

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2021-49: Umansky Subaru Building Renovation
Review Type	Preliminary Review of a Site Plan and Architecture
Parcel Identification	04500-00-00-068D4
Location	On the west side of Routh 29 North, at the intersection of Hilton Heights Road and Route 29.
Zoned	Highway Commercial (HC), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Umansky Properties TOC LLC/Design Develop LLC (Kevin Schafer)
Magisterial District	Rio
Proposal	The applicant proposes to renovate the Umansky Subaru showroom building by applying ACM (aluminum composite material) panels on portions of the Rt. 29 elevation and the majority of the Hilton Heights Road elevation, by painting the existing brick and EIFS gray, by adding elements to the south and east elevations including towers and canopy. The renovation proposal also includes additions to the rear (west) elevation.
Context	The Umansky Subaru site is located in the heavily developed Rt. 29 commercial corridor. The Subaru building is located just south of the Umansky Auto Park (previously Brown) building. A Walmart is located directly to the south across Hilton Heights Rd. Just beyond the Walmart is the Price Chevrolet auto dealership, including the Hyundai showroom, which received ARB approval in 2011. To the west is Sam’s Club, and a Doubletree hotel is located to the north. A variety of commercial buildings stand on the opposite side of Rt. 29.
Visibility	The south elevation is readily visible from the intersection of Rt. 29 and Hilton Heights Rd. Although there is established landscaping along the Rt. 29 EC that will screen portions of the updated elevations from view, increased visibility is expected during the fall and winter seasons when there is less foliage on the trees.
ARB Meeting Date	June 7, 2021
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY

- Two Special Use Permits were approved for this site in 2003. SP-2002-64 was approved for outdoor display of vehicles and SP-2002-65 was approved for structured parking. A condition of SP2002-65 is: “The design of the Phase II building shall be compatible with the Phase I building, as determined by the ARB.” The Phase 1 building is the larger, northern building originally called the Brown Auto Park building, with the structured parking. The showroom for Subaru, the smaller, southern building, was completed as Phase 2 of the development. To maintain compliance with the conditions of the approved Special Use Permits, the proposed design for the renovation of the Subaru building must be compatible with the Phase 1 building.
- ARB-2003-116 received a Certificate of Appropriateness on December 18, 2003 and approved the original design of the Brown Auto Park building (the Phase 1 building at the north).
- ARB-2005-71 received a Certificate of Appropriateness on December 20, 2005 and approved the original design of the Brown Subaru building (the Phase 2 building at the south).

- In 2013, ARB-2013-139 was received as a proposal to renovate the Subaru building. the proposal included the removal of the stone entrance surround, addition of a slate icon tower, and addition of ACM panels over the stucco fascia at the south end of the building. The ARB did not approve this proposal. A Certificate of Appropriateness was issued for a revised design on November 19, 2013, allowing only the replacement of the fieldstone at the entry portal with slate veneer, and a narrow ACM panel and metal cap molding added at the top of the portal.
- Several sign applications have been approved for this development since 2005.

