

**ISSUE:** Permit to Demolish/Capsulate (partial) and Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations

**APPLICANT:** PF III Abingdon, LLC

**LOCATION:** Old & Historic Alexandria District  
1201 East Abingdon Drive

**ZONE:** CRMU-X Commercial residential mixed use (Old Town North) zone

---

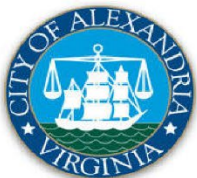
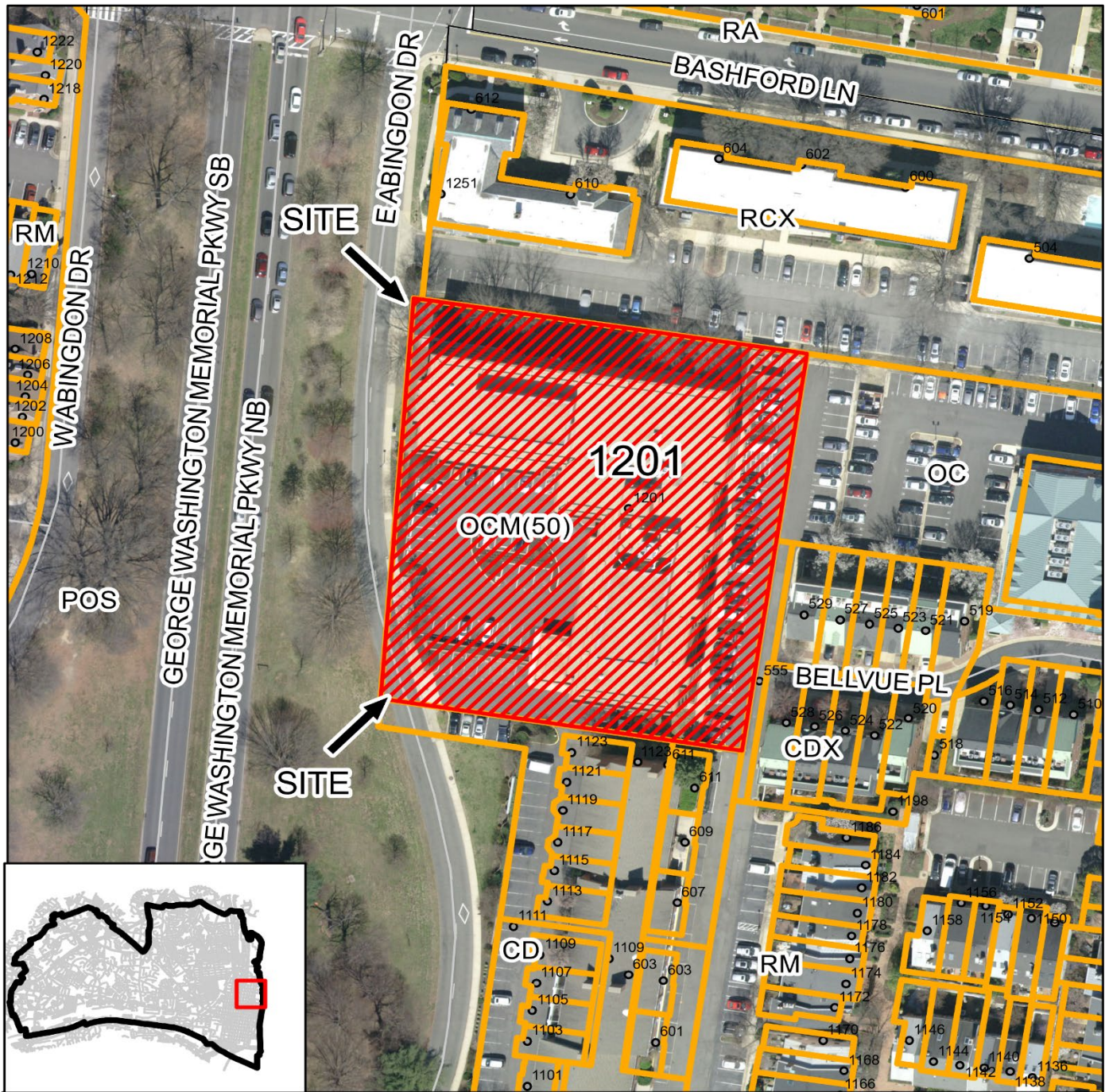
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends **approval** of the Permit to Demolish/Capsulate and Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations, with the following conditions.

1. The final selection of the windows and doors complies with the BAR Window Policy

**GENERAL NOTES TO THE APPLICANT**

1. **APPEAL OF DECISION:** In accordance with the Zoning Ordinance, if the Board of Architectural Review denies or approves an application in whole or in part, the applicant or opponent may appeal the Board's decision to City Council on or before 14 days after the decision of the Board.
2. **COMPLIANCE WITH BAR POLICIES:** All materials must comply with the BAR's adopted policies unless otherwise specifically approved.
3. **BUILDING PERMITS:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by the Department of Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-746-4200 for further information.
4. **ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS AND PERMITS TO DEMOLISH:** Applicants must obtain a copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness or Permit to Demolish PRIOR to applying for a building permit. Contact BAR Staff, Room 2100, City Hall, 703-746-3833, or [preservation@alexandriava.gov](mailto:preservation@alexandriava.gov) for further information.
5. **EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B), 10-206(B) and 10-307 of the Zoning Ordinance, any Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.
6. **HISTORIC PROPERTY TAX CREDITS:** Applicants performing extensive, certified rehabilitations of historic properties may separately be eligible for state and/or federal tax credits. Consult with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) prior to initiating any work to determine whether the proposed project may qualify for such credits.



