

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2024-68: Arbor Oaks Townes Initial
Review Type	Initial Site Development Plan
Parcel Identification	06100-00-00-03800
Location	On the east side of Hydraulic Road (Rt. 743) approximately 452’ northeast of the intersection of Georgetown Rd. and Hydraulic Rd.
Zoned	R-15 Residential / Entrance Corridor (EC) / Airport Impact Area (AIA)
Owner/Applicant	Fusion Properties LLC / Meridian Civil Survey, PLLC (Tim Miller)
Magisterial District	Jack Jouett
Proposal	To develop a previously undeveloped .90-acre parcel with 14 townhouses in two blocks, with associated site improvements.
Context and Visibility	The parcels to the north and south feature townhouses, the parcel to the east contains a single-family residence, Albemarle High School is across Hydraulic Rd. to the west, and two commercial buildings are across Hydraulic Rd. to the southwest (Figure 1). Visibility of the north, west, and south elevations from Hydraulic Road will be clear.
ARB Meeting Date	December 16, 2024
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY

The ARB has not reviewed any previous proposals for this site. A rezoning (ZMA2022-12, R-4 Residential to R-15 Residential) was approved for this property on January 17, 2024. Design staff provided comments on the potential impacts to the Entrance Corridor, highlighting the limited area set aside for frontage plantings, during the ZMA review.

