representative was consulted regarding the availability of full cutoff athletic lighting. The balloon was minimally visible, and certain technical specifications were identified that would make the lighting comply with full cutoff requirements. Consequently, concerns about the impacts of the lighting on the ECs was reduced.	Provide a complete lighting plan for review.
	Landscaping		
7	The requirements of the Guidelines regarding landscaping are intended to reflect the landscaping characteristic of many of the area's significant historic sites which is characterized by large shade trees and lawns. Landscaping should promote visual order within the Entrance Corridor and help to integrate buildings into the existing environment of the corridor.	Visual order along the ECs will be promoted by maintaining a substantial wooded buffer.	See below.
8	Continuity within the Entrance Corridor should be obtained by planting different types of plant materials that share similar		

	characteristics. Such common elements allow for more flexibility in the design of structures because common landscape features will help to harmonize the appearance of development as seen from the street upon which the Corridor is centered.		
32	Landscaping along the frontage of Entrance Corridor streets should include the following: a. Large shade trees should be planted parallel to the Entrance Corridor Street. Such trees should be at least 3½ inches caliper (measured 6 inches above the ground) and should be of a plant species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 35 feet on center. b. Flowering ornamental trees of a species common to the area should be interspersed among the trees required by the preceding paragraph. The ornamental trees need not alternate one for one with the large shade trees. They may be planted among the large shade trees in a less regular spacing pattern. c. In situations where appropriate, a three or four board fence or low stone wall, typical of the area, should align the frontage of the Entrance Corridor street. d. An area of sufficient width to accommodate the foregoing plantings and fencing should be reserved parallel to the Entrance Corridor street, and exclusive of road right-of-way and utility easements.	Wooded area to remain is adjacent to the EC streets, so new frontage trees are not required. However, the “new tree line” does not appear to be accurate.	See #41.
33	Landscaping along interior roads: a. Large trees should be planted parallel to all interior roads. Such trees should be at least 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground) and should be of a plant species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 40 feet on center.	Street trees are shown along the school side of Reservoir Road.	None.
34	Landscaping along interior pedestrian ways: a. Medium trees should be planted parallel to all interior pedestrian ways. Such trees should be at least 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground) and should be of a species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 25 feet on center.	A system of decks and concrete walks connects the proposed buildings. The schematic landscape plan shows the “approximate location of [individual] preserved trees” and some added trees near some of the decks and sidewalks. The “new tree line” establishes a wooded edge along the buildings and decks.	None.
35	Landscaping of parking areas: a. Large trees should align the perimeter of parking areas, located	Interior parking lot trees are provided at the required quantity. Perimeter trees are	Provide parking lot trees at 2½” caliper at planting.

	40 feet on center. Trees should be planted in the interior of parking areas at the rate of one tree for every 10 parking spaces provided and should be evenly distributed throughout the interior of the parking area. b. Trees required by the preceding paragraph should measure 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground); should be evenly spaced; and should be of a species common to the area. Such trees should be planted in planters or medians sufficiently large to maintain the health of the tree and shall be protected by curbing. c. Shrubs should be provided as necessary to minimize the parking area's impact on Entrance Corridor streets. Shrubs should measure 24 inches in height.	provided on the west and south sides of the parking lot at 40' on center. The east side of the parking lot abuts the lower school building group. Proposed tree planting sizes are smaller than the EC requirements. Given the topography of the site, parking lot trees	
36	Landscaping of buildings and other structures: a. Trees or other vegetation should be planted along the front of long buildings as necessary to soften the appearance of exterior walls. The spacing, size, and type of such trees or vegetation should be determined by the length, height, and blankness of such walls. b. Shrubs should be used to integrate the site, buildings, and other structures; dumpsters, accessory buildings and structures; "drive thru" windows; service areas; and signs. Shrubs should measure at least 24 inches in height.	Architectural designs have not been submitted for review. The largest proposed building is the gymnasium at 80' x 110'. Long building elevations aren't expected to be an issued.	None at this time.
37	Plant species: a. Plant species required should be as approved by the Staff based upon but not limited to the <i>Generic Landscape Plan Recommended Species List</i> and <i>Native Plants for Virginia Landscapes (Appendix D)</i>.	Plant species have not been identified.	Provide a complete plant schedule for review.
38	Plant health: The following note should be added to the landscape plan: "All site plantings of trees and shrubs shall be allowed to reach, and be maintained at, mature height; the topping of trees is prohibited. Shrubs and trees shall be pruned minimally and only to support the overall health of the plant."	The plant health note does not appear on the plan.	Add the standard plant health note to the plan.
	Site Development and layout; Development pattern		
6	Site development should be sensitive to the existing natural landscape and should contribute to the creation of an organized development plan. This may be accomplished, to the extent practical, by preserving the trees and rolling terrain typical of the area; planting new trees along streets and pedestrian ways and choosing species that reflect native forest elements; insuring that	The building layout has a generally organized appearance. Buildings are not oriented parallel to the EC street, but the wooded area to remain mitigates this. Pedestrian and vehicular connections are provided. Wooded area to remain, a	None.

