

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2013-26: Albemarle Business Campus
Review Type	Initial Site Development Plan and first review of an architectural design
Parcel Identification	07600-00-00-046A0 and 07600-00-00-05400 and 07600-00-00-046F0 (part)
Location	Rt. 631 at Rt. 780 (See Figure 1.)
Zoned	Residential (R2) / Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	5 th Street Forest LLC / Shimp Engineering (Justin Shimp)
Magisterial District	Samuel Miller
Proposal	To construct a mixed-use development consisting of apartments, retail and office buildings, a hotel and a self-storage building.
Context	The surrounding area includes the County Office Building at 5 th Street, apartment communities, and the Region Ten Community Services Board office building, as well as single family detached residences.
Visibility	All the buildings in the portion of the development located east of Old Lynchburg Road, including the storage building, will be readily visible from the 5 th Street Entrance Corridor. The apartment buildings proposed for the portion of the development west of Old Lynchburg Road are located further from the EC street (over 400' away), with some residences and wooded area between, but the 3- and 4-story heights will make the apartment buildings visible above and beyond the smaller scale residences that are closer to 5 th Street.
ARB Meeting Date	December 7, 2020
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

PROJECT HISTORY

The ARB has reviewed no previous proposals for this site. A rezoning (ZMA-2019-03) was approved for this property in October 2020.

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
	<i>Purpose; Compatibility with significant historic sites; Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor; Structure design</i>		
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.	The brick and its use at the base of the building, and the treatments related to the corner entrance elements have a basis in traditional architecture, but the overall design does not reflect the traditional architecture of the area. The vinyl film-covered windows, the placement of CMU panels, the extensive use of EIFS, the extent of the brick bases on the side elevations, the minimal height increase of the corner storefront elements and the lack of returns at the tops of those elements are non-traditional features that outweigh the traditional components. The number and variety of elements do not contribute to an overall unified appearance.	Revise the storage building design to provide greater organization and unity among the various building elements.
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.		
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.		
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.		
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.		
9	Building forms and features, including roofs, windows, doors, materials, colors and textures should be compatible with the forms and features of the significant historic buildings in the area, exemplified by (but not limited to) the buildings described in Appendix A [of the design guidelines]. The standard of compatibility can be met through scale, materials, and forms which may be embodied in architecture which is contemporary as well as traditional. The replication of important historic sites in Albemarle County is not the objective of these guidelines.		
10	Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.	Several buildings are proposed, but no physical connecting devices are used. The applicant's narrative suggests that all the buildings in the development will have a coordinated appearance. As the first building to be constructed, the materials, colors and details of the storage building will set the tone for the overall development. Proposed materials include off-white and beige EIFS, light and dark grey CMU, and white and black brick. Samples have not been provided.	Provide material/color samples for review.
12	Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.		
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.		
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.	The building measures 230' long and 90' wide and is approximately 42' tall. The brick base, awnings, and storefronts at both ends of the building help establish an appropriate scale.	None.
13	Any appearance of "blankness" resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.	Much of the wall area is without windows, but blankness doesn't predominate due to the distribution	None.

		of materials and colors, and the scoring of the EIFS panels.	
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The building does not appear to be a trademark design.	None.
16	Window glass in the Entrance Corridors should not be highly tinted or highly reflective. Window glass in the Entrance Corridors should meet the following criteria: <i>Visible light transmittance (VLT) shall not drop below 40%. Visible light reflectance (VLR) shall not exceed 30%. Specifications on the proposed window glass should be submitted with the application for final review.</i>	Some of the windows are proposed with a vinyl film covering to hide the storage units. The applicant offers, as an alternative, replacing the windows with additional EIFS panels in a gray color. The gray EIFS panels are not a successful solution. Clear glass without a film coating is appropriate for the ECs.	Eliminate the film coating from the windows.
	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.	Dumpster locations appear to be appropriate for the EC. The architectural drawings show a 3'-tall parapet to be used for screening rooftop equipment. The equipment is not shown on the drawings; equipment often exceeds 3' in height.	Provide additional information to show that the 3'-tall parapet is sufficient to screen rooftop 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.		
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.	Stormwater features are proposed underground.	None.
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 site plan, but not on the architectural plans.	Add the standard equipment visibility note to the architectural plans.
22-31	Lighting	Lighting is not included in the initial site plan.	None at this time.
	Landscaping		
7	The requirements of the Guidelines regarding landscaping are intended to	With nearly 800' of frontage on 5 th	None.

