

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2023-116: Three Notch'd Center
Review Type	Preliminary Architecture Review
Parcel Identification	056A3-00-00-00900
Location	5368 and 5370 Three Notch'd Rd. (Fig. 1)
Zoned	Planned Development Shopping Center (PDSC), Entrance Corridor (EC), Managed Steep Slopes
Owner/Applicant	Notch'd LLC/Design Develop LLC (Kevin Schafer)
Magisterial District	White Hall
Proposal	To construct a 23,120sf two-story multi-tenant building on a 2.32ac site that will be shared with an existing car wash building. The footprint of the multi-tenant building is 16,300sf with 6,820sf available in upper floors.
Context	<p>The site is currently comprised of two buildings. A multi-tenant concrete block building is located near the EC, set back approximately 34 feet from the right-of-way (ROW), and will be replaced by the proposed building. The second building is a 1½-story carwash, located in the northwest corner of the parcel approximately 158 feet from the EC. It has brick at the first story, tan gable-end siding above, a brown shingled roof, and white trim. The two buildings currently operate independently, with separate parking lots and entrances.</p> <p>Areas around the site are fairly level, with distant mountain views available to the north. The immediate area includes a mix of commercial and industrial sites, with older, large-scale industrial buildings and more recently constructed self-storage, office, and commercial buildings. Residential properties, grassy fields, and dense vegetated buffers are visible east of the site. (See Figure 1.)</p>
Visibility	The proposed building will be readily visible from the EC street.
ARB Meeting Date	February 5, 2024
Staff Contact	Mariah Gleason

PROJECT HISTORY

The planning and zoning history on this site is extensive. In 2009, the ARB approved a design for a commercial building in the location of the current proposal. See Figure 2 below for the approved design. Architectural designs for the carwash building were reviewed and approved by the ARB in 2013. That building was constructed in 2018.


Overall, the building configuration of the current proposal does not match previously approved site plans (Figure 3), therefore, a site plan amendment will be needed to approve the new building layout and other site changes. A more detailed evaluation of landscaping, parking areas, and other site features will be part of the review of the minor site plan.



Figure 1: Project location

ANALYSIS

REF	GUIDELINE	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
	GENERAL GUIDELINES		
	<i>Purpose</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.	Brick is the primary building material; it is consistent with historic structures nearby and within the County. Imperial Marquee awnings and dark colored framing and accents are also compatible with the industrial character of the surrounding area and architectural styles in nearby Downtown Crozet, promoting an orderly and attractive appearance along the corridor. The building form, scale, shape, and materials are consistent with buildings along this segment of the corridor, which include large industrial buildings with assemblages of rectangular forms, 1-2 stories in height, with brick, wood, and metal materials.	Show how the EC-facing storefronts will maintain a “front-of-house” appearance.
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.	Storefront windows with entrances occupy most of the first story elevations. The sidewalk along the EC will be continued across the parcel and multiple pedestrian connections are proposed from it to the building. However, the site layout, with most parking relegated to the rear of the building, may result in the parking lot side functioning more like the front of the building, and the EC elevation developing a “back of building” appearance with utilitarian/service functions visible through windows partially covered with poster-style signs. A building design that includes spaces that are more internal to the building to accommodate back-of-house functions would help maintain an appropriate appearance along the corridor.	
	<i>Compatibility with significant historic sites:</i>		
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.	 <p>A “back of building” appearance on the EC with utilitarian/service functions visible through windows partially covered with poster-style signs.</p>	
	<i>Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor</i>		
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.		
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.		
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.		
	<i>Site development and layout</i>		
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	The general configuration of the site remains consistent with previously approved site plans. The applicant has indicated that a minor site plan amendment will be forthcoming to update the footprint of the new multi-tenant building and	Submit an application for a minor site plan amendment to coordinate the site plan with the updated building design

