

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2023-26: Regents School of Charlottesville
Review Type	Site Plan Amendment
Parcel Identification	07600-00-00-01700, 07500-00-00-06600 (See Figure 1.)
Location	2010 Coram Deo Drive
Zoned	Residential (R1) / Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Regents School of Charlottesville Inc. / Shimp Engineering (Rachel Moon)
Magisterial District	Samuel Miller
Proposal	To amend the approved site plan (SDP-2020-52) to add 6 upper school buildings, increase the size of the athletic field, add a practice field, shift the lower school building 30' to the north, establish a new central water supply for the school and expand the central sewerage system, and to approve the color and material of all the school buildings.
Context	The property has been cleared and graded; construction is under way. Foxhaven Farm is across Reservoir Road to the north. Low density residential uses are nearby. Trinity Presbyterian Church is to the east. The I-64/Rt. 29 Bypass interchange is adjacent to the south.
Visibility	There is a clear view of the property through wintertime trees from the I-64 corridor. Visibility is reduced when leaves are on the trees. (See Figure 2.)
ARB Meeting Date	April 17, 2023
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

PROJECT HISTORY

The ARB recommended approval of the Regents School Initial Site Plan in March 2020. The applicant submitted a preliminary ARB application in April 2020. In that submittal, the project was described as a “campus in the woods” with classroom buildings connected by decks, and trees integral to the design scheme, consistent with the forested character of the ECs in the area. A color rendering showed representative buildings in muted, weathered

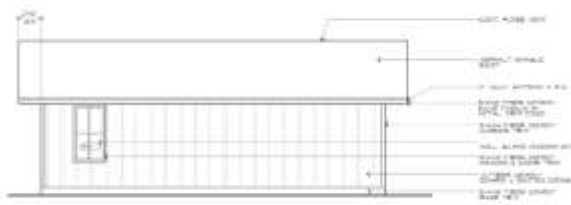
tones. (See Figure 3.) Site sections suggested that the school buildings wouldn't be visible from the EC. The application was approved by staff in July 2020 as a final site plan based on the expected low level of visibility.

Building permits for Buildings A and B were approved (without EC review) in September 2022. Building permits for Buildings D, E, F and I were issued in October 2022, having been approved by ARB staff based on the understanding that they would have very little visibility from the EC.

The current major site plan amendment was submitted under the July 5, 2022, submittal deadline. EC staff comments were provided on July 28, 2022, focusing on the athletic field lighting. In February of 2023, staff noticed that with clearing and grading of the site underway, and with the leaves off the trees, the site was much more visible than originally anticipated. Furthermore, staff learned that the proposed color of the buildings had been revised to white, which was expected to further increase noticeability of the development from the EC street. Because the degree of visibility has increased, this proposal is being forwarded to the ARB for review.

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	GENERAL GUIDELINES		
	<i>Purpose, Compatibility with significant historic sites, Structure design</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.	The proposed buildings use simple, traditional building forms and details (rectangular footprints, gabled roofs, porches, divided lite windows) that are compatible with historic buildings of the county. 	Revise the siding color to a muted earth tone.
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 - BUILDING 1 - REAR ELEVATION	
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.	Given the distance from the street (600' and more to the main travel lanes), building style and details are not expected to have a significant impact on the ECs. Buildings are arranged in groups around decking. The site section shows a deck and adjacent buildings supported by wooden piers up to 15' tall.	
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.	 The primary proposed building material is Hardi-siding in white with black trim. The fiber cement product resembles traditional wood siding. However, the white color proposed for the siding is expected to make the development much more noticeable from the EC. The clearing and grading that has already been completed has opened the view much more than was expected. Muted earth tones for the buildings, as illustrated in the early drawings (Figure 3), would increase compatibility of the development with the surroundings, and would help maintain a consistent appearance along the corridor.	

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.	The existing character of the corridor is established by heavily wooded buffers that significantly limit views of development. The proposed development can harmonize with the character of the corridor by using muted earth tones to blend with the surroundings. Strategic placement of new specimen trees near the buildings could further enhance an integrated appearance.	Revise the siding color to a muted earth tone.
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.	The minimal building height, board and batten siding, base and corner trim, and overhanging eaves help establish human scale in the school buildings.	None.
12	Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.	Building forms, details and materials are consistent throughout the development. Overall coordination could be enhanced by using building materials in muted earth tones.	Revise the siding color to a muted earth tone.
13	Any appearance of “blankness” resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.	Building C has no windows or doors on the side and rear elevations. Most of the other buildings have minimal window openings on some of their elevations. However, the minimal wall heights and the texture of the board and batten siding help mitigate blankness.	None.
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	Some of the buildings are connected by decks.	None.
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The buildings do not have the appearance of trademark designs.	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</i>	Given the distance from the EC street and the size of the buildings, window glass is not expected to have a significant impact on the corridor.	None.

	<i>be submitted with the application for final review.</i>		
	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.	No accessory structures or equipment are shown on the plan. The equipment note appears on the site plan. It does not appear on the architectural drawings, but given the site layout, building designs, and distance from the EC street, equipment is not expected to be visible.	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.		
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."		
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.	A significant amount of grading is required to accomplish the proposed development. Some retaining walls are shown throughout the site. They are not expected to have a negative visual impact on the EC.	None.
	Lighting		
	<i>General Guidelines</i>		
22	Light should be contained on the site and not spill over onto adjacent properties or streets;	The photometric plan shows that light from proposed fixtures will not spill over onto adjacent streets or properties.	None.
23	Light should be shielded, recessed or flush-mounted to eliminate glare. All fixtures with lamps emitting 3000 lumens or more must be full cutoff fixtures.	Proposed light fixtures are full cutoff styles.	None.
24	Light levels exceeding 30 footcandles are not appropriate for display lots in the Entrance Corridors. Lower light levels will apply to most other uses in the Entrance Corridors.	The maximum light level at the athletic field is 38 fc. The maximum in the parking lot is 9 fc.	None.