	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.	Street, the row of large shade trees along the EC will help establish a consistent, orderly and harmonious appearance along the corridor.	
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.	Large shade trees 3.5" caliper at planting are shown spaced 35' on center along the EC frontage. Smaller ornamental trees are irregularly interspersed among the shade trees. No conflicting utilities are shown along the frontage. Additional trees are also shown along the parking lot perimeters that are adjacent to the EC, and a group of trees is added at the southeast corner of the site. Note: the applicant does not plan to install the EC frontage trees with the Block 5 development.	Consider installing the EC frontage trees with the first block that is constructed.
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.	No trees are proposed along Old Lynchburg and Mountainwood Roads. Trees at the required spacing are shown along Rt. 875, but they are on, or very close to, a water line. Trees at the required spacing are shown along the internal road in the eastern half of the development, but many of these are too close to storm pipes.	Provide large trees, 2½" caliper at planting, along Old Lynchburg, Country Green, and Mountainwood Roads, free of utilities and easements.
34	Landscaping along interior pedestrian ways: a. Medium trees should be planted parallel to all interior pedestrian ways.	Trees are provided along all sidewalks in the eastern half of the	Where large shade trees are not already provided

	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.	development, except along Old Lynchburg Road (where large shade trees are required). In the eastern half of the development, sidewalks align the outer perimeters of the parking lot. Where the sidewalks are located between the parking and an apartment building, trees are not provided. Along some sidewalks (near the club house, for example) there appears to be sufficient space for trees, but none are provided.	to meet other requirements, provide medium trees, 2½” caliper at planting, along all paths and sidewalks.
35	Landscaping of parking areas: a. Large trees should align the perimeter of parking areas, located 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.	In the eastern half of the development, trees are provided along most parking lot perimeters; however, the middle of the northern perimeter is without trees and the spacing is too wide at the north end of the eastern perimeter.	Provide large trees, 2 ½” caliper at planting, 40’ on center along the perimeter of all parking areas.
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 only been provided for the storage building at this time. The need for landscaping to soften the appearance of exterior walls of the office, retail, hotel and apartment buildings will be determined when those designs are submitted for review. Note, however, that there is no planting area provided on the east side of the office and storage buildings. A row of trees is provided along the front of the storage building.	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>.	The proposed trees are found on the various lists.	None.
38	Plant health:	The note appears on the plans.	None.

	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.”		
	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 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.	The proposed development is arranged over multiple parcels of land and is divided by Old Lynchburg Road. The site layout in both parts of the development is generally organized. Buildings located along the Entrance Corridor street are oriented parallel to the street. The retail, office and hotel buildings will need to have fully designed fronts on elevations visible from the street, even though parking is to the side and/or rear as viewed from the EC. The site is currently wooded; all trees would be removed from the site to accommodate the proposed development. The rolling terrain will not be preserved, but the Block 5 building (and possibly others) will take advantage of the change in grade to reduce the perceived scale of the structure. Trees are proposed along the EC and internal streets. Sidewalks are proposed within the development and they connect to sidewalks along the nearby streets. A dog park is proposed at the north end of the eastern part of the development; there is no adjacent open space available for connection.	Note that the retail, office and hotel buildings will need to have fully designed fronts on elevations visible from the EC street.
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, when necessary, shall be terraced and planted to blend with the landscape.	Retaining walls are proposed in the eastern half of the development, including adjacent to the EC street at the proposed office building and park. The topography falls away from the EC street, so the height of the walls won't be visible, but some of the walls are not integrated with nearby site elements; for example, the wall at the southeast corner of the office building.	Integrate retaining walls with nearby site features.
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.	No trees are proposed to be retained.	None.
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.		
44	Natural drainage patterns (or to the extent required, new drainage patterns) should be incorporated into the finished site to the extent possible.	The utility plans show new stormwater pipes connecting to existing systems just east and west of the development.	None.

ATTACHMENTS

A – [ABC Initial Site Plan](#)

B – [ABC Partial Revised Site Plan](#)

C – [ABC Block 5 Storage Building Preliminary Architectural Plan](#)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. The overall site layout.
2. EC frontage trees: timing of planting
3. The architectural design of the storage building: proposed building materials, windows and applied film, the techniques used to break up the length/mass of the building; overall organization.

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:
 1. Prior to Initial Plan approval the following items shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the ARB: None.
 - The ARB recommends approval of the Initial Plan without conditions.
- Regarding recommendations on the plan as it relates to the guidelines:
 1. Consider installing the EC frontage trees with the first block that is constructed.
- Regarding conditions to be satisfied prior to issuance of a grading permit: None.
- 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. Revise the storage building design to provide greater organization and unity among the various building elements.
 2. Provide material/color samples for review.
 3. Eliminate the film coating from the windows.
 4. Provide additional information to show that the 3'-tall parapet is sufficient to screen rooftop equipment.
 5. Add the standard equipment visibility note to the architectural plans: Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.
 6. Consider installing the EC frontage trees with the first block that is constructed.
 7. Provide large trees, 2½" caliper at planting, along Old Lynchburg, Country Green and Mountainwood Roads, free of utilities and easements.
 8. Where large shade trees are not already provided to meet other requirements, provide medium trees, 2½" caliper at planting, along all paths and sidewalks.
 9. Provide large trees, 2 ½" caliper at planting, 40' on center along the perimeter of all parking areas.
 10. Note that the retail, office and hotel buildings will need to have fully designed fronts on elevations visible from the EC street.
 11. Integrate retaining walls with nearby site features.