	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.	approve changes to parking areas and parking area landscaping.	and other proposed site changes.
	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.	The proposed site plan and renderings provided in the application materials show different setbacks from the building to the EC. Both provide sufficient space for the large shade trees, ornamental trees, and shrubs proposed along the EC frontage. With size and spacing meeting guidelines requirements, this landscaping will promote visual order along the EC, integrate the development into the natural surroundings, and unify the multiple massing forms within the building's design.	
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.		
	SPECIFIC GUIDELINES		
	Compatibility with significant historic sites		
	Structure design		
11	The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.	Renderings show an articulated building design that helps break the building's massing along the 300-foot building length and contributes to a human-scale design. Awnings, as well as a mix of regularly spaced landscaping planted along the EC frontage, also facilitate a safe, comfortable, and welcoming environment for pedestrians at an appropriate human scale.	None at this time.
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 devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.	Design details and materials eliminate the appearance of blankness in the building design.	

		The renderings show large storefront windows and nine pedestrian entrances along the middle tenant units of the first floor, facing the EC. End units and upper stories have brick walls with recessed brick detailing surrounding regularly spaced windows. A central, recessed bay, differentiated from neighboring brick walls with dark panels, also helps break up the building mass.	
15	Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.	The building form is not representative of a trademark building. Signage for the building and its tenants will require a Comprehensive Sign Plan.	An approved Comprehensive Sign Plan for the building is required prior to final approval of the architectural design. Include a proposed plan with the next submittal.
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>	Page 3 of Attachment 1 contains a note that aligns with the guideline; however, specifications for the proposed window glass were not included in the submittal.	Provide specifications for the proposed window glass.
	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.	Accessory structures are not shown on the site plan or renderings.	None at this time.
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.	Proposed elevations show rooftop mechanical equipment extending above parapet height. Renderings and a note on Page 3 indicate that mechanical equipment will be screened from view of the EC. Sections can confirm that the equipment will be screened as viewed from the EC.	Provide sections confirming that rooftop equipment will be screened from the EC. Provide a design detail for the dumpster area

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 dumpster area located behind the new building may be visible while heading west along the EC. Details on the dumpster pad design and screening were not provided in the submission. Based on the square footage of the multi-tenant building, the zoning ordinance will require at least one loading area to be provided, if not more. (See County Code 18-4.12.13 for more information.)	located behind the new building. Show the location of any required loading area(s) and provide details to indicate how it will be screened from view of the EC.
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 plan does not include the standard mechanical equipment note.	Include the standard mechanical note on the architectural drawings.
22-31	Lighting	A lighting plan was not included in the submittal.	Provide a lighting plan with future submittals that satisfies all guideline requirements.
	Landscaping		
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.	The landscape plan provided in the submission is largely consistent with previous approvals, showing large shade trees located parallel to the EC, planted in regular intervals approximately 35ft on center. A more detailed evaluation of the landscape plan will be part of the review of the minor site plan amendment.	None at this time.

33	<p>Landscaping along interior roads:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>An entrance road to the site is provided along the eastern parcel boundary. Trees shown along this road, both on- and off-site meet this criterion.</p>	<p>None at this time.</p>
34	<p>Landscaping along interior pedestrian ways:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Sidewalks in the renderings and the proposed site plan are shown in different locations around the new multi-tenant building.</p> <p>Street trees along the EC will likely satisfy the landscaping requirement for pedestrian ways, however, sidewalks located in the rear of the multi-tenant building are not accompanied by trees.</p>	<p>Coordinate the locations of sidewalks in the renderings and proposed site plan layout.</p> <p>Provide landscaping along interior pedestrian ways.</p>
35	<p>Landscaping of parking areas:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>This plan does not propose changes to perimeter trees approved under previous site plans. Large trees will be provided in the required intervals and sizes on the northern and eastern edges of the development. Along the western boundary, easements prevent trees from being placed at the prescribed interval. Shrubs are used to supplement plantings in this area.</p> <p>New in this submission is the removal of three parking spaces for an additional landscaped parking island. The site plan shows 102 parking spaces and 11 trees provided in interior parking areas, satisfying this requirement.</p>	<p>None at this time.</p>
36	<p>Landscaping of buildings and other structures:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>b. Shrubs should be used to integrate the site, buildings, and other structures; dumpsters, accessory buildings and</p>	<p>A mix of trees and shrubs, regularly spaced along the EC, helps soften the appearance of the building frontage, unifies separate tenant spaces, and promotes an orderly and attractive appearance along the corridor.</p>	<p>None at this time.</p>

