

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2025-07: Christian Aid Mission
Review Type	Amendment to a Site Development Plan
Parcel Identification	059000000023G1
Location	255 Bob Finley Way (See Figure 1)
Zoned	Commercial Office (CO), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Christian Aid Mission (Dave Vollmer) / Henningsen Kestner Architects (Mark Kestner)
Magisterial District	Samuel Miller
Proposal	To construct a building to house office and religious assembly space.
Context	The site is located on the north side of Ivy Road, with the Ivy Nursery across Broomley Road to the west, commercial and office uses to the east, and Rural Area zoning with single family residential development to the north and south.
Visibility	Although some mature trees limit views from some vantage points, the building will be readily visible from the Entrance Corridor street.
ARB Meeting Date	May 19, 2025
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

PROJECT HISTORY

The original development of this site predates the establishment of the Entrance Corridors. The ARB has reviewed and approved applications for signs, telecommunications equipment, an entrance drive, and office and church buildings on this property.



Figure 1: Project location

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	<i>Purpose; Compatibility with significant historic sites; Structure design</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.	The project is described as a proposal to “redevelop” the existing building, but it appears to be a completely new building. Proposed building materials include brown brick, tan and bronze metal, and a composite woodgrain siding in “Summer Wheat”. The brick is a connection to the historic building materials used throughout the county. Metal and wood panels are used on buildings in the area. The proposed building is divided into a series of bays whose primary materials alternate from glass to brick to metal panels. The bays create a rhythm across the façade and break up the mass of the building. The bronze metal elements help establish a cohesive whole. The wood-tone panels and brick detailing add texture. The corner glass forms balance the heavier brick bays. Overall, the proposed building is expected to contribute to orderly and attractive development along the corridor.	None.
2	Visitors to the significant historical sites in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area experience these sites as ensembles of buildings, land, and vegetation. In order to accomplish the integration of buildings, land, and vegetation characteristic of these sites, the Guidelines require attention to four primary factors: compatibility with significant historic sites in the area; the character of the Entrance Corridor; site development and layout; and landscaping.		
3	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.		
12	Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.		
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 proposed building forms, materials and colors differ from the buildings that are to remain on the site; however, the existing buildings do not have a strong presence on the corridor. The new building is expected to have a more prominent appearance and to improve the character of the site and the corridor.	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 multiple bays of the building, material changes, brick detailing, and window divisions help establish human scale.	None.
13	Any appearance of “blankness” resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.	The design uses a variety of windows, material changes, brick and metal detailing, roof forms, and walls with recesses and projections, such that blankness is not a characteristic of the proposed design.	None.

14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	Physical forms are not used to connect the proposed building to existing buildings to remain. Sidewalks connect the proposed building to an existing annex. Paved travelways connect the proposed building to an existing guest house and administration building.	None.
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The proposed building is not a trademark design.	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>	The proposed design incorporates a significant amount of glass. Glass specs have not been provided, but the narrative acknowledges the VLT and VLR criteria.	Provide a note in the plans identifying the manufacturer's specifications for the proposed window glass, consistent with the EC guidelines.
	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 accessory structures or equipment are shown on the plan. The narrative states that equipment will be contained within the building envelope or placed on the roof with screening.	Revise the site and architectural drawings to show the locations of mechanical equipment and methods for screening the equipment 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.	The narrative states that loading areas are located on the least public-facing sides of the building, but the loading areas are not identified on the site plan. Parking areas are shown, but parking spaces are not delineated. No service/storage areas, refuse areas, or chain link fence are proposed.	Revise the site plan to delineate and label the existing and proposed parking and loading spaces.
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.	No screening devices are shown.	Revise the site and architectural drawings to show the locations of mechanical equipment and methods for screening the equipment from the EC street.

