

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2025-29: City Church Multi-Use Facility
Review Type	Conceptual review of an architectural design
Parcel Identification	061000000153A1
Location	1010 Rio Rd. East (See Figures 1 and 2)
Zoned	Residential (R4), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	City Church Cville, Inc./Mather Architects (John Daly)
Magisterial District	Rio
Proposal	To construct a multi-use facility adjacent to the existing church. (See Attach. 1)
Context	The property contains an existing church, two parking areas, and a wireless facility. To the northeast and south of the property there are institutional uses including the Charlottesville Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC) and other churches. Adjacent properties to the east and west consist primarily of single-family residential uses, including the Dunlora and Greenbrier neighborhoods.
Visibility	The building will be readily visible from the Entrance Corridor.
ARB Meeting Date	December 15, 2025
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

PROJECT HISTORY

A special use permit (SP-2024-12) was approved for this expansion in early 2025. The ARB reviewed and recommended approval of the Initial Site Plan on October 20, 2025 (Attach. 2).

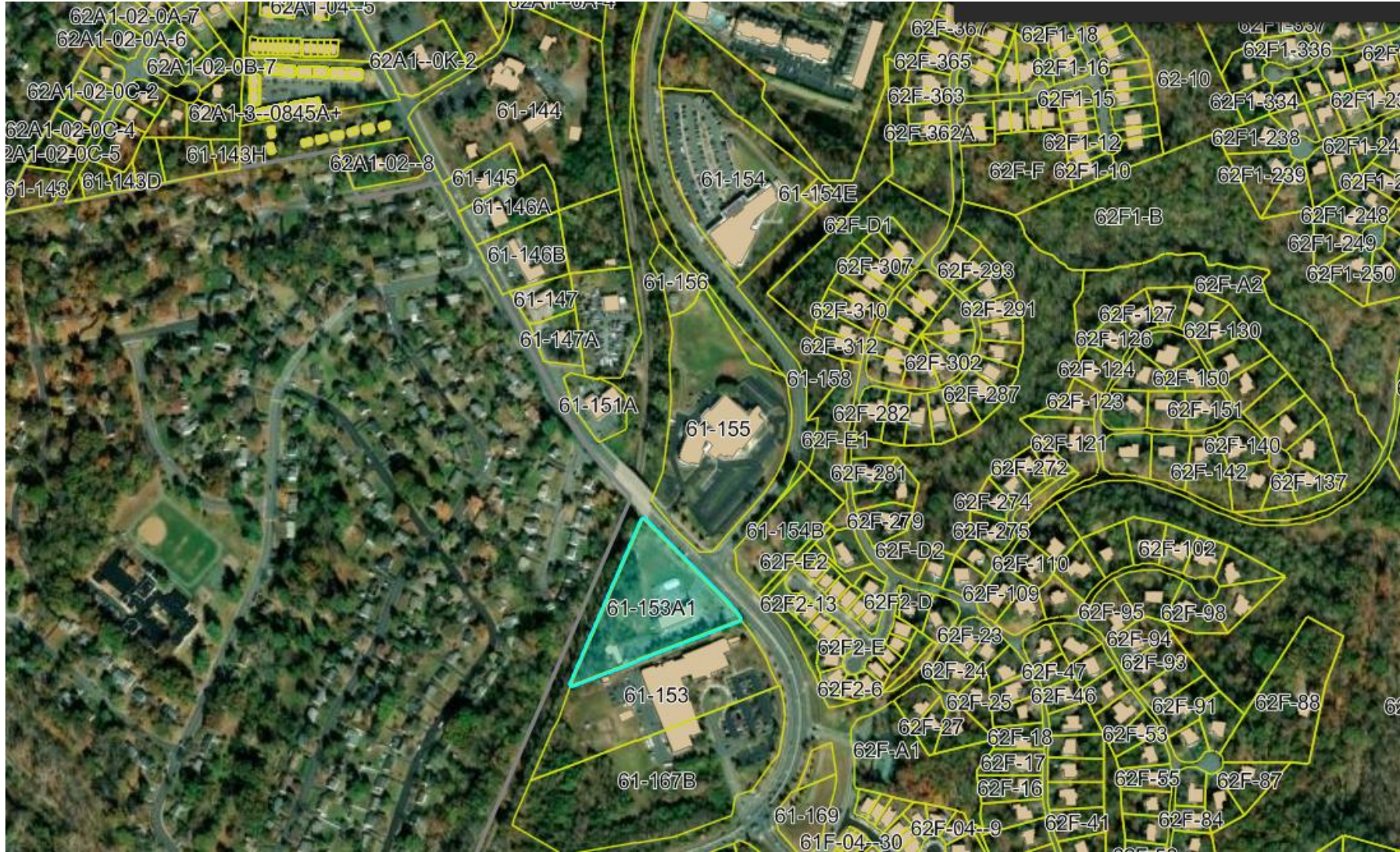


Figure 1: Project Location on the Rio Road Entrance Corridor



Figure 2: Pictometry view of project location on the Rio Road Entrance Corridor

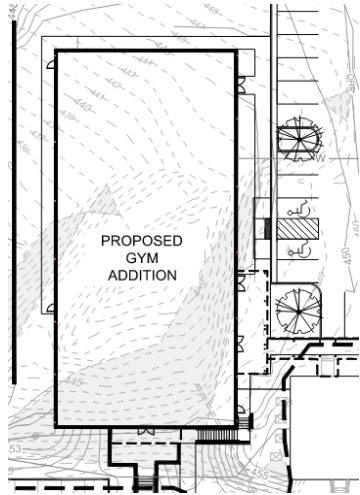
ANALYSIS The analysis provided in the table below focuses on the proposed architectural design of the multi-use facility as illustrated in Attachment 1. The Initial Site Development Plan reviewed by the ARB on October 20, 2025 is provided for reference as Attachment 2.

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE 10/20/25	RECOMMENDATION 10/20/25	ISSUE 12/15/25	RECOMMENDATION 12/15/25
	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 existing church building has a traditional form and appearance and is constructed of red brick that is common in the County. The overall building is compatible with historic buildings in the area. The proposed building has a larger footprint than the existing building. Multiple entrances are shown on the elevation that faces the EC street. The two at the south end are protected by a canopy. Building materials, forms, scale and detailing will be important factors in establishing compatibility with the existing building and the broader architectural context of the County.	