**BAR#2025-00035 & BAR#2025-00036 OHAD**  
**1201 E Abingdon Drive**



**Minutes from April 16, 2025, BAR Hearing**

**BOARD ACTION:** On a motion by Mr. Lyons, seconded by Vice Chair Zandian, the Board of Architectural Review voted to accept the applicant's request for deferral of BAR#2025-00035 and BAR#2025-00036. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

**Speakers:**

Jack Kane, representing the applicant, presented the project.

Melissa Kuennen, 525 Montgomery Street, expressed concern about the views of the proposed addition from the George Washington Parkway, noting that the proposal is not compatible with the architecture of the historic district. She stated that the building looks like other projects in Old Town North and that it should be more harmonious with the nearby townhouses.

**Discussion:**

Mr. Lyons expressed appreciation for the revisions that the applicant made to the project in response to Board comments. He noted that he supported the project at the last meeting and continues to support it with these modifications.

Mr. Spencer stated that the design for the addition stands out from the nearby context and is not a background building. He asked the applicant where the verticality in the design came from. The applicant responded that the massing of the addition aligns with the existing building and that the scale is appropriate for the context.

Ms. del Ninno noted the change to the scale of the pilasters from the previous hearing. She stated that the composition lacks horizontal members, specifically commenting on the 5 story unsupported columns at the addition corners.

Mr. Scott indicated that the contrast between the light and dark bricks was still too great and contributed to the verticality of the design.

Ms. Miller suggested that the columns at the north and south end of the west façade should wrap around the corner. She pointed out that the Whitley project on North Washington Street will be coming to the Board soon and features grey brick, giving some context to this proposal.

Mr. Adams stated that the design for the building is too monumental, and that the addition should serve as a background building. He suggested that a variety of window patterns and a more striking entrance would help.

Mr. Spencer expressed support for the building massing. He suggested that the remaining issue with the design is the contrast between the brick colors. He suggested a brick selection that was more complimentary to the red brick of the existing building. He appreciated the extent of brick detailing in the proposed design.

Mr. Scott stated that the applicant has been responsive to Board comments and likes the brick detailing and the use of recessed balconies. He noted that the majority of the Board had concerns about the contrast between the brick colors.

Mr. Adams asked if the massing of the building could be revised to be less imposing. Mr. Scott pointed out that the massing was previously endorsed at the Concept Review level.

Jack Kane, representing the applicant, requested a deferral in order to address comments from the Board.

## **UPDATE**

The Board's review of this project has included a Concept Review session dated July 6, 2023, at which Board members expressed support for the project and gave feedback on potential design revisions. Following the approval of the DSUP by City Council, the project returned to the BAR for a Certificate of Appropriateness on March 5, 2025, and again on April 16, 2025. The Board provided specific feedback at these hearings and the applicant requested a deferral in order to address these comments.

Comments from the Board at the April 16, 2025, hearing include the following (See above for more detail):

- Despite changes to the design, the elevations are too vertical in proportion, noting the 5 story unsupported pilasters at the north and south ends of the west elevation.
- There was concern regarding the contrast between the light and dark colored brick.
- Some Board members requested a closer relationship between the north and south elevations with the west elevation.
- Board members expressed concern that the building appeared too massive, overwhelming adjacent properties.

## **I. APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL**

The applicant is requesting a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate and Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations of the existing structure and the construction of an addition in order to convert the existing commercial office building at 1201 East Abingdon Drive into a multi-unit residential building.

Since the most recent Certificate of Appropriateness review, the applicant has modified the design to address comments from the Board. These comments were focused on the vertical proportions of the proposed design, the contrast between the two colors of bricks, and how the addition turns the corner at the northwest and southwest corners.

In order to address these issues, the applicant has made several design changes (Figure 2). In lieu of the light-colored brick at the pilasters, the applicant is now proposing the Executive Ironspot blend which is a warm tan color with dark iron spots. This color is similar in tone to the red brick of the existing building and the iron spots are similar in color to the inset dark brick sections of the addition.

To address concerns about the verticality of the building proportions, the proposed design now includes a horizontal member at the third floor of the open bay at the north and south sides of the west elevation. In addition to this change, the applicant has replaced the full height glazed bay at the north and south elevations with a brick and punched window bay similar to the adjacent bays but recessed by 8”.

The recessed bay has also been included on the north and south ends of the west elevation, allowing the corner to read as a consistent element with a narrow hyphen in place of the wider, full height glazed bay. The result is north and south elevations that appear as three bays, and the west elevation as four bays with a connecting corner element.



