ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	**ARB-2021-27: 999 Rio Road Final Site Plan**
Review Type	Final Site Development Plan
Parcel Identification	06100-00-00-154B0
Location	At the east corner of the intersection of Rio Road and Belvedere Boulevard. (See Figure 1.)
Zoned	Neighborhood Model District (NMD)/Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Windmill Ventures LLC/Shimp Engineering (Justin Shimp)
Magisterial District	Rio
Proposal	To construct the first phase of a mixed-use development including multi-family attached and single-family attached and detached residential units, with associated site improvements. A 5,000-sf office building is planned for Phase 2.
Context	The subject parcel is comprised of a ca. 1960 residence and associated outbuildings and wooded area. In the immediate vicinity on the Entrance Corridor is a mix of large-scale institutional development (Covenant Church to the northwest and CATEC to the southwest) and single-family detached residential development (Dunlora, two- to three-stories) to the south and east. Single-story commercial development is found on the north side of the corridor just west of the railroad tracks, with residential on the south side, and a mix of residential, institutional and office beyond. (See Figure 2.)
Visibility	The proposed development will be readily visible from the Rio Road Entrance Corridor. Once constructed, the office building will limit some views of the various residential units.
ARB Meeting Date	April 5, 2021
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

PROJECT HISTORY/CHANGES

The ARB reviewed the initial site plan for this proposal on July 6, 2020. (See Figure 3.) Comments from that meeting are included in the Analysis section of this report. The attached units are distributed differently than in the previous plan and the detached units are now all located in a row at the east end of the south side of the site. Parking between the office site and the attached units has been extended closer to Rio Road. The sitting garden and dog park have swapped locations near the central Belvedere Blvd. entrance. A dumpster has been added at the southeast corner of the parking lot. The retaining wall at the southeast corner of the site has been extended further west.