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	GENERAL GUIDELINES		
	<i>Purpose, Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor, Compatibility with significant historic sites</i>		
1	The goal of the regulation of the design of development within the designated Entrance Corridors is to ensure 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.	This portion of the Rt. 29 Entrance Corridor includes a mixture of small-and large-scale commercial buildings of varying styles and forms. The existing Subaru building and the Phase I building to the north, much like the immediate surrounding area, achieve a level of compatibility through the use of brick as the primary material. The Subaru renovation proposal would add a slate icon tower to the east elevation, remove the existing slate entrance element on the south elevation and add a new slate icon tower a short distance to the west, cover substantial portions of the existing brick and EIFS with ACM panels, paint the red brick and EIFS that are to remain gray, and maintain the blue stripe at the top of the walls. The forms (tower elements, canopy structure, and windows) introduced in the design help break up the length of the EC-facing elevation. However, the size, position and general character of the pick-up canopy result in a monumental element meant to highlight sold vehicles. A reduced footprint and alternate materials might reduce visual impacts. The existing south tower, which is an “entrance element”, is one way the building is visually connected to the north building. The removal and replacement of this element with an “icon tower” transitions the building to more of a trademark design, which is not supported by the design guidelines and was not supported in the 2013 proposal. The painting of the brick, the substantial use of ACM panels, and the slate icon towers are design elements that eliminate the compatibility of the Subaru (Phase II) building with the Phase I building that is required by SP2002-65. These features also remove the connection the Phase 2 design has to the historic architecture of the County and move the building firmly	The proposed design for the Phase II building is not compatible with the Phase I building. Revise the proposal to provide a design that maintains a connection to the historic architecture of the area and compatibility with the Phase I building. Options include, but are not limited to, reducing the size/scale of the pick-up canopy structure, reducing the amount of ACM panel used in the design, maintaining the red brick, using earth-tone colors.
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.	into the realm of trademark design.	
10	Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.		
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.		
12	Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.		
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	Overall, the proposal displays a strong connection to Subaru’s national branding scheme as displayed in the use of gray ACM panels, slate veneer icon towers, and the blue color stripe capping the elevations. As such, the design is about emphasizing corporate identity/trademarking, not compatibility in the EC and with the Auto Park (Phase I) building to the north.	
	Structure design		
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.	The addition of the tower element and windows along the east elevation help to enhance human scale but adding a tower element covered in slate emphasizes the trademark appearance of the building. While the addition of the vehicle pick-up canopy structure helps to break up the length of the building, its size, position and general character result in a monumental appearance.	See recommendation #1
13	Any appearance of “blankness” resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.	The tower element, canopy structure, and additional windows shown along the east elevation, as well as the existing landscaping along the building, help to relieve the blankness that exists in the current building design.	None.
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	No connecting devices are proposed in this proposal.	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>	The standard window glass note is not on the plans.	Revise the plans to include the standard window glass note.

	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.	There are no separate accessory structures proposed, but canopy structures are shown at the south end of the east elevation and along the west elevation. Changes along the west elevation are not expected to have a visual impact on the EC.	None.
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.	The existing roof-mounted mechanical equipment is screened by a parapet wall, and the renovation will not alter this condition. No new mechanical equipment is shown on the plans.	Indicate if any roof or ground-mounted equipment is proposed with the renovations to the building. If new equipment is proposed, show locations and show how that equipment will be screened from the EC.
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.	No screening devices are proposed.	None.
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.	No new stormwater facilities are proposed.	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 is present on the plans.	None.
22-31	Lighting	There is no new lighting shown for this site.	Indicate if any site or building-mounted lighting is proposed with the renovations to the building. If new lighting is proposed, provide complete details.
	Landscaping	The landscape plan proposes a few changes to existing landscaping, and shows some, but not all, of the previously approved landscaping.	Revise the landscape plan to show all previously approved landscaping, and further clarify the proposal to identify plants to remain, plants to be removed, and plants to be added.
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.	Established frontage landscaping is existing and is to remain in this renovation proposal.	None.
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.		
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.	It appears that some of the approved landscaping along Hilton Heights Road is missing. The approved landscaping successfully mitigated the parking and integrated the development into the Entrance Corridor. Maintaining the approved landscaping is important to maintaining orderly, harmonious and attractive development along the corridor.	Revise the landscape plan to provide show the correct quantity of shade trees along the parking area adjacent to Hilton Heights Rd.
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.		
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.	Other than the existing walkways along the east and south ends of the building, no interior pedestrian ways are proposed.	None.
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	The plan does not show all of the approved landscaping along the eastern end of the building. The approved landscaping successfully softens the appearance of the long extent of the exterior walls. Maintaining the approved landscaping is important in mitigating the	Revise the landscape plan to show all approved landscaping along the eastern end of the building.

