

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2023-102: Charlottesville Climbing Gym
Review Type	Conceptual/Advisory Review
Parcel Identification	06000-00-00-046C0
Location	2200 Old Ivy Road (Figure 1)
Zoned	Commercial Office (CO) / Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Ivy Forum LLC & FB Brentwood LLC / Formwork Design Office LLC (Robert Nichols)
Magisterial District	Jack Jouett
Proposal	To expand the existing building to accommodate an indoor climbing gym.
Context and Visibility	The subject parcel is located between Ivy Rd. (Rt. 250 West) and Old Ivy Rd. (Rt. 601), with the tracks of the Buckingham Branch railroad bordering the property's south side. The UVA baseball stadium is located to the northeast. The Ivy Garden Apartments complex is to the northwest and a mix of retail and offices uses are located to the west and south. Vegetation along the railroad screens much of the current development as viewed from Rt. 250, though the upper portions of taller buildings north of the railroad tracks are visible from some vantage points above the trees. (Figures 2 and 3)
ARB Meeting Date	January 2, 2024
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

SITE/PROJECT HISTORY

The ARB has reviewed no previous proposals for this location. The climbing gym use requires a Special Use Permit for an indoor athletic facility. Staff recommended that the applicant submit information to explain how visible the building addition would be from the Entrance Corridor, particularly given the contemporary appearance of the proposed design. The ARB's recommendations on the proposal will be forwarded for consideration with the Special Use Permit request. Any future building permits and site plan amendments will be subject to ARB review.

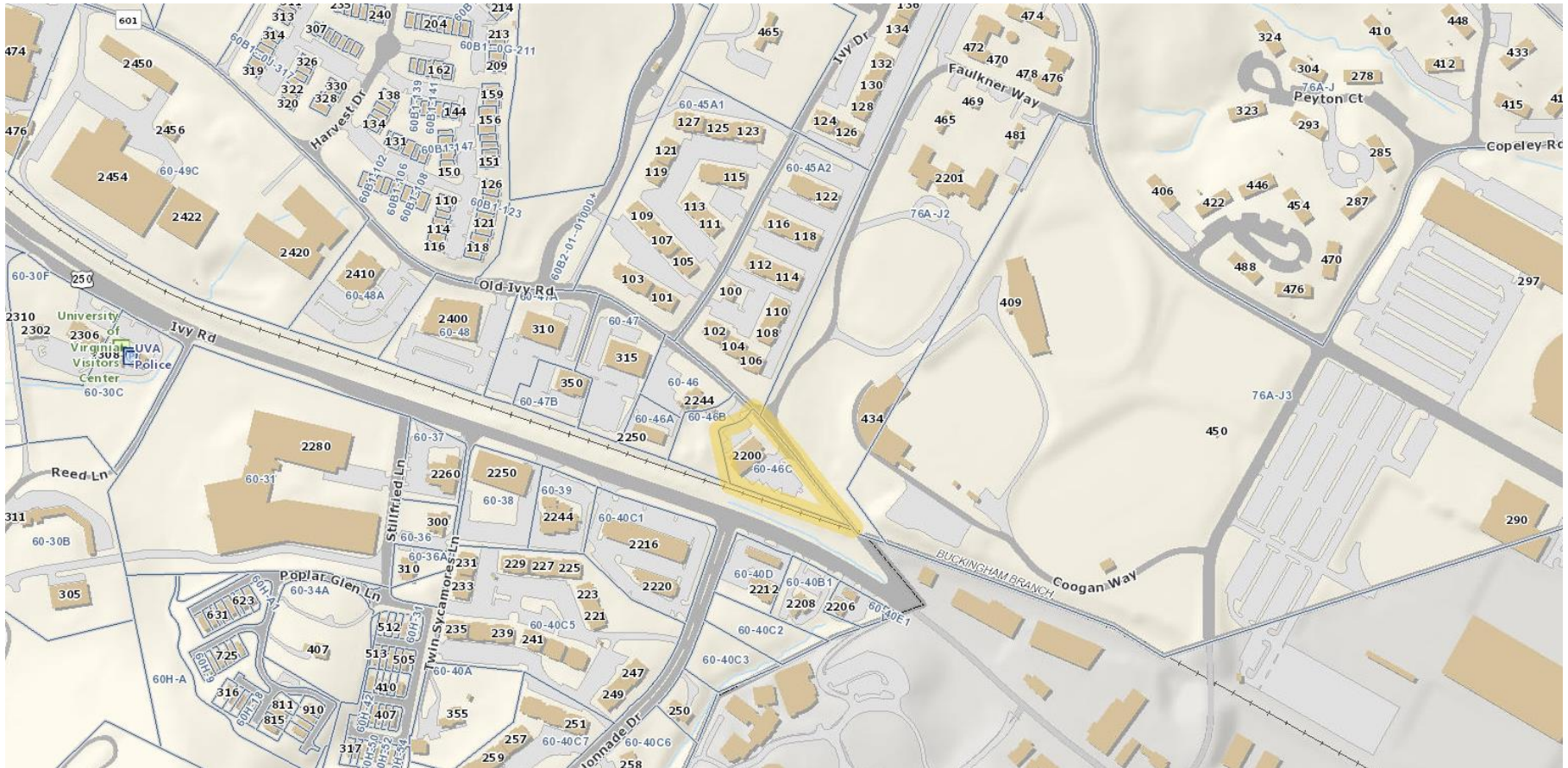


Figure 1: Project location



Fig. 2: Views of the existing building at 2200 Old Ivy Rd. Above: view to the southeast from Old Ivy Rd. Below: view to the southwest from Old Ivy Rd.



