

BAR #2025-00370
Old and Historic Alexandria District
City Council
January 13, 2026

ISSUE: Appeal of a decision of the Board of Architectural Review approving a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations in the Old and Historic District (OHAD) with conditions

APPLICANT: City of Alexandria

APPELLANT: City of Alexandria

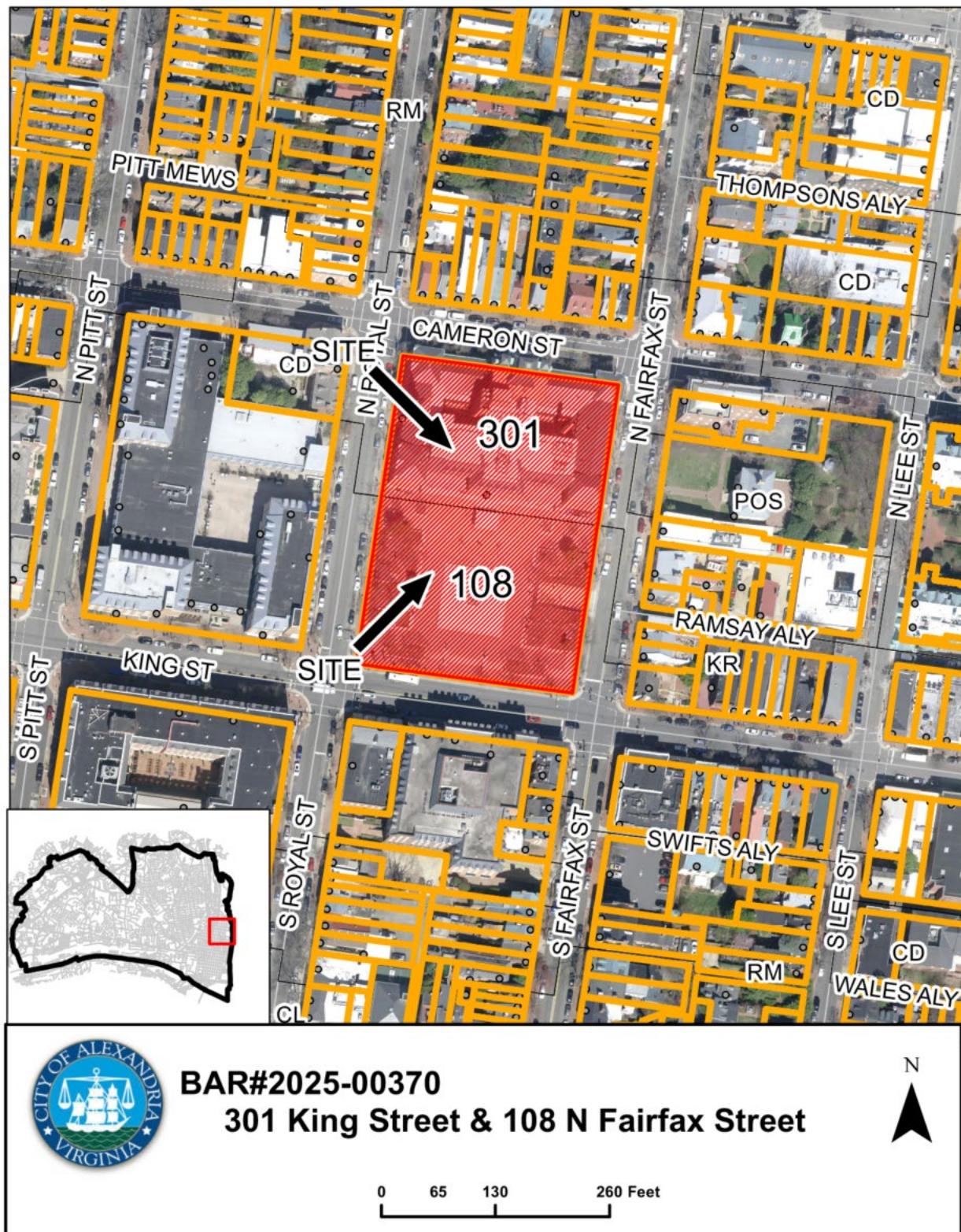
LOCATION: Old and Historic Alexandria District
301 King Street

ZONE: CD (Commercial downtown zone), KR (King Street Urban Retail Zone)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council modify the Board of Architectural Review's (BAR) decision on November 19, 2025, as follows:

1. Affirm the BAR's decision to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations; and
2. Modify the BAR's decision with respect to conditions by removing all of the conditions imposed by the BAR and replacing them with the following new conditions:
 - a. The project shall be consistent with the applicant's design submission included in the materials presented to the BAR at its November 5, 2025, hearing, as further refined by the memorandum from Department of General Services Director Jeremy McPike dated November 13, 2025, and presented at the BAR's November 19, 2025, hearing.
 - b. Work with historic preservation staff during construction to ensure that restoration materials match the historic materials in color and texture.
 - c. Work with historic preservation staff on the final design and detailing of the fifth floor exterior so that it is similar in appearance to the adjacent slate roofs, and to ensure that glazing is minimally visible from ground level.
 - d. Work with historic preservation staff on the final design and detailing of the Market Square shade structures, elevator enclosure structure, site walls, and steps to be consistent with the presentation and submission for the November 5, 2025, BAR hearing.
 - e. Work with historic preservation staff on the embellishment details for the ground floor entry at the south elevation to be consistent with the applicant's design submission included in the materials presented to the BAR at its November 5, 2025 hearing, as further refined by the memorandum from Department of General Services Director Jeremy McPike dated November 13, 2025 and presented at the BAR's November 19, 2025 hearing, including but not limited to Option 4A without chimneys.