	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.	long building elevations. Shrubs are proposed along the base of the canopy that is being added near the southeast corner of the building to screen the low retaining wall there.	
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> .	No plant species have been provided on the landscape plan.	Revise the landscape plan to include plant species.
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 standard plant health note is on the plans.	None.
	Site Development and layout		
	Development pattern		
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.	No changes are being made to the existing access to the site. The existing building is to remain parallel to the EC and the alterations to the existing on-site circulation patterns remain organized. The site has been previously developed. Some existing interior landscaping is proposed to be removed and replaced to accommodate the changes to the site. Views around the site are not expected to be negatively impacted.	None.
	Site Grading		
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	The site has been previously developed. Grading and retaining walls are proposed to establish the vehicle pick-up canopy.	None.

	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.		
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 landforms 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.		
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 grading appears to be proposed within the drip line of any existing trees or other existing features.	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 site has been previously graded. Drainage patterns are not changing.	None.
	Signs	Signage is reviewed and approved by separate submission. However, the following preliminary comments are provided. The ARB may require that the color and scale of standard templates for trademarks, service marks, corporate logos and graphics be modified. If internally illuminated, the backgrounds of the Subaru “Star Cluster” logos must be opaque.	Sign applications are required for all proposed signs.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. The compatibility of the Subaru building with the Phase I building.
2. The design of the Subaru renovation: the addition of trademark elements, the design and scale of the pick-up canopy.

Staff offers the following recommendations on the proposal:

1. The proposed design for the Phase II building is not compatible with the Phase I building. Revise the proposal to provide a design that maintains a connection to the historic architecture of the area and compatibility with the Phase I building. Options include, but are not limited to, reducing the size/scale of the pick-up canopy structure, reducing the amount of ACM panel used in the design, maintaining the red brick, using earth-tone colors.
2. Revise the plans to include the standard window glass note: *Visible light transmittance (VLT) shall not drop below 40%. Visible light reflectance (VLR) shall not exceed 30%.*
3. Indicate if any roof or ground-mounted equipment is proposed with the renovations to the building. If new equipment is proposed, show locations and show how that equipment will be screened from the EC.
4. Indicate if any site or building-mounted lighting is proposed with the renovations to the building. If new lighting is proposed, provide complete details.
5. Revise the landscape plan to show all previously approved landscaping, and further clarify the proposal to identify plants to remain, plants to be removed, and plants to be added.
6. Revise the landscape plan to provide show the correct quantity of shade trees along the parking area adjacent to Hilton Heights Rd.
7. Revise the landscape plan to show all approved landscaping along the eastern end of the building.
8. Revise the landscape plan to include plant species.
9. Sign applications are required for all proposed signs.

ATTACHMENTS

- **Attach. 1: ARB2021-49: [Umansky Subaru Building Renovation Site Plan](#)**
- **Attach. 2: ARB2021-49: [Umansky Subaru Building Renovation Architectural Drawings](#)**

