

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2025-10: 1906 – 1920 Avon St. Extended Initial Site Plan
Review Type	Initial Site Development Plan
Parcel Identification	09000000003300, 090000000033B0, 090000000033C0
Location	1906 – 1920 Avon St. Extended, north of Arden Dr. and across Avon St. from Dauphin Dr. (See Figure 1)
Zoned	Residential (R-10), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Jeanette Smith/Shimp Engineering (Justin Shimp)
Magisterial District	Scottsville
Proposal	To construct a 21-unit residential subdivision with associated site improvements.
Context	The property is currently occupied by two houses, outbuildings, and mature trees. The Avon Park residential development is to the south, Spring Hill Village is across Avon St. to the east, Mill Creek is to the northwest, and Snow's contractors' yards and nursery are to the northeast.
Visibility	This development will be readily visible from the Entrance Corridor street.
ARB Meeting Date	May 19, 2025
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski



PROJECT HISTORY

A request to rezone (ZMA-2022-04) this property from R1 Residential to R10 Residential was approved on February 7, 2024, for a maximum of 21 multi-family, single-family attached and single-family detached dwelling units. Staff provided comments during the rezoning review regarding potential impacts on the Entrance Corridor, noting that the detached units were oriented with their backs to the corridor, and that the back and side elevations should be fully designed fronts for an appropriate appearance. It was also noted that the arrangement of new buildings (Figure 2) did not successfully integrate the existing residence into the overall development. The layout currently proposed for the development (Figure 3) differs from that shown on the rezoning application plan. A unit has been added south of the existing residence to remain and the units closest to the Entrance Corridor are no longer oriented parallel to the EC street. Instead, they are arranged along the curved travelway that is internal to the development. The corresponding site development application for this item is SDP-2025-38.

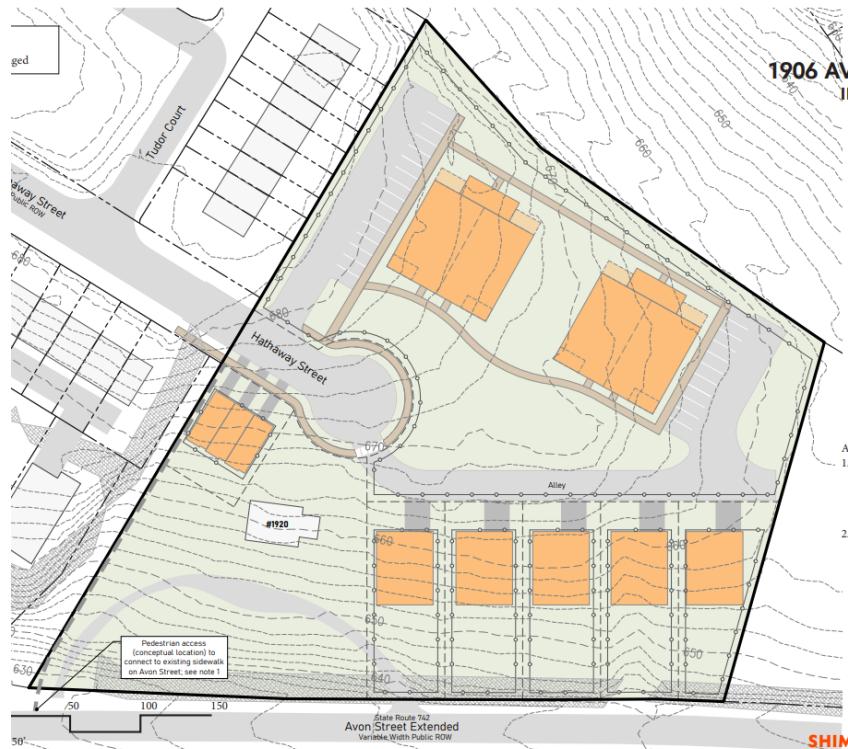


Figure 2: Application Plan approved with ZMA-2022-04.