	structures; “drive thru” windows; service areas; and signs. Shrubs should measure at least 24 inches in height.		
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 Green Vase Zelkova species, shown along the EC frontage, is no longer included on the County’s approved plant list.	Replace the Green Vase Zelkova species with a large shade tree from the County’s approved list, 3.5” caliper at planting. (Choosing a tree with a similar canopy will assist in meeting canopy coverage requirements.)
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 required note is not provided on the plan.	Include the standard planting note on the plan.
	<i>Site Development and layout</i>		
	Development pattern		
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	The proposed building has a strong relationship to the corridor. It is oriented parallel to the EC, with a narrow landscaped lawn provided between the EC and building entrances, and parking and travelways relegated to the sides and rear of the building. Although shown in different configurations, the site plan and renderings provide pedestrian circulation systems around the new building and along the corridor. A site plan amendment will be needed to update the footprint of the new multi-tenant building and approve changes to parking areas and related landscaping. The applicant plans to submit those materials after receiving comments from the ARB on the proposed architecture.	Submit an application for a minor site plan amendment to coordinate the site plan with the updated building design and other proposed site changes.

	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.	The proposed plan is largely consistent with site grading shown in the approved plans; however, additional grading and a new retaining wall (maximum height of 2.3ft) are shown behind the new dumpster pad in the rear of the development. Proposed contours and tie-ins to existing contours in areas surrounding the dumpster are not rounded.	Revise the plan to show proposed contour lines and tie-ins that are more rounded.
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.	A portion of the site has already been developed and some trees have been planted. Those trees will require protection.	Revise the plan to include tree protection fencing details and locations on 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.	Stormwater structures and features are located in the rear of the development and are not visible from the EC.	None at this time.
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 design of the EC elevation and maintaining the appearance of a building front.

Staff recommends the following changes to the proposal to be reviewed by the ARB in a future meeting:

1. Show how the EC-facing storefronts will maintain a “front-of-house” appearance.
2. Submit an application for a minor site plan amendment to coordinate the site plan with the updated building design and other proposed site changes.
3. An approved Comprehensive Sign Plan for the building is required prior to final approval of the architectural design. Include a proposed plan with the next submittal.
4. Provide specifications for the proposed window glass.
5. Provide sections confirming that rooftop equipment will be screened from the EC.
6. Provide a design detail for the dumpster area located behind the new building.
7. Show the location of any required loading area(s) and provide details to indicate how it will be screened from view of the EC.
8. Include the standard mechanical note on the architectural drawings: “Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.”
9. Provide a lighting plan with future submittals that satisfies all guideline requirements.
10. Coordinate the locations of sidewalks in the renderings and proposed site plan layout.
11. Provide landscaping along interior pedestrian ways.
12. Replace the Green Vase Zelkova species with a large shade tree from the County’s approved list, 3.5” caliper at planting. (Choosing a tree with a similar canopy will assist in meeting canopy coverage requirements.)
13. Include the standard planting note on 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.”
14. Revise the plan to show proposed contour lines and tie-ins that are more rounded.
15. Revise the plan to include tree protection fencing details and locations on the grading, landscaping, and erosion and sediment control plans.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS

- I move to approve the list of changes outlined in the staff report for ARB-2023-116: Three Notch’d Center Preliminary Architecture Plan to be reviewed at a future ARB meeting.
- I move to approve the list of changes outlined in the staff report for ARB-2023-116: Three Notch’d Center Preliminary Architecture Plan to be reviewed at a future ARB meeting, amended as follows (state amendments).

ATTACHMENTS

Attach. 1: [ARB2023-116: Three Notch’d Preliminary ARB Submission](#)