



FINAL ARB ACTION MEMO/MINUTES

Date: September 7, 2021
Time: 1:00 PM
Meeting Room: Virtual Meeting

Members:

Frank Stoner: Absent
Frank Hancock: Present
Fred Missel, Vice-Chair: Present
Chris Henningsen: Present
Dade Van Der Werf, Chair: Present

Staff:

Margaret Maliszewski
Khris Taggart
Vivian Groeschel

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Van Der Werf called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and established a quorum.

DISCLOSURES

Mr. Hancock disclosed that he would recuse himself from ARB-2021-94: Crozet Self Storage because he works for the company that is preparing the site plan for the project.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

CONSENT AGENDA: None.

Regular Review Items

a. ARB-2021-92: Albemarle Business Campus Apartments

Location: South of Mountainwood Road, north of Country Green Road, West of Old Lynchburg Road

Proposal: To construct five apartment buildings and a clubhouse with swimming pool, with associated site improvements.

Staff Contact: Margaret Maliszewski

Representatives: Paul Tassell, Ray Gaines, Adrienne Stronge

Margaret Maliszewski summarized the staff report in a PowerPoint presentation. ARB members had no questions for staff.

Paul Tassell, representing the Gaines Group architects, addressed the ARB and offered to answer any questions. Mr. Missel asked if the topography helped with visibility. The applicants noted that the grade is higher between the site and the EC street. The site section was shared and it was clarified that the elevation of 5th Street is below the first floor level of the proposed building. Mr. Henningsen asked for clarification on the location of the storage building. Staff noted the location on the plan.

The ARB discussed the proposal. Board members agreed that the distance from the street reduced visibility. Mr. Missel noted that any development on the intervening parcels would also likely mitigate visibility and he stated that he would expect the architecture and landscape design to continue to be more refined. Mr. Hancock agreed and said that staff level review would be appropriate for the final plan. He noted his appreciation for the site sections and the nice submittal. Mr. Henningsen felt the architecture was appropriate for the context and agreed with future staff level review. Mr. Van Der Werf agreed with the preceding comments.

Motion: Mr. Missel moved to forward the recommendations outlined in the ARB2021-92 Albemarle Business Campus Apartments staff report to the Agent for the Site Review Committee, as follows:

- 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: None.
- Regarding recommendations on the plan as it relates to the guidelines: None.
- 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. Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the site and architectural plans.
 2. Add the cuts sheets for the proposed light fixtures to the lighting plan.
 3. Consider revising the landscape plan to include a minimum of 5 different shrub species.
 4. Provide large shade trees, 2½" caliper at planting, 40' on center, along Old Lynchburg Road.
 5. Provide perimeter parking lot trees, 40' on center, 2½" caliper at planting along the northeast corner of the parking lot.
 6. The final site plan may be reviewed by staff due to the distance from the EC street, mitigating visibility and appropriate architectural concept drawings.

Mr. Henningsen seconded the motion.

The motion was carried by a vote of 4:0 (Stoner absent).

Following the ARB Action, it was clarified that staff may bring the final plan back to the ARB if design changes warrant.

b. ARB-2021-96: Umansky Subaru Building Renovation

Location: On the west side of Route 29 North, at the intersection of Hilton Heights Road and Route 29

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 EIFS gray, and by adding elements to the south and east elevations including towers and canopy. The renovation proposal also includes leaving a portion of the existing brick unpainted and additions to the rear (west) elevation.

Staff Contact: Khris Taggart

Representative: Kevin Schafer, Bob Pineo

Khris Taggart summarized the staff report in a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Missel asked for clarification on the landscape plans attached to the staff report (they are the previously approved plans). Mr. Van Der Werf asked about the previous comments and changes made (branding, coping, brick).

Bob Pineo (Design Develop) addressed the Board, noting acceptance of the comments related to landscaping and lighting, and agreement to discuss the brick and massing. He discussed building articulation, program requirements, metal panels. Kevin Schafer (Design Develop) noted that the existing landscaping is robust, identified the Rt. 29/Hilton Heights Rd. corner as the primary viewshed for the building, and described the structure as a background building.

Mr. Missel that offsetting the drive aisle was a positive move. Mr. Van Der Werf noted appreciation for the development of the metal façade. Mr. Hancock noted that the design achieves what the Board asked for, that the brick and coping changes were successful, and that he agreed that the landscaping is robust. Mr. Henningsen agreed. He noted that the coping change successfully reduces the branding, and that leaving the brick unpainted does create a disjointed appearance internally. Mr. Missel agreed with previous comments and supported the application moving forward. Mr. Van Der Werf said that the design was nicely developed, agreed that the painted brick was more coherent internally, but the current proposal maintains a connection to the Phase 1 building.

Motion: Mr. Hancock moved for approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for ARB-2021-96 Umansky Subaru Building Renovation with the conditions listed in the staff report, amended as follows:

1. Revise the lighting plan to show illumination levels only for new fixtures. Add a note clearly stating that no changes to existing site lighting are proposed and site lighting remains as was approved with SDP-2003-67.
2. Revise the landscape plan to provide the previously approved row of shrubs along the parking area adjacent to Rt. 29, and along the parking area adjacent to Hilton Heights Road.
3. Revise the landscape plan to provide two large shade trees east and west of the existing tree labeled "6HOL30".
4. Correct the proposed planting height of the arborvitae in the plant schedule. (Change inches to feet.)
5. Consider revising the landscape plan to show shrubs along the eastern side of the building consistent with the character of the previously approved plan.