**Figure 1: Previous (top) and current (bottom) design for the south elevation of the addition**

### Site Context

The project site is on the east side of East Abingdon Drive, between Second Street and Bashford Lane. To the east of the site is the extension of North Saint Asaph Street, providing views of the east side of the building. East Abingdon Drive is a one-way road running approximately parallel to the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Given the site configuration, all building elevations will be visible from a public right of way.

Similar to the adjacent townhouse development, which was approved in 2019, the proposed development at 1201 East Abingdon will be subject to the Washington Street Guidelines.

## **II. HISTORY**

The five-story brick veneer office building at 1201 East Abingdon Drive was constructed in **1983-1984**. There have been a number of BAR approvals for this property since its construction. The majority of these approvals have been related to building signage.

One significant exception to this is BAR 2014-00028 & BAR 2014-00029. As originally designed, the building featured a false mansard roof made of a continuous metal panel that was located at the back of the masonry parapet and continued around the perimeter of the building. These metal panels were approximately the height of the rooftop penthouses and were intended to conceal the rooftop structures (Figure 2). This feature gave the impression that the building was a story taller than it was by creating this false roof form. In 2014 the metal panels had become damaged, and the BAR approved a proposal to remove them from the building and apply an EIFS finish to the rooftop structures that were now visible.



Figure 2: Aerial view of original building design including false mansard

Previous BAR Approvals:

BAR 98-00171 – Request for signage

BAR 2007-0026 – Waiver of HVAC Screening

BAR 2015-00226 – Request for Signage

BAR 2016-00058 – Request for Signage

### **III. ANALYSIS**

#### **Permit to Demolish/Capsulate**

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B), which relate only to the subject property and not to neighboring properties. The Board has purview of the proposed demolition/capsulation regardless of visibility.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Description of Standard</b>	<b>Standard Met?</b>
(1)	Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?	No
(2)	Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic shrine?	No
(3)	Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?	No
(4)	Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?	No
(5)	Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?	No
(6)	Would retention of the building or structure 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?	No

The analysis of the standards indicated above relate only to the portions of the wall areas proposed for demolition/capsulation. In the opinion of staff, none of the criteria for demolition and

capsulation are met and the Permit to Demolish/Capsulate should be granted. As noted above, the existing building was constructed in the early 1980s and is typical of commercial buildings constructed during that time. This construction is not of unusual or uncommon design and can easily be replicated. As such, staff recommends the approval of the requested Permit to Demolish/Capsulate.

### Certificate of Appropriateness

Within the historic districts, the Board utilizes the *Design Guidelines* to determine if a potential addition and alterations would be compatible with the character of the historic district and the immediately surrounding buildings. The proposed project includes alterations to an existing building and the construction of an addition in order to convert the existing building from a commercial use to a multi-unit residential use. When considering the compatibility of the proposed design to the historic district, it is important to understand the context in which the building is located. Immediately to the south of the site are the recently completed Abingdon townhouses. These three- and four-story townhouses are masonry with a variety of roof configurations and are designed to be similar to historic buildings within the local historic district; however they are distinctly modern. A series of garden apartment buildings sits to the north of the project site. During the Concept Review hearing, Board members expressed their support for the height, mass, and scale of the proposed project along with the general architectural character of the design. The modifications made to the design are consistent with the original architectural character, while addressing the Board comments.

Due to its location fronting the George Washington Memorial Parkway, any major modifications or additions to the building are subject to additional standards in both the *Design Guidelines* and the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance.

The *Design Guidelines* section on buildings fronting Washington Street is broken down into sections based on the location within the district. The subject site is within the Pendelton Street to Bashford Lane sector. The Scale and Character description for this area states:

“This section is predominantly commercial with a number of modern office buildings and highway-oriented uses. New buildings in this area should be oriented to the street, create an attractive pedestrian environment and foster a sense of place, arrival and community.” (p.8)

In addition to the general BAR standards outlined in the Zoning Ordinance, and the Board’s *Design Guidelines*, the Board must also find that the Washington Street Standards are met. Further standards as outlined in the Zoning Ordinance are intended to ensure that the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway is protected and maintained. These additional standards are as follows:

*Alexandria Zoning Ordinance Sec. 10-105(A)(3): Additional standards—Washington Street.*

(a) *In addition to the standards set forth in section 10-105(A)(2), the following standards shall apply to the construction of new buildings and structures and to the construction of additions to buildings or structures on lots fronting on both sides of Washington Street from the southern city limit line north to the northern city limit line:*

