

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	SDP-2025-00111: Microaire Initial Site Plan
Review Type	Initial Site Development Plan
Parcel Identification	032000000041D2
Location	3590 Grand Forks Blvd. (Fig. 1)
Zoned	Light Industry (LI), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Microaire Surgical Instruments/Collins Engineering (Scott Collins)
Magisterial District	Rio
Proposal	To construct an addition on the north side of the building and to undertake related site improvements.
Context	The existing building is set back approximately 400' from Airport Road. The Laurel Hill Baptist Church is located across Grand Forks Blvd. to the west. Residential developments are further west and to the south. Residences and an entrance to the UVA Research Park are located across Airport Road to the north and northeast. A church and industrial properties are located across Airport Road to the northwest. The Hollymead Town Center is located to the south and southeast. Commercial properties are located to the east.
Visibility	The existing building is visible from the Airport Road Entrance Corridor. It is most visible traveling east on the corridor; the north and west elevations are visible from that vantage. Traveling westbound, the north elevation becomes visible as the height of the berm along the frontage lowers. The existing north elevation has little architectural detail and appears mostly blank from the road. The proposed addition will have greater visibility than the existing front elevation due to its location 90' closer to the road.
ARB Meeting Date	September 29, 2025
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

PROJECT HISTORY

The ARB reviewed an Initial Site Development Plan for this location on October 1, 2018. The current proposal closely resembles the layout of that plan. The ARB recommended approval of the initial plan with the recommendations listed in the staff report for the final plan.



Figure 1: Project location.

ANALYSIS

Gray highlight = means recommendations on this guideline can be provided for the benefit of the final site plan submittal, but cannot be the basis for denial of the initial site plan

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		
	<i>Purpose; Compatibility with significant historic sites; Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor; 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 layout of the development appears orderly. It is anticipated that the addition will have a contemporary appearance. Landscaping consistent with the EC guidelines will help promote an attractive, coordinated development.	See landscape recommendations. Provide detailed architectural plans 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	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.	It is anticipated that the addition will have a contemporary appearance; such an appearance can be compatible with the existing building and nearby structures. Form, scale and materials will be key to establishing a compatible appearance along the EC.	Provide detailed architectural plans for review.
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.	The warehouse addition, proposed for the EC side of the building, measures approximately 90' x 200', with a short leg extending down the east elevation of the existing structure. The addition is offset to the east, forming a courtyard at a new main entrance at the northwest corner of the building. A secondary entrance is proposed towards the east end of the addition's EC elevation. The footprint of the addition suggests that its form and scale can be compatible with the existing structure.	Provide architectural elevations with the next submittal.
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 form, size, and location of the addition provide opportunities to coordinate with the existing building and surrounding context.	Provide detailed architectural plans for review.
10	Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.		
12	Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.		
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.	Architectural elevations have not been provided, but the addition and the courtyard are opportunities to relieve blankness, provide human scale, and establish compatibility along the corridor.	Provide detailed architectural plans for review.
13	Any appearance of "blankness" resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.		

		Architectural elevations are required with the final plan submittal.	
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	Arcades and colonnades are not proposed, but locating the addition to establish an entrance courtyard can be a unifying tool.	
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The design of the addition is not expected to be a trademark design.	
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>	Window glass information has not been provided, but windows may not feature prominently in the design of a warehouse addition.	
	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.	Loading docks are currently located on the west and south elevations and are to remain. A dumpster is located on the south side of the building and is to remain. An existing metal shed is located off the southwest corner of the building and is to remain. An existing transformer just west of the northwest corner of the building is to remain. These features do not have a negative visual impact on the EC.	Provide size and location of proposed rooftop equipment and related screening details in the architectural drawings.
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.		Provide size and location of proposed ground-mounted equipment and related screening details in the site plan.
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 Existing Conditions plan notes existing gas and water meters to remain near the west end of the existing EC-facing elevation. That places this equipment in/near the entrance courtyard, which is not expected to be a positive contribution to the main building entrance, but is not expected to be readily visible from the EC. An existing fire hydrant located near the northwest corner of the building is to be relocated.	Indicate on the plan the new location of the fire hydrant.

