

Board of Architectural Review Work Session
Minutes
Monday, September 14, 2015

Location: NDS Conference Room, Charlottesville City Hall, 2nd Floor

Members Present: Chair Melanie Miller, Members Carl Schwarz, Kurt Keesecker, Justin Sarafin, Whit Graves, Emma Ernst, Tim Mohr, Candace DeLoach, Staff: Mary Joy Scala

Call to Order: the meeting was called to order by Chair Melanie Miller at 5:30 p.m.

William Taylor Plaza Project – Preliminary Design

The developers of a proposed Fairfield Inn at the William Taylor Plaza project met with the Board of Architectural Review at a work session to discuss a preliminary design. The applicants were represented by Charlie Armstrong, Kevin Lewis, Andrew Garlock, D.J. Meagher, and Mike Myers.

Previously, the BAR had held a preliminary discussion at a meeting on August 19, 2015. At that time they had concerns about: the proposed building materials, the lack of activity and pedestrian engagement at street level, the suburban feel of the project, the incompatibility of the project with the scale and character of the neighborhood, the size of the rear retaining wall, the pool use on the plaza, and the Ridge Street entrance that removes trees.

Mr. Lewis of BCA Architects and Engineers said the objective is to get comments, and to see if we are heading in the right direction. We intend to come back to the BAR in October.

Mr. Schwarz said you're definitely going in the right direction, and I think adding additional store-fronts is correct.

Andrew Garland, also with BCA Architects and Engineers noted they are breaking up the building into these smaller components. The plaza is more elevated with no perimeter walls. There is a widened entry into the hotel lobby from Cherry. There is a pedestrian entrance to the parking garage from Cherry, and retail at the bottom- lowest level of the garage. They added leasable space at the plaza level, and kept a secondary entrance to the hotel at the plaza.

Mr. Schwarz said his fear sometimes in seeing new construction trying to be historicist is that it's much harder to pull off, and if it's not pulled off correctly, it comes off cartoony. If you cannot be traditional in detailing, materials and construction, don't go down the post-modern route.

Mr. Mohr suggested a larger spatial break at the Cherry Avenue entrance, and to break up the mass coming down the hill.

Mr. Keesecker said the question is how to put a repetitive program in a residential setting. He suggested the architects take a look at the Queen Charlotte building on High Street, which has an intricate base with finer grain details, and is also a large structure that takes up an entire block.

Mr. Mohr said Cherry Avenue at the corner of Ridge is odd. The courtyard does not have to be so large. Plan is not well resolved at lobby. Need to modulate the fenestration. He suggested flip-flopping the fitness with the commercial.

Ms. Ernst agreed that would engage Ridge Street better.

Mr. Schwarz asked if they could bring the building out to Ridge.

Mr. Lewis summarized that the BAR wanted to know how to get into the lobby going downhill, and how do you resolve the corner space?

Ms. Miller said the retail spaces need to be viable and rentable. She noted the 2009 plan was successful because it included both phases, on Cherry and on Ridge, but we have to assume only one phase may get built.

Mr. Mohr asked for more of an architectural event at the corners on both ends.

Ms. Miller said Ms. Knott could not be at the meeting, but she wants to see a local landscape architect do the design, and be involved from the beginning, particularly in the phase two area. An engineer should not do the landscape plan.

The applicant noted that individual rooms will have UAV mechanical units, with central systems used for the public spaces.

Mr. Keesecker leaves the meeting.

Ms. Miller said the driveway shared with a historic house was problematic. She understands the PUD plan requires an entrance on Ridge, but to move it so that there can be dense screening between the new driveway and the house.

Mr. Mohr said they need a shorter radius – 8-10 feet, not 20-25 feet. Eliminate the 45 degree angle on the sidewalk. There was discussion of setbacks on Ridge Street.

Mr. Armstrong, vice president of Southern Development, said they will leave the bamboo until phase two is developed. He said an archaeological study will be done before construction begins to determine if grave sites exist on the site.

Ms. Miller said there are a number of people on the board and the public interested in the potential graveyard and we understand from the city that there shouldn't be any major barriers to being able to do that work. The BAR is assuming it is proceeding.

Mr. Armstrong said we have worked something out that lets that work happen sooner rather than later and we're proceeding diligently towards that and will send the city a plan this week.

Mr. Schwarz discussed the retaining wall, asking if it can be split or terraced.

Mr. Myers said they cannot terrace the wall due to utilities, and no grading is permitted in the arboretum.

Ms. Miller suggested a row of trees along the base.

Mr. Mohr asked where the phase two parking would occur.

Mr. Armstrong said some would be shared, some under the building, entered from the back or side.

Mr. Mohr suggested extending the landing of the wall to reduce the scale – delete the last stair and continue it to grade. Address in the landscape plan how to deal with the wall.

Ms. Miller said it was a big improvement not to have canopies two stories up. She said Ridge and Cherry should be a premium corner – go beyond the detailing of the hotel there.