Provide architectural plans for review. Show how the EC design guidelines on structure design and architectural compatibility are being met. Perspectives showing the proposed multi-use building with the existing building as seen from the road would be helpful.	The simple building form, gabled roof, water table, and vertical elements establishing a rhythm across the façade of the proposed addition are typical of traditional architecture, but the proposed design is not a strong reflection of the County’s historic landmarks. The proposed light-colored walls are similar to other buildings along the corridor, including the Covenant Church across Rio Rd. (a development that predates the EC overlay), single-family detached residences along Rio in the Dunlora development, and the Rio Point apartments, though brick is more predominant along the corridor. The basic form of the addition – a rectangular box with a gabled roof – and the wall height are generally	Revise the building materials, colors, and/or details to increase compatibility between the addition and the existing building. Focus on roof and wall color changes to reduce the stark contrast between the church and the addition.
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.			consistent with that of the existing church. However, the footprint of the addition is larger (70' x 145.5' vs. 40.1' x 130.3'), the overall height is taller (38'10" vs. 33'10"), and the roof pitch is less steep. The white stucco walls are a stark contrast to the red brick of the church, and the black standing seam metal roof differs significantly from the gray shingles of the church. Most of the windows of the addition are horizontally oriented; those of the church are vertical. The result is an addition that looks more different and less unified with the existing church. Changes to building materials, colors, and/or details could increase compatibility. Roof and wall color changes that reduce the stark contrast between the church and the addition are recommended.	
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.				
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.				
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.			The proposed form, roof shape, and overall size of the addition work towards establishing a cohesive whole on site. The building materials, colors, and details do not.	Revise the proposed building materials, colors, and/or details to establish a more cohesive whole.
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.	The finished floor elevation of the proposed building		Overall, the proposed addition conveys a larger	None.

