

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2022-21: River’s Edge Initial Site Plan
Review Type	Initial Site Development Plan
Parcel Identification	03200-00-00-005A0, 03200-00-00-005A1
Location	On the east side of Rt. 29 at River’s Edge Lane, approximately 1000’ north of the Rt. 29/Lewis and Clark Drive intersection.
Zoned	Planned Residential Development (PRD) / Entrance Corridor (EC) / Airport Impact Area (AIA)
Owner/Applicant	Rivers Edge Holdings LLC (32-5A), Rivers Edge Associates LLC (32-5A1) / Shimp Engineering (Michael Chandler)
Magisterial District	Rivanna
Proposal	To construct 100 multi-family residential units and associated site improvements on approximately 32.53 acres.
Context	The subject property includes a number of detached single-family residences located along a travelway that loops through the parcels. The property is wooded and surrounded by the Rivanna River. Industrial properties are located between 32-5A1 and the EC and office uses are to the north and northeast. Wooded area and the river are to the south and east. (Fig. 1.)
Visibility	Filtered views of the proposed development may be available between the buildings that are located between the site and Rt. 29. The significant amount of wooded area to be removed may open up additional views.
ARB Meeting Date	April 18, 2022
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY

The ARB reviewed and recommended approval of ARB202-130, an initial site plan for this site, on February 1, 2021. Since that review, the proposed site layout has changed significantly enough to necessitate resubmittal of the initial site plan.



Figure 1: Pictometry image (left) showing project area along the Entrance Corridor and County GIS map (right) highlighting subject property.

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		
	Purpose		
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.	Architectural designs were not provided with the latest version of this initial plan so the compatibility of individual buildings with local historic landmarks cannot be determined at this time. The maximum allowable building height here is 35’. Given the maximum building height and distance from Rt. 29, building style and details may not have a big impact on the EC. However, colors that help the development integrate into its surroundings will be important. It is anticipated that the wooded buffer to remain along the EC will help promote an orderly and attractive development. Site sections would help determine the amount of visibility of the proposed development and, therefore, the degree of review required for the architectural designs.	Provide architectural designs with the next submittal. Provide site sections to clarify the visibility of the proposed development from the EC street.
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.		
3-5, 9-16	Compatibility with significant historic sites , compatibility with character of the Entrance Corridor, structure design		
	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. Architectural drawings have not been submitted at this time.	Include the standard mechanical equipment

			note on the architectural plans.
22-31	Lighting	A lighting plan has not been provided with the initial plan.	Provide a lighting plan with the next submittal.
	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.	The site has approximately 303' of frontage along the EC, with approximately 84' being disturbed and 219' of it being wooded area to remain. The improvements to the interior travelway leave 50' open along the EC. It is anticipated that the visual order along the EC will be maintained, in part, by the substantial wooded area that is to remain. While that wooded area satisfies the frontage landscaping requirements, no landscaping is shown at the improved entrance to the site. Landscaping that helps denote the entrance and integrate it into the streetscape will be important. A water line is shown along the improved travelway and a sewer connection is shown near the entrance to the site. These utilities and the location of any future entrance signage and associated landscaping should be coordinated to ensure an appropriate appearance along the EC.	Provide landscaping that helps integrate the site entrance into the EC, taking into consideration any future signage that will be needed.
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.		
		The site plan set appears to show tree lines that are to remain along the improved interior travelway. However, it is unclear if the existing landscaping that is to remain meets the landscape requirement for interior roads and no trees are shown along the portion of the interior travelway closest to the EC.	Identify trees that are to remain that meet the landscaping requirements for interior roads. Revise the site plan to show large trees, 40' on center and 2½" caliper at time of planting, along the portion of the interior