Mr. Schwarz said not to be afraid to drop the historicism if it does not work out, but he likes the brick for materiality.

There was discussion about the lower retail corner.

Mr. Garlock asked out openings into the parking garage – better to be open or have a visual barrier?.

Mr. Sarafin said it depends on the lighting – to err on the side of trying to screen the lighting. Put trees in front of the lower corner on Cherry.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.



DBP 2012-377
Use Commercial

Access
Easement for
IMP 29-158

TM 29-156
Mary Emma S. Gibson
DB 148-395

TM 29-153
Joanne D. Martin
DBP 649-643
Use: Residential

TM 29-156
Mary Emma S. Gibson
DB 148-395 Desc.
DB 87-316 Plat
Use: Vacant

TM 29-155
Arlene Dale Sweeney
DBP 455-359
Use: Vacant

TMP 29-141
Lauter, Clay D.
& Kimberly D. Trustees
DB 2009-3335
Use Residential

TM 29-142
Dogwood Properties
Charlottesville, VA
DBP 1135-312
Use: Commercial

TM 29-143
Charlie C. Jr. &
Marion F. Turner
DBP 628-818
Use: Residential

4 Story Hotel
Hotel:
Level 4 - 496.6
Level 3 - 486.6
Level 2 - 476.6
Level 1 - 464.6
Garage:
Level 2 - 455.1
Level 1 - 446.1

CHERRY AVENUE
VARIABLE WIDTH R/W
DB 144-337 & DB 139-375 Plat

RIDGE STREET
VARIABLE WIDTH R/W
DB 144-337 & DB 139-375 Plat

REFER TO SHEET SP10 FOR
EXISTING RIDGE STREET DETAIL

DOMINION
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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
MICHAEL F. MYERS
Lic. No. 33028
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

REVISIONS		REVISIONS	
NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE	NO.

FILE NAME:
2012-377

SCALE: AS SHOWN

DESIGNED BY: ARC

DRAWN BY: ARC

CHECKED BY: MFM

FINAL SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR
WILLIAM TAYLOR PLAZA PUD (PH1)
CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