	any grading will blend into the surrounding topography thereby creating a continuous landscape; preserving, to the extent practical, existing significant river and stream valleys which may be located on the site and integrating these features into the design of surrounding development; and limiting the building mass and height to a scale that does not overpower the natural settings of the site, or the Entrance Corridor.	stream, stream buffer, and steep slopes are shown between the proposed buildings and the EC streets. The mass and height of individual buildings are not expected to overpower the setting.	
39	The relationship of buildings and other structures to the Entrance Corridor street and to other development within the corridor should be as follows: a. An organized pattern of roads, service lanes, bike paths, and pedestrian walks should guide the layout of the site. b. In general, buildings fronting the Entrance Corridor street should be parallel to the street. Building groupings should be arranged to parallel the Entrance Corridor street. c. Provisions should be made for connections to adjacent pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems. d. Open spaces should be tied into surrounding areas to provide continuity within the Entrance Corridor. e. If significant natural features exist on the site (including creek valleys, steep slopes, significant trees or rock outcroppings), to the extent practical, then such natural features should be reflected in the site layout. If the provisions of Section 32.5.2.n of the <i>Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance</i> apply, then improvements required by that section should be located so as to maximize the use of existing features in screening such improvements from Entrance Corridor streets. f. The placement of structures on the site should respect existing views and vistas on and around the site.		
	Site Grading		
40	Site grading should maintain the basic relationship of the site to surrounding conditions by limiting the use of retaining walls and by shaping the terrain through the use of smooth, rounded land forms that blend with the existing terrain. Steep cut or fill sections are generally unacceptable. Proposed contours on the grading plan shall be rounded with a ten foot minimum radius where they meet the adjacent condition. Final grading should achieve a natural, rather than engineered, appearance. Retaining walls 6 feet in height and taller,	Substantial grading is proposed around the athletic field but, overall, grading is significantly reduced from the what was illustrated with the Special Use Permit application. (Figure 2) Stepped retaining walls are proposed at the south corner of the field; a single wall is proposed at the north corner of the parking lot. Walls are	None.

	when necessary, shall be terraced and planted to blend with the landscape.	also shown at the sport court and the plaza. The walls are not expected to have a visual impact on the EC streets.	
41	No grading, trenching, or tunneling should occur within the drip line of any trees or other existing features designated for preservation in the final Certificate of Appropriateness. Adequate tree protection fencing should be shown on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping and erosion and sediment control plans.	Individual existing trees are not identified on the plan, so the extent to which grading extends into the drip lines of trees to remain can't be determined from the plan. Tree protection fencing is not shown on the plan. A "new tree line" is shown on the schematic landscape plan, but it does not account for proposed utilities.	Revise the plan to show an accurate "tree line to remain". Show tree protection fencing on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping, and erosion and sediment control plans.
42	Areas designated for preservation in the final Certificate of Appropriateness should be clearly delineated and protected on the site prior to any grading activity on the site. This protection should remain in place until completion of the development of the site.		
43	Preservation areas should be protected from storage or movement of heavy equipment within this area.		
20	Surface runoff structures and detention ponds should be designed to fit into the natural topography to avoid the need for screening. When visible from the Entrance Corridor street, these features must be fully integrated into the landscape. They should not have the appearance of engineered features.	Plans show stormwater detention facilities east of the lower school buildings, west of the upper school buildings adjacent to the athletic field, and at the west end of the field. The facilities are not expected to be seen from the ECs, but construction of the facilities requires tree removal that, in turn, opens up the view of the site.	Revise the plan to show a "tree line to remain" that accounts for proposed stormwater facilities.
44	Natural drainage patterns (or to the extent required, new drainage patterns) should be incorporated into the finished site to the extent possible.		

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. Visibility of the proposed development from the ECs.
2. Degree of architectural review required.

Staff recommends that the ARB forward the following recommendations to the Agent for the Site Review Committee:

- Regarding requirements to satisfy the design guidelines as per § 18-30.6.4c(2), (3) and (5) and recommended conditions of initial plan approval:
 - Prior to Initial Plan approval the following items shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the ARB:
 - The ARB recommends approval of the Initial Plan without conditions.
 - Note that a Certificate of Appropriateness is required prior to final site plan approval.
- Regarding recommendations on the plan as it relates to the guidelines: None.
- Regarding conditions to be satisfied prior to issuance of a grading permit:
 1. Show tree protection fencing on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping, and erosion and sediment control plans.
- Regarding the final site plan submittal:

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required prior to final site plan approval. The following items and all items on the ARB Final Site Plan Checklist must be addressed:

 1. Provide architectural designs for review.
 2. Provide site sections to clarify the anticipated level of visibility of the various components of the development from the Entrance Corridors.
 3. Update the plans to include information on accessory structures and equipment.
 4. Provide a complete lighting plan for review.
 5. Provide parking lot trees at 2½” caliper at planting.
 6. Provide a complete plant schedule for review.
 7. Add the standard plant health note to the plan: *“All site plantings of trees and shrubs shall be allowed to reach, and be maintained at, mature height; the topping of trees is prohibited. Shrubs and trees shall be pruned minimally and only to support the overall health of the plant.”*
 8. Revise the plan to show an accurate “tree line to remain” that accounts for all proposed development, including proposed utilities and stormwater facilities.
 9. Show tree protection fencing on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping, and erosion and sediment control plans.