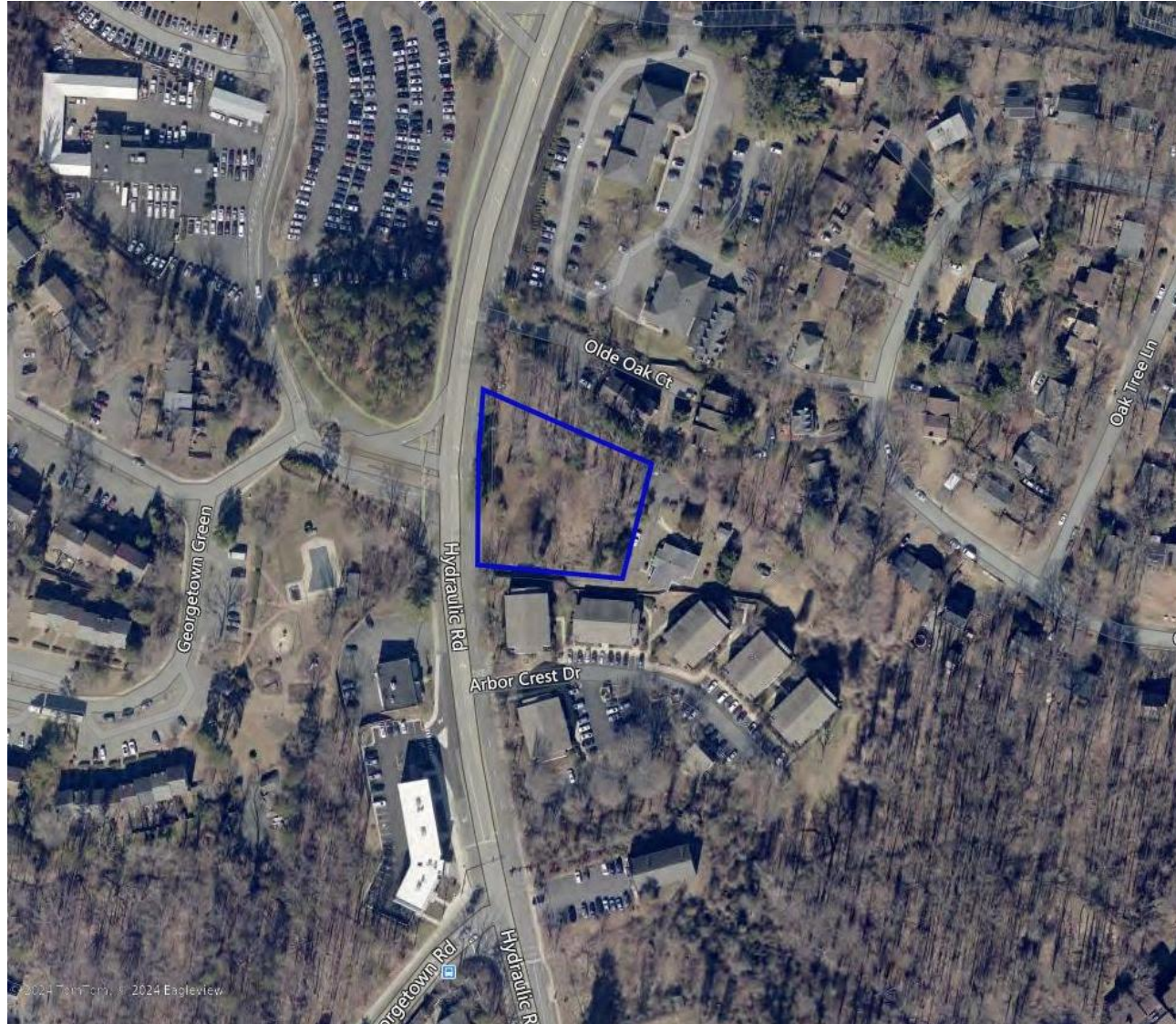


Figure 1: Aerial view highlighting the subject property.

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.	Architectural designs were not provided with the initial plan so the compatibility of the buildings with local historic landmarks cannot be determined at this time. The proposed site layout orients the side elevation of the townhouse blocks towards the EC, but a note on the plan states that “the townhouses closest to Hydraulic Rd. shall have fronts oriented to the street.” The front and rear elevations face away from the EC, but due to the parcel's size, the buildings will be close to the street, making all but the east elevations visible from the EC. Building designs that eliminate blankness and achieve appropriate form, scale, etc. will help establish an appropriate front for the EC and integrate the development into the surrounding context.	Provide architectural designs with the next submittal. Note that the townhouses' front, side, and rear elevations must be designed to eliminate blankness and achieve appropriate form, scale, etc. Submit material and color samples for review.
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 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.	No accessory structures are proposed. The location(s) of mechanical equipment is not labeled on the plan.	Show the location of mechanical equipment (building- and ground-mounted) on the site and architectural plans and show how it will be screened from the EC.
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 site plan does not show any fencing. However, the backyards of the townhouses have space where fencing is possible and would be visible from the EC.	Revise the site plan to note that there will not be any fencing or provide a fence detail to ensure appropriate design and consistency.
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 has not been provided on the site plan set and should also be added to the architectural set when submitted.	Include the mechanical equipment note on the site plan set and architectural drawings.
	Lighting		
22-28	<i>General Guidelines</i>	No lighting plan has been submitted for review.	Provide a lighting plan for review that includes a photometric plan, a luminaire schedule, and manufacturer’s cut sheets for all proposed wall-mounted and freestanding fixtures.
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 footcandle.”	The standard lighting note has not been provided on the site plan.	Revise the plan to provide the standard lighting note.
	Landscaping		
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.	The landscape plan features ornamental trees along the frontage instead of the required large trees. The existing overhead line and a proposed 10-foot electric easement limit the area available for plantings. However, the frontage landscaping guidelines stipulate the necessity for an adequately wide area to accommodate required landscaping, independent of utilities and associated easements.	Revise the layout of the townhouse blocks to provide a planting area along the frontage that can accommodate the required large shade trees free of utility/easement conflicts. Revise the site plan to show large shade trees, 3½” at time of planting and 35’ on center, along the frontage.
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.	Arbor Oaks Ct. is proposed as a private street but will function as a parking lot with parking spaces and sidewalks on both sides of the travelway. Ornamental trees (Crape Myrtles) are shown between the townhouse blocks and the sidewalks.	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.		