SHEET TITLE:
SITE PLAN

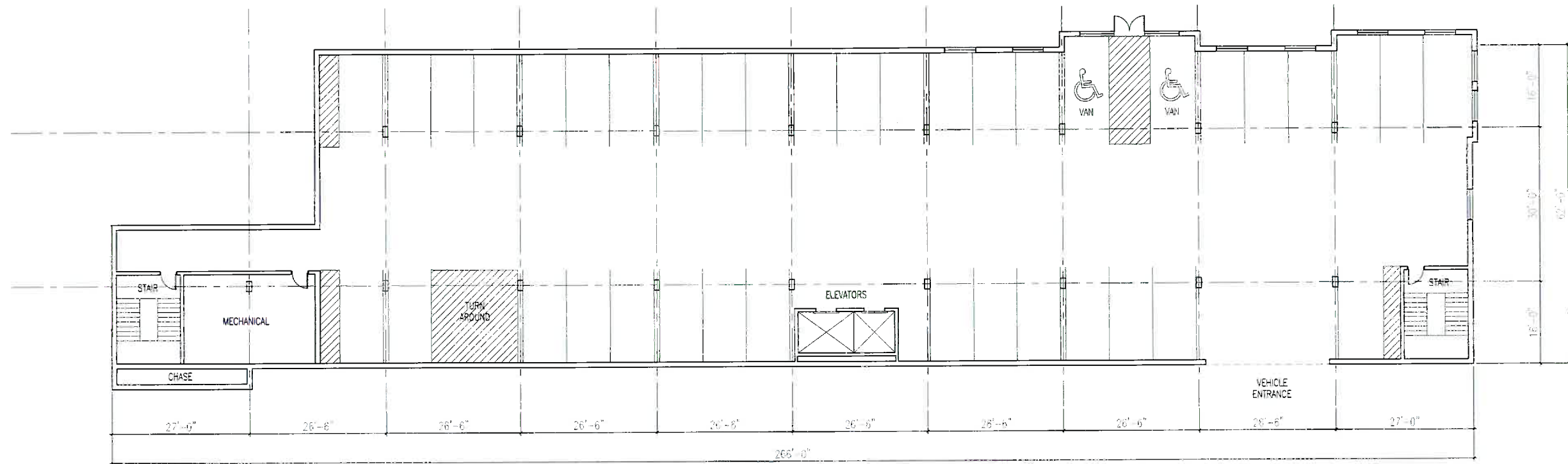
DOM. PROJECT NO: 15.0062

INDEX TITLE:
SP6

SHEET NO: 6 of 16

DATE: 07/29/15

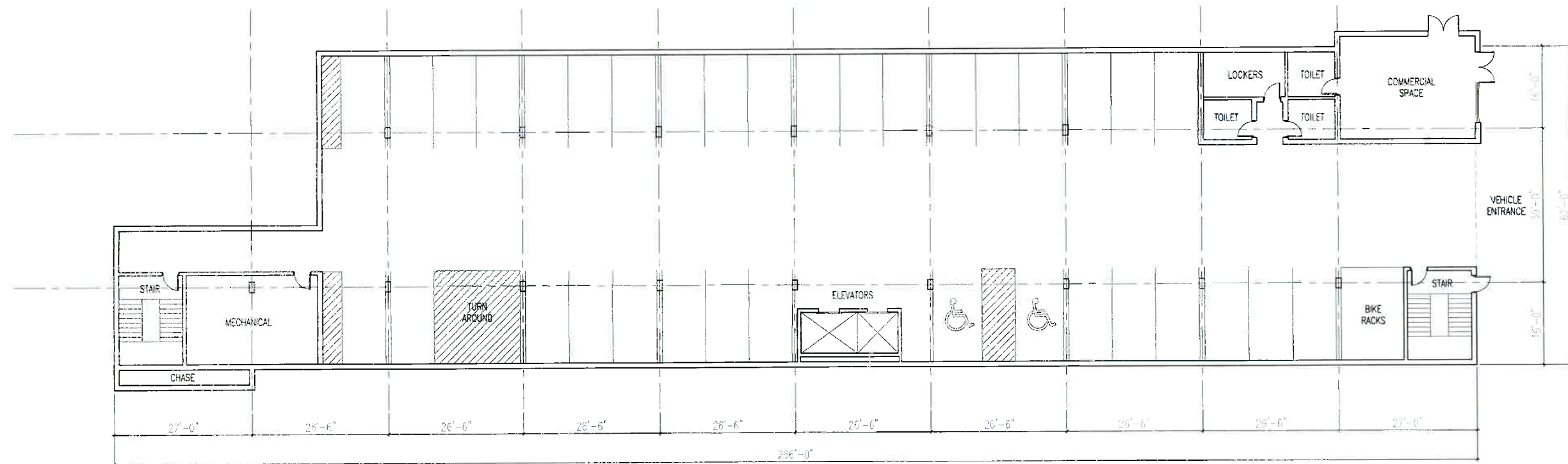
Received at worksession



PARKING LEVEL 2
15,460 SF (GROSS)
39 PARKING SPACES

PARKING LEVEL 2

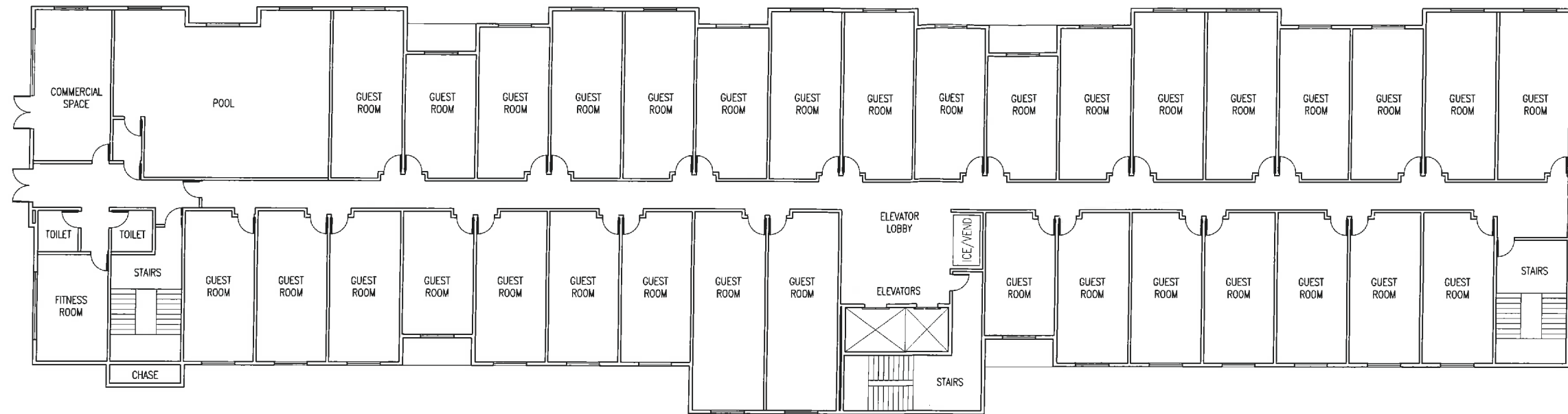
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PARKING LEVEL 1
15,460 SF (GROSS)
35 PARKING SPACES

