

3.9 Aesthetic Resources**3.9.1 Introduction and Methodology**

The visual assessment that is presented below has been conducted in accordance with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) guidelines¹ relating to the assessment and mitigation of visual impacts. A visual assessment is an analytical technique that determines the viewshed of a particular project, identifies aesthetic resources within the viewshed, determines the potential impact of the project on aesthetic resources, and identifies strategies to avoid, eliminate or reduce impacts. The visual assessment will often incorporate use of line-of-sight profiles or photographs to demonstrate potential visibility of the facility from a sensitive viewpoint.

“Viewshed” is defined as the geographic area from which a development may be seen. An aesthetic resource is a formally designated place visited by the public for the purpose of enjoying its beauty. For the purpose of this assessment, that resource may be designated by a local jurisdiction, a state agency, or a federal agency. Additionally, other scenic resources may be considered significant aesthetic resources for the purposes of the visual assessment based on their unique characteristics.

Variables associated with the actual visual experience are often presented in a visual analysis, such as atmospheric perspective (diminishing clarity and contrast of view due to atmospheric interference), and size perspective (reduction of apparent size of objects as distance increases). It is noted that mere visibility of a development, even startling visibility, does not automatically mean it has a visual impact. An impact occurs when there is a demonstrated detrimental effect on the public enjoyment of an aesthetic resource and when design-oriented strategies, or the mitigating effects of perspective, do not adequately reduce the visibility from an aesthetic resource to an insignificant level.

3.9.2 Existing Conditions**Existing Visual Character**

Red Schoolhouse Road abuts the site on a portion of the western frontage. There is a small frontage of the eastern boundary which abuts South Pascack Road. The northern and southern boundaries abut other interior parcels, with an automotive storage facility directly to the north on the west side and vacant second growth wooded land along the majority of the northern boundary. To the south is the Saddle River Equestrian Center. The parcel to the south is being subdivided to facilitate development of a Senior Assisted Living facility and a smaller scale Saddle River Equestrian operation.

Existing Views from Nearby Locations

Views of the site from the nearby roads vary depending on the topography and vegetation. The existing conditions at the potential viewpoints along area roads were noted.

¹NYS DEC Program Policy, *Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts*, 2000.

View 1: From Red Schoolhouse Road

On the west along Red Schoolhouse Road, the western portion of the property has road frontage consisting of sparse deciduous woodland on generally flat land. When the trees are bare, views into the interior of this portion of the site are possible, as shown in Figure 3.9-1A. Existing development along Red Schoolhouse Road south of the project site frontage include Chestnut Ridge Transportation, situated along the road frontage.

View 2: From Loescher Lane

Saddle River Equestrian Center is located immediately south of the site and south of Loescher Lane. The approximately 10-acre parcel is in the process of being sub-divided to create a 7-acre development site to the west and a 3-acre parcel to the east. This 3-acres, in combination with properties further south in the Town of Orangetown and the borough of Montvale in New Jersey will be used to permit continued operation of the Saddle River Equestrian Center. As shown in Figure 3.9-2A, during leaf-off conditions, views penetrate into the site through second growth deciduous woodland and sparse understory. When the trees are in leaf, views into the site are largely obscured.

View 3: From Lance Court

The view southwest from the cul-de-sac on Lance Court encompasses the southern boot end of the subject property (Figure 3.9-3A). During leaf-off conditions, views penetrate into the site through second growth deciduous woodland and sparse understory. When the trees are in leaf, views into the site are largely obscured.

View 4: From the end of Ronwood Road

Beyond the western end of Ronwood Road, is an area of the site with the most topography. This area rises from an elevation of 315 to an elevation of 390. As shown in Figure 3.9-4A, the area is heavily forested with second growth deciduous woodland and leads to the east-west stream corridor.

View 5: From Chestnut Ridge Transportation

As shown in Figure 3.9-5A, the view south from the parcel utilized by the Chestnut Ridge Transportation Company to the northern portion of the site includes the existing single-family house to the east and undeveloped second growth deciduous woodland to the west. During leaf-off conditions, views penetrate into the site through some second growth deciduous woodland and partial views of the stream banks may be seen. When the trees are in leaf, views into the site through the understory are mostly obscure.

3.9.3 Potential ImpactsChange in Visual Character

The proposed project would convert currently vacant woods and fields to a residential and commercial development and thereby change the character of the site. Clearing of trees and grading for construction and the addition of two-story townhouse dwellings would allow views of

the proposed development from the surrounding area. New lawns and landscaping would replace existing woods and meadows in developed areas, while preserving some natural buffers

A Conceptual Landscaping plan has been developed to retain existing forested areas as far as practicable, and to restore vegetation along the road corridor, providing screening of the developed areas within the interior of the site.

Visual Renderings have been prepared to illustrate the visibility from several identified viewpoints, presented below under. Figure 3.9-6 shows the locations of the views.

Changes in Views from Nearby Locations

View 1: From Red Schoolhouse Road

As shown in Figure 3.9-1B, the post development view along Red Schoolhouse Road will be of the beautifully landscaped main entrance to Equestrian Estates. The buildings are set back from the road to provide an open airy feeling to the development. The first-floor retail will be subtly visible from Red Schoolhouse Road without dominating the visual scene. Views of the pedestrian spine to the development will be visible from this vantage point.

View 2: From Loescher Lane

Loescher Lane provides the secondary access to Equestrian Estates. As shown in Figure 3.9-2B, this view is predominantly of the community of semi-attached duplex units. The feeling at this location is of a neighborhood community. Tree clearing and removal of the understory will be necessary to develop these deluxe townhouse units. Since the units will be part of a home owners association responsible for landscape maintenance, a clean, trim well-kept neighborhood can be expected.