I. STANDARD OF REVIEW ON APPEAL TO CITY COUNCIL

Upon appeal, City Council must determine whether to affirm, reverse or modify, in whole or in part, the unanimous decision of the BAR to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with conditions. The City Council's review is not a determination regarding whether the BAR's decision was correct or incorrect but whether the Certificate of Appropriateness should be granted based upon City Council's review of the standards in Zoning Ordinance Section 10-105. While City Council may review and consider the BAR's previous actions, City Council must make its own decision based on its evaluation of the material presented.

II. ISSUE

The Board of Architectural Review held two Concept Review sessions (April 16, 2025 and June 18, 2025), to review and provide feedback on the proposed design for the renovation of Alexandria City Hall. At these reviews, the Board provided feedback on the height, mass, scale, and architectural character of the proposed design.

On October 16, 2025, the BAR approved the Permit to Demolish (partial) and accepted a request for deferral from the applicant to address comments from the Board for the Certificate of Appropriateness. On October 22, 2025, the BAR held a work session to continue discussions regarding the proposed design. At this work session, Board Members provided feedback on the changes made to the design in response to comments made at the October 16, 2025 BAR hearing.

At the November 5, 2025 BAR hearing, the Board reviewed revisions and new depictions of the proposed design. After discussing the proposal, the Board voted to continue the case to the next available hearing date. At the November 19, 2025, BAR hearing the Board voted to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project with conditions.

On December 2, 2025, a Record of Appeal was received from the applicant. The appeal states in part "As detailed in the attached memorandum provided to the Board of Architectural Review, the City's application fully satisfies all applicable standards . . . without need for modification. The conditions imposed by the BAR exceed the standards required by the Code, are not necessary to ensure compatibility within the historic district and would impede the City's ability to deliver a compliant and functional renovation of City Hall."

III. HISTORY

The original Market House complex located on the site of the current City Hall building was constructed in 1817 but destroyed by fire in May 1871. In June 1871, City Council approved plans for a new civic building designed by the architect Adolph Cluss. Cluss was a German-American architect who was one of the most prolific and prominent architects working in the Washington DC area during the latter half of the 19th century. Among the many buildings that he designed in the region are Eastern Market, Sumner School, and the Smithsonian Institution Arts and Industries Building.

The Alexandria City Hall building was designed in the Second Empire style and includes large mansard roofs and Baroque detailing similar to other buildings designed by this architect (Figure 1). A prominent feature of the City Hall building is the clock tower located on the Royal Street side of the building. This tower was designed to resemble the clock tower on the previous building located on the site designed by well-known architect Benjamin Latrobe. When it was designed, the City Hall building contained many civic functions including market stalls that dominated the ground floor, government offices, police and fire department facilities, and courtrooms. In 1961, a large addition in the colonial revival style was built on the south side of the building, infilling the original courtyard.



Figure 1: View of Alexandria City Hall circa 1890

The current Market Square that occupies the southern half of the block features large planters and a square fountain above two levels of below grade parking. The current configuration replaces numerous buildings and internal alleys that were razed in 1966-1967 as part of the urban renewal movement that included the construction of the office buildings on the opposite side of North Royal Street. Prior to this demolition, Sharpshin Alley bisected the block immediately to the south of the City Hall building and provided access to many of the markets within the block. The buildings that faced King Street, North Royal Street and North Fairfax Street on the southern half of the block included a historic tavern and a number of buildings similar to those found elsewhere in the commercial core of historic Alexandria (Figure 2).

The Market Square that now occupies this area was designed by Neer and Graef Architects along with landscape architect Lester A. Collins and was constructed in 1967. As such, Market Square

was a contemporary of the southern addition to City Hall and re-oriented the building to face King Street instead of Cameron Street as originally designed.



Figure 2: Photo showing Hullfish Hardware at 315 King Street and other buildings demolished to make way for the current Market Square.

IV. DISCUSSION

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required in the Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD) under Section 10-103(A) of the Zoning Ordinance which states that: "No building or structure shall be erected, reconstructed, altered or restored within the Old and Historic Alexandria District unless and until an application for a certificate of appropriateness shall have been approved by the board of architectural review or the city council on appeal as to exterior architectural features, including signs (see Article IX), which are subject to public view from a public street, way or place. Evidence of such required approval shall be a certificate of appropriateness issued by the board of architectural review or the city council on appeal."