PARKING LEVEL 1

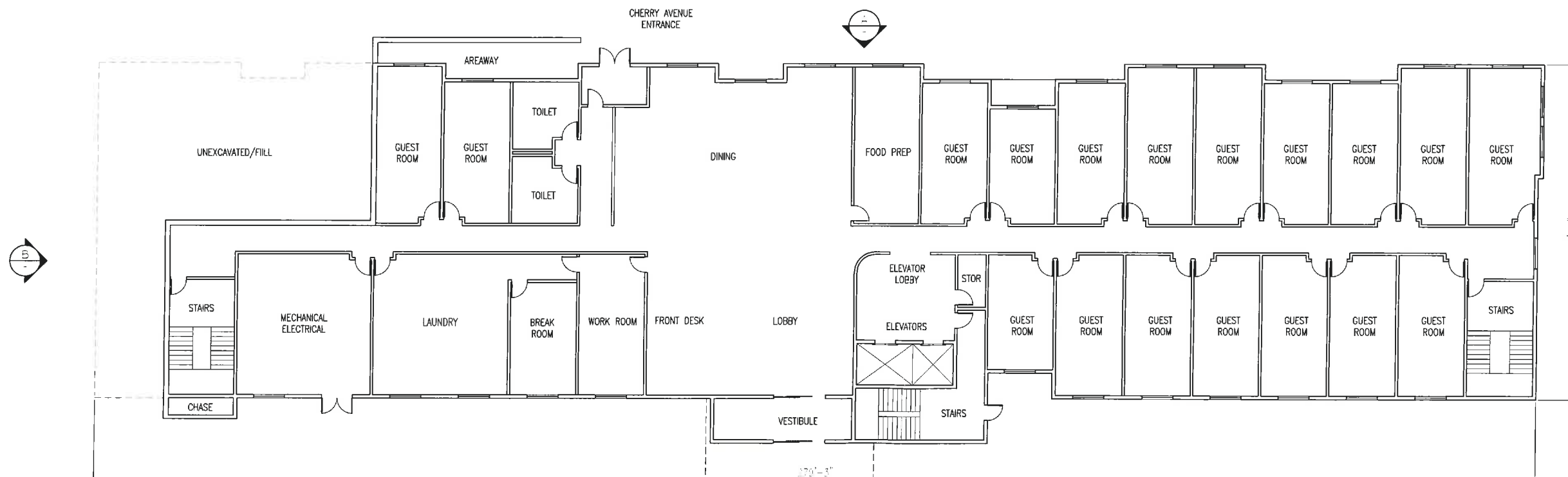
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SECOND FLOOR
17,185 SF (GROSS)
33 GUEST ROOMS

SECOND FLOOR

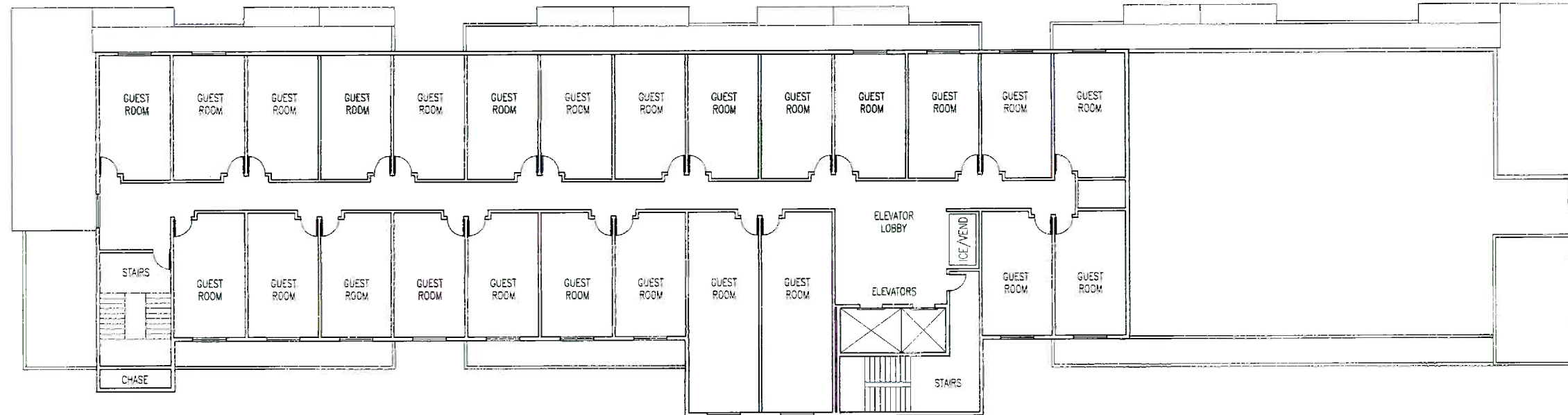
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FIRST FLOOR (LOBBY LEVEL)
16,213 SF (GROSS)
18 GUEST ROOMS

FIRST FLOOR (LOBBY)

