

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2022-88: Cville Rio Road Apartments Initial Site Plan
Review Type	Initial Site Plan
Parcel Identification	04500-00-00-026A2, 04500-00-00-026B2, 04500-00-00-026B3, 04500-00-00-026B4, 04500-00-00-026B5
Location	On the south side of Rio Road West, approximately 530’ west of the intersection of Woodburn Road and Rio Road West.
Zoned	Planned Residential Development (PRD)/Entrance Corridor (EC)/Airport Impact Area (AIA)
Owner/Applicant	Charlottesville Rio Road Apartments LLC (04500-00-00-026A2, 04500-00-00-026B4, 04500-00-00-026B5), Rio Road LLC (04500-00-00-026B3), Rahim, Abdul W; Habib Rahim & Shaid Rahim (04500-00-00-026B2) / Collins Engineering (Scott Collins)
Magisterial District	Rio
Proposal	To develop five parcels totaling 8.23 acres with 250 multi-family residential apartment units in seven buildings and associated site improvements.
Context and Visibility	The subject properties contain four ca. 1950 residences and associated outbuildings and a travelway that connects TMP 45-26 to Rio Road West with wooded areas at the rear of the residences and along both sides of the travelway. The surrounding area contains mostly single-family housing and a few commercial buildings. Charlottesville Health and Rehabilitation Center is located behind the subject properties to the southeast; four single-family residences and wooded areas are located north across Rio Road West [Figure 1]. Visibility from Rio Road West will be clear.
ARB Meeting Date	November 21, 2022
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY:

The ARB has reviewed no previous proposals for this site. Staff advisory comments regarding the potential impacts of the proposal on the Entrance Corridor were provided during the review of the rezoning.



Fig 1: County GIS map with subject parcels highlighted.

ANALYSIS

Gray highlight = means the guideline can't be reviewed at the 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, location/configuration can be made a condition of initial plan approval and can be the basis for denial

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

REF	GUIDELINES	ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS
	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.	The site plan shows a total of 8 buildings (7 apartment buildings and a clubhouse). The maximum heights for the buildings along Rio Road (Buildings 1-4) are restricted to three stories (35'). The heights for Buildings 4 and 5 are three to four stories and Building 6 and 7 are four to five stories. Buildings 1-4 and portions of the upper two stories of Buildings 5-7 will be readily visible from the EC. Views of the clubhouse and the lower stories of Buildings 5-7 will be available through the two entrances into the site along Rio Road West. Providing perspectives, with and without landscaping, from both directions on Rio Road West would help to clarify the level of visual impact the development will have on the EC.	Provide architectural drawings with the next submittal. Elevations visible from Rio Road West must be fully designed with forms, features, and treatments that establish human scale and a tie to the historic architecture of the area.
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.	At 3 to 5 stories tall and up to over 200' long, the building will appear large. Architectural designs were not provided with the initial plan, but the building footprints show regularly spaced recesses along most of the elevations, including the street-facing elevations of Buildings 1-3 (which are adjacent to the EC). These recesses are expected to provide some relief to the length and mass of these buildings as viewed from the EC, but the architectural designs will also need to include additional forms, features, and treatments to establish human scale and a tie to the historic architecture of the area. Landscaping will be integral to the creation of an orderly, attractive, and cohesive development.	Provide perspectives, with and without landscaping, from both directions on Rio Road West to clarify the visibility of all proposed buildings.
	Compatibility with significant historic sites:		
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		

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	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.		
	Structure Design		
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.		
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.		
12	Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.		
13	Any appearance of “blankness” resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.		
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.		
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.		
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>		

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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.	The refuse area is proposed to be located in the southwest corner of the parking area between Building 6 and the clubhouse. The site plan notes that the enclosure will be an unspecified brick. In this location, the dumpster and dumpster enclosure are not expected to be visible from the EC. The site plan notes that the mechanical equipment will be screened from the EC. The site plan also notes that the mechanical equipment for Building 3 will be located on the roof; however, the locations of the mechanical equipment for the remaining buildings have not been noted on the site plan.	Revise the site plan to show the locations of the ground-mounted equipment. Provide architectural drawings that show the locations for the roof-mounted mechanical equipment for Building 3. Show how the equipment will be screened from the view of the EC.
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 is on the site plan; architectural drawings have not been provided with this submittal.	Include the standard mechanical equipment note on the architectural drawings.
22-31	Lighting	A lighting plan has not been provided with the initial plan.	Provide a complete 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.	A landscape plan has not been provided with the initial plan. The site plan shows variable-width landscape buffers (14’-20’ along Building 1 and 10’-12’ along Buildings 2, 3, and 4) along Rio Road. Tree species, size, quantity, and spacing can be assessed when a complete landscape plan is submitted.	Revise the site plan to include a complete landscape plan that includes the standard plant health note.
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		