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 schedule indicates that there are 29 parking spaces provided, which is one more than the number required. Based on the number of spaces shown, 3 interior parking lot trees are required; however, none have been provided.	Revise the landscape plan to provide three interior parking lot trees, 2½” caliper at time of planting.
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 longest townhouse block is approximately 158’ long. The site layout leaves little room for landscaping along the townhouses to soften the exterior walls so architectural designs that help relieve blankness and break up the length of the blocks will be important.	See architectural recommendations, above.
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 plant species are on the approved lists.	None.
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 landscape note has not been provided on the landscape plan.	Revise the landscape plan to include the standard landscape note.
	Site Development and layout		
	Development pattern		
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.	The parking area and travelway have an organized pattern. The existing sidewalk along Hydraulic Road will be demolished and repositioned slightly to the east. Connections will be made to the sidewalks near the townhouses and the parking area. The building mass is oriented perpendicular to the EC so building designs that eliminate blankness and incorporate sufficient architectural detailing will be important to help establish an appropriate front for the EC. No significant natural features or vistas exist on this site.	See architectural recommendations, above.

	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.	Grading is required north, east, and west of the townhouse blocks, necessitating three retaining walls. A long, almost continuous retaining wall runs along the northern and eastern parcel boundaries and a smaller wall is shown along the frontage west of Lots 1-5. The longer walls have a maximum height of 7 feet, but they are not terraced or landscaped. The townhouses are expected to filter views of the walls from the EC but visibility is expected from the site entrance along Hydraulic Rd. and through the backyards of the townhouses. Details of the walls, including proposed materials and colors, have not been provided but are required to determine impacts.	Provide details of the proposed retaining walls in the site plan set and submit material and color samples for review. Retaining walls over six feet must be terraced and landscaped.
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.	The Existing Conditions and Demolition Plan (Sheet 2) shows several extant trees on the parcel with a note that states “existing trees to remain.” However, there are additional trees on the parcel that have not been identified.	Revise the existing conditions sheet to show all existing trees and differentiate between trees to be removed and those to be retained. Provide sufficient tree protection fencing around the trees that are to be preserved.
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.	An underground stormwater system is proposed near the southwest corner of the site. The stormwater pipes from this facility limit the space available for landscaping along the frontage.	See the frontage landscaping recommendations, 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. Landscaping:
 - Frontage
 - Interior parking area
2. The proposed retaining walls' visual impact on the EC.

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:
Staff does not recommend approval of the site plan at this time. Prior to initial plan approval, the following item shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the ARB:
 1. Revise the layout of the townhouse blocks to provide a clear planting area along the frontage that can accommodate the required large shade trees free of utility/easement conflicts.
- Regarding recommendations on the plan as it relates to the guidelines: None.
- Regarding conditions to be satisfied prior to issuance of a grading permit:
 1. Revise the existing conditions sheet to show all existing trees and differentiate between trees to be removed and those to be retained. Provide sufficient tree protection fencing around the trees that are to be preserved.
- Regarding the final site plan submittal:
A Certificate of Appropriateness is required prior to final site plan approval. The following items and all items on the ARB Final Site Plan Checklist must be addressed
 1. Provide architectural designs with the next submittal. Note that the townhouses' front, side, and rear elevations must be designed to eliminate blankness and achieve appropriate form, scale, etc.
 2. Submit material and color samples for review.
 3. Show the location of mechanical equipment (building- and ground-mounted) on the site and architectural plans and show how it will be screened from the EC.
 4. Revise the site plan to note that there will not be any fencing or provide a fence detail to ensure appropriate design and consistency.
 5. Include the mechanical equipment note on the site plan set and architectural drawings: Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.
 6. Provide a lighting plan for review that includes a photometric plan, a luminaire schedule, and manufacturer's cut sheets for all proposed wall-mounted and freestanding fixtures.
 7. Revise the plan to provide the standard lighting note: 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.
 8. Revise the layout of the townhouse blocks to provide a clear planting area along the frontage.
 9. Revise the site plan to show large shade trees, 3½" at time of planting and 35' on center, along the frontage.
 10. Revise the landscape plan to provide three interior parking lot trees, 2½" caliper at time of planting.
 11. Revise the landscape plan to include the standard landscape 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.
 12. Provide details of the proposed retaining walls in the site plan set and submit material and color samples for review. Retaining walls over six feet must be terraced and landscaped.
 13. Revise the existing conditions sheet to show all existing trees and differentiate between trees to be removed and those to be retained. Provide sufficient tree protection fencing around the trees that are to be preserved.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attach 1: [ARB2024-68: Arbor Oaks Townes Initial Site Plan](#)