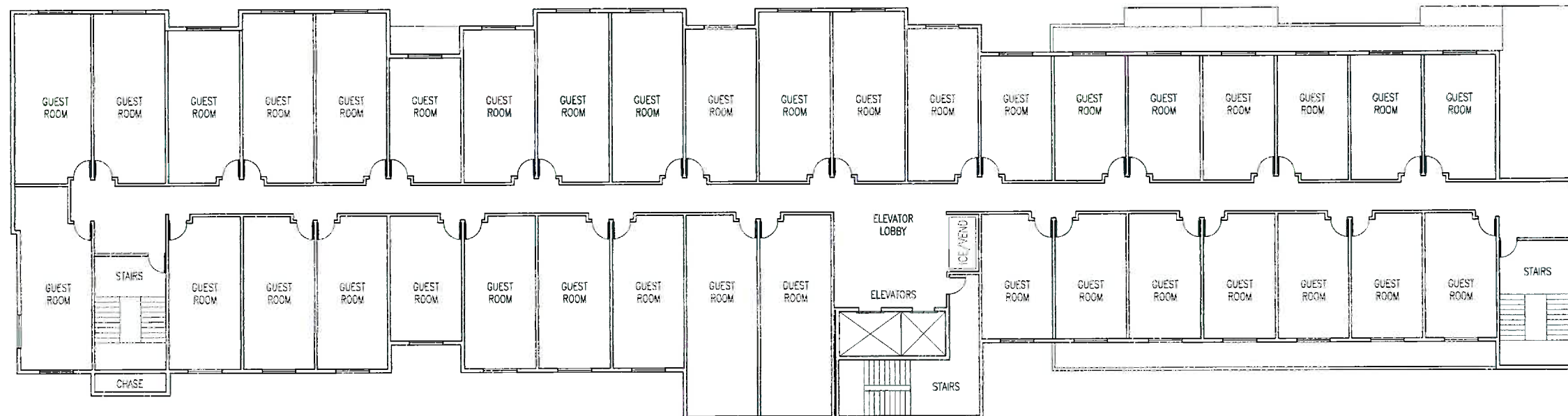
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



FOURTH FLOOR
9,863 SF (GROSS)
25 GUEST ROOMS

FOURTH FLOOR

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



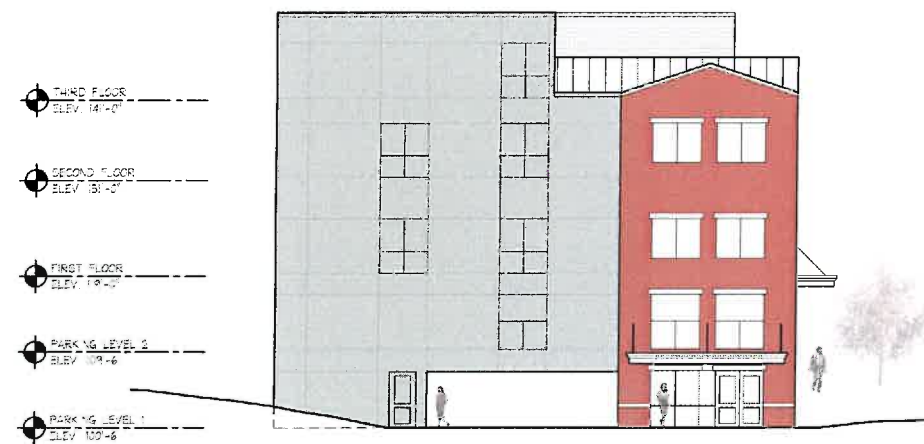
THIRD FLOOR
16,826 SF (GROSS)
37 GUEST ROOMS

THIRD FLOOR

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



EXTERIOR ELEVATION **A**
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



EXTERIOR ELEVATION **D**
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



EXTERIOR ELEVATION **B**
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

Scala, Mary Joy

From: Andrew Garlock <agarlock@TheBCGroup.com>
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2015 8:26 AM
To: BAR
Cc: Kevin Lewis; DJ Meagher (djmeagher@khmhotels.com) (djmeagher@khmhotels.com); Wayne Thompson; Krysta Schell; Charlie Armstrong (CharlesA@southern-development.com); Mike Myers (mmyers@dominioneng.com) (mmyers@dominioneng.com); Scala, Mary Joy
Subject: William Taylor Plaza - Marriott Fairfield Inn & Suites - Concept Elevations - 08/31/15
Attachments: Concept Elevations 08.28.15.opt.pdf

Greetings Charlottesville BAR members,

I hope you are all doing well. I just wanted to update you all on the building concept progress for the Fairfield Inn & Suites project...

One of the many takeaways for the project team from the BAR meeting last week was that our proposed building concept was urban, flat, non-engaging, and conflicting in many ways with the surrounding residential context. We had developed and modeled our concept from the 2009 proposal, which although was approved by the Charlottesville City Council and the BAR in 2009, does not reflect the current vision for the site. Since the BAR meeting, we've scrapped that concept, and have developed a new building concept that we believe is appropriate for the site and surrounding community.

The project location is actually very interesting... the project site seems to be within or on the boundary of many different established urban fabrics. These include being adjacent to the Ridge Street ADC District, on the boundary edge of the SIA, and along the Entry Corridor of Ridge Street. The commercial context of Cherry Avenue also adds another layer of fabric. This site is seemingly the "crossroads" of differing contexts, each with different requirements, guidelines, and visions. This idea generated the foundation for our new concept... the building must "speak many different languages."