Fig. 3: View north from the Colonnade Dr./Ivy Rd. intersection toward the subject property, with Ivy Rd. in the foreground and the railroad tracks in the mid-ground.

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	<i>Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor; 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 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.	The applicant proposes to raise the existing two-story building 15' to a height of three stories. The new structure would be visible above the vegetation on the north side of the Ivy Rd. Entrance Corridor. The proposed building extension features a flat roof, walls finished to match the finish below, exposed galvanized steel structure, clerestory fenestration, and perforated metal mechanical penthouse screen. These features do not have a	The proposed building addition is expected to appear compatible with the surrounding context of the site.
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.	strong connection to the historic architecture of the area. However, the applicant cites UVA's baseball stadium as a precedent for the proposed design.	
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.	Disharoon Park, UVA The buildings located nearby at 2420 Old Ivy Rd. may also serve as a precedent.	
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.		
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	2420 Old Ivy Rd. Given the available vantage points and the visibility of the Old Ivy Rd. buildings from the EC, the climbing gym addition is expected to appear consistent with the surrounding context.	

	significant historic sites in the area.		
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 mass and scale of the proposed structure will be broken down by the steel framing elements, the clerestory windows, and the penthouse screening, all of which also establish a rhythm across the elevations.	None.
12	Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.	The existing building is not visible from the EC street, so coordination (or lack thereof) between the designs of the existing building and the addition will not be obvious from the EC.	None.
13	Any appearance of “blankness” resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.	Blankness is not a characteristic of the proposed design.	None.
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	There is a single building in this development.	None.
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The proposal does 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>	Clerestory windows are proposed. Details on window glass were not included with this submittal.	Provide specifications showing that the window glass guideline will be met.
	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 new accessory structures or equipment are shown on the plan. The penthouse screen is expected to screen rooftop equipment from view.	Provide building elevations with equipment locations and heights.
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.	Information on equipment locations and heights relative to the screen should be provided to confirm lack of visibility.	

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.		
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.	No new stormwater facilities are proposed.	None.
44	Natural drainage patterns (or to the extent required, new drainage patterns) should be incorporated into the finished site to the extent possible.		
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 mechanical equipment note will be needed on the architectural and site plans.	Add the mechanical equipment note to the architectural and site plans.
22-31	Lighting	Lighting changes were not included in this submittal. Details on any new ground- and building-mounted lighting should be provided with the next submittal.	Provide lighting information with the next submittal. Full cutoff styles are recommended for all fixtures.
	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 parcel does not directly front on the EC. The railroad and vegetation along the train tracks separate the parcel from the EC street and screen the existing development from view.	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.		
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.	No interior roads are proposed.	None.
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.	No new pedestrian ways are proposed.	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 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.	No changes to the existing parking are proposed. The plan shows a row of shrubs along the 10-space parking row adjacent to Old Ivy Rd., and 4 large shade trees added at the perimeter of the parking areas.	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.	Existing off-site vegetation along the railroad tracks screens the existing building as viewed from the Ivy Rd. EC. There does not appear to be space available on site for new trees between the building and the EC.	None.
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> .	This level of detail is not included in this submittal.	None at this time.
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 will be needed on the site plan.	Add the standard plant health note to the landscape plan.
	Site Development and layout		
	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.	No changes to the site layout or building footprint are proposed. The existing pattern of roads and paths would be retained. The existing building is oriented at an angle to the corridor. The addition will be visible above the trees, following the same orientation as the existing building. Vehicular access is provided to Old Ivy Rd. There are existing sidewalks and paths around the building. There are no sidewalks at this end of Old Ivy Rd.	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.	No grading is proposed.	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.		
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.	There is existing vegetation to remain that will require tree protection fencing.	Show tree protection fencing on the plan.
43	Preservation areas should be protected from storage or movement of heavy equipment within this area.		

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended points of discussion

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. Visibility of the addition from the EC
2. The architectural design of the addition; compatibility with surrounding context

Recommendation on the Special Use Permit

Because the proposed building addition is expected to appear compatible with the surrounding context of the site, staff recommends that the ARB forward a recommendation of “no objection” to the proposed Special Use Permit.

Recommendations for future ARB submittals

Staff recommends that the following items be addressed with future ARB submittals (in addition to all standard checklist items):

1. Provide specifications showing that the window glass guideline will be met.
2. Provide building elevations with equipment locations and heights.
3. Add the mechanical equipment note to the architectural and site plans: *Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.*
4. Provide lighting information with the next submittal. Full cutoff styles are recommended for all fixtures.
5. Add the standard plant health note 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.*
6. Show tree protection fencing on the plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB2023-102: Charlottesville Climbing Gym architectural submittal](#)

Attach. 2: [ARB2023-102: Charlottesville Climbing Gym project narrative](#)