		(450') is well below the elevation of Rio Rd. in this area (approx. 468'), which could help reduce the impact of the building's scale on the EC.		than human scale, although the water table, the stucco scoring, and the rhythm of the downspouts on the front elevation mitigate this to some extent. The addition is situated approximately 200' from the EC street and its finished floor elevation is approximately 17' below that of the street. This is expected to help reduce the impact of the building's scale on the EC.	
13	Any appearance of "blankness" resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.	The multi-use building is labeled as a gym on the site plan. That building type is often designed with little fenestration, which could result in blankness.		Much of the building's elevations are without doors and windows, a result of the interior use/programming. Downspouts provide a regular rhythm across the front elevation and reveals in the stucco provide some visual relief.	None.
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	Sidewalks connect the buildings, but the proposed building is not physically connected to the existing one.		A colonnade is proposed to link the new building to the existing church. A brick base is proposed for the new building to establish a visual connection to the existing brick church.	None.
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The multi-use building is not expected to exhibit a trademark design.		The proposed design does not have the appearance of a trademark building.	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</i>	The window glass information will be needed for review.		Window glass specs have not yet been submitted.	Provide window glass specs with the next submittal. Show that the guidelines criteria are being met.

	<i>proposed window glass should be submitted with the application for final review.</i>				
	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.	A dumpster with a wooden enclosure is proposed at the west end of the southern parking lot. The location is visible from the street, but the wooden enclosure is expected to blend with the existing fence around the wireless facility located to the west, so it is not expected to have a significant visual impact.	None.	Service areas and mechanical equipment are located behind the building where they would not be visible from the street.	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 Sheet C0.1 of the site plan.	Add the mechanical equipment note to the architectural plans.	The note does not appear on the architectural drawings.	Add the mechanical equipment note to the architectural plans.
22-31	Lighting	No new site or building lighting is shown on the plan.	Clearly show all existing site lights on the plan and identify all of those to be removed. Provide a complete lighting plan for review showing all proposed building and site lighting.	No lighting is shown on the plan.	Provide a complete lighting plan with the final site plan showing all proposed building and site lighting.
	Landscaping				
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	A sidewalk is proposed around most of the new building and along the northwest side of the existing building. Two of the proposed interior parking lot trees are located in front of the proposed building as viewed from the EC street.	Shift new trees proposed in locations that are close to utility lines to avoid conflicts as the trees mature.	Two trees are proposed in parking islands on the EC side of the building, but one of them is proposed approximately 7’ from an underground water line. Resolving that conflict and adding a tree could help	Shift new trees proposed in locations that are close to utility lines to avoid conflicts as the trees mature. Add a tree and tree island in the parking row adjacent to the addition, and plants at the

	structures; “drive thru” windows; service areas; and signs. Shrubs should measure at least 24 inches in height.	These trees could help soften the appearance of the new building; however, one tree is proposed approximately 7’ from an underground water line. The need for additional trees in this area can be assessed when architectural plans are submitted for review.		relieve the blankness of the elevation.  The color rendering of the addition shows shrubs at the base of the front elevation. The landscape plan does not show any shrubs in this location, but plants along the elevation could help reduce blankness.	base of the front elevation, to help relieve blankness.
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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. The compatibility of the proposed addition to the existing church: materials, colors, details
2. Blankness and scale of the proposed addition
3. Landscaping along the front elevation of the addition to relieve blankness

Staff offers the following recommendations on the architectural design:

1. Revise the proposed building materials, colors, and/or details to increase compatibility between the addition and the existing building and to establish a more cohesive whole. Focus on roof and wall color changes to reduce the stark contrast between the church and the addition.
2. Provide window glass specs with the next submittal. Show that the guidelines criteria are being met: *Visible light transmittance (VLT) shall not drop below 40%. Visible light reflectance (VLR) shall not exceed 30%.*
3. Add the mechanical equipment note to the architectural plans. *“Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.”*
4. Provide a complete lighting plan with the final site plan showing all proposed building and site lighting.
5. Shift new trees proposed in locations that are close to utility lines to avoid conflicts as the trees mature.
6. Add a tree and tree island in the parking row adjacent to the addition, and plants at the base of the front elevation, to help relieve blankness.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB-2025-00029: City Church Multi-Use Space Addition Architectural Plans](#)

Attach. 2: [ARB-2025-00029: City Church Initial site plan reviewed by the ARB on October 20, 2025](#)