In order for the building to transition and respond effectively to each context, we've decided to layer the façade of the building with three distinct layers:

- The first layer of the façade is colored red in the elevations. This is the layer of the building that speaks to the residential context... red brick façade, gable roof profile, marquee canopy, precast water table and lintels. The spacing and massing of these brick facades are sympathetic to the spacing and massing that you would find along Ridge Street.
- The second layer of the façade is colored medium gray in the elevations. This layer of the building would be set back from the brick façades. We are envisioning this façade being a stucco or EIFS finish, which speaks more to the commercial context of Cherry Avenue.
- The third layer of the façade is colored light gray in the elevations. This layer of the building is set back even further yet (8-10 feet back). Because of the setback, this façade will likely not be visible from the sidewalk along Cherry Avenue. This façade would be very modern, light, and simple. We have been discussing cladding options and ideas for this layer, such as a metal panel system or even a simple clapboard system.

Some programmatic concepts were redeveloped as well, which although are not expressed by the concept elevations, would be detailed in the plans. Below are some of the programmatic ideas we are working through:

- The indoor pool has moved inward from the public plaza. Instead, we are looking at having commercial space on the very corner of the building, with an entrance accessible from the public plaza.
- We moved the exit stairway on the Ridge Street side inward to open up the façade and allow the fitness center to occupy the space along the plaza.
- We're developing the commercial space in the lower level of the parking garage with marquee entrance canopies and storefronts facing both Cherry Avenue and the entrance drive.
- We've added an additional entrance from Cherry Avenue into the second level of the parking garage. We would like to provide an entrance here, either into another dedicated commercial space or directly into the parking garage.

We would greatly appreciate your input on the new building concept and program modifications above. Please contact me through email or by phone at any time if you would like to discuss.

I look forward to hearing back from you.

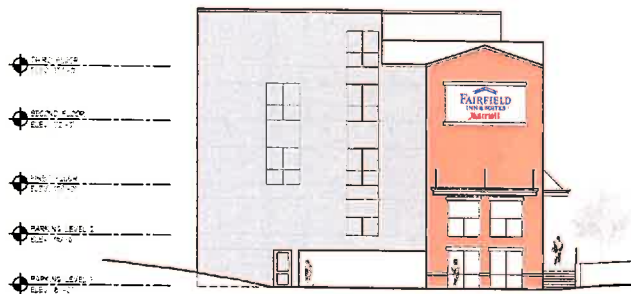
Best Regards,
Andrew

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--Laura L. Knott

Concept Elevation

In reference to the Design Guidelines, New Construction and Additions:

- **A. Introduction:** This project is probably a “Neighborhood Transitional” building, which is defined as a commercial/office building located on a site that adjoins a residential area. The guidelines say: “The design of these buildings should attempt to relate to the character of the adjacent residential neighborhood as well as the commercial area.” However, the guidelines also state that “[w]hile these buildings may be larger in scale than residential structures, their materials, roof forms, massing, and window patterns should relate to residential forms.” In the case of William Taylor Plaza, however, the broadest face the building presents to the street is on Cherry Street, suggesting that **this building should, instead, take its cues from the commercial developments along Cherry**, which, although not to be imitated, are generally **International style, vernacular commercial buildings with floor-to-ceiling, aluminum framed windows and flat roofs**. This is in contrast, however, to what is recommended in the guidelines regarding roofs, page 12.
- **B. Setback:** Guidelines recommend avoiding deep setbacks or open corner plazas on corner buildings downtown and on corners of West Main, but nothing about Ridge. However, they allow that plazas might be appropriate if “the design contributes to the pedestrian experience or improves the transition to an adjacent residential area.” So, the corner plaza would be recommended in this case. However, the plaza does not seem appropriate at this particular location because here, Ridge is a five lane (including the turn lane) major artery and I wager that this corner would be a very unpleasant place to sit outside most any time of the day or night and in any weather. That being said, Milli Joe’s plaza seems to be always occupied. At any rate, an open space does not seem to be the “gateway” we should have at that particular space. It would seem more appropriate to have the building brought up to the street so that it defines the end of that stretch of old Ridge Street. This is contrary to the guidelines in the same section related transitional sites, but exceptions make the rule?