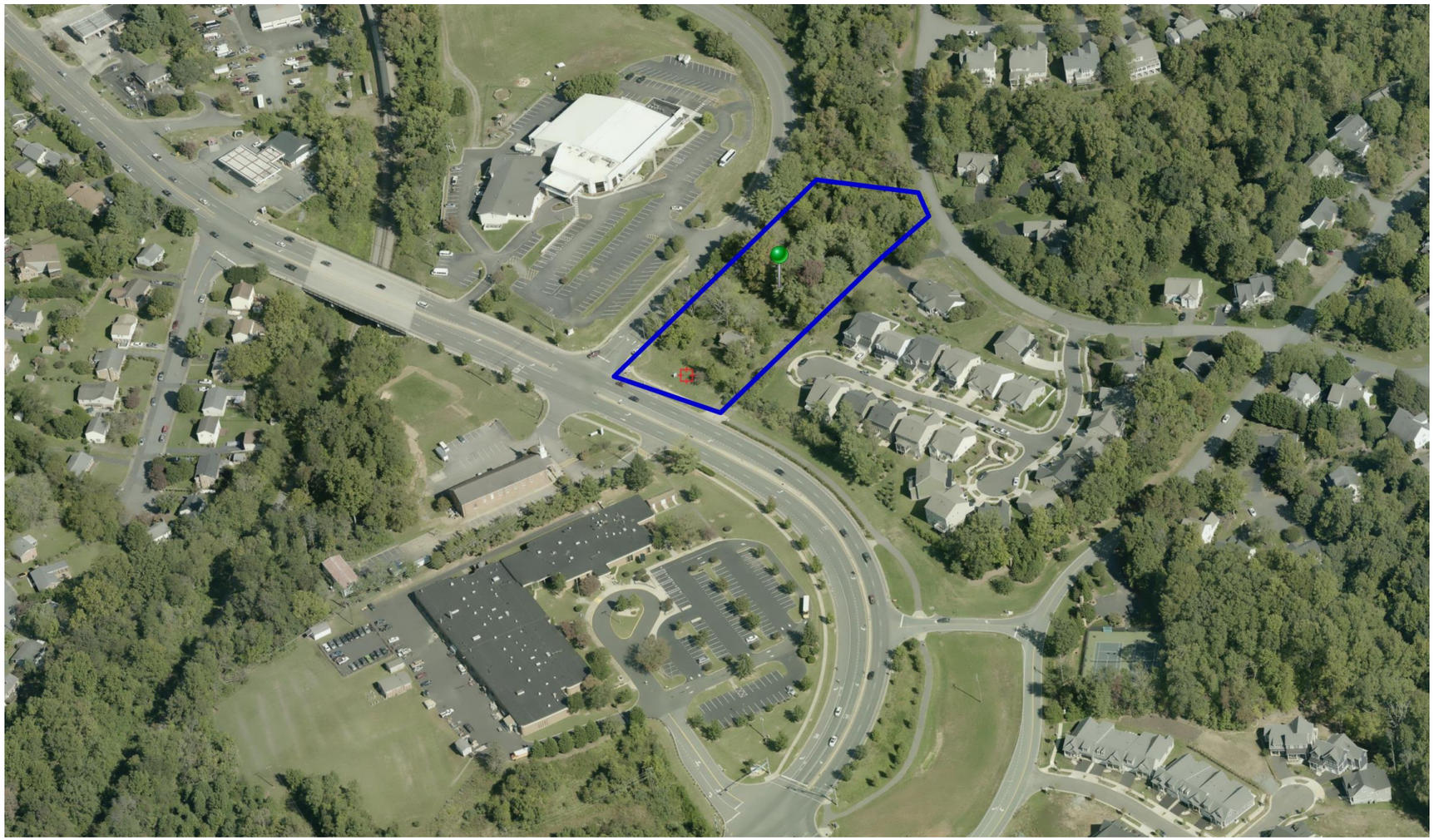

Figure 1: Aerial view highlighting the subject property.

Figure 2: Street view showing Covenant Church (left) to the northwest of the subject parcel, the subject parcel with the single-story brick residence (center), and the Dunlora residential development to the east (right).