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	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.		
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>.		
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.”		
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.	Planting strips are shown along the interior road (Heritage Hall Road) that runs through the site connecting to TMP 45-26. However, the western planting strip has been located over an existing gas line, and a storm pipe is proposed under the planting strip east of Building 3. This layout does not allow for this guideline to be met. Trees that meet the size and spacing for interior roads will be required.	Revise the site layout to allow for trees, 40’ on center and 2½” caliper at time of planting, along both sides of Heritage Hall Road.
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.		
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.	The proposed surface parking areas include 376 spaces which will require 38 interior parking lot trees. The grading, drainage, and utility plans show a few locations where utilities are proposed under or near planting islands, so the current layout may not accommodate the required interior trees.	Revise the site layout to allow for 38 interior parking lot trees. Provide the trees, 2½” at time of planting, evenly distributed throughout the parking areas.

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	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.		
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.	No architectural drawings have been provided with the initial plan, so the extent of landscaping required for "softening" cannot be determined at this time. However, the plan does show that planting areas along the east side of Building 4, the west side of Building 6, and the north side of Building 7 are not wide enough to accommodate planting that will provide sufficient softening of the building elevations, if required.	Note that if landscaping is required to soften the appearance of the buildings, the site layout will need to be revised to provide sufficient planting area.
	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.	Portions of the five parcels that make up the site have been previously developed, with four of the parcels containing ca. 1950s single-family detached houses and the remaining parcel containing a travelway that connects to TMP 45-26 located to the southeast. South of the houses and east and west of the travelway are wooded areas. A portion of a stream also runs east to west behind the houses on parcels 45-26B2 – 45-26B4. The stream, houses, and wooded areas will be removed to accommodate the proposed development. The buildings along Rio Road West are oriented mostly parallel to the EC with the associated parking areas relegated to the sides and rear of the frontage buildings. The plan shows no connections between the EC elevations of the frontage buildings and the sidewalk along the street, suggesting that the EC elevations are not entrance elevations. The EC elevations, and all other elevations visible from the EC, will need to incorporate forms, details, hierarchy, and distribution of materials to result in the appearance of fully designed elevations.	See the recommendations listed with the architectural guidelines.
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	The site will have two access points along Rio Road West, Lariat Street between Buildings 1 and 2, and Heritage Hall Road between Buildings 3 and 4. The layout of the site is generally organized with roads and paths providing connections from the site to Rio Road West and TMP 45-26. No views are expected to be impacted by the proposed development.	

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	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 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.	A significant amount of grading is proposed across the site to accommodate the buildings, travelways, and parking areas for the development. Retaining walls are shown along Building 3, the parking area east of Building 4, south of Building 6, and southwest of Building 7. The walls towards the rear of the site will not be visible from the EC. The walls near Building 3 and the parking area east of Building 4 face into the site, which will limit the visibility of the walls from the EC. However, the location of the wall and the utilities that run along the east side of the sidewalk near Building 3 leave insufficient planting area for the required street trees along Heritage Hall Road. The plan notes tan as the block color for the retaining walls but a specific product has not been identified and a sample has not been provided.	Indicate retaining wall material(s) and color(s) on the plan. A physical sample may be necessary for review. Revise the site layout to allow for trees, 40' on center and 2½" caliper at time of planting, along both sides of Heritage Hall Road.
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.	There are no trees that are designated for preservation within the site.	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.		
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.	There are no above-ground stormwater facilities shown on the site plan.	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. Building orientation and sidewalk connections.
2. Planting area for the interior roads and parking areas.
3. Planting area for the landscaping of buildings.

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 drawings with the next submittal. Elevations visible from Rio Road West must be fully designed with forms, features, and treatments that establish human scale and a tie to the historic architecture of the area.
2. Provide perspectives, with and without landscaping, from both directions on Rio Road West to clarify the visibility of all proposed buildings.
3. Revise the site plan to show the locations of the ground-mounted equipment.
4. Provide architectural drawings that show the locations for the roof-mounted mechanical equipment for Building 3. Show how the equipment will be screened from the view of the EC.
5. Include the standard mechanical equipment note on the architectural drawings.
6. Provide a complete lighting plan with the next submittal.
7. Revise the site plan to include a complete landscape plan that includes the standard plant health note.
8. Revise the site layout to allow for trees, 40' on center and 2½" caliper at time of planting, along both sides of Heritage Hall Road.
9. Revise the site layout to allow for 38 interior parking lot trees. Provide the trees, 2½" at time of planting, evenly distributed throughout the parking areas.
10. Note that if landscaping is required to soften the appearance of the buildings, the site layout will need to be revised to provide sufficient planting area.
11. Indicate retaining wall material(s) and color(s) on the plan. A physical sample may be necessary for review.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attach. 1: [ARB2022-88: Cville Rio Road Initial Site Plan](#)