

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE # 2012-0210

BAR Meeting
July 18, 2012

ISSUE: Concept Approval

APPLICANT: Alexandria City Public Schools

LOCATION: 1501 Cameron Street

ZONE: RB/Residential & POS/Public Open Space

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends deferral of the application for further study with the following findings:

1. That the site layout, scale, mass, and height of the school are appropriate; and
2. That the applicant restudy the architectural character of the school to create a contemporary building which incorporates more direct stylistic references to historic buildings within the district and the surrounding area, similar in quality and detail to the recent Moderne design alternative.

*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE: In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official 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.

**BUILDING PERMIT NOTE: Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire 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, 703-838-4360 for further information.

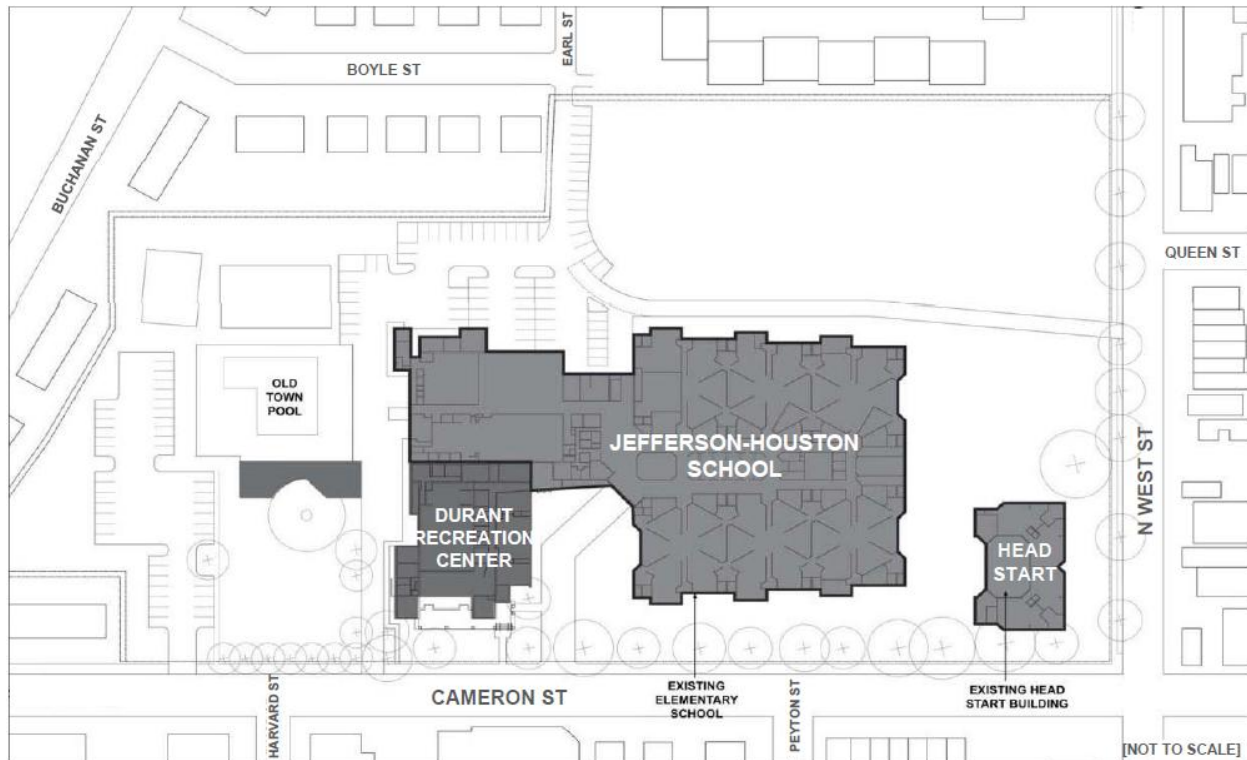


CASE BAR2012-0210



I. ISSUE

The applicant is requesting Concept Review for a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a new Jefferson Houston PreK-8th grade community centered school at 1501 Cameron Street. The school will occupy a site co-shared by Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) and the City of Alexandria Department of Recreation Parks and Cultural Affairs (RPCA) at the corner of Cameron and North West streets. The site encompasses the existing school, Head Start building, Oswald Durant Center, the Old Town Swimming Pool, and Buchanan City Park.