- (1) *Construction shall be compatible with and similar to the traditional building character, particularly including mass, scale, design and style, found on Washington Street on commercial or residential buildings of historic architectural merit.*
- i. *Elements of design consistent with historic buildings which are found on the street shall be emphasized.*
  - ii. *New buildings and additions to existing buildings shall not, by their style, size, location or other characteristics, detract from, overwhelm, or otherwise intrude upon historic buildings which are found on the street.*
  - iii. *The design of new buildings and additions to existing buildings shall be complementary to historic buildings which are found on the street.*
  - iv. *The massing of new buildings or additions to existing buildings adjacent to historic buildings which are found on the street shall closely reflect and be proportional to the massing of the adjacent historic buildings.*
  - v. *New buildings and additions to existing buildings which are larger than historic buildings which are found on the street shall be designed to look separate and shall not give the impression of collectively being more massive than such historic buildings. This design shall be accomplished through differing historic architectural designs, facades, setbacks, roof lines and styles. Buildings should appear from the public right-of-way to have a footprint no larger than 100 feet by 80 feet. For larger projects, it is desirable that the historic pattern of mid-block alleys be preserved or replicated.*
  - vi. *Applications for projects over 3,000 square feet, or for projects located within 66 feet of land used or zoned for residential uses, shall include a building massing study. Such study shall include all existing and proposed buildings and building additions in the six block area as follows: the block face containing the project, the block face opposite, the two adjacent block faces to the north and the two adjacent block faces to the south.*
  - vii. *The massing and proportions of new buildings or additions to existing buildings designed in an historic style found elsewhere in along Washington Street shall be consistent with the massing and proportions of that style.*
  - viii. *New or untried approaches to design which result in new buildings or additions to existing buildings that have no historical basis in Alexandria or that are not consistent with an historic style in scale, massing and detailing, are not appropriate.*
- (2) *Facades of a building generally shall express the 20- to 40-foot bay width typically found on early 19th century commercial buildings characteristic of the Old and Historic Alexandria District, or the 15- to 20-foot bay width typically found on townhouses characteristic of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. Techniques to express such typical bay width shall include changes in material, articulation of the wall surfaces, changes in fenestration patterns, varying roof heights, and physical breaks, vertical as well as horizontal, within the massing.*
- (3) *Building materials characteristic of buildings having historic architectural merit within the district shall be utilized. The texture, tone and color of such materials shall display a level of variety, quality and richness at least equal to that found abundantly in the historic setting.*

- (4) Construction shall reflect the traditional fenestration patterns found within the Old and Historic Alexandria District. Traditional solid-void relationships exhibited within the district's streetscapes (i.e., ratio of window and door openings to solid wall) shall be used in building facades, including first floor facades.*
- (5) Construction shall display a level of ornamentation, detail and use of quality materials consistent with buildings having historic architectural merit found within the district. In replicative building construction (i.e., masonry bearing wall by a veneer system), the proper thicknesses of materials shall be expressed particularly through the use of sufficient reveals around wall openings.*
- (b) No fewer than 45 days prior to filing an application for a certificate of appropriateness, an applicant who proposes construction which is subject to this section 10-105(A)(3), shall meet with the director to discuss the application of these standards to the proposed development; provided, that this requirement for a preapplication conference shall apply only to the construction of 10,000 or more square feet of gross building area, including but not limited to the area in any above-ground parking structure.*
- (c) No application for a certificate of appropriateness which is subject to this section 10-105(A)(3) shall be approved by the Old and Historic Alexandria District board of architectural review, unless it makes a written finding that the proposed construction complies with the standards in section 10-105(A)(3)(a).*
- (d) The director may appeal to city council a decision of the Old and Historic Alexandria District board of architectural review granting or denying an application for a certificate of appropriateness subject to this section 10-105(A)(3), which right of appeal shall be in addition to any other appeal provided by law.*
- (e) The standards set out in section 10-105(A)(3)(a) shall also apply in any proceedings before any other governmental or advisory board, commission or agency of the city relating to the use, development or redevelopment of land, buildings or structures within the area subject to this section 10-105(A)(3).*
- (f) To the extent that any other provisions of this ordinance are inconsistent with the provisions of this section 10-105(A)(3), the provisions of this section shall be controlling.*
- (g) The director shall adopt regulations and guidelines pertaining to the submission, review and approval or disapproval of applications subject to this section 10-105(A)(3).*
- (h) Any building or addition to an existing building which fails to comply with the provisions of this paragraph shall be presumed to be incompatible with the historic district and Washington Street standards, and the applicant shall have the burden of overcoming such presumption by clear and convincing evidence.*
- (i) The applicant for a special use permit for an increase in density above that permitted by right shall have the burden of proving that the proposed building or addition to an existing building provides clearly demonstrable benefits to the historic character of Washington Street, and, by virtue of the project's uses, architecture and site layout and design, materially advances the pedestrian-friendly environment along Washington Street.*

Staff finds that the applicant has made revisions to the design in response to comments from the Board at the previous Certificate of Appropriateness meeting. Comments from the Board were focused on the contrasting brick colors, the vertical proportion of the addition, and the treatment of the addition's corners.

In place of the previous light-colored pilasters, the applicant is now proposing a blend that has a warm tan base color with iron spots. This color addresses the direction of the Board at the Concept Review stage to differentiate the addition from the existing building to remain, and the comments at the Certificate of Appropriateness reviews that a light color brick is too stark against the dark brick at the infill bays. The proposed brick blend takes cues from both the existing building and the neighboring townhouses, allowing the addition to be less visually prominent than previously designed.

The addition of a recessed brick bay at the western edge of the north and south elevations in place of the full height glazed bay helps to break down the overall elevation into smaller sections that are similar in proportion to the adjacent townhouses (Figure 3). The vertical masonry bays are taller, but reminiscent of the proportions of these townhouses. Continuing this recess around the corner to the north and south ends of the western elevation similarly breaks down this elevation into components similar to the townhouse modules (Figure 4). Along with the addition of a horizontal element at the third floor, these changes address the Board's concern regarding the vertical proportion of the addition.