View 3: From Lance Court

A 75-foot vegetated buffer of existing second growth is to be preserved along the sites eastern border. This will effectively screen the view of the rear of the townhouse units from existing residences along Lance Court. During off leaf conditions views through the 75 feet of woods may reveal the back yards of the townhouse units along Entrance Road A as shown in Figure 3.9-3B.

View 4: From The end of Ronwood Road

Beyond the western end of Ronwood Road, is an area of the site that rises up toward Ronwood Road. This area is to be left undeveloped and utilized as open space or a nature trail. View of the existing second growth forest will remain intact from this vantage point.

View 5: From Chestnut Ridge Transportation

The view south from the parcel utilized by the Chestnut Ridge Transportation Company will include the rear of the proposed Senior housing. As Figure 3.9-5B shows, Site Plan design includes substantial landscape screening along this property line. The new landscaping will be combined with existing trees to offer buffer protection.

3.9.4 Proposed MitigationSite Design

The site design for the proposed development would locate the mixed use/retail building with frontage along Red Schoolhouse Road, while the duplex townhouses would be clustered in the central portion of the property. This layout would allow for the preservation of existing trees, and topography throughout the site. A Conceptual Landscaping plan will be developed to retain existing forested areas as far as practicable, providing screening of the developed areas within the interior of the site. The foregoing discussion demonstrates that the proposed project would not obstruct any existing scenic view.

Architecture

Architecture for the Equestrian Estates Development would be developed more fully during the review process to respond to requirements and goals of the Village. Representative architecture is shown in the set of architect's renderings in Figures 3.9-7 through 3.9-13. The project sponsor is committed to selecting residential architectural styles that complement the most pleasing examples in the community. Colors and materials would be chosen to integrate the buildings with the natural landscape and the character of the locale. The architect's renderings shown in Figures 3.9-7 through 3.9-13 illustrate the potential visual character of the development. The proposed architectural design, colors, and materials are subject to review and approval by the Village architectural review board and planning board.

Landscaping

A Conceptual Landscaping Plan will be developed to blend a naturalistic parklike feel with the more manicured areas of the site. The landscaping will be placed to effectively screen the development from the surrounding properties. The project includes an extensive system of walkways to facilitate pedestrian circulation around the project site which will be landscaped and include finishing elements to establish a sense of place. The proposed landscaping plan is subject to review and approval by the Village planning board.



Figure 3.9-1A: Existing View from Red Schoolhouse Road
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY
Source: Photo

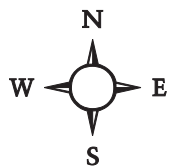


Figure 3.9-1B: Post Development View Red Schoolhouse Road
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY
Source: Photo



Figure 3.9-2A: Existing View from Loescher Lane
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY
Source: Photo

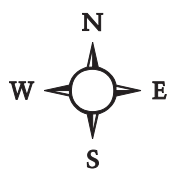


Figure 3.9-2B: Post Development View from Loescher Lane
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY
Source: Photo



Figure 3.9-3A: Existing View from Lance Court
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY
Source: Photo



Figure 3.9-3B: Post Development View from Lance Court
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY
Source: Photo





Figure 3.9-4A: Existing View from Ronwood Road
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY
Source: Photo



Figure 3.9-4B: Post Development View from Ronwood Road - No Observable Change in View

Equestrian Estates

Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY

Source: Photo



Figure 3.9-5A: Existing View from Chestnut Ridge Transportation
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY
Source: Photo

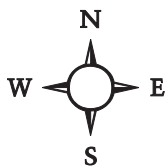


Figure 3.9-5B: Post Development View from Chestnut Ridge Transportation
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY
Source: Photo



Figure 3.9-6 Photo Locations Key
 Equestrian Estates
 Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, NY
 Source: Langan Engineering



THE EQUESTRIAN ESTATES
AT CHESTNUT RIDGE

Figure 3.9-7: Mixed Use Building
Equestrian Estates

Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, New York

Source: Montoro Architectural Group

Renderings by Oleg Sedletsky

Tim Miller Associates, Inc., 10 North Street, Cold Spring, New York 10516 (845) 265-4400 Fax (845) 265-4418



THE EQUESTIAN ESTATES
AT CHESTNUT RIDGE

Figure 3.9-8: Mixed Use Building - Wide View
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, New York
Source: Montoro Architectural Group
Renderings by Oleg Sedletsky

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THE EQUESTRIAN ESTATES
AT CHESTNUT RIDGE

Figure 3.9-9: Mixed Use Building - Close Up
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, New York
Source: Montoro Architectural Group
Renderings by Oleg Sedletsky

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THE EQUESTRIAN ESTATES
AT CHESTNUT RIDGE

Figure 3.9-10: Senior Building Entrance

Equestrian Estates

Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, New York

Source: Montoro Architectural Group

Renderings by Oleg Sedletsky



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Figure 3.9-11: Senior Building
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, New York
Source: Montoro Architectural Group
Renderings by Oleg Sedletsky



THE EQUESTRIAN ESTATES
AT CHESTNUT RIDGE

Figure 3.9-12: Townhouse Front
Equestrian Estates

Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, New York

Source: Montoro Architectural Group

Renderings by Oleg Sedletsky

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Figure 3.9-13: Townhouse Side
Equestrian Estates
Village of Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, New York
Source: Montoro Architectural Group
Renderings by Oleg Sedletsky