

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2023-92: Dunlora Park, Phase 2 Townhomes
Review Type	First review of an architectural design
Parcel Identification	062F0040002900, 062F0040003000, 062F0040003100, 062F00400000A2
Location	Vacant, graded lots located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Dunlora Dr. and Varick St., approximately 280' from Rio Rd. East. (See Figure 1)
Zoned	Residential (R4), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Dunlora Investments LLC/Riverbend Development (Ashley Davies)
Magisterial District	Rio
Proposal	To construct three attached townhouse units on individual, existing lots.
Context & Visibility	The townhouse units are part of a larger, coordinated, residential development known as Dunlora Park. Residences within the development are typically 2- to 3-story single-family attached and detached units. Dunlora Park is surrounded by other residential developments to the north, east, and south. CATEC is located west of the site. (See Figure 2) The subject property is separated from the Rio Rd. East and John W. Warner Parkway ECs by two parcels that contain a multiuse path and are planted with various trees and grasses. The block contains a grassy berm at its southern end and sunken central area towards the middle and northern end. The units will be visible from the Rio EC. Due to the topography of the planted block, only the upper stories and roof lines of the townhouses will be visible from the Parkway EC. (See Figure 3)
ARB Meeting Date	November 20, 2023
Staff Contact	Mariah Gleason

PROJECT HISTORY

The three townhouses that are part of this review were originally approved under the Dunlora Park Phase II site plan (SDP201800002), which was later amended by a major site plan amendment (SDP202100023). The ARB review of the site plans was inadvertently overlooked. ARB review and approval of the architecture of the three townhouses is required prior to building permit approval.



Figure 1: Project Location (ECs shown in orange; subject property shown in red).



Figure 2: Existing development within Dunlora Park.



Figure 3: Visibility of the proposed townhouses from the Rio Road East and John W. Warner Parkway Entrance Corridors (ECs shown in orange; subject property shown in red).

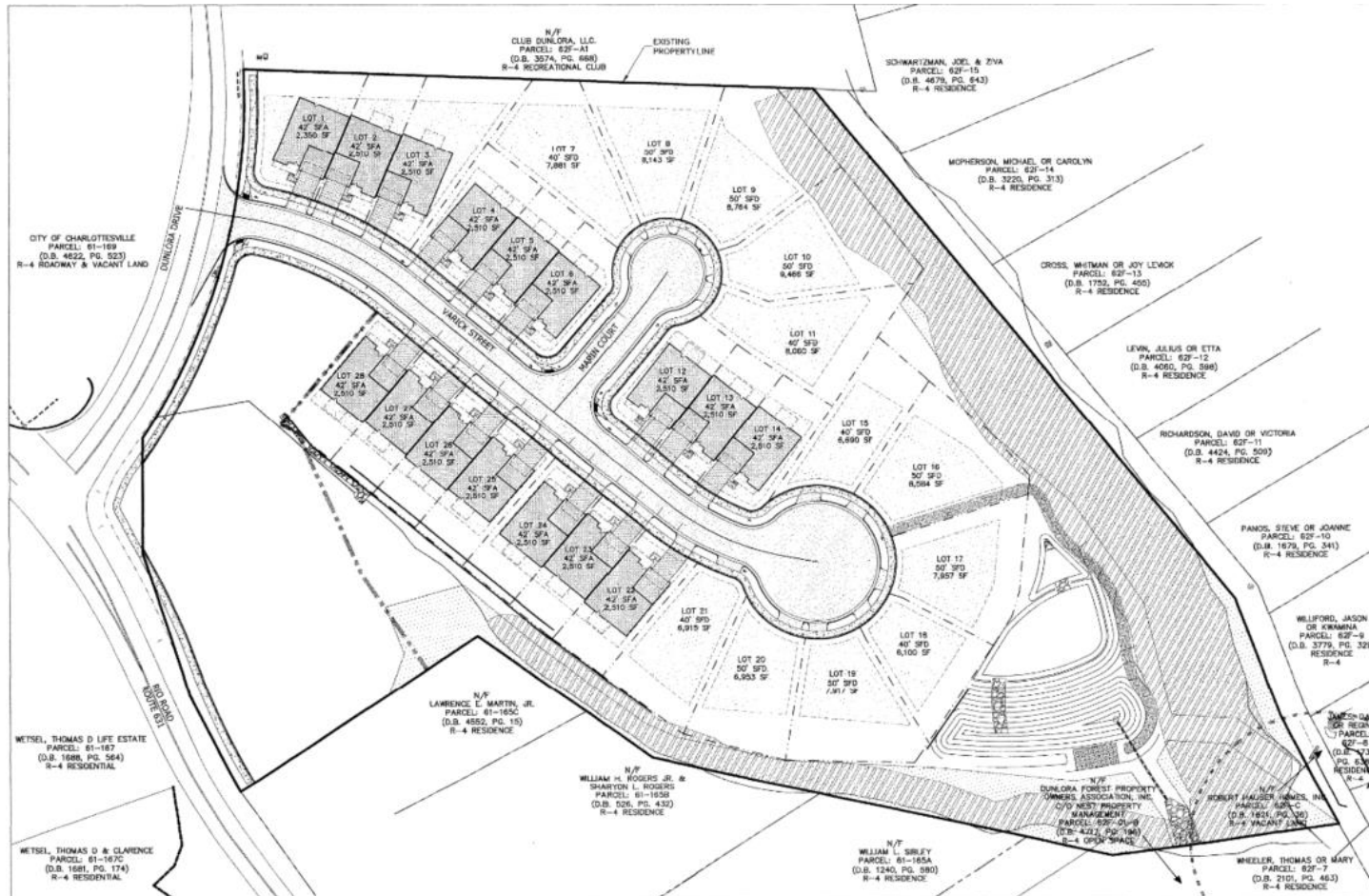


Figure 4: Site Layout approved under SDP201700033 for Dunlora Park Phase I.