**Figure 3: Modifications to the corner and south elevation to break down the proposed massing**



Figure 4: Modifications to the west elevation to break down the proposed massing

Staff finds that the applicant has been responsive to the comments of the Board and has made significant modifications to the proposed design in order to address these comments. With the proposed design modifications, staff recommends **approval** of the Permit to Demolish/Capsulate and Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations, with the condition that the final selection of the windows and doors complies with the BAR Window Policy.

#### **STAFF**

Bill Conkey, AIA, Historic Preservation Architect, Planning & Zoning  
Tony LaColla, AICP, Land Use Services Division Chief, Planning & Zoning

#### **IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

Legend: C- code requirement R- recommendation S- suggestion F- finding

##### **Zoning**

C-1 Proposed DSUP and Master Plan Amendment will comply with zoning as long as it follows the conditions of CDSP 2023-00026

C-2 Applicant will need to return for approval of signage

##### **Code Administration**

F-1 A building permit is required.

**Transportation and Environmental Services**

- C-1 Comply with all requirements of CDSP2023-00026 and the future associated Site Plan. (T&ES)
- C-2 The Final Site Plan must be approved and released and a copy of that plan must be attached to the demolition permit application. No demolition permit will be issued in advance of the building permit unless the Final Site Plan includes a demolition plan which clearly represents the demolished condition. (T&ES)

**Archaeology**

No archaeology comments

**V. ATTACHMENTS**

- Application Materials
- Completed application
- Plans
- Material specifications
- Scaled survey plat if applicable
- Photographs
- Public comment
- Any other supporting documentation

# 1201 EAST ABINGDON DR

## CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND DEMOLITION PERMIT APPLICATION *BAR Review #4*

05/05/2025



# BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036

## DESIGN HISTORY



### JULY 2023 BAR COMMENTS

- Explore ways for masonry detailing to express rhythm
- Explore alternate materials for the vertical brick dividers
- Design an entry canopy that will be immediately recognizable
- Design is monolithic, too much red brick. Introduce additional colors to reduce volume



### MARCH 2025 BAR COMMENTS

- Revise the design of the entry gate to enhance its prominence within the project and create a greater sense of importance
- Equalize the pilaster widths for uniformity
- Reduce the verticality of the pilasters
- Adjust the brick color to a softer tone, avoiding a stark white appearance.



### APRIL 2025 BAR COMMENTS

- Brick colors are too contrasting
- Minimize the verticality and strength of the addition
- Study the relationship of the West facade with the North and South facades of the addition.

# BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036

RECEIVED 04/16/2025

**1** BRICK COLOR

The light brick color creates too much contrast with the existing office building and the darker-colored brick within the window bays of the addition, and is not complementary to the adjacent red brick buildings.

**2** VERTICALITY AND FLATNESS

Minimize the verticality and strength of the addition.

**3** WRAPPING THE NEW ADDITION WEST FACADE

Study the relationship of the West facade with the North and South facades of the addition.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW - APRIL 2025



PERSPECTIVE VIEW - APRIL 2025

BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036

BRICK COLOR

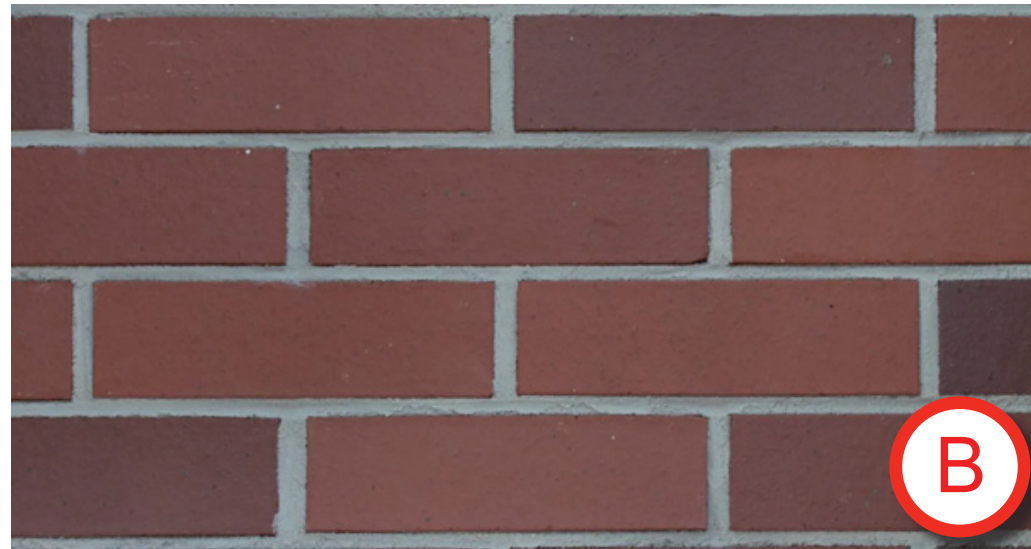
1 The light brick color creates too much contrast with the existing office building and the darker-colored brick within the window bays of the addition, and is not complementary to the adjacent red brick buildings.