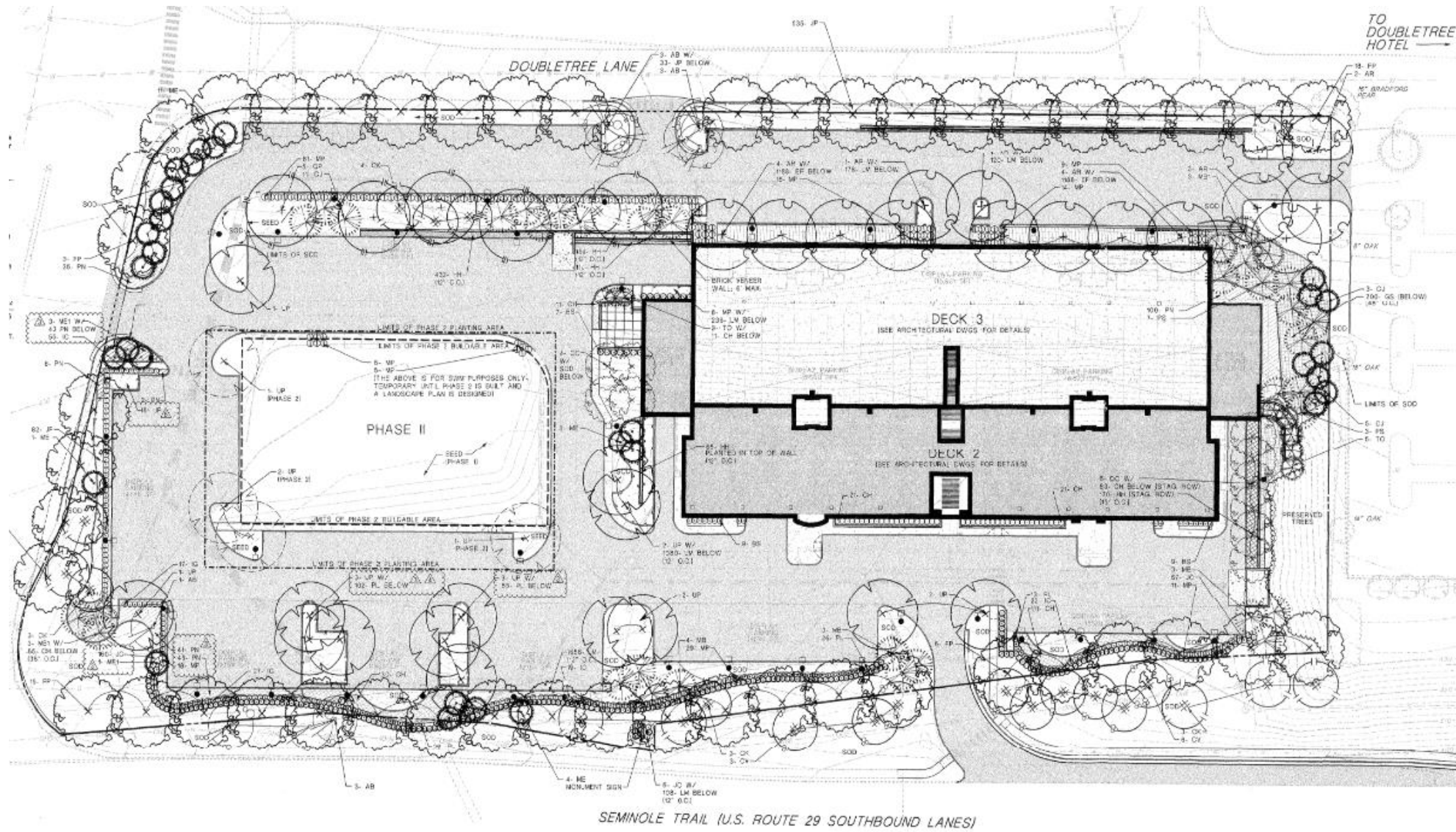


Figure 1: SDP2003-67 Approved Landscape Plan (Phase I)