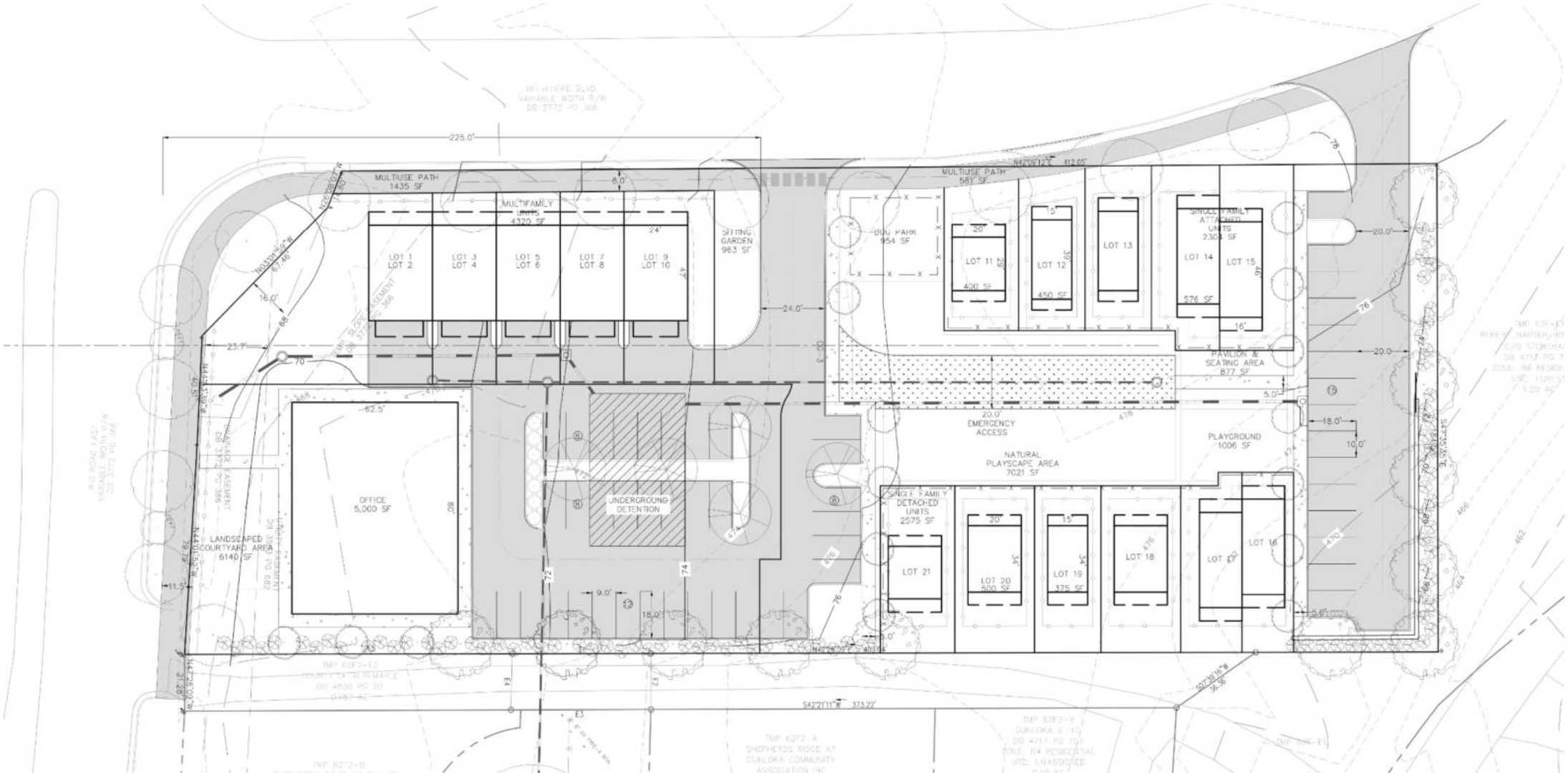

Figure 3: Initial Site Plan reviewed by the ARB on July 6, 2020.

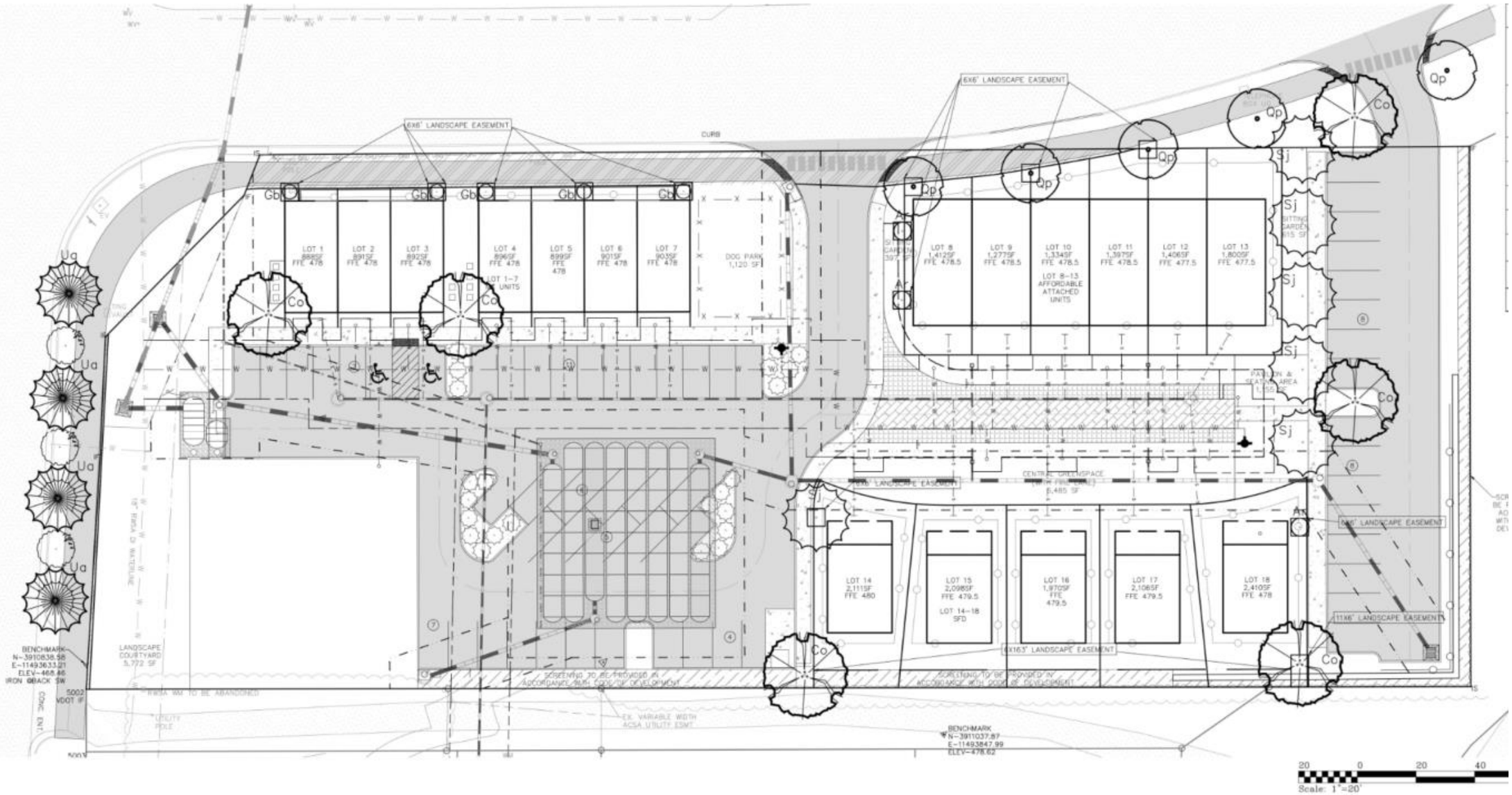

Figure 4: Current site plan proposal with revised distribution of residential units.