APPLICANT RESPONSE

After reviewing the brick tones of the surrounding townhomes and existing office building, we've selected a warmer brick option that complement the streetscape's color palette.



General Shale  
Full Range Wirecut



US Brick Cherry  
Smooth



Belden Black  
Diamond Velour



496 Antique  
Buff



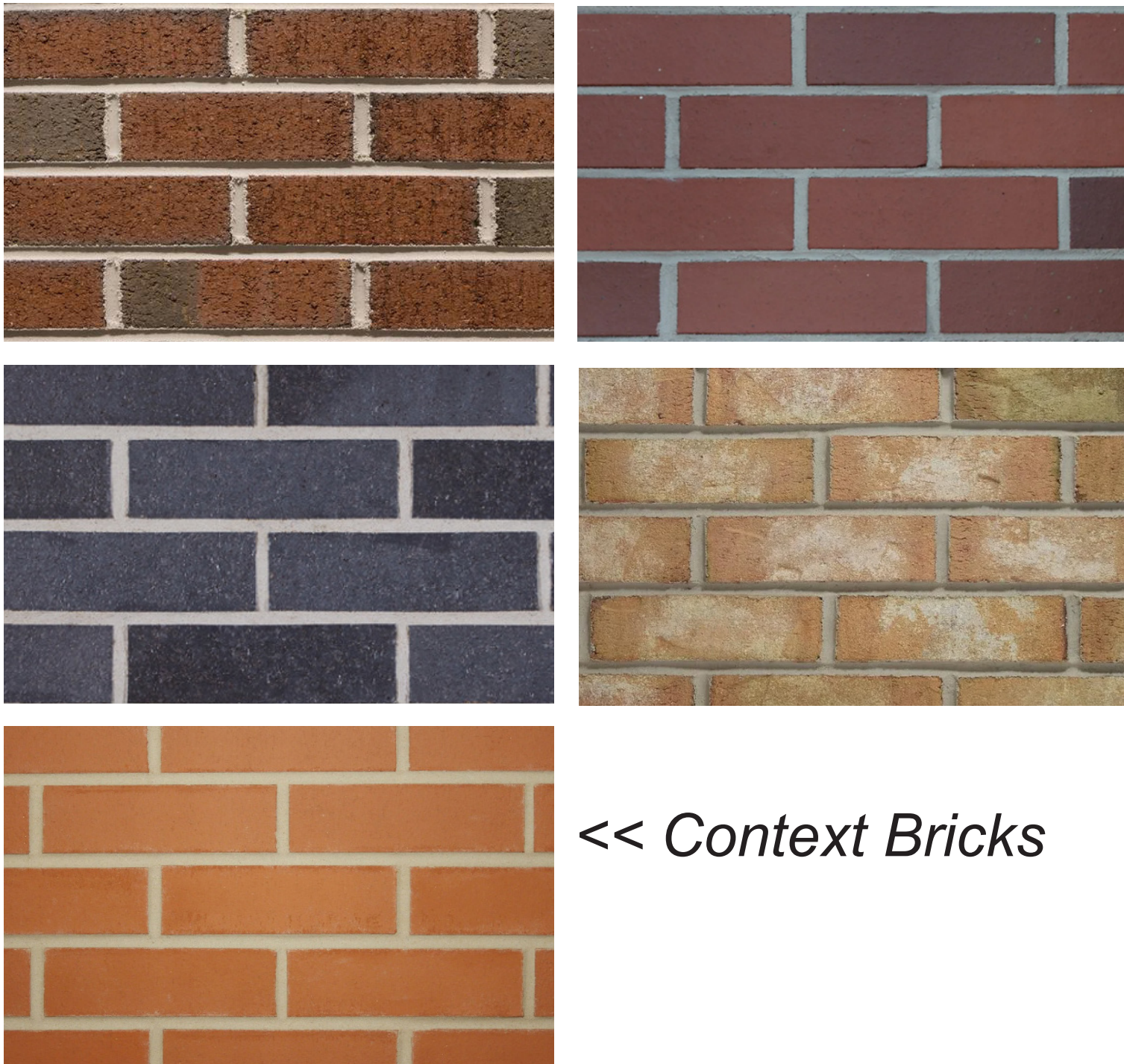
Palmetto Brick  
Red Smooth

All brick information received from brick supplier.

