

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	ARB-2020-120: Galaxie Farm Townhomes Initial Site Plan
Review Type	Initial Site Development Plan
Parcel Identification	09100-00-00-00900, 09100-00-00-01500
Location	193 Galaxie Farm Lane on the west side of Rt. 20, .3 miles south of the intersection of Mill Creek Drive and Rt. 20.
Zoned	Planned Residential Development (PRD)/Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	Mallie P & Jasper L Haynes (91-15), Anna Marie & David S. Wittmer (91-9)/Blackbird of Charlottesville LLC, Shimp Engineering (Keane Rucker)
Magisterial District	Scottsville
Proposal	To construct 23 attached townhouses in 6 blocks as part of a larger development including 42 detached residences and associated site improvements on approximately 13.36 acres.
Context	Residences constructed c. 1940 and c. 1960 are located on the subject parcels. The character of this portion of the Entrance Corridor is largely residential and rural. Some commercial properties are interspersed.
Visibility	See Project History/Visibility.
ARB Meeting Date	December 21, 2020
Staff Contact	Khris Taggart

PROJECT HISTORY/VISIBILITY

The ARB has reviewed no previous proposals for this site. A zoning map amendment was approved for this development on December 4, 2019. Entrance Corridor requirements apply to the townhome portion of this development and Road A1. Assuming the height of the townhomes is similar to or less than that of the single-family detached units, Lots 26-38 and Lots 39-41 will have visibility from the EC.

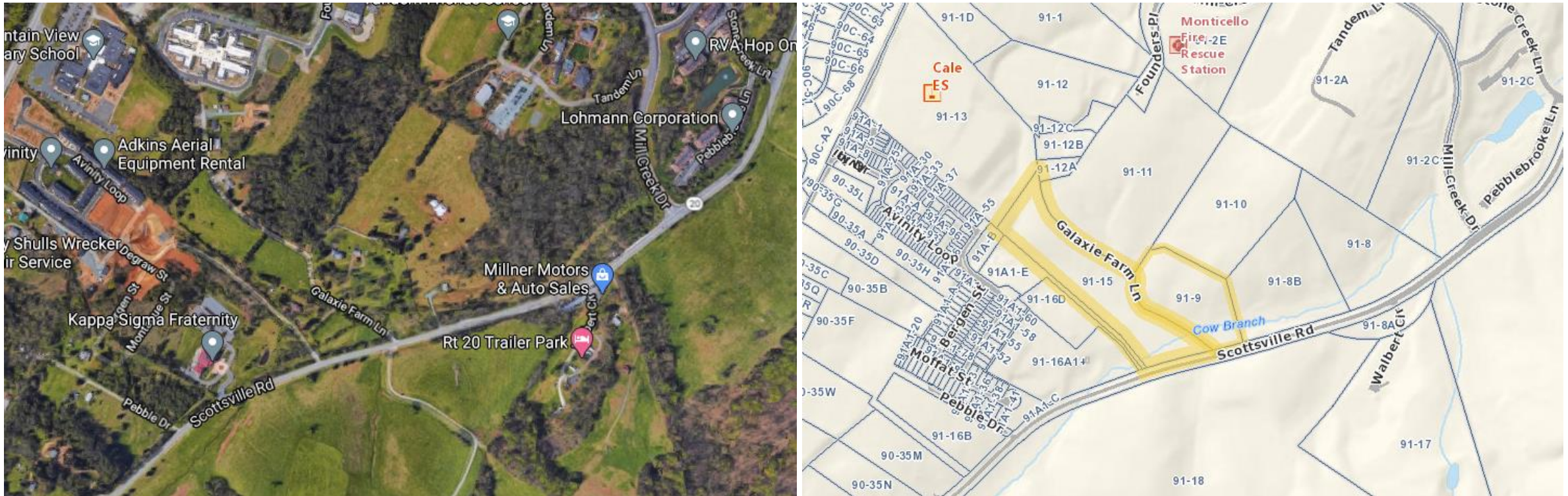


Figure 1: Google Image (left) showing project area along the Entrance Corridor and County GIS map (right) highlighting subject property.

