

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2024-53: ArborLife Initial Site Plan
Review Type	Initial Site Development Plan
Parcel Identification	07100-00-00-037K0
Location	163 Patterson Mill Lane, south of I-64
Zoned	Rural Areas (RA), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Baber, Roger L / Meridian Civil Survey, PLLC (Timothy Miller)
Magisterial District	Samuel Miller
Proposal	To utilize an existing building on site to house a landscaping business and to undertake site improvements including storage areas for vehicles, equipment, and landscaping materials on approximately 4.02 acres.
Context	The character of this portion of the EC is largely residential and rural. A VDOT facility that stores materials and equipment for roadway maintenance is located directly across Patterson Mill Ln. To the north of the site is I-64 and to the east along Patterson Mill Ln. are residential properties.
Visibility	The subject property is approximately 87’ from the eastbound lanes, and 232’ from the westbound lanes, of the I-64 EC. The median and the area between the eastbound lane and the site contain trees and berms. The topography is expected to limit visibility, and the wooded areas provide screening of the site during the spring and summer months, but increased visibility is likely during the fall and winter months when there is less foliage.
ARB Meeting Date	September 3, 2024
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY

A special use permit (SP2023-06, landscape contractor in the Rural Areas) was approved for this property on March 6, 2024. Staff comments on potential impacts to the EC were provided during the review of the SP.

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

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	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.	A one-story metal building is existing on site and no changes are proposed to the building. The character of this portion of the I-64 EC is defined by its wooded areas that bound the travel lanes and limit the views of the development beyond. This proposal is not expected to change the existing character of this EC.	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.		
3-5, 9-16	Compatibility with significant historic sites; Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor; Structure Design		
	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.	The plan shows a pole shed to the southeast, and a compost toilet to the northeast, of the existing building. In these locations, the structures are not expected to be visible from the EC.	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.	The plan shows a loading space near the northeast corner of the building and a vehicle storage area to the southeast of the building. The distance, berms, and wooded areas between the site and the corridor are expected to mitigate the visibility of the loading and parking areas during the spring and summer months. When there is less foliage on the trees in the fall and winter, fleeting views of these areas from the I-64 EC may be possible. However, these views are not expected to have a negative visual impact on the EC.	
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.	A 25’x30’ log storage area is also shown on the site plan northeast of the existing building. The views of this area will	

		be fleeting, and logs stacked in piles will not be out of character with the surrounding context of the I-64 EC.	
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 not on the site plan.	Revise the site plan to include the standard mechanical equipment note.
22-31	Lighting	Lighting was not shown in the initial plan.	Indicate if new lighting is proposed. If it is, provide a 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.	Given the rural context of the surrounding area and the wooded context of I-64, the standard EC frontage landscaping would not promote visual order. A landscaping arrangement that screens the vehicle storage and loading areas from the EC would be appropriate.	See landscaping recommendations, above and below.
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.	There are no interior roads within this site.	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 sidewalks are existing or proposed in this site plan.	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.	The nine new parking spaces shown on the site plan require one large tree interior to the parking area. The site plan does not show any interior trees. However, given the layout of the parking spaces, the gravel parking area, and the rural surrounding context, an interior parking tree is not necessary.	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.	The existing building does not have any long elevations that require landscaping.	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>.	The proposed Leyland Cypress trees are on the approved lists. However, the site plan shows a row of pollinating vegetation between the site and Patterson Mill Lane but does not note the proposed species.	Revise the site plan to note the species of landscaping proposed between the site and Patterson Mill Lane.
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 standard plan health note does not appear on the site plan set.	Include the standard plan health note on the site plan in the next submittal.
	Development pattern		
	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; ensuring 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.	This site has been previously developed and the proposed changes to the site maintain an organized layout. Given the rural context, no pedestrian or vehicular connections are needed. The placement of the structures, parking, and storage areas maintains the existing forested area, open spaces, and views.	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 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.	Site grading is limited to establishing the new stormwater facility. This grading will not be visible from 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.	No grading is proposed near any areas designated for preservation.	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.	The site plan shows an above-ground stormwater facility south of the existing building. In this location the facility will not be visible from the I-64 Entrance Corridor.	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. The anticipated visibility of the vehicle storage and loading areas.

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 Site Development Plan.
- 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 final site plan for this development is available for staff-level review. The following items and all items on the ARB Final Site Plan Checklist must be addressed:

 - 1. Revise the site plan to include the standard mechanical equipment note: Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.
 - 2. Indicate if new lighting is proposed. If it is, provide a lighting plan with the next submittal.
 - 3. Revise the site plan to note the species of landscaping proposed between the site and Patterson Mill Lane.
 - 4. Revise the site plan to include the standard plant health note: 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.

ATTACHMENTS

- [Attach. 1: ARB2024-53: Arborlife Initial Site Plan](#)