The requested Certificate of Appropriateness is for modifications to the City Hall building and to the Market Square plaza. The existing City Hall building consists of two sections, the historic "U" shaped section was originally constructed in 1871 and faces Cameron Street with wings on both North Fairfax and North Royal Streets. The modern section of the building was constructed in 1961 and faces the Market Square plaza. The proposed scope of work includes all sections of the building and the plaza including the reconstruction of the parking garage beneath the plaza. While

this work is not to be reviewed by the Board, it is important to understand the extent of the proposed work and how it affects the portion of work to be reviewed.

Restoration of historic portion of building

The historic portion of the building represents one of the most important historic and civic structures in the City of Alexandria. A variety of modifications and repairs to the building have been made over the decades, some of which have been consistent with the original design while others have obscured the historic elevations. The proposed restoration will reverse the more destructive modifications and restore the building to the original design intent as closely as possible (Figure 3).

The existing slate roof will be removed throughout; once water infiltration issues are identified and resolved, any slate that can be salvaged will be reinstalled and new slate to match the existing will be installed where it cannot be salvaged. Using historic photographs, the design team has identified the original decorative patterns on the historic roof and will be re-creating them upon replacing the roof. Also using the historic photographs, the team will be recreating the original roof cresting at the building corners. In addition to new roofing, copper flashing, downspouts, and gutters will be installed throughout.

The existing windows and doors throughout the building are not original to the structure and in many cases do not resemble the original configuration. Windows and doors throughout the Early portion of the building will be replaced. Using historic photographs, the team will be recreating the original muntin configurations to the greatest extent possible. The *Design Guidelines* state for Early buildings “On street facing sides, windows should be single pane wood.” The design team proposes to use wood windows with vacuum insulated glass throughout. These windows are an emerging technology that places two layers of glass in close proximity to one another, separated by a vacuum. This is different than the traditional double pane glass where the panes are separated by a spacer bar and an inert gas. Staff supports the use of these windows, finding that unlike traditional double pane windows, this product closely resembles the original single pane windows while providing a level of thermal performance that is required of a modern building. Staff recommends that the applicant work with historic preservation staff during construction to ensure that restoration materials match the historic materials in color and texture.

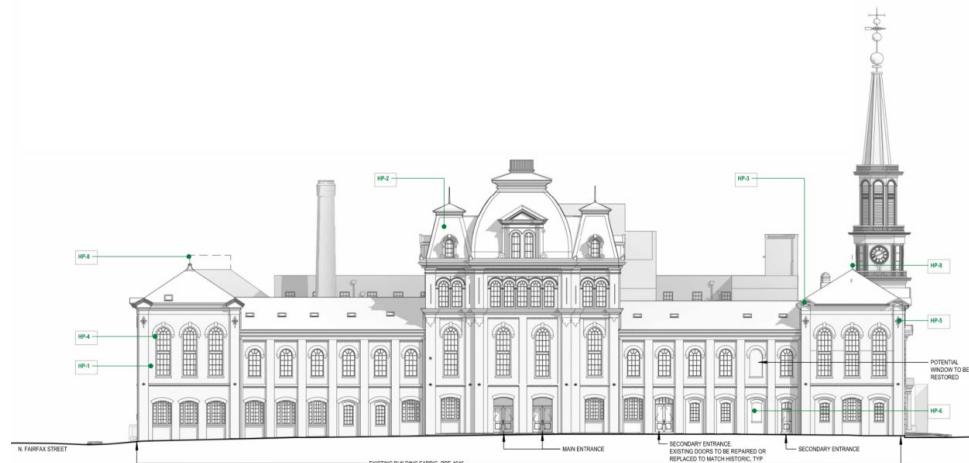


Figure 3: Proposed restoration of historic portion of building

Glazed hyphens

The use of a full height glazed hyphen connecting the 1871 portion of the building to the 1961 era south elevation has been a part of the proposal since the earliest Concept Review hearings and is consistent with how the Board has previously approved modern additions connecting to historic fabric. The *Design Guidelines* states that “An addition to a historic building should be clearly distinguishable from the original structure. An addition should not obscure or dilute the architectural and historic importance of an existing building by creating a false sense of the past.” It further states that “Offsetting the footprint of the addition to break the wall plane of the addition to the existing building can also be used as a means of creating a differentiation between the old and new.”

To achieve this, the proposal includes a full height glazed hyphen the width of the stairs located at either end of the 1961 addition (Figure 4). This hyphen will include an exit at the ground floor and will be recessed from the adjacent wall to allow previously enclosed historic window openings to be restored.



Figure 4: Glazed hyphens at either end of the 1961 addition

Revisions to south elevation

The proposed alterations to the City Hall building include significant changes to the south elevation of the portion of the building originally constructed in 1961. These changes include the elimination of the ground floor arcades and upper-level chimneys, the creation of full height glazed hyphens at the east and west ends of the elevation, and the creation of a central ground floor entry and decorative elements above. Per the memorandum dated November 13, 2025, from the applicant, the proposal to be reviewed is Option 4A without chimneys and with an orthogonal brick infill above the entry doors (Figure 5).