25	Light should have the appearance of white light with a warm soft glow; however, a consistent appearance throughout a site or development is required. Consequently, if existing lamps that emit non-white light are to remain, new lamps may be required to match them.	The color temperature for the sports lights is 5700K, which is a cool white color. The parking lot lights have a color temperature of 4000K. The cut sheets for the parking lot pole lights are not fully legible.	Revise the parking lot pole lights to have a color temperature not to exceed 3000K. Make the light fixture cut sheets fully legible.
26	Dark brown, dark bronze, or black are appropriate colors for free-standing pole mounted light fixtures in the Entrance Corridors.	The sports lights have an aluminum finish. Bronze is the standard finish for the parking lot lights, though the finish is not indicated on the plan.	Revise the lighting plan to specify a bronze finish for the parking lot pole lights.
27	The height and scale of freestanding, pole-mounted light fixtures should be compatible with the height and scale of the buildings and the sites they are illuminating, and with the use of the site. Typically, the height of freestanding pole-mounted light fixtures in the Entrance Corridors should not exceed 20 feet, including the base. Fixtures that exceed 20 feet in height will typically require additional screening to achieve an appropriate appearance from the Entrance Corridor.	The sports lights maximum height is 70'. The proposed pole height was approved with the special use permit for the school. Parking lot pole light height is 20'.	None.
28	In determining the appropriateness of lighting fixtures for the Entrance Corridors, the individual context of the site will be taken into consideration on a case by case basis.		
29	The following note should be included on the lighting plan: "Each outdoor luminaire equipped with a lamp that emits 3,000 or more initial lumens shall be a full cutoff luminaire and shall be arranged or shielded to reflect light away from adjoining residential districts and away from adjacent roads. The spillover of lighting from luminaires onto public roads and property in residential or rural areas zoning districts shall not exceed one half footcandle."	Notes on the plan address the requirements.	None.
30-31	<i>Guidelines for the Use of Decorative Landscape Lighting</i>	The plan shows no proposed decorative landscape lighting.	None.
	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	The site plan shows a "school buffer area" and an "academic woods area" along the EC side of the property. The school property slopes down steeply through these areas to a stream that is off-site, then the ground in the right-of-way rises back up steeply	None.

	and help to integrate buildings into the existing environment of the corridor.	to the EC street. A row of large shade trees is not consistent with the natural character of the wooded buffer along the EC street.	
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.	A mix of large street trees and ornamental trees of varying planting sizes are shown along the school side of Reservoir Road where there is no existing tree line to remain.	None.
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 parking lot trees are provided at the required quantity. Perimeter trees are provided on the west side of the parking lot at 40' on center.	None.

	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.	The east side of the parking lot abuts the lower school building group. Proposed tree planting sizes meet the EC requirements.	
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.	A system of decks, stairs and concrete walks connects the proposed buildings. Previous plans showed existing trees to remain in closer proximity to the buildings and decks. The quantity of individually identified trees to remain has been reduced, and the tree line to remain has shifted away from the buildings and closer to the perimeter of the site. No new trees are proposed along the paths, but some trees to remain are shown close to Buildings I3, D5 and D6 in Phase 3. Although the number of trees to remain is reduced compared to previous plans, the remaining on-site wooded buffer, and the trees in the right-of-way, will soften the appearance and reduce the view of the buildings from the Entrance Corridor, particularly when the leaves are on the trees.	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 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.		
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>.	Inkberry holly has been identified as an invasive species.	Consider replacing the Inkberry holly with a native 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 note appears on the plan.	None.

	<i>Site Development and layout</i>		
	Development pattern		
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.	Buildings are not oriented parallel to the EC, but the distance from the street and the character of travel on the interstate are mitigating factors. The mass and height of individual buildings are not expected to overpower the setting. Pedestrian and vehicular connections are provided. Wooded area to remain, a stream, stream buffer, and steep slopes are shown between the proposed buildings and the EC streets.	None.
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.		
	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 land forms 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 clearing and grading has been completed. The current plan shows more grading than was initially shown at the northeast part of the site. Substantial grading is proposed at the athletic field. Some retaining walls are shown throughout the development, but they are not expected to have a negative impact on the EC.	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.	Only a few individual existing trees are 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.	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.	Tree protection fencing is shown on the development side of a group of nine individually identified trees to remain that are close to proposed buildings.	None.
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 slopes down to the south to a stream. The plan shows stormwater piped to a channel that leads to the stream.	None.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. Anticipated visibility of the development following clearing/grading.
2. Integration of the development with the surroundings/compatibility with the EC: wooded buffer, proposed building colors.

Staff recommends approval of the proposal with the following conditions:

1. Revise the siding color to a muted earth tone.
2. Revise the parking lot pole lights to have a color temperature not to exceed 3000K.
3. Make the light fixture cut sheets fully legible on the plan.
4. Revise the lighting plan to indicate a bronze finish for the parking lot pole lights.
5. Consider replacing the Inkberry holly with a native plant species.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB2023-26: Regents School Architectural Drawings](#)

Attach. 2: [ARB2023-26: Regents School Site Plan](#)

Attach. 3: [ARB2023-26: Regents School Project Description](#)



Figure 1: Location of the proposed development.



Figure 2a: View of a portion of the cleared/graded site with buildings under construction in early Spring.



Figure 2b: Trees along the Interstate in the summer months screen the view of the site from the EC street.



Figure 3: Classroom buildings as illustrated in 2020 EC submittals.