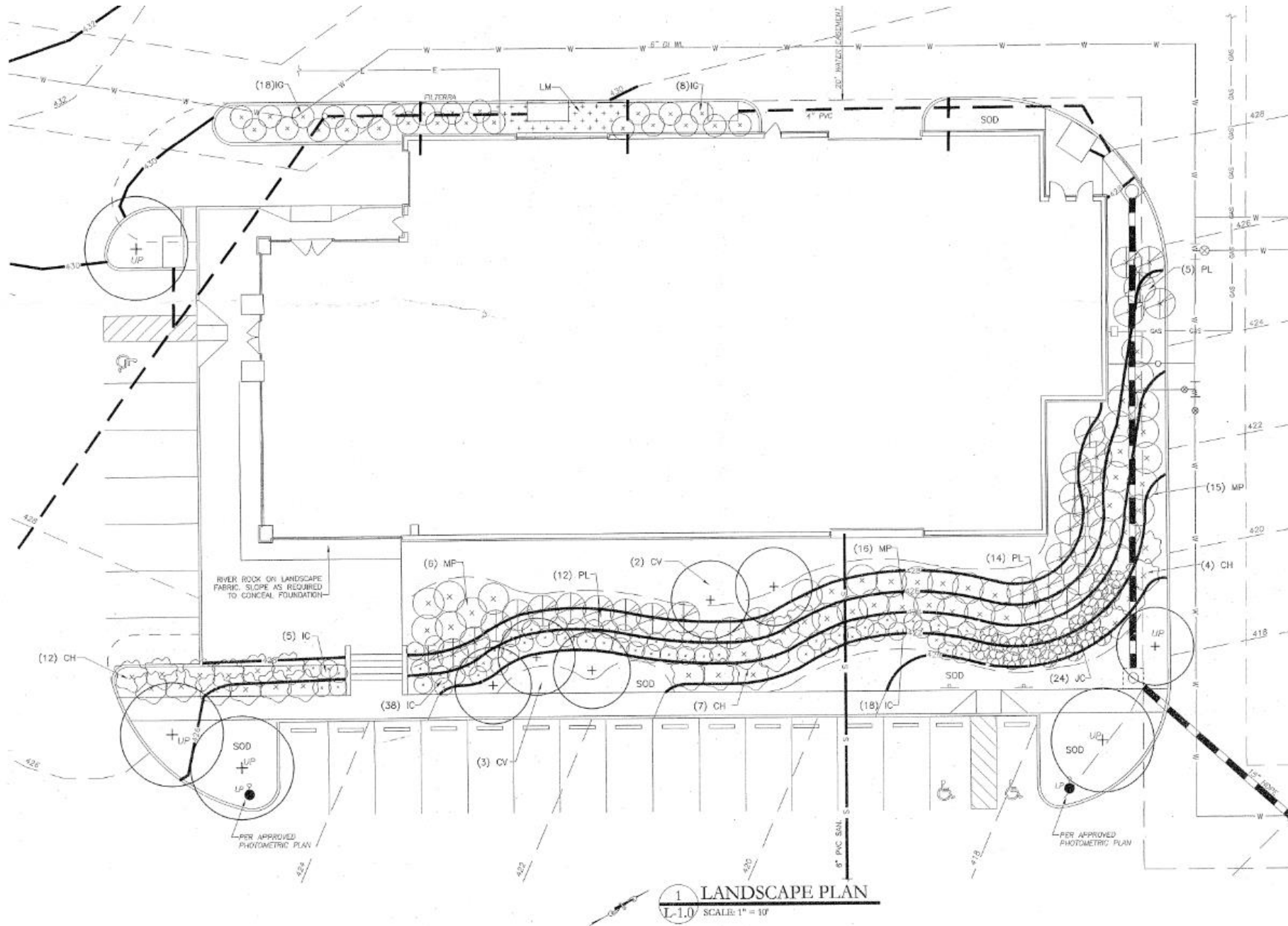


Figure 2: SDP2005-45 Approved Landscape Plan (Phase II)

TABLE A

This report is based on the following submittal items:

Sheet #	Drawing Name	Drawing Date/Revision Date
-	Umansky Subaru Building Renovation Site Plan	-
L100	Cover Sheet	04/26/21
L101	Notes	
L102	Existing Overall Site Plan	
L103	Existing Conditions	
L104	Layout Plan	
L105	Grading & Utility Plan	
L106	Landscape Plan	
L107	Site Details	
-	Umansky Subaru Building Renovation Architectural Drawings	-
1	Cover	04/25/21
3	Table of Contents	
5	Project Description	
6	Vicinity Map	
7	Context Photos	
8	Entrance Corridor Automobile Dealerships	
9	Existing Conditions	
10	Visibility from Entrance Corridors	
11	Views from Entrance Corridors	
12	Metal Panels on Entrance Corridors	
13	Nationwide Subaru Design	
14	Existing vs. Proposed Elevations (South)	
15	Existing vs. Proposed Elevations (East)	
16	Existing vs. Proposed Elevations (West)	
17	Eastern (Rt. 29) Elevation	
18	Southern (Hilton Heights) Elevation	
19	Approach: Seminole Trail (Rt. 29)	

20	Approach: Seminole Trail (Rt. 29)	04/25/21
21	View from Hilton Heights Road	
22	View from Rt. 29 Entrance Corridor	
23	Interior Drive Aisle Perspective	
24	Interior Drive Aisle Perspective	
25	Interior Drive Aisle Perspective	
26	Interior Drive Aisle Perspective	
27	Interior Drive Aisle Perspective	
28	Exterior Finishes	
29	Exterior Finishes	