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	July 6, 2020 RECOMMENDATION	CURRENT ANALYSIS/ISSUE	CURRENT RECOMMENDATION
	Purpose			
1	The goal of the regulation of the design of development within the designated Entrance Corridors is to ensure 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.	Provide architectural designs with the next submittal. The Rio Road-facing elevation of the office building and the Belvedere Boulevard-facing elevations of the multi-family units must be designed to appear as front facades, and side elevations visible from the EC street must be treated with architectural detail to eliminate blankness.	Two sets of architectural designs have been provided for the attached townhouses. The 3-unit and 4-unit blocks (those closest to the Rio Road EC) are identified as the Craig Units, and the 6-unit block is identified as the Habitat Units. The Belvedere Blvd.-facing elevations of all the units have a sufficient level of architectural detailing such that the elevations do not appear blank or undesigned. Side elevations of both unit types have less detail. There are windows at both levels, but the sides are clearly secondary elevations. Additional trees west of Lot 1 would help mitigate impacts.	See landscaping recommendations.
13	Any appearance of "blankness" resulting from building design should be relieved using design detail or vegetation, or both.			
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.	None at this time.	The proposed designs incorporate sufficient elements of traditional residential design (masonry and siding materials, gabled roofs, shed dormers, grouped windows, porches) to establish compatibility with the historic residential sites of the county.	None.
	Compatibility with significant historic sites:	None at this time.	The proposed brick and siding materials and their distribution across the buildings, the shed and gabled roof forms, the porches supported by simple columns, and the building heights of approximately 30'-33' result in buildings that are expected to be compatible in scale, materials and form with the area's historic structures. A 25' maximum height is set for the office building, which is also expected to be compatible with nearby development.	None.
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.			
	Compatibility with significant historic sites			
	Structure design			
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.		All the proposed units are two stories tall with a pitched roof. The Craig Units have brick at the first story with siding above, or brick at both stories. The materials list on the drawings does not identify the brick, but a written description identifies it as "Blue Ridge Regent." The physical sample has a light tan finish.  Paint for the Hardi-siding is Sherwin Williams "Dovetail" – a medium grey. Trim is white and Sherwin Williams Sealskin – a dark grey. Dormers, gables and porch roofs help break up the roofline. The main roofs have black architectural shingles. The Habitat Units are proposed with horizontal Hardi-siding in two very light colors (Cobblestone and Light Mist) at the first and second stories and vertical siding in two dark colors (Mountain Sage and Countrylane Red) at the upper second stories and gable ends. Roofs have black shingles. The colors are generally consistent with those of nearby development.	Include brick in the materials list for the Craig Units and indicate the proposed manufacturer and color in the list. Provide a materials list in the Habitat Units architectural drawings.
10	Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.		The proposed houses are expected to be compatible in height and general character with nearby residential development but will have a different	
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.		scale and character than the existing institutional buildings that are nearby. The design of the future office building will play a role in establishing compatibility and cohesiveness along the corridor.	
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.		The designs include material changes, grouped windows, brick detailing, dormers and porches that help establish human scale.	None.
14	Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.		Most of the units are attached in three blocks.	None.
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.		The designs may have been constructed in other locations, but they do not have the appearance of trademark designs.	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: *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.*		The written description of the buildings indicates that window glass will meet the criteria, but this is not noted on the drawings.	Provide the specs on the window glass. Show that Visible Light Transmittance (VLT) will not drop below 40% and Visible Light Reflectance (VLR) will not exceed 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.	Show the location of mechanical equipment (building and ground mounted) on the site and architectural plans and show how it will be screened from the EC.	Ground-mounted equipment is shown just west of the Lot 1 unit. It is surrounded by a screening fence with a height of 4’ 5½”. A note on the site plan indicates that the fence material is wood, but the fence detail on sheet C10 does not identify the material. Visibility from the EC would be eliminated if the equipment was located between units 3 and 4, where other equipment is already proposed. In the current location west of Lot 1, landscaping would be needed to integrate the fenced equipment into the surroundings.	Move the equipment located west of Lot 1 to eliminate visibility from the EC. Add a note to the screening fence detail on C10 that the fence material is wood. Indicate the finish. Add landscaping on the west side of Lot 1 to establish a cohesive appearance.

