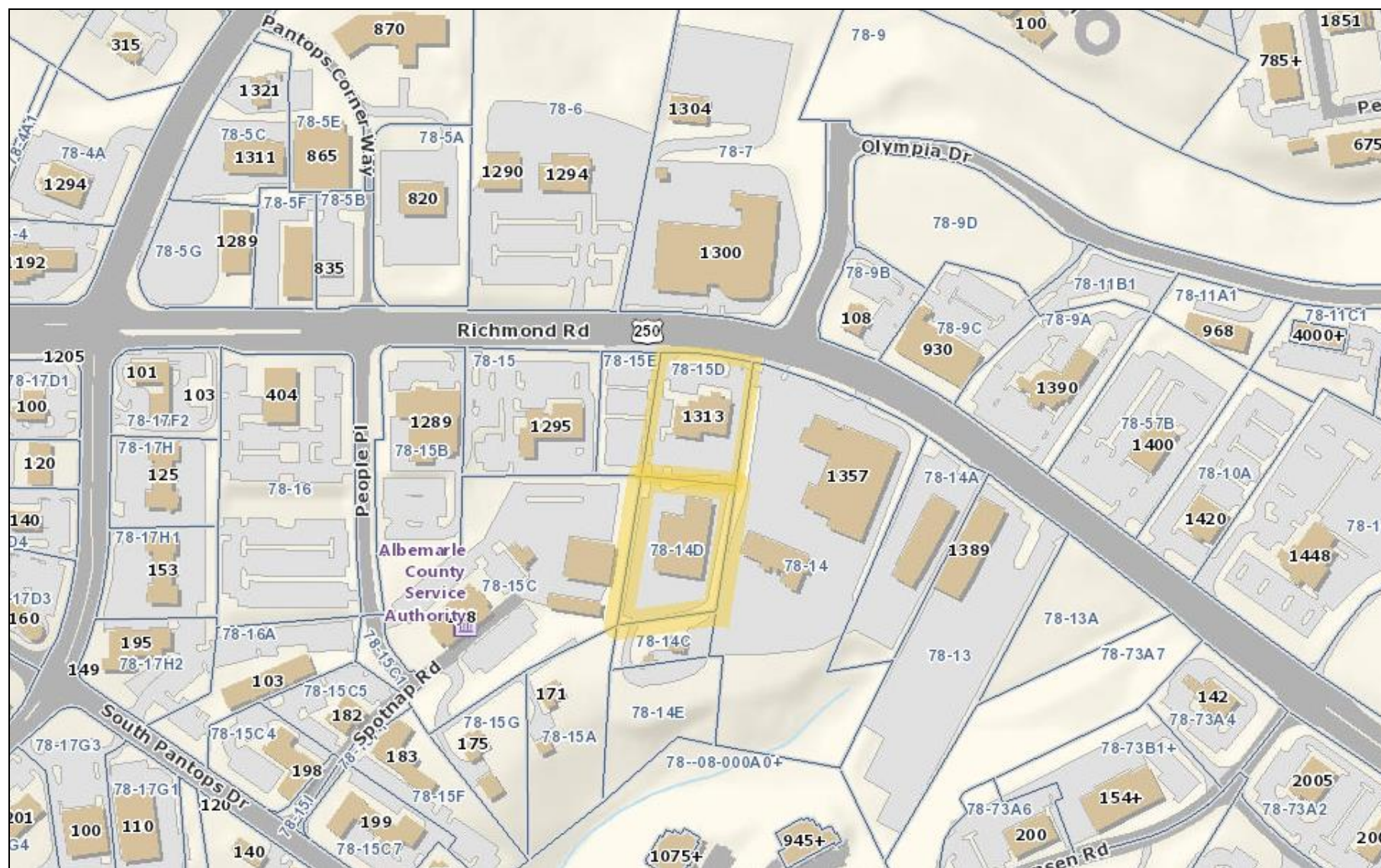


ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2024-70: Flow CVL Mercedes-Benz
Review Type	Minor Site Plan Amendment
Parcel Identification	07800-00-00-015D0, 07800-00-00-014D0
Location	1313 Richmond Road (Fig. 1)
Zoned	Highway Commercial (HC) / Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Flow Automotive, Janice Linkous & Kathy Linkous Simmons, Trustees / Design Develop LLC (Kevin Schafer)
Magisterial District	Rivanna
Proposal	To replace the existing auto dealership building with a new Mercedes-Benz showroom of approximately the same size and to undertake associated site improvements.
Context	This site is located along a portion of the corridor that is dominated by auto dealerships. Other commercial development is nearby. Residential development is located further south.
Visibility	This development is readily visible from the Entrance Corridor.
ARB Meeting Date	January 6, 2025
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

PROJECT HISTORY

The original development of this site predates the establishment of the Entrance Corridors. The ARB reviewed several proposals over the years to renovate and add to the original building at this site. Reviews were completed in 19995, 2005 through 2007, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2019. Most of the proposals in the more recent years were not built. The outdoor sales, storage and display of vehicles at this site and on the adjacent parcel to the west was approved in 2008 under SP-2007-45. SDP-2024-11 is under review to amend the previously approved plan (SDP-2008-38).



ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	<i>Purpose; Compatibility with significant historic sites</i>		
	Structure design		
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 proposed design is not a strong reflection of the traditional architecture of the area, but the materials and forms (metal panels, geometric shapes, large areas of storefront glass) are compatible with other contemporary auto dealerships along the corridor. As such, the development could contribute to an orderly and attractive corridor. The proposed color scheme is black, grey and silver. Black is proposed for the ACM wall panels and for the paint (MP89635 Satin Black 60% sheen) at the building's base. The illustrations suggest a continuous appearance from panel to base, but the reflectance of the metal panels is expected to differ from the painted finish below, the surfaces are expected to wear differently, and the paint could be a maintenance issue. Additional details comparing the materials/finishes would help clarify the appearance.	Provide additional information comparing the black metal and paint finishes to show how they will achieve an appropriate appearance on the corridor. Revise the white gloss color of the service building side elevations to a more muted tone.
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	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	The building design includes elements that are not typical of the corridor or traditional architecture. The proposed roof has a thin form, rounded corners, 6' overhang, and contrasting grey color that is a distinctive element of the trademark design and an unusual feature in the corridor. Unlike many of the other auto dealerships on the corridor that use metal panels to define entrances or bands across the top of the building, here black ACM panels curve and angle across the front elevation, breaking up the	

	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.	glass front and leading the eye to the stepback form.	
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.	The exterior of the building is designed to showcase the interior display with an expanse of glass at the northwest corner. The topography of the site drops away to the west and the main floor elevation is level with the eastern end of the parking lot. This puts the showroom floor well above the parking area west of the building. The glass corner allows the vehicles on display inside the building to appear elevated to viewers outside the building (compared to vehicles in the parking lot). The expanse of glass will also allow the interior illumination to highlight the building at night. The service building at the rear of the site would be painted as part of this proposal to coordinate with the new building. The blank metal siding on the side elevations would be painted “white gloss”. Although the deep setback of the building reduces visibility, the west elevation is visible from the corridor. A more muted tone for the west elevation would help minimize the impacts of the blank wall.	
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.	The design’s metal panels, geometric shapes, and large areas of storefront glass are found in other contemporary auto dealerships located along this corridor. The design is expected to appear compatible with nearby development.	None.
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 building steps back from the main showroom façade to a vehicle delivery area then to the service drive reception. The grey roof extends over the showroom and vehicle delivery areas, establishing that block as a cohesive, primary feature and de-emphasizing the service function. The angled and curved ACM panels on the front elevation also serve to connect the three forms. The stepped building form, the pattern created by the divisions in the storefront glass, and the metal panels on the front elevation are expected to help break up the mass of the building and establish some human scale. However, the renderings show the eastern end of the building and the south end of the west elevation as very dark masses. The dark color and shadows may lessen the positive benefit of the stepping, patterning, and divisions.	Provide additional information to show how the black metal and paint finishes will achieve an appropriate appearance on the corridor.
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.	Blankness is not a feature of the front elevation. The east elevation is primarily ACM panels with a small area of storefront, but the service drive-thru blocks the view of most of that side wall. The west elevation (above the building base) is approximately 50% ACM panels and 50% storefront. The base is mostly solid. Trees in and around the parking lot will filter the view of the west side of the building.	None.
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	A single building is proposed. It is not practical to physically connect it to the service building at the rear of the site.	None.
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The proposed building design is a version of a trademark design.	See recommendations above.
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</i>	The narrative states that windows will not be highly tinted or reflective and will meet the VLT and VLR requirements.	Provide in the architectural drawings the manufacturer’s specifications for the window glass showing that VLT is not below

	<i>application for final review.</i>		40% and VLR does not exceed 30%.
	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 ground-mounted accessory structures or equipment are shown on the plan. Bird's-eye views of the proposed building show that rooftop equipment is contained in a sunken portion of the roof. The equipment does not appear in views of the building taken from street level and the narrative states that the equipment will not 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.		
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 appears on the cover sheet of the site plan.	None.
	Lighting		
	<i>General Guidelines</i>		
22	Light should be contained on the site and not spill over onto adjacent properties or streets;	No lighting is shown on the plan but there are existing pole lights in/around the parking lot, and it is anticipated that the new building will have wall-mounted and soffit lighting.	Include the existing light fixtures on the existing conditions plan. Provide details and a photometric plan for building-mounted lighting.
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.		
24	Light levels exceeding 30 footcandles are not appropriate for display lots in the Entrance Corridors. Lower light levels will apply to most other uses in the Entrance Corridors.		
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.		
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.		
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.		
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 note does not appear on the plan.	Add the standard lighting note to the site plan.
	<i>Guidelines for the Use of Decorative Landscape Lighting</i>		
30	Light used for decorative effect shall: a. be compatible with the character of the Entrance Corridor. Compatibility of exterior lighting and lighting fixtures is assessed in terms of design, use, size, scale, color, and brightness. b. impact only the immediate site. The effect of the illumination should not be discernible from distances along the Entrance Corridor.	No new decorative lighting is shown on the plan.	None.
31	Where used for decorative effect, outdoor light fixtures shall: a. be equipped with automatic timing devices and shall be extinguished between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and dawn. b. be shielded and focused to eliminate glare. Glare control shall be achieved primarily through the use of such means as cutoff fixtures, shields and baffles, and appropriate application of mounting height, wattage, aiming angle,		