Figure 5: View of south elevation showing glazed hyphens and modifications to the existing building.

Fifth floor addition

The proposed modification to the fifth floor will transform the area currently occupied by mostly utilitarian functions into an occupiable space with roof deck. In the current configuration, the fifth floor is a collection of forms that have been added over time and include an elevator overrun, mechanical equipment, and roof access. These forms are highly visible from the street and are not composed into a single enclosure. In the proposed design, much of this equipment will no longer be required, so in its place there will be a single linear form clad in a metal rainscreen system and curtain wall glazing. The proposed rainscreen system will be metal panels of a color and configuration similar to the nearby slate roofs. The simple form of the fifth floor has been designed to minimize its visibility from the street and to not draw attention away from the historic section of the building (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Visibility of proposed fifth floor from intersection of North Royal and Cameron Streets

Market Square structures

The new structures being proposed include shade structures, an elevator enclosure, and planter walls located within Market Square (Figure 7a & 7b). The elevator enclosure is located on the west side of the plaza and provides access to the parking garage. Adjacent to this is the stage area with overhead enclosure. On the east side of the plaza on axis with the stage area is another shade structure with wide steps suitable for seating. The elevator enclosure is a rectilinear structure with glazing on the west side, brick on the east, and a decorative cornice at the perimeter of the roof. The adjacent stage area is rectangular with rounded corners and raised central section. The structure includes metal columns and an aluminum ceiling made to resemble wood. The eastern shade structure utilizes similar materials but includes a wood clad wall separating the seating area from the garage entrance below.



Figure 7a: Elevator enclosure and stage structure



Figure 7b: Shade structure with seating

In considering a Certificate of Appropriateness, the Board, and City Council on appeal, shall consider the following applicable criteria set forth in Zoning Ordinance Section 10-105(A)(2) and set out in **bold** below. It should be noted that the City Council's consideration of the Zoning Ordinance criteria on appeal is independent of the Board's decision. While City Council may review and consider the Board's previous action, City Council will separately make its own decision based on an evaluation of the previously submitted material and any new material presented at the hearing. Following is the staff analysis of each of the Zoning Ordinance criteria.

(a) Overall architectural design, form, style and structure, including, but not limited to, the height, mass and scale of buildings or structures;

Revisions to south elevation

The *Design Guidelines* state that “The Boards generally prefer addition designs that are respectful of the existing structure, and which seek to be background statements...”. In the case of the south elevation of the City Hall building, there are competing interests in terms of its design. As noted in the *Design Guidelines*, modern additions to historic buildings should be background statements that allow the historic portion of the building to be prominent, however in this case the south elevation is the focal point of the Market Square and houses the main building entrance. Each of these functions requires a level of prominence beyond simply a background statement.

Staff finds that the proposed option successfully navigates the competing interests for background and prominence in the south elevation. The subtlety of the new building entry and associated upper-level pilasters clearly reflects the importance of this focal point and main entrance without creating a level of decoration that competes with the historic 1871 building. The existing chimneys are not proportional to the existing building and would be more appropriate on a residential building than a prominent civic building. Staff finds that the proposed design is compatible with the *Design Guidelines* and recommends approval of the proposal with the condition that the applicant work with staff on the design for the embellishment of the ground floor entry doors to be consistent with the renderings in the submission materials.

Market Square structures

The *Design Guidelines* state that “Free-standing accessory structures should complement, not compete with, the architecture of the main building.” The Board purview over the design of the plaza is limited to structures and vertical elements over two feet in height. Staff finds that the design for the planters, shade structures, and elevator enclosure is consistent with the *Design Guidelines* in that they are complementary to the building. They each have their own character that marks them as being clearly modern while their detailing and design recalls the design of the building. Staff supports the proposed design and recommends that the applicant work with historic preservation staff on the final design and detailing of the Market Square shade structures, elevator enclosure structure, site walls, and steps to be consistent with the submission materials.

Fifth floor addition

Staff finds that the visibility of the fifth floor will be limited when viewed from the public right of way. Of particular importance is the view of the fifth floor from the north, east, and west sides when it is seen above the historic 1871 portion of the building. The use of metal panels in a color and configuration similar to the nearby slate roofs make this massing blend into the overall roof, further limiting their visual impact. In discussions with the design team, the extent and location of the glazing on the fifth floor has been designed so that it is not visible from the public right of way. Staff finds the proposed design of the fifth floor to be compatible with the *Design Guidelines* and recommends that as the design progresses, the applicant work with historic preservation staff to ensure that the design for the exterior is similar in color and configuration to the slate roofs and to ensure that the glazing is minimally visible from the public right of way.