6. Sign applications are required for all proposed signs. Note that if internally illuminated, the backgrounds of the Subaru “Star Cluster” logos must be opaque.

Mr. Henningsen seconded the motion.

The motion was carried by a vote of 4:0 (Stoner absent).

c. ARB-2021-94: Crozet Self Storage

Location: 5695 Rockfish Gap Turnpike

Proposal: To construct a 90,000 sf, 3-story self-storage building with associated site improvements.

Staff Contact: Margaret Maliszewski

Representatives: Andrew Lewis, Clint Shifflett, Valerie Long

Mr. Hancock recused himself from the discussion.

Margaret Maliszewski summarized the staff report in a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Missel asked if the zoning allows for the use (yes) and if the submittal included the proposed building in street views (no).

Andrew Lewis, with Merchants Retail Partners, addressed the Board, noting that they are at the very beginning of their design process. He described the use as “passive,” “secure” and “low impact”. He noted that it will act as a buffer, that there is little parking and no light or noise impacts. Clint Shifflett, with Timmons Group, Inc., stated that a good result can be achieved that meets the concerns outlined in the staff report. He said that the dumpster could be flipped to the back of the site where a small retaining wall could help screen it from the residential area. He said that they could provide more robust landscaping. Valerie Long, with Williams Mullen, stated that the site is in a Highway Commercial zoning district at the edge of the Development Area, with surrounding residential properties. She reiterated the limited land use impacts (traffic, noise) and said they were looking for feedback on design. Mr. Van Der Werf said that the board could move to a work session format. Mr. Lewis shared slides outlining his introductory remarks and showing images of buildings in Crozet and potential precedent storage buildings. He noted the chamfered corner of the Crozet Square building as a possible feature to mimic.

Mr. Missel noted that the building type is a challenging one for this gateway site and he asked if everyone could agree that this would be a gateway building. He said the building would have to address the 4-way intersection and that the chamfered corner in Crozet Square appropriately marks an entrance – how would it be used at this site? He noted that Crozet Square is broken into 2 buildings; that the topographic “relief” puts the tallest part of the building at the EC corner; that maximum utilization of the parcel isn’t necessarily the best in terms of scale and the pedestrian experience; that landscape buffering should be considered; and that pushing the building back from Rockfish Gap Turnpike could be appropriate. He cautioned about false windows and questioned the appearance of lighting at night. He noted the image with a corner tower and said that type of feature typically marks an entrance. He noted the low height of the Harris Teeter building and the pedestrian circulation around it.

Mr. Henningsen said that his big concern is the overall mass and scale of the building combined with the proximity to the EC. How the mass is handled is important; it would help to incorporate strategies to break up the mass and scale, to break up the building into component parts that are more in scale with nearby residential and commercial buildings.

Mr. Van Der Werf agreed that the site is a gateway and the building needs to address the intersection. He noted the predominant 2-story building height in Crozet and the lengths of the Crozet Square buildings, and recommended a sense of 2-story scale for the building. He offered Clover Lawn Village as a useful precedent on how to articulate scale. He noted brick and stone materials as appropriate for the site which is approaching a more rural character, and recommended more relief from the EC street and the use of layering devices (porches, trellises). He directed the applicants to page 11 of the Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines and the discussion about appropriate scale as it relates to the site.

Mr. Lewis asked if there was a way to communicate with the Board about design changes in a less formal format. Mr. Van Der Werf suggested a work session and noted that, on occasion, some applicants meet individually with ARB members, but the work session is preferred. Mr. Missel cautioned the applicant to not get too far without a work session, and to work with staff. Ms. Long reiterated the challenges of building height and setback. Responding to the question about siting, Mr. Missel said that pedestrian scale must be addressed. "Close to the road" is OK if the pedestrian experience is comfortable; stepbacks, material changes from first to second story, and articulation are possible options. Mr. Van Der Werf stated that massing concepts would be an appropriate topic for a work session. Regarding round corner forms, he noted that they are used as civic elements; he questioned if it would mark a true pedestrian entry; and he cautioned against "signaling incorrectly."

The ARB offered the following comments on the proposal for the benefit of the applicant's next submittal:

1. Provide an architectural design that incorporates forms and features of local historic architecture and is coordinated with the scale of the surroundings.
2. Provide perspective renderings to clarify the scale and visual impacts of the proposed building.
3. Provide drawings to clarify the extent of visibility of the proposed building along the corridors.
4. Provide an architectural design whose form and scale contribute to unity and coherence along the adjacent Entrance Corridors.
5. Provide transparent glass in window openings.
6. Relocate the dumpster to reduce visual impacts on the EC streets.
7. Add ornamental trees along the EC street frontages. Consider an informal arrangement of trees that is more consistent with the surrounding context without reducing quantities.
8. Revise the plan to provide landscaping along the east side of the parking area to minimize visual impacts. Include shrubs and perimeter trees spaced 40' on center.
9. Reduce visual impacts resulting from the scale of the building.
10. Revise the design of the stormwater facility and landscaping to result in a facility that is fully integrated into the landscape.

WORK SESSIONS: None

OTHER BUSINESS

a. Minutes Approval: August 16, 2021

Motion: Mr. Henningsen moved for approval of the minutes from the August 16, 2021, ARB meeting.

Mr. Hancock seconded the motion.

The motion was carried by a vote of 3:0 (Stoner absent, Missel abstained).

b. Next ARB Meeting: MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2021, 1:00 PM – VIRTUAL MEETING

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m. to the next Virtual ARB meeting on Monday, October 4, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.