			travelway closest to the EC.
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.	Rivers Edge Road is proposed to be converted to a pedestrian pathway that will connect to the development near the rear of the site. The site plan set appears to show tree lines that are to remain along this pedestrian path but no trees are shown along the portion of the pedestrian way closest to the EC. Within the development are concrete walks that connect the proposed buildings and a trail that surrounds many of the proposed buildings. The landscape plan shows 36 trees in interior parking islands and 16 trees in end-of-row islands. About half of these are located approximately 20’ from the concrete walks.	Revise the site plan to show large trees, 40’ on center and 2½” caliper at time of planting, along the portion of the pedestrian pathway closest to the EC.
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.	Based on the total length of parking lot perimeters and number of parking spaces shown, approximately 34 perimeter and 20 interior trees are required. This quantity is met with the 52 island trees (mentioned above) and 2 trees proposed in other locations. Although the trees are not technically located at the parking lot perimeters, the wooded area to remain along portions of the parking lots mitigates the shortfall. However, the caliper of the trees is proposed at 1½” - not the required 2½”.	Revise the landscape plan to show all trees at 2½” caliper at planting.
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. However, due to the distance from the EC and the anticipated minimal scale of the proposed buildings, long building elevations aren’t expected to be an issue.	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 plants are on the recommended species list but there are only 3 species proposed for the total quantity of trees. This lack of diversity does not support a healthy landscape.	Revise the landscape plan to increase the variety of trees to a minimum of four species for increased plant health.

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 plan health note appears on the site plan set.	None.
	Development pattern		
	Site development and layout		
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 form and placement of the buildings within the site have changed significantly since the previous submittal, resulting in a layout that generally has a more simplified and 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. The Rivanna River, wooded areas that are to remain, a stream buffer, and preserved slopes are shown between the proposed buildings and the EC street. The mass and height of individual buildings are not expected to overpower the setting.	Revise the existing conditions sheet to identify the existing wooded areas north and south of Rivers Edge Lane in the vicinity of the EC. If any of this vegetation is to remain, revise the appropriate sheets of the site plan to reflect this.
39	The relationship of buildings and other structures to the Entrance Corridor street and to other development within the corridor should be as follows: - An organized pattern of roads, service lanes, bike paths, and pedestrian walks should guide the layout of the site. - 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. - Provisions should be made for connections to adjacent pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems. - Open spaces should be tied into surrounding areas to provide continuity within the Entrance Corridor. - 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. - The placement of structures on the site should respect existing views and vistas on and around the site.	 Site Plan February 1, 2021.	

		 Site Plan April 18, 2022. The aerial view of the site shows existing trees north and south of Rivers Edge Lane in the vicinity of the EC that do not appear on sheet C4 as existing wooded areas.	
	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 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.	There is a gentle change in topography within the parcel that is adjacent to the EC. The existing topography is much steeper within the parcel that includes the new residential units. Significant grading is required to establish portions of the building and parking areas, as evidenced by the proposed retaining walls. Walls (maximum height 10') are shown on sheet C10 along the northwest and a portion of the southwest sides of the development, and between the 108-space parking lot and units 5-10 and 19-34. Other retaining walls are shown near the steps next to unit 1 and along a portion of the new paved travelway. Due to the proposed orientation and distance from the EC, these walls are not expected to have a visual impact on the EC street.	None.

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.	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 above-ground stormwater features associated with the proposed development, but these facilities are not expected to be seen from the EC.	None.
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 EC.
2. Degree of architectural review required.
3. The planting size of interior and exterior parking area trees
4. Treatment of the site entrance from Rt. 29.

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: None. The ARB recommends approval of the Initial Plan without conditions.
- 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. Provide architectural designs with the next submittal.
2. Provide site sections to clarify the visibility of the proposed development from the EC street.
3. Update the plans to include information on accessory structures and equipment.
4. Include the standard mechanical equipment note on the architectural plans.
5. Provide a lighting plan with the next submittal.
6. Provide landscaping that helps integrate the site entrance into the EC, taking into consideration any future signage that will be needed.
7. Identify trees that are to remain that meet the landscaping requirements for interior roads.
8. Revise the site plan to show large trees, 40' on center and 2½" caliper at time of planting, along the portion of the interior travelway closest to the EC.
9. Revise the site plan to show large trees, 40' on center and 2½" caliper at time of planting, along the portion of the pedestrian pathway closest to the EC.
10. Revise the landscape plan to show all trees at 2½" caliper at planting.
11. Revise the landscape plan to increase the variety of trees to a minimum of four species for increased plant health.
12. Revise the existing conditions sheet to identify the existing wooded areas north and south of Rivers Edge Lane in the vicinity of the EC. If any of this vegetation is to remain, revise the appropriate sheets of the site plan to reflect this.
13. Show tree protection fencing on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping, and erosion and sediment control plans.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attach. 1: [ARB2022-21: River's Edge Initial Site Plan](#)