(b) Architectural details including, but not limited to, original materials and methods of construction, the pattern, design and style of fenestration, ornamentation, lighting, signage and like decorative or functional fixtures of buildings or structures; the degree to which the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site (including historic materials) are retained;

As noted above, the proposed scope of work for the historic portion of the City Hall building will include a careful restoration of the building. Using materials and methods that are sensitive to the existing historic fabric, the building will be returned to its original design intent. In addition, the proposed modifications will protect the existing structure from water infiltration and other environmental damage that has degraded parts of the historic fabric. Using historic photographs, the proposed work will restore wall openings to their original configuration and restore the roof to its original design.

In a number of previously approved additions, the Board has supported the use of a vertical slot of some sort to provide the prescribed differentiation between the historic and a later addition. The proposed modifications to the east and west ends of the 1961 addition create this vertical slot by “offsetting the footprint” of the building setting the face of the hyphen a significant distance behind the face of the addition. The use of full height glazing on this component addresses the *Design Guidelines* direction not to “obscure or dilute the architectural and historic importance of an existing building” by allowing for the original exterior wall of the 1871 portion of the building to

be visible from the exterior. Staff supports this approach as consistent with the *Design Guidelines* and with previously approved additions.

These modifications will address the language in the review standards associated with “the original materials and methods of construction, the pattern, design and style of fenestration, ornamentation, lighting, signage and like decorative or functional fixtures of buildings or structures.” Staff finds that the proposed modifications to the existing building will effectively restore the building to its original condition.

(c) Design and arrangement of buildings and structures on the site; and the impact upon the historic setting, streetscape or environs;

This standard is most relevant when considering the layout of Market Square. The layout is organized around a central axis extending from the main building entry to King Street. A series of curved planters and stairs adjacent to King Street creates a dynamic entry to the plaza which is more rigid and rectilinear. The plaza includes a series of “outdoor rooms” along the east and west sides which bring the scale of the space to a pedestrian level. An east-west axis is created through the construction of shade structures on either side of the plaza. A glass and brick enclosed structure on the west side of the plaza encloses the elevator entry to the parking garage below (Figure 8).