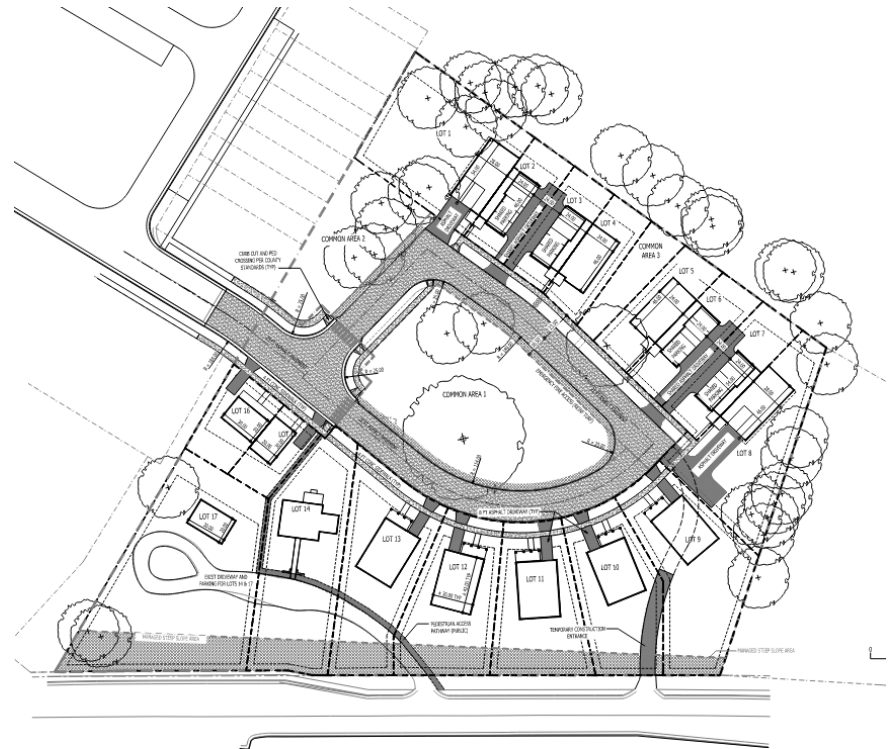


Figure 3: Current proposed layout of the development.

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
	<i>Purpose; Structure design; Compatibility with significant historic sites:</i>		
1	The goal of the regulation of the design of development within the designated Entrance Corridors is to insure that new development within the corridors reflects the traditional architecture of the area. Therefore, it is the purpose of ARB review and of these Guidelines, that proposed development within the designated Entrance Corridors reflect elements of design characteristic of the significant historical landmarks, buildings, and structures of the Charlottesville and Albemarle area, and to promote orderly and attractive development within these corridors. Applicants should note that replication of historic structures is neither required nor desired.	Architectural designs were not submitted with the initial site plan submittal, so the degree to which the architecture reflects traditional buildings cannot be determined at this point. However, the proposed buildings are all residences, so there is ample opportunity to establish a connection to the historic residential architecture of the area. An orderly and attractive development would be promoted with a layout of streets, utilities and easements that allows for required landscaping, and with the provision of landscaping that mitigates visual impacts.	See 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 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 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.		
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.	Architectural plans were not included in the initial site plan submittal. Five of the proposed detached units and two attached units are oriented with rear and/or side elevations facing the Entrance Corridor. Though they may not be completely blank, side and rear elevations often have a lower level of detail and finish. Other residences in the immediate vicinity are oriented with their backs to the EC, but most are not blank elevations, and have a significant amount of detail. The proposed building footprints do not appear to be over-scaled, but the topography of the site will tend to emphasize the rear elevations and the building height. It is not clear how visible the multi-family units at the back of the site will be. Site sections would help clarify the level of visibility, the relationship of the buildings to the EC, and the level of landscaping needed to offset impacts.	Provide architectural plans for review. Provide site sections to clarify the relationship of the proposed buildings to the EC and the level of landscaping needed to offset impacts.
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.		
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.		
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.		
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.		
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>		
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	Architectural designs have not been submitted for review. Residential developments that are nearby exhibit a variety of forms and styles from which this	None at this time.

	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.	proposed development can draw.	
10	Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.		
	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 or equipment are shown on the plan.	Revise the plan to show all accessory structures and equipment. Show how visibility of equipment will be eliminated from the EC street.
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 does not appear on the plan.	Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the plan.
22-31	Lighting	A lighting plan was not included in this submittal.	Provide a complete lighting plan with the next submittal, including complete details on ground- and building-mounted lights.
	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	A landscape plan was not included in this submittal. The property slopes up and away from Avon St. An existing overhead power line	Revise the plan to place utilities and easements in locations that allow for the required large shade trees and ornamental trees

	the existing environment of the corridor.	runs parallel to the street, close to the property line. A new sanitary line in a 20' easement is proposed along the EC frontage. Street trees are not typically allowed in this type of easement. The location of the easement would place the street trees 20' and more away from the EC.	along the EC. Provide a landscape plan showing how landscaping will be used to establish an appropriate appearance for the corridor.
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.	Bio-cells (small stormwater facilities) are proposed for each of the lots that have EC frontage, located in a private stormwater easement between the building site and the sanitary easement. This further hinders the ability to meet frontage planting requirements. The project engineer has indicated that some large trees can be planted in the bio-cells, but it isn't clear from the plan that a frontage planting consistent with EC Guidelines can be accomplished. Also, because the residential lots extend to the right-of-way on Avon, consistent maintenance of frontage landscaping is a potential issue.	Move the bio-cells and EC landscaping in common areas outside of individual lots.
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.	Some existing trees are shown to remain in a central common area and near a portion of the one-way road. The proximity of some of those trees to proposed construction suggests that some of the trees may not survive. Stormwater features limit the ability to plant along much of the one-way road.	Revise the plan to provide sufficient planting area for trees along interior roads, 2½" caliper at planting, 40' on center. Show the required trees on a landscape plan.
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	No planting area is provided along most of the proposed sidewalks.	Revise the plan to provide planting area and trees along sidewalks.

