

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2026-00008: Veterinary Emergency Group Site Plan
Review Type	Site Plan Amendment
Parcel Identification	061W00300019A0
Location	North corner of the intersection of Hydraulic Road and Swanson Drive
Zoned	Neighborhood Model District (NMD), Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	OCT Stonefield Property Owner LLC c/o O'Connor Capital Partners / Design Develop LLC (Juanita Li)
Magisterial District	Jack Jouett
Proposal	To construct a veterinary clinic with associated site improvements.
Context	The proposed site is a vacant lot, part grass-covered and part parking lot, identified as future Building C1-1 in the Stonefield shopping center. The Regal cinema is to the west, Building A5 (originally occupied by Pier 1 and now occupied by Lens Crafters) is across Swanson Drive to the southeast.
Visibility	The building will be readily visible from the Hydraulic Road Entrance Corridor.
ARB Meeting Date	May 26, 2026
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

PROJECT HISTORY

The Albemarle Place rezoning was approved in 2003, the developer of the property changed in 2008, and blocks of the development were approved by the ARB in 2011 and 2012. This site was identified as a future phase of development.

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	GENERAL GUIDELINES		
	<i>Purpose, Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor, 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 proposed building does not have a strong relationship to the historic architecture of the county. As viewed from the Entrance Corridor, it has a minimal connection to the surrounding context of the shopping center, but that could be significantly enhanced. The form and mass of the building are compatible with the other buildings in the shopping center. Proposed materials for the building elevations visible from the EC include EIFS in PPG “Delicate White” and Hardi siding. Those materials and the EIFS color are consistent with the previous approvals for the shopping center. However, the Hardi color is not identified on the drawings.	Revise the design of the south elevation to present an appropriate appearance for the Entrance Corridor, to eliminate the back of building character, and to coordinate better with similar sized buildings in the shopping center. Revisions to the location and treatment of bays, the position of window/door openings within bays, the relation between the roof screen and the bays, and the detailing of the bays are recommended. Revise side elevations to maintain coordination.
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.	The Entrance Corridor-facing elevation of the proposed building is mostly blank. It is divided into three unequal bays by material changes. The end bays are faced with EIFS and include no windows or doors. Between the EIFS is a bay with Hardi siding, a door, and two windows. The location of the material changes on this elevation appear random. They have no relationship to the rooftop screen, which is thoughtfully integrated into the design of the north elevation (though the north elevation is not visible from the EC). The treatment of the bays does not relate to other buildings in the center. It lacks the detailing at the top of the wall and the pilasters that establish the building bays. The placement of a door and a window at the point where the materials change results in an awkward appearance. The treatment clearly indicates that	Indicate the proposed color of the Hardi siding on the drawings.
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.	this is the rear of the building. It does not contribute to the establishment of 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.	 <i>Example of a building in the Stonefield shopping center with pilasters and metal panel detailing.</i>	
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 narrative states that storefronts are to be anodized black; the materials sheet says bronze. The building is small compared to some others in the shopping center, but the limited fenestration and lack of detail on the EC elevation contribute to a lack of human scale.	
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.		
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		
		Physical connecting devices are not proposed.	

	devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	Connection can be achieved through compatible building materials, colors and details.	
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The building does not have the appearance of 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>	Window glass information has not been provided.	Add a note to the plan stating that window glass will meet the criteria: VLT not below 40% and VLR not above 30%.
	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.	The proposal includes rooftop equipment with a screen wall to eliminate visibility. The screen wall is an extension of the central entrance feature on the front elevation, which is not visible from the Entrance Corridor.	Integrate the equipment screening with the overall architectural design as viewed from Hydraulic Road.
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.	 <i>Bird's eye view of the proposed building with the rooftop mechanical screen</i> The screen will eliminate visibility of the equipment from the corridor, assuming the equipment height is less than the wall height, but the screen wall is not integrated with the architecture of the EC-facing elevation. Steel fence is proposed at both ends of the pet area. It is proposed at the height of the retaining wall, so it is not expected to have a visual impact on the Entrance Corridor.	
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 the architectural plans but not on the site plan.	Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the site plan.
	Lighting		
22	Light should be contained on the site and not spill over onto adjacent properties or streets;	The narrative states that building-mounted lighting will be down-only luminaires, finished to match the storefront. Under canopy fixtures are also proposed. Information from the manufacturer’s catalog is copied on the architectural lighting plan, but options are not identified. The new lighting is not included in the site plan drawings.	Add the lighting information to the site plan amendment drawings. Provide a luminaire schedule that shows conformity with the Entrance Corridor lighting guidelines. Indicate the intensity of illumination from the proposed fixtures at ground level. Show that it does not exceed 20 fc.
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	The note is not on the plan.	Include the standard lighting note on the site plan.