Small retail stores located in historic areas of Charlottesville all seemed to be bellied up right to the property line, compared with their residential neighbors. Here are some examples:



Avon Street



10 & Page Neighborhood

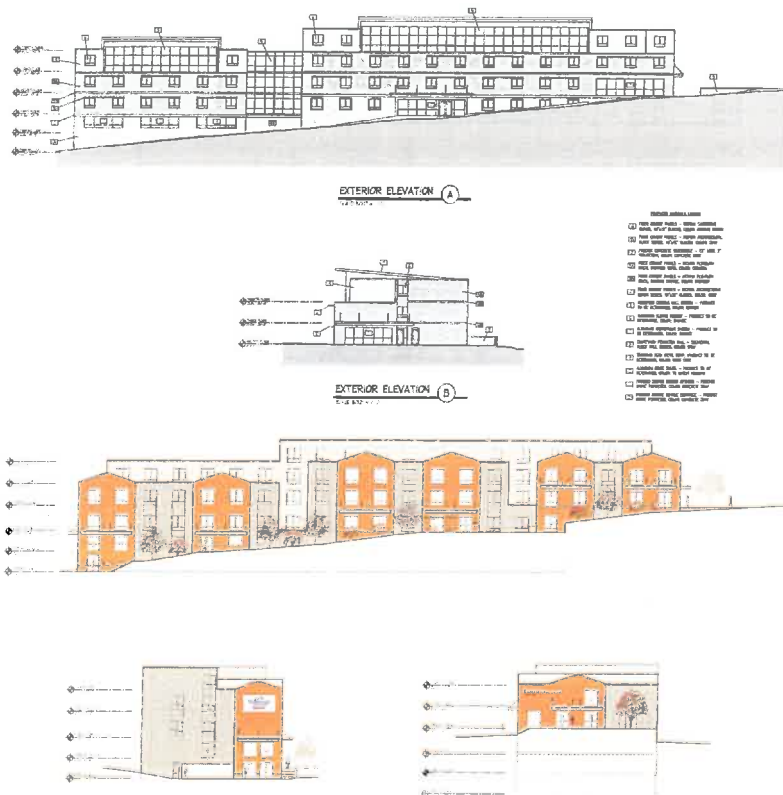


Monticello Road

Perhaps this sets a defensible precedent for having this building set at the building line?

- D. Massing and Footprint:** The guidelines say that “neighborhood transitional buildings should have small building footprints similar to nearby dwellings...if the foot print is larger, massing should be reduced to related to the smaller-scaled forms of residential structures...and include stepping back upper levels, adding residential roof and porch forms, and using sympathetic materials.” I appreciate that the architect is trying to follow these guidelines; however, the guidelines don’t seem to fit this particular situation. Because the building’s primary façade is oriented to Cherry, it seems silly to ask the architect to add gables and porches. Instead, referencing back to the first paragraph, perhaps the building should relate more to the Cherry Street commercial area, but with more modulation, reflecting the smaller scale of the residential area, and modern materials

I appreciate what the architect was trying to achieve in modulating the building façade in the new elevation, but the concept we saw in the BAR meeting in August was more appropriate in its massing and roof line to the Cherry Street commercial area than the current concept. The current concept, with its false townhouse fronts, entrance awnings over minor entrances (or no entrance at all), and gables, although an attempt to related to Ridge Street architecture, I can only describe as “hybrid pseudo-historic.” Perhaps a hybrid of the two, that is a more modulated massing, but more contemporary in style, might be more acceptable?



- G. Roof:** The guidelines recommend that neighborhood transitional buildings use roof forms that relate to neighboring residential forms instead of the flat or sloping commercial form. However, in this case, because of the orientation of the major façade to Cherry, this does not seem appropriate. Further down in this section, the guidelines say that “shallow pitched roofs and flat roofs may be appropriate in historic residential areas on a contemporary designed building.” I thought that the designers of this building were headed in the right direction with the roof forms presented in the original design; the new gable form seems silly. I thought the Train and Partners design looked appropriate.



- K. Street-Level Design:** The guidelines state that “street level facades of all [commercial] building types...should not have blank walls; they should provide visual interest to the passing pedestrian..[n]ew

structures do offer the opportunity for more contemporary storefront designs.” They also say that for retail commercial, there should be eighty percent transparency to ten feet at a minimum; this is not a retail building, but in the case of this building, being an anchor of sorts for the end of old Ridge Street, should perhaps have a retail element at this end with high transparency. The guidelines also say that institutional buildings (although this is a hotel, sort of institutional) should have articulated bays, visual interest at street level, and display spaces or first floor windows.

So far, I think this is appropriate for this building. However, the guidelines also state that “[n]eighborhood transitional buildings in general should not have transparent first floors, and that the design and size of their façade openings should relate more to neighboring residential structures.” The street level design of the building, while greatly improved from the August version, still needs work. Although our guidelines say that the design of fenestration of large buildings should relate to neighboring residential structures, because of the Cherry Street orientation, I think that the design should relate more to the International style precedent of Cherry Street, however humble. This building, if done right, could raise the bar and lead the way in an exciting Cherry Street architectural renaissance.

- **M. Materials and Textures:** The guidelines say that in commercial/office areas, brick is most appropriate in many situations and that stone is more commonly used in Charlottesville for site walls than buildings. These guidelines seem overly broad and the phrase about stone is incorrect. Stone is widely used for foundation walls, as well. I thought that the original building design was headed in an OK direction in the use of a material at the base that suggested stone; however the use of a manufactured material that imitates a natural material like stone or a formed material like brick lowers the visual quality of a building at such a key location. Also, the base was far too high in the original design. I would have no issue with the honest use of a new material if it was not imitative. We did approve a design at Main and 10th that referenced Charlottesville brick in terracotta panels.
- **O. Details and Decorations:** The guidelines say that “paste on” historic details on a modern unadorned design are not appropriate, but I disagree. Post-Modern buildings had great fun with just that sort of detailing. I think that if it is clear that the designer is just having a bit of fun, it would be fine.