	(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.	Shared parking is provided at lots 1-8 on the west side of the development. These spaces are not expected to be visible from the EC.	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 proposed buildings are not long, but rear and side elevations would likely benefit from landscaping to soften blank walls.	Provide landscaping to mitigate visual impacts of proposed buildings.
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> .	Species choices have not been provided.	Provide a plant list with species from the county's approved list.
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.	Add the standard plant health note to the site 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 site layout is generally organized and incorporates one of the existing residences, but the development is internally focused and mostly has its back to the EC. Buildings are not parallel to the EC. Vehicular and pedestrian connections are made to the Avon Park development to the south. A sidewalk is proposed from Avon into the development along the existing southern driveway. Many of the existing mature trees are proposed for removal. Many other trees shown on the plan are located off-site or on the northern property line. The placement of the sanitary line and related easement and the stormwater features prevent placement of street trees adjacent to the property line along Avon.	Revise the layout of the site to allow for required EC landscaping.
39	The relationship of buildings and other structures to the Entrance Corridor street and to other development within the corridor should be as follows: - An organized pattern of roads, service lanes, bike paths, and pedestrian walks should guide the layout of the site. - 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. - Provisions should be made for connections to adjacent pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems. - Open spaces should be tied into surrounding areas to provide continuity within the Entrance Corridor. - 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. - 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	A significant amount of grading is shown in	See landscaping

	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.	the eastern and central sections of the site. As viewed from the EC, the grading will have a very regular, engineered appearance, but the land form will be interrupted by the detached residences. The back yards of the residences will be visible from the EC.	recommendations.
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.	Grading is proposed within the drip line of the 50" Oak located in the center of the property. A note on the plan says, "Cut roots this area with assistance of arborist." Some sources suggest that 25-30% of a tree's roots can be cut without killing the tree. The area proposed for cutting appears to fall in this range. Grading is also proposed very close to three additional trees.	Revise the plans to include a Conservation Checklist and tree protection fencing.
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.	Seven bio-cells (small stormwater facilities) are located near the EC frontage, one for each lot that has frontage on Avon. The ground slopes up from the EC, and the bio-cells would be located at the edge of the managed steep slope area, above street level. The location of the bio-cells is a potential issue because it will likely impact plant choices and placement and is a maintenance concern on individual lots. The stormwater features would be better located in a common area. The location of stormwater features should allow for EC frontage landscaping.	Revise the plan to place utilities and easements in locations that allow for the required large shade trees and ornamental trees along the EC. Provide a landscape plan showing how landscaping will be used to establish an appropriate appearance for the corridor. Move the bio-cells and EC landscaping outside of individual lots and into a common area.
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. Building orientation: rear and side elevations facing the Entrance Corridor
2. Location of utilities along the EC frontage and bio-cells on individual lots close to the EC
3. EC frontage landscaping

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:
The ARB does not recommend approval of the plan at this time. Prior to Initial Plan approval the following items shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the ARB:
 1. Revise the layout of the site to allow for required EC landscaping.
 2. Revise the plan to place utilities and easements in locations that allow for the required large shade trees and ornamental trees along the EC.
 3. Move the bio-cells and EC landscaping outside of individual lots and into a common area.
- 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. Show tree protection fencing on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping, and erosion and sediment control plans.
- 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 plans for review.
 2. Provide site sections to clarify the relationship of the proposed buildings to the EC and the level of landscaping needed to offset impacts.
 3. Revise the plan to show all accessory structures and equipment. Show how visibility of equipment will be eliminated from the EC street.
 4. Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the plan. "Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated."
 5. Provide a complete lighting plan with the next submittal, including complete details on ground- and building-mounted lights.
 6. Revise the layout of the site to allow for required EC landscaping.
 7. Revise the plan to place utilities and easements in locations that allow for the required large shade trees and ornamental trees along the EC.
 8. Provide a landscape plan showing how landscaping will be used to establish an appropriate appearance for the corridor.
 9. Move the bio-cells and EC landscaping to common areas outside of individual lots.
 10. Revise the plan to provide sufficient planting area for trees along interior roads, 2½" caliper at planting, 40' on center. Show the required trees on a landscape plan.
 11. Revise the plan to provide planting area and trees along sidewalks.

12. Provide landscaping to mitigate visual impacts of proposed buildings.
13. Provide a plant list with species from the county's approved list.
14. Add the standard plant health note to the site 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."
15. Revise the plans to include a Conservation Checklist and tree protection fencing.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB-2025-10: 1906 – 1920 Avon St. Ext. Initial Site Plan](#)