Figure 5: Site Layout approved under SDP202100023 for Dunlora Park Phase II.

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
1	The goal of the regulation of the design of development within the designated Entrance Corridors is to insure 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.	Previous site plans approved the layout of 34 residential units in the Dunlora Park subdivision. While most of the lots have been built, three townhouse units have not been constructed and require ARB review. The remaining undeveloped lots, including Lots 32-34 shown in Figure 5, will be single-family detached residences which do not require ARB review.	None.
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.	Although the proposed townhouses have a contemporary appearance, traditional residential building forms are found in their design, including the simple rectangular footprints, the gabled roofs, paired and dormer windows, and the use of siding above a masonry base.	
	<i>Compatibility with significant historic sites:</i>		
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 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.		
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.		
	<i>Landscaping</i>		
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 landscaping plan and street trees have already been approved for the development.	None.
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.		
10	Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.	The proposed townhouses are expected to appear compatible with the existing houses in the subdivision through the use of gabled roof forms, paired and dormer windows, and shingle roofs. The distance from the EC	Revise the Elevations and Exterior Selections document to indicate material selections for
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.	streets is expected to minimize the impact of inconsistencies in the designs (including the lack of porches and columns in the new units, the increased building height, increased application of stone, and bracket detailing).	the side and rear elevations of Lots 29-31.
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	The front elevations successfully establish human scale and a unified design. The limited windows and detailing on the long side elevations result in a lack of human scale that could be relieved with additional detail and/or landscaping. Proposed materials and colors are identified on the front elevations (Attach. 1), but not on the side or rear elevations. If consistent throughout the block, “arctic white” is proposed for the west elevation of Lot 31. Only one existing detached unit within the subdivision appears to use this shade for siding. On the west elevation of Lot 31, the color will appear stark and will draw attention to the blankness of the design. A more muted earth tone will blend better with the development.	Revise Lot 31 to amend the arctic white siding color to a muted earth tone compatible with siding colors on existing attached units within the development.
13	Any appearance of “blankness” resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.	The west elevation of the townhouse on Lot 31 will be visible through the street trees provided along Dunlora Dr. and Varick St. This elevation is mostly blank, with few windows and minimal architectural detailing.	Revise the architectural drawings and/or landscaping on Lot 31 to eliminate the appearance of blankness on the west elevation.
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.	An option to relieve blankness is to add trees along the west elevation.	If trees will be added to eliminate the appearance of blankness on the west elevation of Lot 31, 1) a site plan amendment will

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> .		be needed, 2) the plants must be chosen from the approved list of recommended species, and 3) the standard landscaping note must be included on the plan.
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.”		
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The townhouses do not have the appearance of a trademark design.	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 be submitted with the application for final review.</i>	Specifications for the window glass have not been provided. The applicant has indicated that the glass of the dormer windows will be painted black on the inside to give the appearance of a dark internal space. This is not a typical treatment for windows along the EC, however, based on the size and limited quantity of dormer windows and the distance from the ECs, the treatment is not expected to have a negative visual impact on the EC.	Revise the architectural drawings to indicate conformity with the EC window glass criteria.
	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.	Accessory structures are not proposed with the townhouse units.	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.	Sheet 3 of the Elevations and Exterior Selections for Lots 29-31 (Attach. 1) includes a note stating that mechanical equipment will be screened by a white painted fence. Neither the location(s) of mechanical equipment nor the fence material are shown on the approved site plan or the architectural drawings.	Provide information to indicate where the mechanical equipment will be located. If fencing will be used to screen the equipment, provide a detail and indicate the material of the fence. Note that a site plan amendment may be required depending on
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 location of the mechanical equipment and screening technique.
22-31	Lighting	A site plan, which addressed lighting, has already been approved for the development.	None.
32-35	Landscaping	A landscaping plan and street trees have already been approved for the development.	None.
6, 20, 39-44	Site Development and layout; Site Grading	These guidelines are not applicable to the current evaluation. A site plan has already been approved for the development.	None.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. Degree of visibility of the townhouses
2. The appearance of blankness on the western elevation of Lot 31
3. Arctic white siding
4. Visibility of the mechanical equipment

Staff recommends approval with the following revisions:

1. Revise the Elevations and Exterior Selections document to indicate material selections for the side and rear elevations of Lots 29-31.
2. Revise Lot 31 to amend the arctic white siding color to a muted earth tone compatible with siding colors on existing attached units within the development.
3. Revise the architectural drawings and/or landscaping on Lot 31 to eliminate the appearance of blankness on the west elevation.
4. If trees will be added to eliminate the appearance of blankness on the west elevation of Lot 31, 1) a site plan amendment will be needed, 2) the plants must be chosen from the approved list of recommended species, and 3) the following standard landscaping note must be included on the 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.”
5. Revise the architectural drawings to indicate conformity with the EC window glass criteria.
6. Provide information to indicate where the mechanical equipment will be located. If fencing will be used to screen the equipment, provide a detail and indicate the material of the fence. Note that a site plan amendment may be required depending on the location of the mechanical equipment and screening technique.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB2023-92: Elevations and Exterior Selections for Lots 29-31](#)

Attach. 2: [ARB2023-92: Elevations, Floor Plans, and Structure Plans for Lots 29-31](#)

Attach. 3: [ARB2023-92: Poplar I Architecture Plans](#)