

February 6, 2023

ATTN: County of Albemarle Architectural Review Board

Subject: Narrative description of proposed work and compatibility with surrounding area

Project: Hickory Hope Apartments A at Southwood (Block 12)

TMP 09000-00-00-001A0 | 07600-00-00-0B1A0

Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

We are pleased to present to the Architectural Review Board (ARB) a building design for the new 70-unit, multifamily, affordable housing project developed by Piedmont Housing Alliance at Southwood – the Hickory Hope Apartments A. This affordable housing project will provide elevator-accessed, one, two, and three-bedroom units; a 765 to 1485 square foot flexible community space open to the entire Southwood neighborhood; a space dedicated to the Monticello Area Community Action Agency (MACAA) Head Start program; PHA's leasing facility; and other residential support spaces. All apartment units will be accessible to universal design standards and 10% of the units will achieve even higher accessibility standards. The project is financed by Low- Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) that were awarded in 2021, with an anticipated start of construction May 31, 2023.

The proposed building will begin to transform the site from the existing greenfield into the “highest density” hub of the Southwood Phase 1 neighborhood. As envisioned by the Southwood residents, this area of the neighborhood will be an attractor, ideally complimenting the residents’ desire that this is “downtown Southwood”. To attract pedestrian traffic throughout the day, the Hickory Hope Apartments A will provide accessory uses on the first floor of the buildings – MACAA Head Start will run an early childhood education program which fronts on Hickory Street and is directly adjacent to a community room for the entire Southwood neighborhood which will run as an event and gathering space. The Hickory Hope Apartments A are designed to accentuate and open onto a public green space park at the corner of Hickory Street and Horizon. Although this green is not necessarily visible from the Entrance Corridor, it is the first and potentially most frequented, of what will be, a series of internal green spaces and recreational parks all connected by sidewalk and paths throughout the Southwood neighborhood.

The two buildings are large – three story buildings that are approximately 38,400 (building 2) and 43,000 (building 1) square feet and comprise 31 (building 1) and 39 apartment units (building 2). The building design, form, and materials satisfy the construction requirements and efficiency inherent to the LIHTC program and its maximum construction cost limits. However, as much as possible, we have attempted to break down the building mass. Though

this is the designated area for higher density construction in Southwood, it is still a neighborhood at heart and the buildings have a rhythm of human scale – a simple pattern of bays that correlate to the units within. At the same time, Hickory Hope’s “A” buildings are the beacon of Southwood – one side of two bookends that frame Hickory Street at the main entrance off the Entrance Corridor (E.C.). The general attention to simple brick detail and the various treatment of the brick cornices and parapets are meant to give a simple elegance to the buildings similar to what one might see in a neighborhood district of a traditional, pedestrian-friendly downtown. Particularly, the corner massing and the façades that address the intersection of Hickory and Old Lynchburg are designed to act as this beacon – the highest parapet and cornice detail nods to the intersection while turning the corner and inviting the viewer into the neighborhood to the complimentary building corner at the building’s entry: the park and focal point further down Hickory.

While a main entry does not face the E.C., we argue that the windows populate the building façade in a way that is appropriate for an apartment building and, coupled with the orientation, minimal setbacks, and site sidewalks, indicate an honest interaction between the E.C. and a multifamily building meant for the neighborhood’s use.

As discussed, care has been taken in designing the building shape to allow the community uses to front the corner park, the location of which is dictated by NMD-2018-003. The ‘I-shaped’ building form also reduces overall length of any one side of the building and provides an intimate entry sequence from Hickory Street through a corner park (which is bound by pedestrian plazas and the short ends of each building); through an open-air, covered building connector; and into the buildings. Much of the park will be further from view along Old Lynchburg Road, however we have developed these spaces (as well as the overall building) utilizing themes central to the ARB.

Finally, thought has been taken to regulate the parking so that it is not as prominent from the E.C. due to existing trees in the adjacent right-of-way and so that it is not visible from the Southwood neighborhood and pedestrian.

Our team began earnestly working on the design for the Hickory Hope Apartments in 2020. The building was reviewed and approved by the Southwood Internal ARB (established in accordance with NMD 2018-003) in February of 2021 and we provided a courtesy update to the Southwood Internal ARB in June of 2022.

As mentioned previously, the construction start date for this project is May 31, 2023. This is a critical component of project viability as it is directly tied to the deadline for project funding. As a competitive LIHTC project, successful delivery of the 70 affordable and accessible Hickory Hope Apartment units depends on alignment with federal and state funding deadlines.

We respectfully ask for the ARB’s guidance in finding the best possible solution for this building - a lynchpin project that dovetails into the overall vision of a thriving Southwood neighborhood.

Thank you,

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COMPATIBILITY WITH ENTRANCE CORRIDOR GUIDELINES

STRUCTURE DESIGN

- Building form and features relate to multiple scales of the site - the E.C. and the pedestrian on site - by breaking down the meter through facade variation and breaking down the overall mass of the building through the 'l-shape' of the building surround and integrating with a community park.
- Care has been taken in siting the building to allow for accessible site circulation, conform to existing site development patterns, and provide for pedestrian and vehicular connections and circulation per the site's anticipated build out.

ACCESSORY STRUCTURES AND EQUIPMENT

- Rendered studies along the E.C. indicate that proposed mechanical equipment and elevator towers on the building's roof will not be visible at the typical height of a vehicle or pedestrian north or southbound along Old Lynchburg Road.
- All utility transformers and refuse will be located behind the building near the parking, a good distance from E.C. and screened by existing trees along the right-of-way.

LIGHTING

- All lighting on site for parking, pedestrian walkways, and decorative landscape lighting will comply with Entrance Corridor Guidelines and Universal Design requirements as an accessible and well-lit pathway.

LANDSCAPING

- This project will provide all required landscaping along project specific interior roads such as Hickory Street, pedestrian walkways, and will provide all required landscaping along the building – all of which were reviewed and approved in the site plan process for the building.
- Specifically, a community park space as well as a patio and planting areas are integral components of the building design and are designed by a landscape architect.
- A landscaping contractor will oversee and maintain these gardens and planting beds.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

- The building and site plan for the project are organized to provide ease of travel on and off site within the existing context and in planning for future building on the site.
- Similarly, the building and site plan allow the possibility of future pedestrian connections to the southern and western-most adjacent parcel(s) and, therefore, the nearest existing bus stop, to the west.
- Pedestrian walkways are also designed to provide access to proposed park space, parking, and the intersection towards the future development and existing bus stop.

GRADING

- This project will comply with Universal Design standards for accessibility. Therefore, the site circulation is no different. This is yet another piece of the design that has contributed to careful site placement to minimize grading while allowing all walkways to comply with accessibility standards.
- Furthermore, the surrounding existing homes adjacent to the site will remain in use during and after construction and place some limits on site grading.
- The North property line of the site requires a small retaining wall as indicated in the site plan.