Existing Site Plan

Enrollment in the ACPS system has increased significantly in recent years and the trend is expected to continue. According to a facilities report by ACPS in 2009, the existing Jefferson Houston School is in poor condition and the cost of repair is excessive. Furthermore, the layout of the c.1970 era school is incompatible with contemporary teaching philosophy – it has classrooms with no natural lighting, no storage and half height walls allowing distracting sound transmission between classrooms. The proposed building will be larger than the existing building and will help accommodate the City’s growing elementary and middle school student body. Jefferson Houston is also an International Baccalaureate school and the new facility will be built with this unique curriculum in mind.

The time frame for the construction of the new school is condensed, as planning for a new school began in early 2010. The current projection is for construction to begin in March 2013 and building occupancy in late 2014/early 2015.

BAR Concept Review Process

The new Jefferson Houston PreK-8 School is before the Board for Concept Review, which is the first step in the Certificate of Appropriateness hearing process when a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) is also required. The Concept Review findings are advisory to the Planning

Commission and City Council and include an analysis of scale, mass and general architectural character. The Board does not take an official action, but rather defers action on the Certificate of Appropriateness while making a “finding” that the building complies with the Design Guidelines and applicable standards. The comments provided by the BAR give the applicant a level of certainty about whether a large or complex project would likely be supported by the BAR once it goes through the remainder of the City’s regulatory process. After the applicant receives Planning Commission and City Council approval, the final design of the project will be reviewed by the Parker-Gray BAR for a Certificate of Appropriateness. In this particular case, a Permit to Demolish will also be required at that time to demolish the existing school and Head Start buildings. The applicant will also seek BAR approval for alterations to the Durant Center, which will be necessary when the existing, abutting school is demolished.

The Department of Planning & Zoning has tentatively scheduled a community meeting to discuss the DSUP application sometime in September. The applicant expects the DSUP to be heard by Planning Commission and City Council in November.

ACPS/City Coordination

In September 2010, ACPS kicked-off a community focused process for the new school. Since that time, ACPS has held monthly community meetings, soliciting feedback from a variety of stakeholders – nearby residents and property owners, teachers, students, and parents. The meetings have been held at various locations around the community and at various times during the week to reach a greater audience. At a number of the meetings participants were anonymously polled in order to achieve unbiased feedback about a variety of topics – process, building location on the site, and architectural styles are just a few examples. The applicant has used this data to help guide the siting and design of the new school building.