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.	No new surface runoff or detention structures are shown.	None.
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	The applicant’s submittal states that light specifications have not yet been confirmed, but all lighting will adhere to regulations.	Provide a lighting plan with complete information on proposed exterior site and building-mounted lighting.
	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 existing frontage of this site includes a rock outcropping, guard rail, and a variety of mature trees irregularly spaced and grouped, most of which are in the right-of-way. Three elm and four serviceberry trees are proposed to be added on site, near the existing trees along the frontage. One gap in the frontage planting remains in the vicinity of the guard rail. Shrubs to screen the guard rail would improve appearances and a large shade tree would fill the gap. However, the planting area is off-site and there are existing trees in a nearby interior planting island.	None.
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.	Maples of the required size and spacing are proposed along the travelway that encircles the building.	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.	A sidewalk is proposed around most of the building. Existing and new trees are located near much of the sidewalk.	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.	Some trees proposed along the frontage and near sidewalks are also located near parking areas. A mix of existing and proposed trees meets the tree requirement for the parking area southeast of the proposed building. A short portion of the parking area located northwest of the building has no perimeter trees. In the areas where travelways and parking areas are readily visible from the street, shrubs along the perimeters would help minimize the visual impact of the paved areas and integrate them into the surroundings.	Revise the landscape plan to eliminate the gap in perimeter parking lot trees located northwest of the proposed building. Revise the landscape plan to add shrubs along the perimeters of travelways and parking areas that are readily visible from the street.
36	Landscaping of buildings and other structures: a. Trees or other vegetation should be planted along the	Some landscaping is proposed near the building. Many other existing and proposed trees are	

	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.	located between the building and the EC street.	
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> .	Hackberry and butterfly bush are in the landscape schedule, but not on the approved plant list.	Revise the landscape plan to replace the hackberry and butterfly bush with plants on the approved plant 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 proposed building is intended to occupy the footprint of the existing building with no changes to the general layout of the site. Landscaping does not currently meet EC standards. Additional landscaping would help establish an organized and attractive development.	See landscape recommendations.
39	The relationship of buildings and other structures to the Entrance Corridor street and to other development within the corridor should be as follows:		

	a. An organized pattern of roads, service lanes, bike paths, and pedestrian walks should guide the layout of the site. b. In general, buildings fronting the Entrance Corridor street should be parallel to the street. Building groupings should be arranged to parallel the Entrance Corridor street. c. Provisions should be made for connections to adjacent pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems. d. Open spaces should be tied into surrounding areas to provide continuity within the Entrance Corridor. e. If significant natural features exist on the site (including creek valleys, steep slopes, significant trees or rock outcroppings), to the extent practical, then such natural features should be reflected in the site layout. If the provisions of Section 32.5.2.n of the <i>Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance</i> apply, then improvements required by that section should be located so as to maximize the use of existing features in screening such improvements from Entrance Corridor streets. f. The placement of structures on the site should respect existing views and vistas on and around the site.		
	Site Grading		
40	Site grading should maintain the basic relationship of the site to surrounding conditions by limiting the use of retaining walls and by shaping the terrain through the use of smooth, rounded 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 proposed building is intended to occupy the footprint of the existing building with no changes to the grading of the site.	None.
41	No grading, trenching, or tunneling should occur within the drip line of any trees or other existing features designated for preservation in the final Certificate of Appropriateness. Adequate tree protection fencing should be shown on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping and erosion and sediment control plans.	Many existing trees are designated to remain. No grading is shown within their driplines.	None.
42	Areas designated for preservation in the final Certificate of	Tree protection is not shown on the plan. One 8"	Revise the site plan to

	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.	maple is shown to remain very close to the southwest elevation of the building. It seems unlikely that it wouldn't be removed to allow for construction. A few other trees are also very close to proposed construction.	show tree protection fencing and identify all trees that will be removed to allow for construction of the new building.
43	Preservation areas should be protected from storage or movement of heavy equipment within this area.		
44	Natural drainage patterns (or to the extent required, new drainage patterns) should be incorporated into the finished site to the extent possible.	No changes to drainage are proposed.	None.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. Appropriateness of the proposed building forms, details, and materials for the Entrance Corridor
2. Frontage landscaping

Staff recommends approval with the following changes to the proposal:

1. Provide a note in the plans identifying the manufacturer's specifications for the proposed window glass, consistent with the EC guidelines.
2. Revise the site plan to delineate and label the existing and proposed parking and loading spaces.
3. Revise the site and architectural drawings to show the locations of mechanical equipment and methods for screening the equipment 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 lighting plan with complete information on proposed exterior site and building-mounted lighting.
6. Revise the landscape plan to eliminate the gap in perimeter parking lot trees located northwest of the proposed building.
7. Revise the landscape plan to add shrubs along the perimeters of travelways and parking areas that are readily visible from the street.
8. Revise the landscape plan to replace the hackberry and butterfly bush with plants on the approved plant list.
9. 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."*
10. Revise the site plan to show tree protection fencing and identify all trees that will be removed to allow for construction of the new building.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB-2025-07: Christian Aid Mission Architectural Plans](#)

Attach. 2: [ARB-2025-07: Christian Aid Mission Site Plan Amendment](#)