

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2024-66: Northside Drive Industrial
Review Type	Review of a Conceptual Architecture Plan
Parcel Identification	03200-00-00-022M0, 03200-00-00-02200 (partial)
Location	Southwest corner of Seminole Trail (Route 29) and Northside Drive (Figure 1)
Zoned	Heavy Industrial (HI), Entrance Corridor (EC), Airport Impact Area (AIA)
Owner/Applicant	Northside Drive LLC / Southern Development (Kevin Lancaster)
Magisterial District	Rio
Proposal	To construct a 72,000-sf warehouse in addition to associated site improvements.
Context	The site is part of an industrial-zoned area that extends to the north, west, and southwest. Residential developments are located to the south and across Rt. 29 to the east.
Visibility	The upper portions of the building’s north, east, and south elevations will be readily visible from the Route 29 Entrance Corridor.
ARB Meeting Date	December 2, 2024
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT/SITE HISTORY

The ARB reviewed an initial site plan proposal to construct a vehicle repair service center on this site (ARB2023-37) on August 7, 2023, and recommended approval of the plan with conditions. A final site plan for that development has not been submitted.



Figure 1: Aerial view highlighting the subject property.

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	GENERAL GUIDELINES		
	<i>Purpose, Compatibility with significant historic sites and the character of the Entrance Corridor, Structure design, Site Development and layout</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 building design uses concrete tilt-up construction, which can have limited flexibility in using design elements to relieve building mass and blankness. The result is a building with a strong contemporary appearance and no relationship to the historic architecture of the County. The immediate surrounding context is industrial; however, the industrial buildings of similar scale are located at the end of Northside Drive and are not visible from EC.	See architectural and landscaping recommendations, below.
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 characteristics 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.	The site plan shows grading to expand the existing berm the full length of the frontage and increase its height. This berm expansion is expected to limit the visibility of the lower portion of the building elevations from the EC. The landscaped berm could help promote orderly and attractive development along the corridor.	
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.	The elevations visible from the EC are composed of a series of concrete panels separated by vertical scoring. The building has a dark blue base, white upper walls, and light blue accents. At the base of the EC-facing elevation, each of the panels has a door with a canopy, an overhead door, windows, or a narrow panel with a contrasting color and scoring. These features eliminate blankness from this part of the building, but the base is expected to have minimal visibility from the street due to the berm.	
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.		
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	Several light blue panels are spaced at intervals, above building entrances, and extend above the main roof line. The narrow decorative panels extend from the dark base into the white upper wall, and a horizontal score line accents the top of the wall. The forms, color changes, and detailing provide visual interest to the building’s simple rectangular form and help reduce its mass and scale. However, the upper walls of the building remain largely blank and uniform, and it is unclear how effective the score lines will be when viewed at a distance. While the construction type may have some limitations, revising the design to incorporate additional/alternate elements at the	Revise the architecture to incorporate forms and