		Notes on Sheets 1 and 2 state that mechanical equipment will be located on the roof and hidden from view. Size and location of proposed rooftop equipment and details on screening are required with the architectural drawings. The same information for ground-mounted equipment is required on the site plan.	
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 existing storm water management basin located in the northwest corner of the parcel is to be revised to a wet pond with a revised shape, a forebay, and an aquatic bench. Planting around the current pond screens it from view, though that landscaping does not appear on the Existing Conditions plan. A double row of shrubs is proposed around the revised basin. A less regular arrangement of plants along the EC-side of the basin might integrate more fully with other on-site landscaping.	Show the existing landscaping near the existing stormwater basin on the Existing Conditions plan. Revise the arrangement of proposed plants at the new storm water basin for a more integrated overall landscape plan.
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 plans.	Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the site and architectural plans.
	Lighting		
	<i>General Guidelines</i>		
22	Light should be contained on the site and not spill over onto adjacent properties or streets;	There are existing pole lights in the parking lots that are to remain. Some additional lights are proposed, but details have not been provided. A note on the cover sheet states that existing lights may be relocated, though this is not illustrated on the plan.	Provide a complete lighting plan for review, including proposed locations for relocated lights. Note that relocated lights must meet all ordinance and guidelines requirements.
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."		
	<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 decorative lighting is shown on the plan.	Indicate on the plan any decorative lighting proposed for the site.
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.	Large shade trees are proposed along the EC frontage at the required size and spacing. Ornamentals are interspersed. However, the abbreviation for the magnolia in the Plant Legend doesn't match the one in the Plant Schedule. A few trees are proposed close to existing underground electric lines. The plan notes a proposed permanent utility easement, but the extent of the easement is not shown clearly.	Coordinate the abbreviation for the magnolia in the Plant Legend and Schedule.
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.		Revise the plan to clearly show the extent of the proposed permanent utility easement.
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.	Large trees are proposed along Grand Forks Blvd. at the required size and spacing.	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 provided from the north end of the west side of the building, around the entrance courtyard, and along the north side of the proposed elevation. Trees are not provided along the sidewalk, but there appears to be space for planting along the north side of the addition.	Provide trees along the sidewalk on the north side of the building.
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.	Trees are provided at the north, east, and west perimeters of Parking Area #2. Perimeter tree size and spacing requirements are met. 116 spaces are proposed in that parking lot, requiring 12 interior trees. 9 interior trees are proposed. Two additional trees are located close to the parking lot, requiring one additional interior tree. 46 parking spaces are proposed west of the building. Interior trees are not provided in these parking areas, but they are single rows located more distant from the EC. The perimeter trees in those areas are expected to sufficiently mitigate the appearance.	Provide one additional interior tree in Parking Area #2.
36	Landscaping of buildings and other structures:	Conformity with this guideline can be	None at this time.

	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.	assessed when the architectural design is submitted for review.	
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 trees are found on the various 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 note appears on the landscape plan.	None.
	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 has been previously developed. No significant natural landscape remains. The addition is oriented nearly parallel to the EC street. The site layout appears organized. Vehicular connections are made; pedestrian connections are not, but there are no sidewalks on Grand Forks Blvd. Existing views are not expected to be impacted.	None.
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.	Providing the EC frontage and parking lot landscaping will help establish an organized and attractive development.	

	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.	Grading is proposed primarily at the storm water basin. Minor grading is proposed along the EC side of the parking lot and east of the building addition. The grading is not expected to change the basic relationship of the site to the surrounding conditions.	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.	Grading is shown within the drip line of an existing tree and shrubs located just east of the site entrance.	Revise the plans to coordinate grading with 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.		
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.	The proposal includes revising the existing storm water basin located in the northwest corner of the parcel to a wet pond.	None.
	SIGNS	The plan notes that the existing monument sign is to be relocated as part of the Berkmar/Airport Road roundabout project. The location shown as “existing” on the plan does not match the actual on-the-ground location. Also, the site plan shows the new location as if the sign is double-sided. The existing sign is single-sided. Sign location and design are not approved with the site plan. A separate sign permit application is required.	Note that a separate sign application is required for moving the existing freestanding sign and/or erecting a new sign. Revise the site plan to show the accurate location of the existing freestanding sign and related landscaping.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. The location of the proposed addition
2. The proposed 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:
 - Prior to Initial Plan approval the following items shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the ARB: None.
- 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 plans to coordinate grading with trees to remain.
 2. Maintain grading outside the driplines of trees to remain. 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 detailed architectural plans for review with the next submittal.
2. Provide size and location of proposed rooftop equipment and related screening details in the architectural drawings.
3. Provide size and location of proposed ground-mounted equipment and related screening details in the site plan.
4. Indicate on the plan the new location of the fire hydrant.
5. Show the existing landscaping near the existing stormwater basin on the Existing Conditions plan.
6. Revise the arrangement of proposed plants at the new stormwater basin for a more integrated overall landscape plan.
7. Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the site and architectural plans: "Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated."
8. Provide a complete lighting plan for review, including proposed locations for relocated lights. Note that relocated lights must meet all ordinance and guidelines requirements.
9. Indicate on the plan any decorative lighting proposed for the site.
10. Coordinate the abbreviation for the magnolia in the Plant Legend and Schedule.
11. Revise the plan to clearly show the extent of the proposed permanent utility easement.
12. Provide trees along the sidewalk on the north side of the building.
13. Provide one additional interior tree in Parking Area #2.
14. Revise the plans to coordinate grading with trees to remain.
15. Note that a separate sign application is required for moving the existing freestanding sign and/or erecting a new sign.
16. Revise the site plan to show the accurate location of the existing freestanding sign and related landscaping.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [SDP-2025-00111: Microaire Initial Site Plan](#)