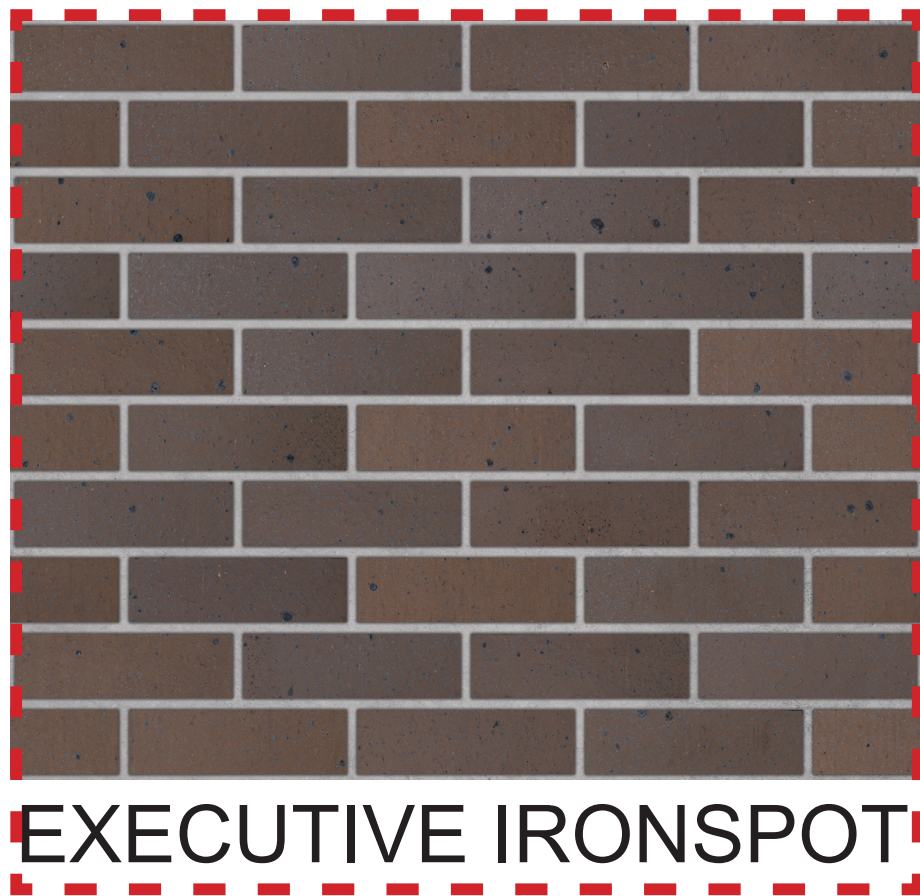


BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036

BRICK COLOR



<< Context Bricks



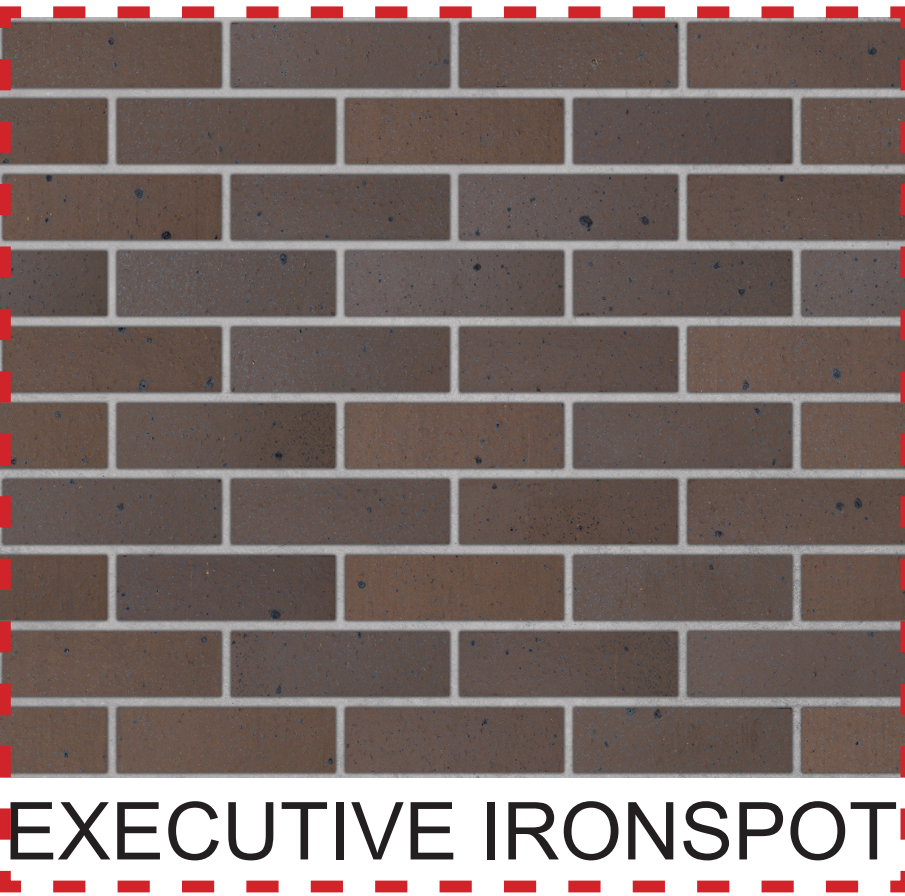
Executive Ironspot: *Deep, Rich, Earthy*

The Executive Ironspot amplifies a deep, rich tone and sophistication to the facade. Its natural warmth and elegance complements the surrounding palettes of reds, light browns, and blacks, while adding a subtle contrast and depth.



BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036

BRICK COLOR



# BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036

## BRICK COLOR



EXISTING REFERENCE VIEW



PARKWAY VIEW ENTERING ALEXANDRIA



EXISTING REFERENCE VIEW



PARKWAY VIEW EXITING ALEXANDRIA

# BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036

## VERTICALITY AND FLATNESS

2

Minimize the verticality and strength of the addition.

