



County of Albemarle
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Albemarle County Architectural Review Board
FROM: Margaret Maliszewski, Planning Manager
RE: ARB-2022-00061: Vista 29 Rooftop Mechanical Equipment
DATE: June 10, 2026

PROJECT DETAILS

Location: 415 Premier Circle, on the west side of Rt. 29, approximately 300' north of Westfield Road

Zoned: Neighborhood Model District (NMD), Entrance Corridor (EC)

Owner/Applicant: Premier Circle PSH LLC / BRW Architects (Kurt Keesecker)

Proposal: To install rooftop mechanical equipment that will be visible from the Entrance Corridor and to install a screen to limit visibility.

Visibility: The equipment screen is expected to be visible from the northbound lanes of the Rt. 29 Entrance Corridor from approximately the north end of the Stonefield development to the Premier Circle building location.

HISTORY

A Certificate of Appropriateness was issued for this development (then known as TJACH Premier Circle and Premier Circle VSH Building) on May 24, 2023. At the time the design was approved, the rooftop mechanical equipment was not expected to be visible from the street. (See page 20 of Attachment 1.) In late 2025 the architects contacted staff to explain that, with construction well underway, they noticed that the mechanical units planned for the top of the building would be more visible than originally anticipated and they proposed a screening solution. (See Figure 1.) Staff recommended that a mockup of the screening be installed to better determine visual impacts. Staff and a representative of the architect's office viewed that mockup on May 15, 2026.

The Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines state:

- 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 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.
- 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.

DISCUSSION

The architects have submitted photoshop images of the anticipated appearance of the screen based on photos taken at the May 15 site visit and have offered two color options (stone gray (darker) and gray-white (lighter)). See Attachment 2. The mockup was visible from the northbound lanes of the Rt. 29 Entrance Corridor from the north end of the Stonefield development to the Premier Circle building location. When visible, the view was not wide-open; there are trees, signs, and utility poles that distract the eye and obstruct parts of available views. The view will likely be more open when the leaves are off the trees, but staff believe that the mechanical screen is a reasonable solution. The form of the screen is suited to the size and form of the building, the darker color is coordinated with the building colors, the screen will be visible for a relatively short distance along the corridor, and the existing visual distractions located nearby reduce noticeability and impact.

QUESTIONS FOR THE WORK SESSION

1. Is the increased level of visibility of the rooftop equipment/screen acceptable?
2. Is the design of the equipment screen acceptable?
3. Is the darker color (stone gray) preferred for the screen?



Figure 1: Proposed mechanical screen

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB-2022-00061: Vista 29: ARB Approved Plan](#)

Attach. 2: [ARB-2022-00061: Vista 29: Mechanical Screen Studies](#)