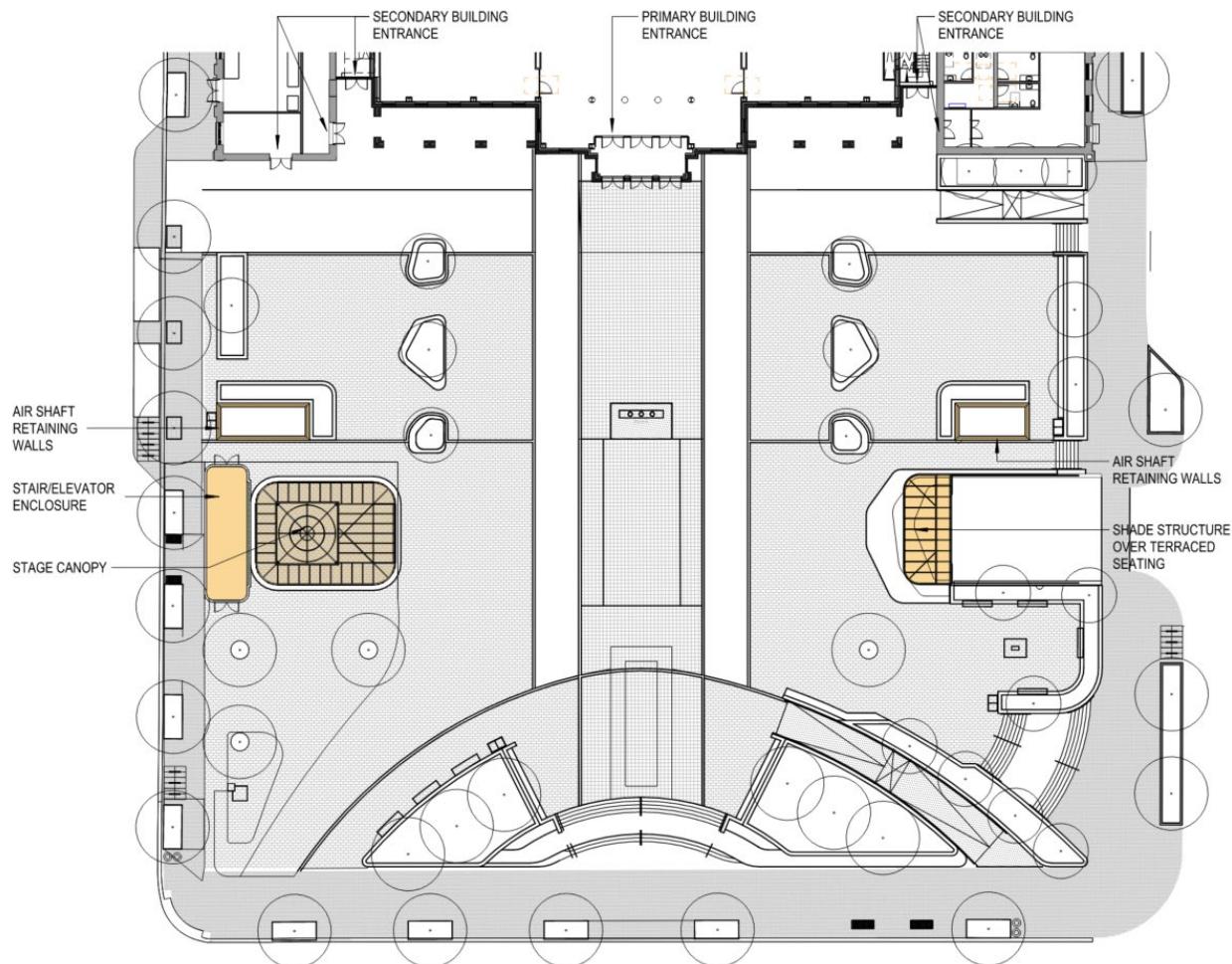


Figure 8: Proposed layout for Market Square

Staff finds this configuration to be consistent with the formal nature of the existing building and compatible with other nearby historic structures. This layout also creates a pedestrian friendly streetscape by providing multiple entry points to the plaza and eliminating many of the large retaining walls currently found on the site.

(d) Texture, material and color, and the extent to which any new architectural features are historically appropriate to the existing structure and adjacent existing structures;

As noted above, the revisions to the south elevation, the new fifth floor, and the Market Square structures are the most prominent interventions into the existing structure. The revisions to the south elevation utilize materials and designs that are similar to the existing architecture.

The proposed fifth floor has been carefully located so as to be minimally visible from the public right of way, particularly when seen along with the historic portion of the building. The addition will be clad in metal panels of a color and configuration that is similar to the slate roof on the historic building. With the recommendation noted above, glazing will be minimally visible from the ground when viewed from the north, east, and west sides, leaving the addition to blend into the historic roofing where it will be visible.

The Market Square shade structures will be made of metal posts with a ceiling meant to appear similar to wood and the elevator enclosure will be clad in glass, brick, and stone. These materials are consistent with historic shade structures found elsewhere and are compatible with the materials on the building.

Staff finds the proposed materials to be consistent with the *Design Guidelines*. While they are clearly a modification to the existing building, staff finds the design to be “historically appropriate to the existing building.”

(e) The relation of the features in sections 10-105(A)(2)(a) through (d) to similar features of the preexisting building or structure, if any, and to buildings and structures in the immediate surroundings;

The revision to the south elevation includes the creation of a formal entry and a more prominent central element in place of the existing entry that is without ornament. These revisions include features similar to those found on the existing south elevation. This portion of the building was built in the neo-colonial architectural style that is known for punched openings and decorative features that recall early Georgian style architecture. The design for the revised entry is composed of brick piers that support a stone entablature and brick pilasters that are capped by a decorative cornice. These are all features commonly found on neo-colonial architecture, particularly on civic buildings of this style.

Staff finds that the proposed modifications include features that are “similar to the preexisting building” and compatible with the overall architectural style. The proposed intervention will be stylistically compatible with the existing building while providing a prominent entry that is befitting this important structure.

(f) The extent to which the building or structure would be harmonious with or incongruous to the old and historic aspect of the George Washington Memorial Parkway;

Not applicable. The property is not located along Washington Street, the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

(g) The extent to which the building or structure will preserve or protect historic places and areas of historic interest in the city;

The original portion of the building, constructed in 1871, is one of the most important historic civic structures in the City of Alexandria. As noted above, the project team is proposing an extensive and careful restoration of this part of the structure. This restoration will address previous modifications that caused harm to the building and will restore its original prominence.

(h) The extent to which the building or structure will preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway;

Not applicable. The property is not located along Washington Street, the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

(i) The extent to which the building or structure will promote the general welfare of the city and all citizens by the preservation and protection of historic interest in the city and the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway;

The original portion of the building, constructed in 1871, is one of the most important historic civic structures in the City of Alexandria. As noted above, the project team is proposing an extensive and careful restoration of this part of the structure. This restoration will address previous modifications that caused harm to the building and will restore its original prominence.

(j) The extent to which such preservation and protection will promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live.

The original portion of the building, constructed in 1871, is one of the most important historic civic structures in the City of Alexandria. As noted above, the project team is proposing an extensive and careful restoration of this part of the structure. This restoration will address previous modifications that caused harm to the building and will restore its original prominence.

Minutes from November 19, 2025 BAR Hearing

BOARD ACTION: Vice-Chair del Ninno arrived at docket item #3. This item was moved and heard after docket item #5. On a motion by Mr. Scott, seconded by Ms. Miller, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR#2025-00370 as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

SPEAKERS:

Jeremy McPike, City of Alexandria, answered questions from the Board.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Zandian, introduced the continuation of the deliberations from the previous hearing, noting that the Board had received input from the public and from the applicant in the form of letters and a memo from the applicant. These materials have been reviewed by the Board and are included in the project record.

Mr. Scott made a motion for approval with conditions.

Mr. Conkey noted that the applicant submitted a memo clarifying their proposal since the last hearing.

Mr. Scott asked the applicant if this memo replaces the previous submission.