ANALYSIS

Gray highlight = means the guideline can't be reviewed at initial site plan stage, but recommendations can be provided for final

Yellow highlight = means the guideline can only be reviewed for location/configuration at the initial plan stage

Regular text = means the guideline can be reviewed at initial plan stage, can be made a condition of initial plan approval, and can be the basis for denial

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 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.	Architectural designs were not provided with the initial plan. The side and rear elevations of the townhouses that are visible from the EC must be designed to eliminate blankness and achieve appropriate form, scale, etc.	Provide architectural designs with the next submittal. Note that the side and rear elevations of the townhouses in lots 26-38 and 39-41 must be designed to eliminate blankness and achieve appropriate form, scale, etc.
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.		
3-5, 9-16	<i>Compatibility with significant historic sites</i> , compatibility with character of the Entrance Corridor, structure design		
	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.	No accessory structures are proposed in this development. The location(s) of mechanical equipment is not labeled on the plan.	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.
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,	The site plan shows fencing along the southwest side of the site. Chain link and white vinyl are not appropriate materials for fences visible from the EC.	Provide a detail of the proposed fencing in the site plan. Chain link and white vinyl are not appropriate fence material choices.

	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 is not present of the site plan. Architectural drawings have not been submitted at this time.	Include the standard mechanical equipment note on the site and architectural plans.
22-31	Lighting	A lighting plan has not been provided with the initial plan.	Provide a lighting plan with the next submittal.
	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.	Along the Rt. 20 frontage of the development is a 100' stream buffer that is wooded and to remain, so the standard EC frontage trees are not required in this case. The buffer is not particularly dense; views are available through the wooded area in the winter. Some trees are located very close to the road, as is an overhead power line. The wooded buffer is consistent with the surrounding context.	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	<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>Along Roads C and A1, tree spacing exceeds 40’ in several locations. Regular spacing is difficult to achieve due to limited planting area and the quantity and proximity of utility laterals running to each townhome. Overall, the quantity of trees provided is consistent with the requirement. However, the proposed trees along Road C are medium trees at 1.5” caliper – not the required large trees at 2.5” caliper.</p>	<p>For the interior street trees provided in the townhome portion of the development, revise the trees to large species, 2.5” caliper at planting.</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 are provided along Roads B2 and C. The interior street trees provided there also act as interior pedestrian way trees.</p> <p>A trail is proposed through the stream buffer, more or less parallel to the EC. Pedestrian way trees are not needed along it because trees remain in the stream buffer.</p>	<p>None.</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>A parking lot is proposed behind Lots 42-45. It is not expected to be visible from the Entrance Corridor.</p>	<p>None.</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 structures; “drive thru” windows; service areas; and signs. Shrubs should measure at least 24 inches in height.</p>	<p>The longest townhome block is approximately 109’ long. The townhome block that is closest to the EC is located approximately 120’ from the street. Architectural designs haven’t been provided, but the blocks incorporate minor variations in depth; some units project forward, others are recessed. Building length and setback minimize the need for landscaping along the townhouses.</p>	<p>None at this time.</p>
37	<p>Plant species:</p> <p>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>.</p>	<p>The proposed plants are on the recommended species lists.</p>	<p>None.</p>