	fixture placement, etc. c. be cutoff luminaires, aimed so as not to project their output beyond the objects intended to be illuminated; or non-cutoff luminaires, equipped with glare shields, visors, barn doors, and/or other similar shielding accessories as required to meet the following criteria: Light distribution from all lighting installations shall be cut-off at all angles beyond those required to restrict direct illumination to within the perimeter of the landscape feature being illuminated. d. never exceed 3,000 lumens. Further restrictions on lumens may be imposed by the ARB. e. not be modified to reflect seasonal colors. f. be of a number that is compatible with the scale of the object and the development to be illuminated, such that the light emitted will not over-illuminate or overpower the site, as determined by the ARB.		
	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 previously approved site plan shows trees and shrubs along the street frontage, a few interior parking lot trees, some shrubs near the building, and trees and shrubs in an island that separates the showroom parcel from the service parcel. The proposed existing conditions plan does not show that landscaping.	Show all existing-to-remain landscaping on the plan and label it as such. Ensure that it is consistent with the previously approved plan or identify proposed changes and show that plant quantities are not reduced with the current proposal.
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.		
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.		
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.		
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."	The note does not appear on the plan.	Include the standard plant health note on the 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.	The proposed site changes (SDP-2024-11) would amend SDP-2008-38. The earlier site plan is noted incorrectly on the cover sheet of the site plan. The organization and layout of the site would remain substantially the same as the existing condition with this proposal. No natural features or open spaces remain on the property. The new building would be oriented parallel to the EC street. The proposal includes some changes to the parking layout. The layout and distribution of	Revise the reference to SDP-2008-39 on the cover sheet of the site plan to read SDP-2008-38. Revise the site plan to include a diagram that identifies parking space types (display, customer, employee, service, etc.) consistent with the approved Special Use Permit for outdoor

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.	spaces at this site was approved with the Special Use Permit (SP) for outdoor display in 2008. Expansion or alteration of the display spaces requires an amendment to the SP.	display.
	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.	Minimal grading is proposed in the parking area and travelways around the building. The relationship of the site to surrounding conditions is not expected to change. A 3' tall retaining wall is proposed at the southeast corner of the building. It is not expected to have a visual impact on 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	Trees exist along the EC frontage. They are not shown on the plan. Some grading may occur within the drip lines of those trees.	Show existing landscaping on the plan. Show that proposed grading will not occur

	coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping and erosion and sediment control plans.		within the drip lines of trees to remain.
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.	No tree protection fencing is shown on the plan.	Show tree protection fencing on the site plan.
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.	Site drainage would tie into the existing underground system.	None.
44	Natural drainage patterns (or to the extent required, new drainage patterns) should be incorporated into the finished site to the extent possible.		
	SIGNS	Signs are shown on the building but require separate permits and review.	Note that separate applications are required signs.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. The overall architectural design and its appropriateness for the EC
2. The roof form
3. The black metal panels and black paint

Staff recommends the following changes to the proposal to be reviewed by the ARB in a future meeting:

1. Provide additional information comparing the black metal and paint finishing to show how they will achieve an appropriate appearance on the corridor.
2. Revise the white gloss color of the service building side elevations to a more muted tone.
3. Provide in the architectural drawings the manufacturer's specifications for the window glass showing that VLT is not below 40% and VLR does not exceed 30%.
4. Include the existing light fixtures on the existing conditions plan. Provide details and a photometric plan for building-mounted lighting.
5. Add the standard lighting note to the site 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."
6. Show all existing-to-remain landscaping on the plan and label it as such. Ensure that it is consistent with the previously approved plan or identify proposed changes and show that plant quantities are not reduced with the current proposal.
7. Include the standard plant health note on the plan: "All site plantings of trees and shrubs shall be allowed to reach, and be maintained at, mature height; the topping of trees is prohibited. Shrubs and trees shall be pruned minimally and only to support the overall health of the plant."
8. Revise the reference to SDP-2008-39 on the cover sheet of the site plan to read SDP-2008-38.
9. Revise the site plan to include a diagram that identifies parking space types (display, customer, employee, service, etc.) consistent with the approved Special Use Permit for outdoor display.
10. Show existing landscaping on the plan. Show that proposed grading will not occur within the drip lines of trees to remain.
11. Show tree protection fencing on the site plan.
12. Note that separate applications are required signs.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB2024-70: Flow Mercedes Site Plan](#)

Attach. 2: [ARB2024-70: Flow Mercedes Architectural Submittal](#)

Attach. 3: [ARB2024-70: Flow Mercedes Dimensioned Elevations](#)