Or perhaps bust or figures of former mayors?

Site Plan

This review is based on the site plan dated 7-29-15 and may not reflect updates to the concept. Our guidelines are not very specific regarding the placement of a building within the site in relationship to topography and other site features, only to surrounding buildings in a historic district. However, the guidelines do state that

“[w]hen making changes to a property within one of the historic districts, the entire site should be studied to better understand its original design and its context within its subarea...create a new plan that reflects the site traditions of the area and that fits the scale of the lot.”

Unfortunately, it may be that this site plan cannot be changed. In my comments, however, I’m going to assume the opposite; in addition—because our guidelines don’t address historic landscapes on a larger scale—I’m going to reference the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes in my comments.

Building placement: The SOI Guidelines for rehabilitation of cultural landscapes, “Alterations/Additions for New Uses,” (as close as I can come for the addition of a building to a vacant site) recommend the following:

- Design new features to assure the preservation of the historic **spatial organization and land patterns**. The orientation of this building is in contrast to historic spatial organization and land patterns in the surrounding historic district. Traditionally, buildings in this historic district were arranged with their longest façade facing the ridge.

If we assume that Phase II may not ever happen, the Phase I building should be turned 90 degrees to face Ridge Street and then its façade carefully designed and modulated to complement the residential scale of the historic district. It would make sense that a hotel, instead of residences, would face onto this busy street. In this way, the hotel would be sited in relationship to the natural ridge in the way that the historic residences were sited. This is a traditional building pattern seen throughout the city in its oldest neighborhoods. As designed, the building does not work well with the topography of the site.

In addition, the placement of this building in a natural drainageway interferes with this historic water feature that once supplied the brick works that operated in the southwest corner of the intersection of Cherry and Ridge, including what is now Tonsler Park and extending almost to 7-1/2 Street. It also seems in conflict with City of Charlottesville environmental protection and sustainability goals.

Access and parking: The SOI Guidelines recommend the following:

- Design new **topographic features**, when required by the new use so that they are as unobtrusive as possible and to assure the preservation of the historic landscape. Do not locate a new feature in such a way that it detracts from or alters the historic topography. Introduce a new feature in an appropriate location, but make it visually compatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color, and texture.
- Design new **circulation features** to assure the preservation of the historic character of the landscape...for example, controlling and limiting new curb cuts, driveways, etc.

The driveway that enters the site and leads up to the open parking lot is inappropriate for the site because it requires a 20’-tall retaining wall to support it. This is a poor solution and contrasts with the more sensible, hands-off approach to development in drainage areas in the historic district. The location, configuration, height, and materials of the wall are unacceptable in the historic district and the site in particular.

Planting Plan: The SOI Guidelines recommend the following:

- Design compatible new **vegetation** patterns or specimens, when required by new uses to assure the preservation of the historic character of the landscape...for example, designing and installing a hedge that is compatible with the historic character of the landscape to screen new construction.

The planting plan proposed for this site is inappropriate for the historic district and does not relate to its context. For example, the street tree planting is composed of crape myrtles, instead of the cherries (or crabapples) that are used across Cherry Avenue—if a small tree is planted, it should match those.

In addition, plantings along the Ridge Street side do not reflect the variety and scale of the rest of the street. At minimum, in addition to crape myrtles, red oak, pecan, maple, ash, Southern magnolia, Eastern red cedar, Deodar cedar, and dogwood are found in the front yards of the historic Ridge Street houses.

Regarding the "arboretum, I'm not seeing the characteristics of an actual arboretum, which is defined as

"an area devoted to specimen plantings of trees and shrubs...distinct from a forest, nursery, or park, it is in a sense an outdoor museum of trees...a place where many varieties of trees are grown for research, educational, and ornamental purposes."

I see eight new trees of only two varieties and no shrubs at all. I also see that it is enclosed by a 5' tall "wood picket" fence. What does this look like? Why is it wood picket? Why not a more translucent wire or other material?

Finally, why were the viburnum and witch hazel chosen for the top of the retaining wall? Both of these large shrubs/small trees grow to 8-10' in height, creating what is now, essentially, a 30' high wall above the path that goes to the arboretum. Not a very appealing situation. I also see no attempt to use trees or other plants designed in a layering configuration to mitigate the apparent height of this wall, or plant materials that would be appropriate for the water treatment and retention facilities. In addition, I don't see any precedent for the row of star magnolia along the front of the building or any other plant material here arranged in any way that is either functionally or aesthetically appropriate. Did an engineer design this plan? A local landscape architect who is familiar with vegetation of the area should be designing this landscape.