Mr. McPike stated that the design described in the proposed motion is not consistent with the proposed design.

Mr. Scott stated that the mandatory items in the motion are from options included in the submission from the previous hearing.

Mr. McPike reiterated that the proposed motion is not consistent with the design as described in the memo provided by the applicant.

Ms. Miller seconded the motion.

Motion of Approval

For this application, I move to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations, with the following conditions:

As to Staff Recommendation 1: The board approves the following selections with conditions and specifications as described:

For The Center Portion of the South Façade:

The final design for the center portion of the south façade shall conform to “Option 4B with Chimneys” as depicted on Figure 4 on page 8 of the staff report for this application, BAR #2025-003 70, dated November 5, 2025, with the following conditions and further specifications:

1. The pilasters shall be made of stone or precast material and shall be in the color of Aquia Creek Sandstone or a similar light gray, tan, or golden- beige color.
2. The pilasters should be capped with an entablature that generally embraces classical proportions. Such entablature should be made of the same stone or precast material as the pilasters.
3. The ground floor entryway openings in the center entrance pavilion should be

arched and may include keystone and stone water table base elements. In order to accommodate arched openings, the applicant has the option to reduce the overall mass of the first-floor cornice molding and move the lettering to the entablature or cornice molding at the roofline atop the third floor.

4. The doors of the center entrance pavilion shall be made of wood or clad in bronze or other metal. The doors shall not be aluminum storefront, frameless glass, or full-glass French doors. Any windows incorporated into the center entrance pavilion doors shall be of a Colonial style with true or simulated divided lites and external muntins.
5. The decorative chimneys atop the center portion of the south façade shall be retained or reconstructed and composed of or clad primarily in brick, as depicted in the left image of Figure 4 on page 8 of the staff report, “Option 4B with chimneys.” The decorative chimneys shall not be smaller or less visible than as depicted in such image.
6. To the maximum extent practicable, the first-floor extension of the center entryway pavilion shall be on the same vertical plane as the upper-floor (floors 2 and 3) extension directly above. Architectural detailing shall be used to minimize the appearance of any necessary setback in the upper floors.

For the Fifth Floor:

The addition shall be an unobtrusive backdrop to the contributing building facades. Glass and glazing on the curtain wall system shall not be visible from any point at street level behind the contributing façades on Cameron, Fairfax, and Royal Streets. Lighting along the roof of the fifth-floor addition is not approved and shall be removed from the plan as applicable.

For The Structures on Market Square:

The design for the shade structure, terraced seating area, stage canopy, and stair/elevator enclosure shall generally conform to the design as presented to the Board of Architectural Review during the Board of Architectural Review hearing on November 5, 2025, with the following conditions and further specifications:

1. The applicant shall study integrating the stage canopy structure with the opening of the stair/elevator enclosure.
2. The stage canopy, shade structure, and terraced seating shall be complimentary, using the same architectural style, design language, and materials.
3. The stage canopy shall be tall enough to accommodate a temporary stage beneath. This is authorized to be taller than 14 feet.
4. The applicant shall study incorporating architectural elements from the 1871 City Hall building into the stage canopy, shade structure, and stair/elevator enclosure. Such study should explore using curved 19th century style brackets on support columns.
5. The terraced seating beneath the shade structure and the stone elements in the stair/elevator structure shall be granite stone.
6. All conduit and drainage piping shall be enclosed and not exposed.

For the glass hyphens:

1. The glazing shall be unobtrusive, such that the hyphens recede as a third design element of the South façade.
2. The canopy roof at the fire exits should be minimized so as to not create confusion about the location of the front entrance of the south façade of the building.

As to Staff Recommendations 2 and 3:

The board approves, as further modified:

2. The restoration materials shall match the historic materials in color and texture.
3. The final design and detailing at the fifth-floor exterior shall be similar in appearance to the adjacent slate roofs.

Minutes from November 5, 2025 BAR Hearing

BOARD ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Scott, seconded by Ms. del Ninno, the Board of Architectural Review voted to continue BAR#2025-00370 to the November 19, 2025 hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

SPEAKERS:

Jenine Kotob, City of Alexandria, introduced the project.

Irena Savakova, project architect, presented the design.

Christine Roberts, HAF, encouraged the applicant to request a deferral in order for the public and the Board to review the design revisions.

John Patrick, HARC, appreciated the changes to the design and supports the inclusion of chimneys. He expressed concern that the glazed hyphens are not appropriate for the building and stated that the fifth floor should have limited glazing.

Yvonne Callahan, OTCA, expressed concern about the late design revisions and encouraged the applicant to request a deferral.

Al Cox, 311 North Alfred, appreciated the changes to the design but stated that the design for the entry element should be stronger. Regarding the options for the pilasters, he stated that the brick is not different enough from the rest of the wall and that red sandstone should not be used. He noted that segmented arches are not appropriate for the style of building and that arches should not be under an entablature.

Melissa Kuennen, 525 Montgomery Street, noted the importance of the design for City Hall and that the BAR has worked with the architect to resolve design issues but some issues remain. She expressed concern regarding the design for the hyphens.

