

*******DRAFT MINUTES*******

Board of Architectural Review
Wednesday, November 5, 2025
7:00 p.m., City Council Chambers
City Hall

Members Present: Nastaran Zandian, Chair
Theresa del Ninno, Vice-Chair
Bud Adams
Margaret Miller
Frances Pratt
Andrew Scott
James Spencer

Members Absent: None

Secretary: William Conkey, Historic Preservation Architect

Staff Present: Brendan Harris, Historic Preservation Planner

1 **Call to Order**

The Board of Architectural Review was called to order at 7:00 p.m. All members were present.

2 **Minutes**

Consideration of the minutes of the October 16, 2025 Board of Architectural Review Public Hearing.

BOARD ACTION: On a motion by Ms. del Ninno, the Board of Architectural Review approved the minutes of the October 16, 2025 meeting as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

Consent Calendar

- 3 BAR #2025-00391 - Parker Gray
Request for alterations at 1605 Cameron Street. (Parcel Address: 1501 Cameron Street)
Applicant: City of Alexandria Department of General Services represented by Frank J. Delimba

BOARD ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Spencer, seconded by Mr. Scott, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR#2025-00391 as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

REASON: The Board agreed with staff's recommendation.

SPEAKERS: None

DISCUSSION: None

Unfinished Business and Items Previously Deferred

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BAR#2025-00370 - OHAD

Request for alterations at 301 King Street and 108 North Fairfax Street.

Applicant: City of Alexandria represented by Lisa Lettieri, Architect

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 north east 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 stair. 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.

New Business

- 5 BAR #2025-00382 - Parker Gray
Request for alterations at 313 North Fayette Street.
Applicant: Richard Hakala

BOARD ACTION: On a motion by Ms. Miller, seconded by Mr. Scott, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR#2025-00382 as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 5-2 with Mr. Spencer and Ms. Del Ninno voting no.

REASON:

Mr. Spencer felt there was not enough deliberation. Ms. Del Ninno did not like the precedent.

SPEAKERS:

Richard Hakala, the owner, was available to answer questions.

Christine Roberts, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke against the project. She said that HAF wants *Design Guidelines* to be followed. She also noted that she has sash kit windows in her house and they're fine. She understands that the Board may find the Marvin window lines appropriate. Since there are two similar cases tonight, she feels that the *Design Guidelines* should be studied more closely and perhaps be updated. Mr. Hakala asked who Ms. Roberts was and why she could give her opinion on his windows. Mr. Scott explained.

Tom Patterson, President and Founder of The Window Man, gave a presentation explaining the differences between insert and full frame windows, noting that in this case, inserts will show more glass; they are specifically manufactured to not look like inserts. They also fit better into the existing windows, which were installed in the 1990s and are of an inferior make. He also explained that in the past, staff would administratively approve this type of window replacement.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Pratt asked what the existing windows are. Mr. Patterson explained that they are made of a cheap Ponderosa pine, which tends not to hold up well, and are double-hung with compression vinyl jamb liners, which are notorious for leaking. They were installed in 1999.

Ms. Zandian asked where the windows would be installed. Mr. Hakala told her the front and back of the house, replacing existing windows.

Mr. Scott asked Mr. Conkey if the reason that this case is coming to hearing is because staff used to approve insert windows administratively and they no longer do? Mr. Conkey advised yes. Mr. Scott then asked if the proposed windows comply with the window policies. Mr. Conkey advised yes, that it's coming to the Board because it's an insert window on a Later building. Mr. Scott asked if staff had approved this type of window previously, and Mr. Conkey advised that yes, insert windows were formerly reviewed and approved by staff, but the *Design Guidelines* were changed to require Board approval.

Mr. Spencer explained that the *Design Guidelines* were changed because too many windows were getting approval.

Mr. Patterson noted in the past, window applicants provided samples to the Board, and Al Cox and his staff went to the sites to determine approval. They do order full frame wood windows for older homes. Window choice depends on the age of the house.

Ms. Del Ninno asked if Marvin makes a sash kit and asked if that was considered. Mr. Patterson replied that they stopped doing that as they failed miserably. Some companies still make sash kits

but Al Cox is the only customer he knows of who is happy with them. Everyone else has complained about them.

Mr. Scott asked if the windows would have external muntins. Mr. Patterson explained that they will replicate what is there: SDL windows, which have muntins inside between the glass as well as outside on the exterior.

- 6 BAR #2025-00392 - OHAD
Request for alterations at 414 Pitt Mews.
Applicant: Zachary and Marlene Stern

BOARD ACTION: On a motion by Ms. Zandian and seconded by Mr. Scott, the Board voted to approve BAR2025-00392 with staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 5-2 with Mr. Spencer and Ms. Del Ninno voting no.

REASON:
The Board supports staff's recommendation.

SPEAKERS:
Zachary Stern, the applicant, presented the application.

Christine Roberts, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, said that if the Board is seeing new window products that make it so that we don't have to have the automatic prohibition in the guidelines, maybe the Board should consider revisiting the guidelines that say insert windows aren't appropriate. That way, everybody won't have to come to the Board for something that the Board is consistently deeming appropriate.

DISCUSSION:
Mr. Spencer said that the design guidelines committee presented the window guidelines to the Board which said that insert windows are not acceptable.