### APPLICANT RESPONSE

To minimize the verticality of the new addition and address the appearance of unsupported piers, we've extended the horizontal element through the outer bays, ensuring that the outermost columns are visually and structurally supported.

To soften its presence and reduce its perceived mass, we've set back the two end bays by 8 inches, breaking the Western facade into three distinct segments.



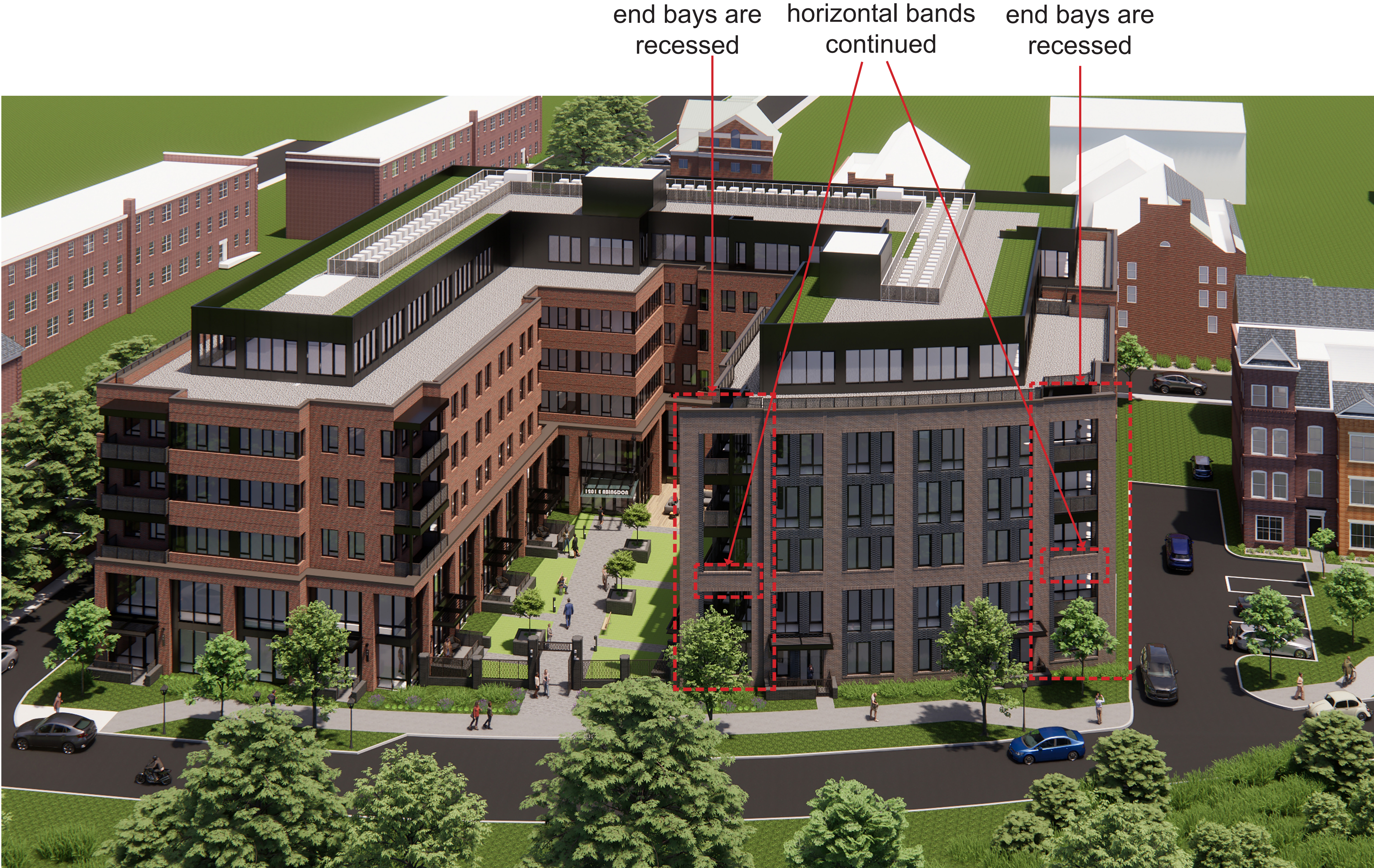
PERSPECTIVE VIEW - APRIL 2025



PERSPECTIVE VIEW - MAY 2025

BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036

VERTICALITY AND FLATNESS



BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036

VERTICALITY AND FLATNESS

Parkway Context

A view of the prominently vertical buildings along the George Washington Parkway while entering Alexandria.



**BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036**  
**WRAPPING THE NEW ADDITION WEST FACADE**

- 3 Study the relationship of the West facade with the North and South facades of the addition.

**APPLICANT RESPONSE**

The window walls on the North and South facades have been replaced with an additional bay of brick and windows, recessed to provide movement and interest. This modification is more contextually appropriate with the adjacent townhome bays and works to connect the Western facade with the rest of the addition.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW - APRIL 2025



PERSPECTIVE VIEW - MAY 2025

**BAR COMMENTS - BAR2025-00035 & BAR2025-0036**  
**WRAPPING THE NEW ADDITION WEST FACADE**

narrower hyphen  
between Western and  
Southern facade

replaced storefront  
with a fourth recessed  
bay