Dino Drudi, 315 North West Street, was concerned about the timing of the design revisions and encouraged the applicant to request a deferral.

Carol Black, 13 Auburn Court, expressed concern about the visibility of the fifth floor, stating that it is not appropriate for the building. She also noted that the design for the shade structures is not appropriate.

John Richards, 1800 Diagonal Road, stated that City Hall is a landmark that defines the City and that he opposed the fifth-floor addition.

Stephen Milone appreciated the design changes made by the architect but did not support the glazed hyphens or the use of red sandstone.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Pratt asked the architect to clarify the differences between the submission materials and the presentation.

Ms. Miller asked the architect about the proposed material for the shade structure roof. The architect replied that it will be aluminum with a decorative film to appear to be wood.

Ms. del Ninno asked the architect about drainage for the shade structures and whether lighting and A/V equipment would be included in the structure. The architect stated that there would be internal drainage with no exposed downspouts and that lighting and A/V equipment would be integral to the structure.

Mr. Scott asked how tall the east shade structure would be and asked the architect if they would work with staff on the final color selection. The architect stated that the roof would be 11' tall.

Mr. Spencer asked for clarification regarding the material for the shade structure columns. The architect noted that they would be aluminum but not with a wood grain finish.

Ms. del Ninno asked about the material for the wall behind the shade structure. The architect stated that it would be wood.

Ms. del Ninno asked for the height and thickness of the western shade structure. The architect answered that the roof is 14'-6" tall and it will be 10"-12" thick.

Mr. Spencer asked about the materials for the seat walls. The architect stated that they would be brick with a light-colored precast top.

Ms. del Ninno confirmed with the applicant that the location for the perspective in the presentation showing the fifth floor is taken from the northeast corner of North Royal Street and Cameron Street.

Ms. Miller asked the architect about the function of the stairs in the hyphens and about the interior wall at the rear of the stairs. The architect noted that the stairs will be used by employees to access shared spaces located on each floor and that there will be a glazed section of wall adjacent to the historic wall to allow for a continuous view of this wall.

Ms. Zandian asked about the relationship between the horizontal muntins at the hyphens and the stair landings. The architect indicated that the horizontal muntins will align with the intermediate landings.

Ms. Zandian asked if the proposed pilasters at the center section of the south elevation are projecting or recessed. The architect noted that the pilasters are projecting.

Mr. Adams asked the architect about the proposed arches in the presentation and the architect discussed the geometry of the proposed arches.

Mr. Scott stated his appreciation for the design revisions and the input from members of the public. He stated that with the details included in the presentation, the Board could provide meaningful comments. He stated that he supports the design for the hyphens and the design for the entry without the arches. He expressed a preference for Option 4C for the design of the south elevation and noted that the proposed shade structures will not detract from the building design.

Ms. Pratt expressed her support for option 4B, noting that the brick pilasters do not draw enough attention to the center portion of the south elevation. She expressed support for the inclusion of the chimneys and the design for the shade structures.

Mr. Adams appreciated the continued evolution of the design and expressed an interest in seeing continued progress. He stated that the proposed design for the entry element is consistent with the design for the south elevation and understood the complexity of the proposed arches. He expressed a preference for the lighter color sandstone at the pilasters and asked if the entry pavilion could be stone as well. He appreciated the additional details for the shade structures and asked that decorative brackets be added to the structures for visual interest. Regarding the hyphens, he noted that they could be less glassy.

Ms. del Ninno discussed the project timeline. She appreciated the additional views of the fifth floor and the changes that have been made to the location of glazing on this element. She expressed a preference for Option 4B for the south elevation and stated that the architect should consider raising the roof for the west shade structure to allow for more performance usage.

Mr. Spencer expressed support for the design of the hyphens, the shades structures, and the fifth floor. He had a preference for option 4A with the potential for the entry to be clad in stone. He asked the architect about the blank panel at the lower half of the entry doors, the architect indicated that this panel would include an embossed design.

Ms. Miller stated that the submission is incomplete and suggested that the applicant request a deferral in order to complete the documentation. She did not support the proposed design for the hyphens and preferred instead for them to be solid and clad in slate or metal. She wants to retain the chimneys in the final design. She noted that the design for the shade structures is not compatible with the design for the building and preferred the use of fabric at the roof in lieu of the proposed design.

Ms. Zandian agreed with her colleagues that the chimneys should be retained. She appreciated the revisions to the fifth floor glazing design. She supported options 4A and 4B and stated that arches at the entry are not necessary. She supported the design for the shade structures, noting that additional brackets could be an improvement.

STAFF

Paul Stoddard, AICP, Director, Department of Planning & Zoning

Tony LaColla, AICP, Land Use Services Division Chief

William Conkey, AIA, Historic Preservation Architect

VII. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: BAR staff report with BAR actions from November 5, 2025

Attachment 2: November 13, 2025 General Services Memo to BAR

Attachment 3: Board of Architectural Review Design Guidelines

Attachment 4: Appeal application