	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.”		
30-31	<i>Guidelines for the Use of Decorative Landscape Lighting</i>	No decorative lighting is proposed.	None.
	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.	There are three large trees to remain along the Hydraulic Road frontage. They meet the street tree requirement. Three Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry are proposed to be added, alternating with the large trees. They meet the ornamental tree requirement. Two rows of existing shrubs are also shown as to remain along Hydraulic. The proposed work is located very close to these trees and shrubs. Tree protection and trunk armoring are noted on the E&S plan.	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.	Trees are in place along Swanson Drive.	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.		
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.	There are two existing interior parking lot trees.	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.	A row of Arborvitae is shown on the approved landscape plan between this site and the Regal cinema. These trees help mitigate the visual impacts of the cinema building. A note on sheet C6 states that the trees will be trimmed as needed to accommodate the new improvements. It is not clear that the trimming will result in an appropriate appearance or a healthy condition for the trees. The site/grading plan does not show the row of trees.	Revise the site/grading plan to show the row of Arborvitae along the cinema. Provide additional information in the plan to show how the trimming of the Arborvitae will

	Shrubs should measure at least 24 inches in height.	 <i>Arborvitae planted between the site and the Regal cinema.</i>	result in an appropriate appearance and a healthy condition for the trees.
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> .	All the plants are on the 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 is on the 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	The proposed building is oriented parallel to the EC, but the back of the building faces the EC. The FFE of the proposed building is 492'. The elevation of the EC in the area ranges from 498' to 500'. A retaining wall is proposed around most of the building – 5' from the west side of the building, 13.5' from the south side, and 4' from the east side. A portion of the space between the building and the retaining wall on the south side is for a pet relief yard. The retaining wall will extend a few feet above ground level as viewed from the EC. The block	Revise the retaining wall material and color to coordinate closely with the adjacent Stonefield sign and the building across Swanson Drive.

	does not overpower the natural settings of the site, or the Entrance Corridor.	
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.	proposed for the wall is a gray color that matches the block used for the apartment building located further west on Hydraulic beyond the cinema. That block differs from the tan and brown tones of the stone (Luck Stone thin stone veneer in “Oak Ridge”) used in Building A5, across Swanson Drive, and at the base of the adjacent freestanding sign. <i>The south corner of the proposed retaining wall (top) would be adjacent to the existing freestanding sign (bottom).</i> Pedestrian and vehicular connections exist. No views are expected to be impacted by the proposal. Impacts to natural features are discussed in #32 and #36.

	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 retaining wall extends the full length of the EC and east sides of the building, and most of the west side. This continues the engineered appearance of the site that already exists. The retaining wall is to have a 3'6"-tall safety railing. The plan does not detail the appearance of the railing. The proposed work could damage the row of arborvitae that stands along the Regal cinema. The retaining wall is to be constructed adjacent to shrubs and within the driplines of the trees to remain along Hydraulic.	Revise the site plan to include details describing the appearance of the safety rail.
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.		
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.	Above-ground stormwater features are not proposed.	None.
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 recommend the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. The character and appearance of the EC-facing elevation
2. The equipment screen
3. The proximity of work to existing landscaping

Staff recommend the following revisions to the proposal, to be reviewed by the ARB in a future meeting:

1. Revise the design of the south elevation to present an appropriate appearance for the Entrance Corridor, to eliminate the back of building character, and to coordinate better with similar sized buildings in the shopping center. Revisions to the location and treatment of bays, the position of window/door openings within bays, the relation between the roof screen and the bays, and the detailing of the bays are recommended. Revise side elevations to maintain coordination.
2. Indicate the proposed color of the Hardi siding on the drawings.
3. Add a note to the plan stating that window glass will meet the criteria: VLT not below 40% and VLR not above 30%.
4. Integrate the equipment screening with the overall architectural design as viewed from Hydraulic Road.
5. Add the standard mechanical equipment note to the site plan: "Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated."
6. Add the lighting information to the site plan amendment drawings. Provide a luminaire schedule that shows conformity with the Entrance Corridor lighting guidelines. Indicate the intensity of illumination from the proposed fixtures at ground level. Show that it does not exceed 20 fc.
7. Include the standard lighting note on the site 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."
8. Revise the site/grading plan to show the row of Arborvitae along the cinema.
9. Provide additional information in the plan to show how the trimming of the Arborvitae will result in an appropriate appearance and a healthy condition for the trees.
10. Revise the retaining wall material and color to coordinate closely with the adjacent Stonefield sign and the building across Swanson Drive.
11. Revise the site plan to include details describing the appearance of the safety rail.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB-2026-00008 Veterinary Emergency Group Architectural Drawings](#)

Attach. 2: [ARB-2026-00008 Veterinary Emergency Group Site Plan](#)