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 a detail of the proposed dog park fencing in the site plan. Chain link fencing is not appropriate.	A dog park fence detail has been provided. It shows a 4'-tall fence composed of wire mesh behind horizontal wooden slats. Wire mesh has a similar appearance to chain link. However, the dog park is located approximately 200' from the EC and beyond two blocks of townhouses as viewed from the EC. The location will reduce visibility of the wire mesh and the wooden slats help minimize impacts. Adding a tree and shrubs along the Belvedere Blvd. frontage of the dog park would further limit impacts.	Add shrubs and a tree along the Belvedere Blvd. frontage of the dog park.
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."	Include the standard mechanical equipment note on the architectural plans.	The note is not on the architectural plans.	Include the standard mechanical equipment note on the architectural plans.
22-31	**Lighting**	None at this time.	No 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.	Provide a complete plant schedule with the next submittal. Provide confirmation that easements will not conflict with the proposed/required landscaping.	Along Rio Road, street trees are proposed in the right-of-way. Four large shade trees (American Elm Princeton) alternate with three ornamental trees (Saucer Magnolias). One additional large shade tree is required. The large trees are not provided at the required caliper. One of the ornamentals is located over a water line.	Add a large shade tree along the Rio Rd. frontage for a total of 5 large shade trees. Revise the planting size of the large shade trees along Rio Road to 3½" caliper. Resolve the ornamental tree/water line conflict along the Rio Road frontage.
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.	Reduce the spacing of the proposed trees along Belvedere Boulevard to 40’ on center.	Ten large shade trees are required along Belvedere Blvd. Eleven trees are provided. Eight are proposed within 6’ x 6’ landscape easements. Four of these easements are bounded by the retaining walls that front the Craig units, the townhouses themselves, and the sidewalk. This is a tight space, but may be sufficient for the Princeton Sentry cultivar that is specified.	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.	Identify the landscaping proposed in the landscaped courtyard.	The landscaped courtyard is associated with the office building, which is scheduled for a future phase of development. Plants proposed for the courtyard are not shown at this time, but street trees are proposed along Rio Road. Sidewalks are provided along the eastern parking row, along the central entrance road into the site, and along the south side of Lots 1-7. Trees are provided along some of these paths, but not consistently (due primarily to the location of utilities).	None at this time.
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.	Provide a complete plant schedule with the next submittal.	In the initial site plan, trees were provided on both the east and west sides of the eastern parking row. The current plan includes notes stating that screening will be provided along the northeast and southeast sides of the site in accordance with the Code of Development. The planting widths vary from 2’ to 6’. The Code of Development requires that the design of the screening be coordinated with adjacent residential property owners.	Show the landscaping that is proposed in the screening areas on the northeast and southeast sides of the site so that it may be reviewed for consistency with the guidelines.

	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.			
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. Shrubs should measure at least 24 inches in height.	Consider adding landscaping at the corner of the site between the office building and the Lot 1-2 building to help the visual transition between the varying building uses and characters.	One tree has been added at the south corner of Lot 1. Multiple utilities cross the area between Lot 1 and Rio Road, but low planting could help integrate the development. Additional trees would help mitigate the reduced level of detail on the Lot 1 townhouse side elevation.	Add trees and low planting in the area between the developed portion of the site and Rio Road to help establish a cohesive overall development.
37	Plant species: a. Plant species required should be as approved by the Staff based upon but not limited to the *Generic Landscape Plan Recommended Species List* and *Native Plants for Virginia Landscapes (Appendix D)*.	Provide a complete plant schedule with the next submittal.	A plant schedule has been provided. The species 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."	Add the standard landscaping note to the landscape plan.	The note is on the plan.	None.
	Development pattern; *Site development and layout*			
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.	None.	All existing trees would be removed from the site with this proposal. Rolling terrain would not be evident. Trees are proposed along the streets. Building mass and height are not expected to appear out of scale with the surroundings.	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.	See #1.	The development has a generally organized character. The residential units are oriented parallel to the streets. Internal sidewalks would connect to a path along Belvedere Blvd. and Rio Road. There are no connecting open spaces. All existing trees	None.