	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.	middle and upper parts of the elevations that draw on local industrial or commercial precedents would be appropriate.	detailing that help break up the scale and mass of the building.
10	Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.	Material samples have not been provided but images of colors and finishes from the manufacturer’s website have been included with this submittal. The colors appear to be various shades of white, gray, and brown with varying levels of texture. Material samples will be needed to determine the visual impact of the proposed materials.	Provide material samples with the next submittal.
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.	The proposed building is a 450’ long by 160’ wide by 35’ tall rectangular block. The darker color at the bottom of the elevations visually creates a base but the proposed berm and required frontage landscaping are anticipated to limit its visibility. Above the darker color is a visually lighter color and horizontal scoring to divide the middle and top. However, the lack of variation in material and depth along the upper elevations results in a design with little definition between the middle and top of the building. Revising the building design to use detailing and changes in finish or color to provide a clear definition between the base, middle, and top of the building would provide a more cohesive design and a connection to historic building construction.	Revise the architecture to use detailing and changes in material or color to better establish a base-middle-top pattern.
12	Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.		
13	Any appearance of “blankness” resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.	Based on the anticipated visual impact of the windowless walls on the EC, design detail and vegetation will be necessary to relieve blankness.	See the architectural recommendations, above and the landscape recommendation in Guideline 36.
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	A single building is proposed.	None.
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The building does not have a trademark appearance.	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 and samples of the proposed window glass have not been submitted at this time. However, the proposed berm is expected to limit the visibility of the building’s base from the EC.	None.
	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.	A large loading area and loading docks are shown along the west side of the proposed building, where they will be screened from the EC. A smaller loading area is shown on the east side of the building where it is expected to be screened by the existing berm.	Show the locations of all ground- and building-mounted equipment on the site plan, roof plan, and elevations.
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 location(s) of mechanical equipment is not labeled on the plan.	Show how visibility from the ECs will be eliminated. Revise the architectural drawings to add the roof-mounted equipment locations and heights to the elevations.
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 note is not present on the site plan or the architectural drawings.	Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the site and architectural plans.
	Lighting		
	<i>General Guidelines</i>		
22	Light should be contained on the site and not spill over onto adjacent properties or streets;	A lighting plan has not been provided with the initial plan.	Revise the site plan to provide a complete lighting plan with the next submittal.
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.		
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.		
26	Dark brown, dark bronze, or black are appropriate colors for free-standing pole-mounted light fixtures in the Entrance Corridors.		
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.		
24	Light levels exceeding 30 foot-candles are not appropriate for display lots in the Entrance Corridors. Lower light levels will apply to most other uses in the Entrance Corridors.		
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.		
30-31	<i>Guidelines for the Use of Decorative Landscape Lighting</i>		
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 foot-candle.”	The note is not present on the site plan.	Add the standard lighting note to the lighting plan.
	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	A landscaping plan has not been provided with this submittal. An existing berm runs along the frontage from the southern corner of the	Provide a complete landscape plan with the next submittal.

	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.	parcel to just past the middle of the parcel and existing overhead lines run along the full length of the frontage. The site plan shows grading to add to the height of the existing berm and extend it to the northern corner of the parcel. The site sections provided appear to show trees and shrubs to be planted on top of the berm; however, it is unclear how the berm and landscaping will coordinate with the existing utilities along the frontage. The sections suggest that the landscaping at the berm will completely screen the building; however, this is unlikely both at time of planting and when the trees are mature. The frontage landscaping Guidelines call for plantings that integrate and harmonize the appearance of the building and development as viewed from the EC. A row of consistently spaced evergreens may provide screening, but that type of planning tends to draw attention to the fact that a feature needs to be screened. Providing an arrangement of mixed species in an irregular pattern coordinated with the proposed grading would be appropriate.	Ensure the proposed species are on the recommended lists.
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.		Provide an arrangement of mixed species along the Rt. 29 frontage in an irregular pattern coordinated with the proposed grading to help screen the building and integrate the development into the corridor.
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.		Revise the site section to show the property line and existing overhead line. Include the standard landscaping note on the landscape plan.
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> .		
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.”		
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.	Large shade trees, 2½” caliper at time of the planting and 40’ on center, are required along Northside Drive.	Provide trees along Northside Drive that meet the interior road landscaping requirements (2½” caliper and 40’ on center).
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.	Other than the sidewalk along the front of the building, no interior 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.	The parking lot is shown between the proposed building and the existing/proposed berm along the frontage. Trees provided along the frontage could double perimeter parking trees. The grading along the frontage is expected to reduce the visual impact of the parking lot on the EC; however, some visibility of the lot is expected where the berm height dips near the north end of the area. Trees provided along the northern and southern perimeters of the parking area would help integrate the site and building design into the surrounding context. 82 parking spaces are proposed, requiring 8 interior parking lot trees.	Provide trees along the northern and southern perimeters of the parking lot that meet the perimeter parking area landscaping requirements (2½” caliper and 40’ on center). Provide 8 interior parking lot trees at 2½” caliper.
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 east (450’) and north and south elevations (160’) are long elevations that are anticipated to be visible from the EC above the proposed berm and required landscaping. The elevations use forms, color variation, and concrete scoring in a regular pattern to create visual interest along the elevations. Nevertheless, blankness predominates. Providing the required interior parking area trees will help to soften the building’s east elevation but large trees along the north and south sides of the building will be needed to soften the appearance of those walls.	Provide large trees along the north and south elevations to help soften the appearance of the exterior walls.
	Site Grading		
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.	The site has already been cleared and graded; no natural landscape remains. The proposed development includes the expansion of the berm along the frontage, with the parking area, building, and stormwater facility to the west of the berm. The expanded berm is expected to limit the view of the site from the EC but perspective renderings from both directions on Rt. 29, with and without landscaping, would help clarify the impact of the building design on the EC.	Provide perspective renderings from both directions on Rt. 29, with and without landscaping, to clarify visibility and potential impacts.
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.		
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.	The site has been previously graded. Proposed grading increases the scale of the existing berm along the frontage to decrease the building's visibility from the EC, but the upper elevations, which are largely blank, will remain visible. Proposed grading also creates a berm along the frontage that will have a man-made appearance. Revising the grading to establish a more natural appearance and revising the building design to reduce the blankness of the upper walls would be appropriate. The proposed slope west of the loading area will have an engineered appearance; however, it is unclear how visible this feature will be from the EC. Revising the site sections to include this grading would help clarify the impact on the EC. A retaining wall is shown along the east and south sides of the parking lot. No wall heights have been provided but based on the nearby grading the wall will face inward to the site and will not be visible from the EC.	Revise the grading along the frontage to establish a more natural appearance. Revise the site sections to include the slope west of the loading area behind the building.
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.	There is a tree line along the southern perimeter of the site, but no tree protection is shown for the trees that are to remain.	Revise the site plan to show tree protection fencing along the southern perimeter of the site.
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 stormwater facility north of the proposed building is expected to have limited visibility from the EC. Trees provided along Northside Drive would further limit the visibility of this facility.	See interior road landscaping recommendation, above.
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 architectural design of the building; the mass, scale and detailing of the long walls.
2. The grading along the frontage and at the rear of the site.
3. Landscaping along Route 29, Northside Drive, and within the site.