Mr. Conkey informed the Board that he is planning to put together a workshop on insert windows during a future hearing, to present insert window samples and in-depth information to help the Board make a decision on whether to modify the guidelines.

Mr. Scott said he supports this application for the same reason as the prior one that the Board approved – because this insert window has such a small difference between a replacement window and an insert window, about less than half an inch on each side, it's fiberglass, and it's a Later building. He said that in his judgment, this is an insert window he can support in the historic district, but he would not support every type of insert window.

Ms. Del Ninno said the reason she had a problem with insert windows on the design guidelines committee is the layered sill that looks like an applique.

Mr. Spencer said he has an issue with the 5/8 inch of window being reduced, as well as the window sill which looked horrible on the last insert window the Board approved.

Ms. Pratt said she is inclined to approve this insert window because of how far back from the street this house is – it will barely be visible.

Mr. Stern showed the Board an example of another insert window on Oronoco Street and asked whether that was the type of window the Board has objections to or only the Marvin windows.

Ms. Zandian asked the applicant to confirm that the windows being replaced are on the front of the building but located in an alley. Mr. Stern responded affirmatively. Ms. Zandian said she can support the application because it's in an alley.

Mr. Spencer asked if this is a series of houses or one big house. Mr. Harris responded that it's a row of houses. Mr. Spencer said this is a slippery slope because if you approve these windows on the end unit, how do you tell the other units they can't have it?

Mr. Scott said he is fine with the window on this particular house.

Ms. Zandian said that if the Board approves this window on one unit, it doesn't mean they have to approve it on the other units.

- 7 BAR #2025-00182 - OHAD
Request for alterations at 229 North Alfred Street.
Applicant: Megan Gentry represented by Rasca Sisowath

BOARD ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Spencer, seconded by Mr. Scott, the Board of Architectural Review voted to deny BAR#2025-00182. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

REASON:
The Board supports staff's recommendation.

SPEAKERS:
Megan Gentry, property owner, explained project and was available to answer questions.
Christine Property, HAF, spoke in support of staff recommendation.

DISCUSSION:
Ms. Pratt asked for clarification of door material.

- 8 BAR #2025-00406 - OHAD
Request for alterations and signage at 111 North Pitt Street.
Applicant: Ghazal Amir represented by Scott McGhee

BOARD ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Spencer, seconded by Chair Zandian, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR#2025-00406 as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

Conditions of Approval

1. The applicant must work with staff to finalize the final design of the door, preferably something like an 18-panel door.

REASON:

The Board found the door in the specifications to be unsuitable, but they liked the door in the renderings.

SPEAKERS:

Scott McGhee, project architect, gave a brief introduction noting that most of the proposed work was interior, and there is a small bit of exterior work. He was available to answer questions.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Pratt noted that in the renderings, the doors look like traditional wooden doors, but they look different in the material specs. They look like they're from the rustic southwest. The same goes for the lantern lights; she did not know which was correct. Mr. McGhee advised that he does not think that they will be able to get the door shown in the specifications, as the size will not work. They will try to find a salvage door close to this or get a new door that has some level of detail like an 18-panel door. They do want to install the lights shown in the specifications.

Ms. Pratt asked how Mr. McGhee saw that lantern fitting into Old Town. Mr. McGhee doesn't want to replicate other buildings. Instead, he and his team want to be a little bit different in a tasteful way. There have been two other restaurants in this location so they need to do something to set themselves apart from those prior businesses.

Ms. Del Ninno asked what the material around the surround is. Mr. McGhee said it will be wood, probably an epee type wood that shows the wood and is durable and holds up to weathering.

Mr. Scott asked if the decorative stones asked if they would be precast concrete. Mr. McGhee said no, that they would put actual stones there. Mr. McGhee also noted that this is not on the street; it is set back.

Mr. Spencer expressed concern about not knowing what door will be installed. The light fixtures are fine and are better than what is there now. He did not want to approve the case without a definitive door. He prefers the door in the rendering to the door in the specs. Mr. Scott suggested a deferral. Mr. Conkey suggested that the applicant work with staff on final selection of the door, following any recommendations that the Board may have. Or the Board could approve with the condition that the door in the rendering be installed by the applicant. Mr. McGhee asked if the Board would be okay with an 18-panel door. Board members agreed that would be fine.

- 9 BAR #2025-00407 - Parker Gray
Request for alterations at 415 North Peyton Street.
Applicant: Emily Lapp

BOARD ACTION: On a motion by Chair Zandian, seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR#2025-00407 as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

REASON:

The Board supports staff's recommendation.

SPEAKERS:

Emily Lapp, applicant, available to answer questions.

Christine Property, HAF, spoke in support of staff recommendation.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. del Ninno described project and clarified that the bricks will be retained and reused.

Ms. Zandian expressed support for the design.

Other Business

- 10 BAR #2025-00305 - OHAD
Request for a concept review at 333 North Fairfax Street.
Applicant: Ken Wire

BOARD ACTION: The Board of Architectural Review accepted a deferral of the proposed concept review at 333 North Fairfax Street.

11 **Adjournment**

The Board of Architectural Review Public Hearing was adjourned at 10:45 p.m.