38	<p>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.”</p>	The note is present on the landscape plan.	None.
	Development pattern		
	Site development and layout		
6	<p>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.</p>	The site is a combination of existing developed areas (single-family residential) and natural landscape (open space, mature trees). Except for the tree buffer that is to remain along Rt. 20, the existing natural landscape is being removed to accommodate the proposed development.	None.
39	<p>The relationship of buildings and other structures to the Entrance Corridor street and to other development within the corridor should be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> An organized pattern of roads, service lanes, bike paths, and pedestrian walks should guide the layout of the site. 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. Provisions should be made for connections to adjacent pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems. Open spaces should be tied into surrounding areas to provide continuity within the Entrance Corridor. 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. The placement of structures on the site should respect existing views and vistas on and around the site. 	<p>The site is accessed from Rt 20. The travelways and parking areas have an organized pattern. A trail is proposed through the stream buffer, more or less parallel to the EC; it connects to the interior pedestrian ways.</p> <p>The townhome blocks are not adjacent to the EC street. Those that will be most visible are arranged more or less perpendicular to the EC. The sidewalk layout suggests that the front of the townhomes visible from the EC will face the interior of the site (north), so the east and south elevations of these units must be designed to eliminate blankness and achieve appropriate form, scale, etc.</p> <p>The existing site is a mixture of the two single-family residential properties and open spaces with mature trees, most of which will be removed to accommodate the proposed development.</p> <p>Views around the site are not expected to be negatively impacted.</p>	See #1.

	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.	Grading is proposed throughout the site. A retaining wall reaching 10' tall is proposed at the northwestern corner of the site. However, the wall is not anticipated to be visible from the EC.	None.
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.	The landscape plan shows a tree buffer that is to remain along the EC frontage. Tree protection fencing is shown on Sheet C7. This will need to be coordinated throughout the site plan set.	Show the tree protection fencing for the tree buffer consistently throughout the landscaping, grading and, E&S 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.	A stormwater pipe runs from Lots 58/59 towards the tree buffer, ending with a culvert and a rip rap lined channel that connects to the nearby stream (Cow Branch). There are also pipes, culverts, and rip rap associated with Road A1. These features are expected to have some visibility from the EC. All these features could be better integrated into the site with the use of earth-tone colors for the concrete and stone.	Revise the plan to show the use of earth-tone concrete and stone to better integrate the culverts and rip rap located in the tree buffer into the site.
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 that the ARB forward the following recommendations to the Agent for the Site Review Committee:

- Regarding requirements to satisfy the design guidelines as per § 18-30.6.4c(2), (3) and (5) and recommended conditions of initial plan approval:
 - Prior to Initial Plan approval the following items shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the ARB: None. The ARB recommends approval of the Initial Plan without conditions.
- Regarding recommendations on the plan as it relates to the guidelines: None.
- Regarding conditions to be satisfied prior to issuance of a grading permit: None
- Regarding the final site plan submittal:
 A Certificate of Appropriateness is required prior to final site plan approval. The following items and all items on the ARB Final Site Plan Checklist must be addressed:
 1. Provide architectural designs with the next submittal. Note that the side and rear elevations of the townhouses in Lots 26-38 and 39-41 of the site must be designed to eliminate blankness and achieve appropriate form, scale, etc.
 2. 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.
 3. Provide a detail of the proposed fencing in the site plan. Chain link and white vinyl are not appropriate fence material choices.
 4. Include the standard mechanical equipment note on the site and architectural plans: “Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.”
 5. Provide a lighting plan with the next submittal.
 6. For the interior street trees provided in the townhome portion of the development, revise the trees to large species, 2.5” caliper at planting.
 7. Show the tree protection fencing for the tree buffer consistently throughout the landscaping, grading and, E&S plans.
 8. Revise the plan to show the use of earth-tone concrete and stone to better integrate the culverts and rip rap located in the tree buffer into the site.

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

C1	Cover	11/09/2020
C2	Existing Conditions: Overview	11/09/2020
C3	Site Plan: Overview	11/09/2020
C4	Grading and Utility Plan: Overview	11/09/2020
C5	Site Plan	11/09/2020
C6	Grading and Utility Plan	11/09/2020
C7	Landscape Plan	11/09/2020

ATTACHMENTS

1. [Galaxie Farm Townhomes Initial Site Plan](#)