Staff offers the following comments on the conceptual design:

1. Revise the architecture to incorporate forms and detailing that help break up the scale and mass of the building.
2. Provide material samples with the next submittal.
3. Revise the architecture to use detailing and changes in material or color to better establish a base-middle-top pattern.
4. Show the locations of all ground- and building-mounted equipment on the site plan, roof plan, and elevations. Show how visibility from the ECs will be eliminated.
5. Revise the architectural drawings to add the roof-mounted equipment locations and heights to the elevations.
6. Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the site and architectural plans: Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.
7. Revise the site plan to provide a complete lighting plan with the next submittal.
8. Add the standard lighting note to 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 foot-candle.
9. Provide a complete landscape plan with the next submittal. Ensure the proposed species are on the recommended lists.
10. Provide an arrangement of mixed species along the Rt. 29 frontage in an irregular pattern coordinated with the proposed grading to help screen the building and integrate the development into the corridor.
11. Revise the site section to show the property line and existing overhead line.
12. Include the standard landscaping note on 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.
13. Provide trees along Northside Drive that meet the interior road landscaping requirements (2½” caliper and 40’ on center).
14. Provide trees along the northern and southern perimeters of the parking lot that meet the perimeter parking area landscaping requirements (2½” caliper and 40’ on center).
15. Provide 8 interior parking lot trees at 2½” caliper.
16. Provide large trees along the north and south elevations to help soften the appearance of the exterior walls.
17. Provide perspective renderings from both directions on Rt. 29, with and without landscaping, to clarify visibility and potential impacts.
18. Revise the grading along the frontage to establish a more natural appearance.
19. Revise the site sections to include the slope west of the loading area behind the building.
20. Revise the site plan to show tree protection fencing along the southern perimeter of the site.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attach. 1: [ARB2024-66: Northside Drive Industrial Site Plan](#)
- Attach. 2: [ARB2024-66: Northside Drive Industrial Architectural Drawings](#)
- Attach. 3: [ARB2024-66: Northside Drive Industrial Perspective](#)