TABLE A

This report is based on the following submittal items:

Sheet #	Drawing Name	Drawing Date/Revision Date
C1	Cover	1-21-2020
C2	SP Application Plan & Conditions	1-21-2020
C3	SP Application Plan & Conditions	1-21-2020
C4	Existing Conditions	1-21-2020
C5	Site Plan Overview	1-21-2020
C6	Site Plan	1-21-2020
C7	Site Plan	1-21-2020
C8	Grading & Utilities Plan	1-21-2020
C9	Grading & Utilities Plan	1-21-2020
C10	Off-Site Sewer Connection	1-21-2020
C11	Road Plan	1-21-2020
C12	Road Plan	1-21-2020
C13	Road Plan	1-21-2020
C14	Schematic Landscape Plan	1-21-2020



Figure 1: Vicinity map.

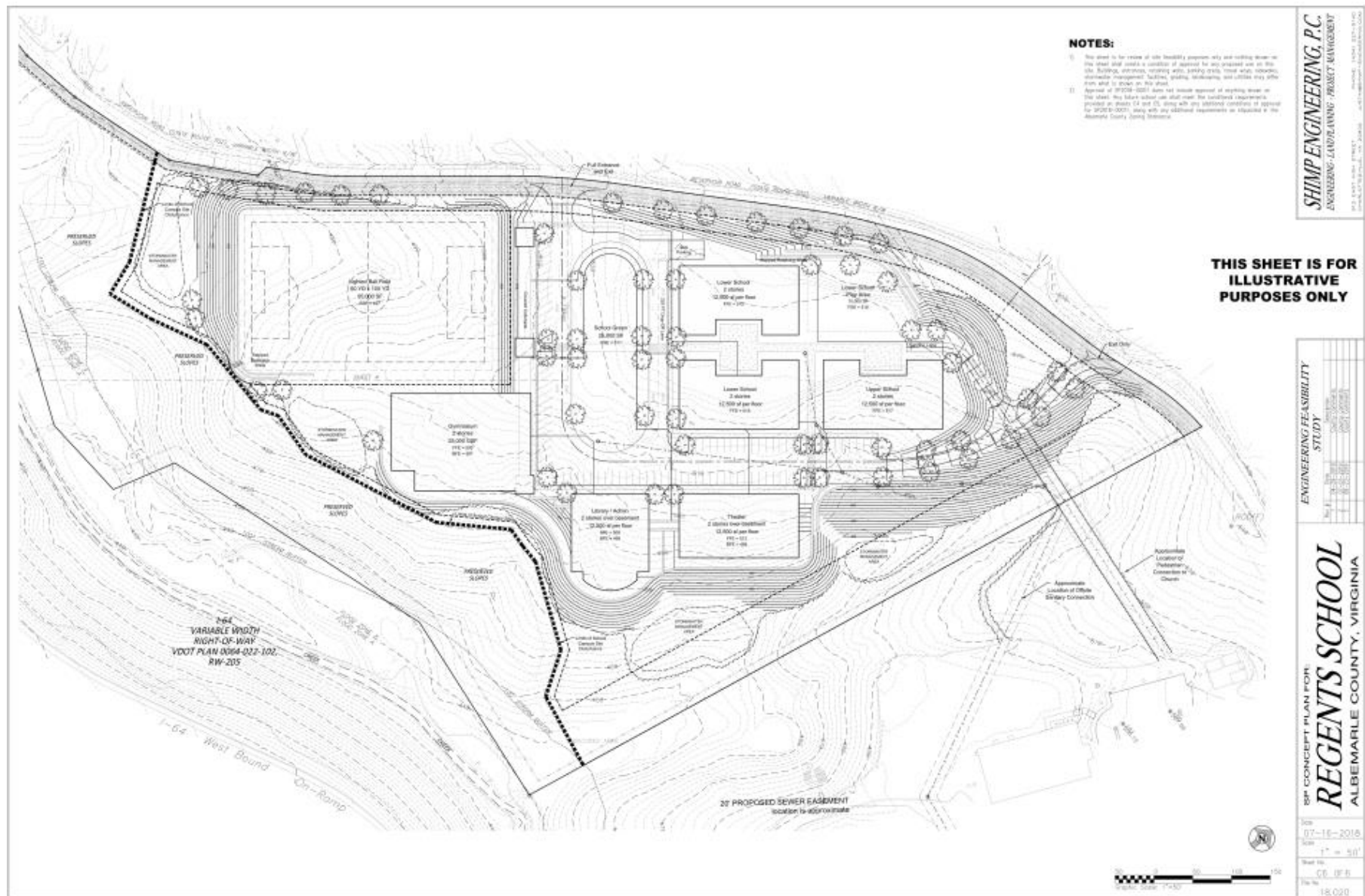


Figure 2: Feasibility study submitted with Special Use Permit application.