

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2025-19: High School Center 2 Solar
Review Type	Building Permit
Parcel Identification	060000000078A0
Location	2775 Hydraulic Rd. (Figure 1)
Zoned	Rural Areas (RA), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	County of Albemarle School Board/Kagan Squire (Albemarle County Public Schools)
Magisterial District	Jack Jouett
Proposal	To install a solar array on the rooftop of the High School Center 2 building.
Context	The building is currently under construction in the Lambs Lane Campus south of Albemarle High School. Institutional, office, and residential uses are nearby.
Visibility	The school is located approximately 270' from the Entrance Corridor street and is visible for an approximate distance of 1300' along the corridor. The panels are expected to have limited visibility from the Entrance Corridor.
ARB Meeting Date	September 2, 2025
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

PROJECT HISTORY

A Certificate of Appropriateness was issued for the High School Center 2 building on December 23, 2024. Building construction is under way.



Figure 1: Project location

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	GENERAL GUIDELINES		
	<i>Purpose; Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor; 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.	For the reasons described below, the proposed solar installation is not expected to have a negative visual impact on the Entrance Corridor (EC). It is not expected to detract from an orderly and attractive appearance on site or 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.		
5	It is also an important objective of the Guidelines to establish a pattern of compatible architectural characteristics throughout the Entrance Corridor in order to achieve unity and coherence. Building designs should demonstrate sensitivity to other nearby structures within the Entrance Corridor. Where a designated corridor is substantially developed, these Guidelines require striking a careful balance between harmonizing new development with the existing character of the corridor and achieving compatibility with the significant historic sites in the area.		
9-16	Compatibility with significant historic sites; Structure design	No changes to the architectural design of the building are proposed.	None.
	Accessory structures and equipment		
17	Accessory structures and equipment should be integrated into the overall plan of development and shall, to the extent possible, be compatible with the building designs used on the site.	Solar panels are proposed for the main roofs of the building. Panels are black with silver aluminum frames and each one measures approximately 7'6" x 3'9" x 1.4". The panels are to be arranged in parallel rows aligned with the prominent roof edges. They would be mounted at an angle to the roof surface, with the tops of the panels at a maximum height of approximately 12" above the roof.	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.		
		The Hydraulic Road EC is elevated above the site, so some visibility of the panels is expected. A parking lot separates the building from the EC. Trees in and around the parking lots will reduce views of the building, its roofs, and the solar panels, particularly in the months when leaves are on the trees. Given the proposed design and anticipated visibility, the solar array is expected to have an organized appearance that blends with the roof and	

		fascia. The installation is expected to maintain the character of the roof and building.	
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 or altered stormwater facilities are proposed with this application.	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 level of visibility anticipated for the new equipment associated with this proposal is not expected to have a negative impact on the EC.	Any new equipment not included with this proposal is subject to ARB review.
22-31	Lighting	No lighting is proposed with this application.	None.
7, 8, 32-38	Landscaping	No landscaping is proposed with this application.	None.
6, 39	Site Development and layout; Development pattern	No changes to the site layout are proposed with this application.	None.
40-44	Site Grading	No grading is proposed with this application.	None.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. Visibility of the solar array from the EC.
2. Panel colors and arrangement

Staff recommends approval with the following condition:

1. Any new equipment not included with this proposal is subject to ARB review.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB-2025-00019: High School Center 2 Solar Narrative](#)

Attach. 2: [ARB-2025-00019: High School Center 2 Solar Architectural Drawings](#)

Attach. 3: [ARB-2025-00019: High School Center 2 Solar Array Details](#)