	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 *Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance* 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.		would be removed to accommodate the development. Views are not expected to be negatively impacted.	
	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.	Identify the retaining wall heights on the grading plan. Indicate retaining wall material(s) and color(s) on the plan. A physical sample may be necessary for review.	Proposed grading increases the slope along the Rio frontage and places the townhouses and parking area approximately 10’ above the EC elevation. The elevation at the street is 468’. The parking lot closest to the EC is at an elevation of 475’. The Lot 1 townhouse has a finished floor elevation of 478’. Retaining walls along the northeast and southeast sides of the site are proposed at 4’ and 6’ tall. Materials are not indicated. Once the residential units are constructed, the retaining walls will have little visual impact on the EC.	Indicate retaining wall material(s) and color(s) on the plan. A physical sample may be necessary for review.
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.	None.	There are no trees that are designated for preservation.	None.
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.	None.	No above-ground stormwater features are 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 recommends the following as the primary points of discussion:

1. The two architectural designs
2. Landscaping along Rio Rd. and Belvedere Blvd.
3. Equipment on the Rio Rd. side of Lot 1.

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. Include brick in the materials list for the Craig Units and indicate the proposed manufacturer and color in the list.
2. Provide a materials list in the Habitat Units architectural drawings.
3. Provide the specs on the window glass. Show that Visible Light Transmittance (VLT) will not drop below 40% and Visible Light Reflectance (VLR) will not exceed 30%.
4. Move the equipment located west of Lot 1 to eliminate visibility from the EC.
5. Add a note to the screening fence detail on C10 that the fence material is wood. Indicate the finish.
6. Add landscaping on the west side of Lot 1 to establish a cohesive appearance.
7. Add shrubs and a tree along the Belvedere Blvd. frontage of the dog park.
8. Include the standard mechanical equipment note on the architectural plans: “Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.”
9. Add a large shade tree along the Rio Rd. frontage for a total of 5 large shade trees.
10. Revise the planting size of the large shade trees along Rio Road to 3½” caliper.
11. Resolve the ornamental tree/water line conflict along the Rio Road frontage.
12. Show the landscaping that is proposed in the screening areas on the northeast and southeast sides of the site so that it may be reviewed for consistency with the guidelines.
13. Add trees and low planting in the area between the developed portion of the site and Rio Road to help establish a cohesive overall development.
14. Indicate retaining wall material(s) and color(s) on the plan. A physical sample may be necessary for review.

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: ARB2021-27: 999 Rio Road combined site and architectural drawings

TABLE A This report is based on the following submittal items:

Sheet #	Drawing Name	Drawing /Revision Date
999 Rio Road Final Site Plan **SHEET INDEX** **C1** COVER **C2** EXISTING CONDITIONS **C3** SITE PLAN **C4** UTILITY PLAN **C5** OFF-SITE SEWER CONNECTION **C6** UTILITY PROFILES **C7** GRADING PLAN **C8** AMENITY & LANDSCAPE PLAN **C9** SITE, VDOT & ACSA DETAILS **C10** SITE, VDOT & ACSA DETAILS **C11** ACSA DETAILS **C12** MAINTENANCE OF TRAFFIC		2/22/2021
Habitat For Humanity Townhomes Madagascar CS COVER SHEET A.1 FOUNDATION & BASEMENT PLAN A.2 FIRST FLOOR PLAN-STAIR SECTIONS A.3 FIRST FLOOR LAYOUT PLANS A.4 SECOND FLOOR & ROOF PLANS A.5.1 SECOND FLOOR LAYOUT PLANS A.5.2 SECOND FLOOR LAYOUT PLANS A.6 ELEVATIONS-WINDOW TYPES A.7 ELEVATIONS-SECTIONS-DETAILS A.8 PORCH SECTIONS A.9 PORCH SECTIONS A.10 SECTIONS-DETAILS A.11 SECTIONS-DETAILS		6/19/2017
1-9	999 Rio Townhouses – Craig Units: 3-unit building front & back elevation and upper & lower floor plans; 4-unit building front & back elevation and upper & lower floor plans; 3- and 4-unit buildings right & left elevations	2-12-2021
	Rezoning project proposal; EC Plan proposal; Sherwin Williams stain color print SW 3507 Riverwood; HFHGC Architectural Products sheets (2) with Madagascar elevations and Hardiplank Mountain Sage, Countrylane Red, Cobblestone and Light Mist color prints; comment response letter; images (2) showing low wall along street/sidewalk; Hardiplank samples in Mountain Sage, Countrylane Red, Cobblestone and Light Mist; Brick sample: General Shale Blue Ridge Regent	