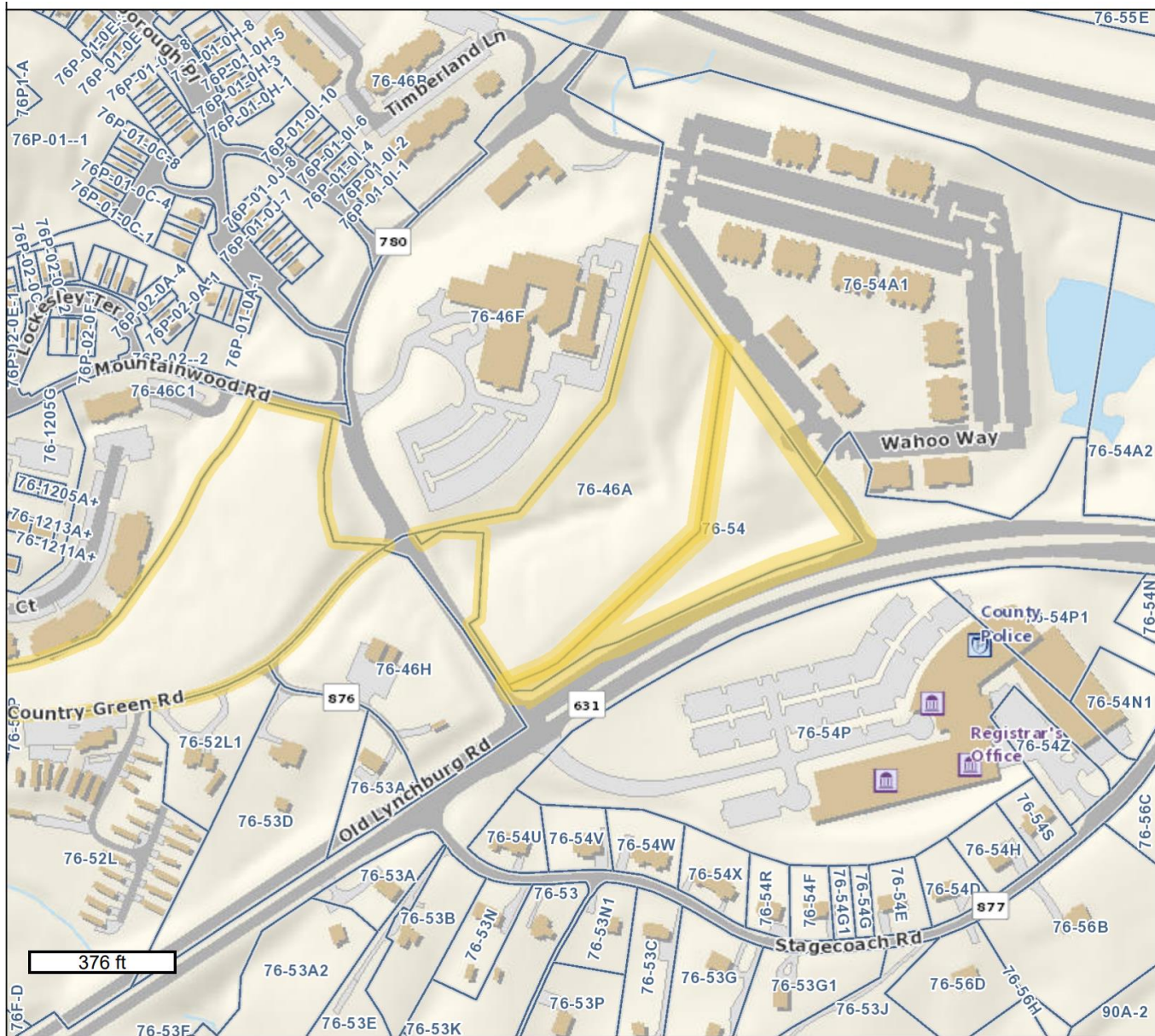


Figure 1: Project location and surroundings.

TABLE A This report is based on the following submittal items:

Sheet #	Drawing Name	Drawing Date/Revision Date
	INITIAL SITE PLAN	
C1	Cover	10-5-2020
C2	Existing Conditions: Overview	
C3	Existing Conditions	
C4	Existing Conditions	
C5	Site Plan	
C6	Site Plan	
C7	Site Plan	
C8	Grading & Utility Plan	
C9	Grading & Utility Plan	
C10	Landscape Plan	
C11	Landscape Plan	
C12	Landscape Plan	
C13	Landscape Details	
	PARTIAL UPDATED SITE PLAN	
C1 OF 2	Revisions to Initial Site Plan Submission 10-8-2020	10-26-2020
C2 OF 2	Revisions to Initial Site Plan Submission 10-8-2020	
	ARCHITECTURAL PLANS	
1	Cover	10-26-2020
2	Narrative	
3	Site Plan Block 5	
4	Existing Site Conditions vs New Development	
5	Exterior Elevations and Finish Materials	
6	Exterior Elevations	
7	Exterior Elevations – Alternative Option	
8	Schematic Floor Plans	