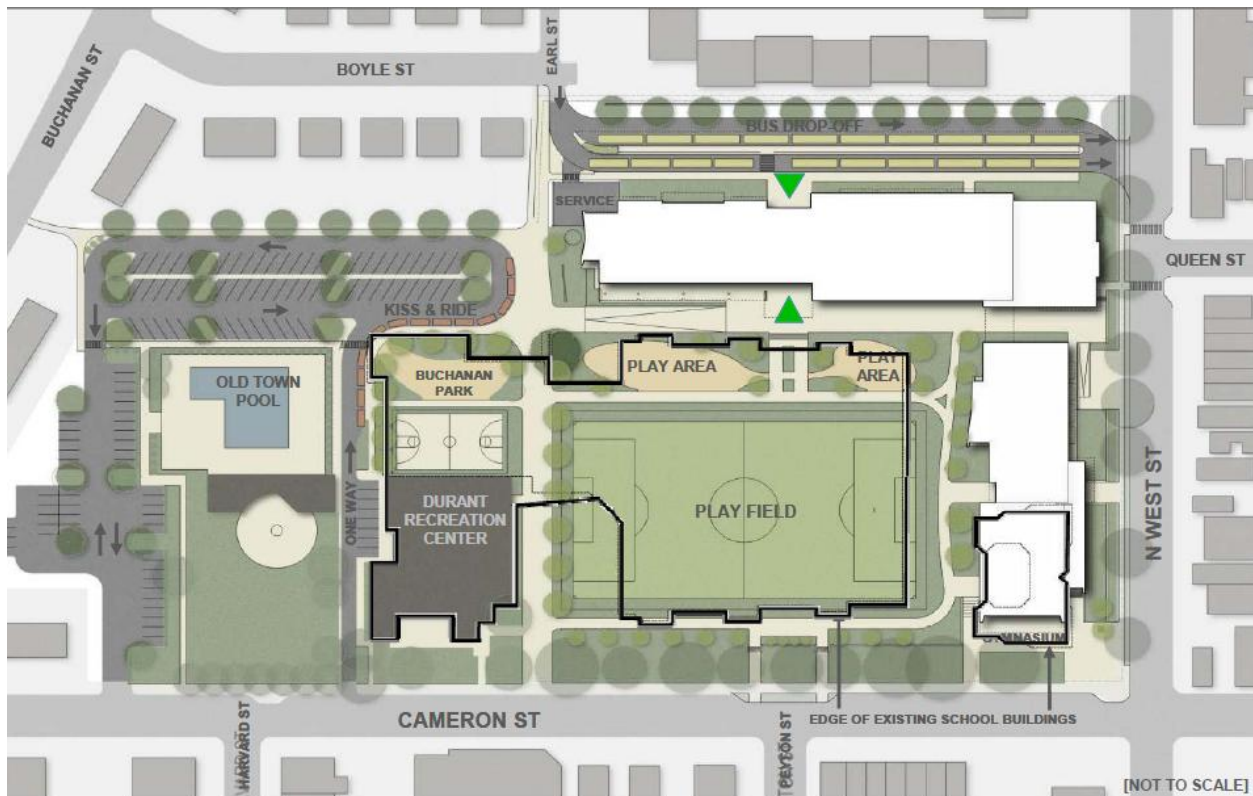
Concurrent with the public process, the applicant set up a number of other focus groups, including a Steering Committee which Planning & Zoning BAR and Development Staff has participated in. BAR Staff has attended all Steering Committee and community meetings to date.

Siting and Site Plan Layout

The applicant spent the first few months of 2012 studying the existing site and soliciting feedback from the community about potential locations for the new school (at one point over nine sites were under consideration). Ultimately, ACPS determined that, for several important reasons, the existing school needed to remain in operation during construction of the new school, thereby significantly limiting the number of viable sites. When ACPS gave the Parker-Gray BAR an information presentation on February 22, 2012, the site selection process had been narrowed down to two options: (1) an L-shaped plan with a three story east-west wing extending across the south side of Jefferson village with a two-story north-south wing along North West Street, and (2) a two-to-three story building with a rectangular footprint oriented east-west and located just south of Jefferson Village. At the informational meeting, the BAR expressed no objection to either site plan. ACPS, supported by community polling data, selected the L-shaped site plan at the end of February.

The L-shaped school will incorporate a main entrance at the interior of the site, facing Cameron Street and on axis with North Peyton Street, as one looks north across the play field from King Street. Bus drop-off will occur along the north, from a new service road parallel to Jefferson Village. Pedestrians from the east side of the site will access the main entrance from North West

Street, likely under a second story pedestrian bridge connecting the two wings of the L-shaped school. The school's gymnasium will be located on the corner of North West and Cameron Streets, in a highly visible location easily accessible to the community after school hours. On the south side of the site, the L-shaped school building and the Durant Center will frame a regulation size athletic field that will be open to view from Cameron Street. Other site improvements associated with the new school include the relocation of the existing Buchanan playground and the basketball court and reconfiguration of the parking and circulation systems to maximize usable open space and create a safe environment for the children.



L-Shaped site plan schematic

Program

While the educational program of the school is not directly related to the BAR's approvals, it does inform the exterior scale, mass and character. The existing c.1970, one-story Jefferson Houston elementary school houses approximately 350 children in 83,000 square feet. The new school will be capable of housing twice as many students (600-800) in an additional 42,000 square feet (125,000 square feet total). The portion of the building fronting North West Street will be two stories in height. The east-west wing of the building will be two stories for the first 80 feet off of North West Street, and then will step up to a third story for the remainder of the building. The school will have many state-of-the-art educational features, some of which are located so that they are easily accessible to the community after school hours, including:

- Green roof
- Media center/black or white box
- Outdoor teaching gardens
- White or black box theater
- Gymnasium
- "Greenovation" lab
- Language lab

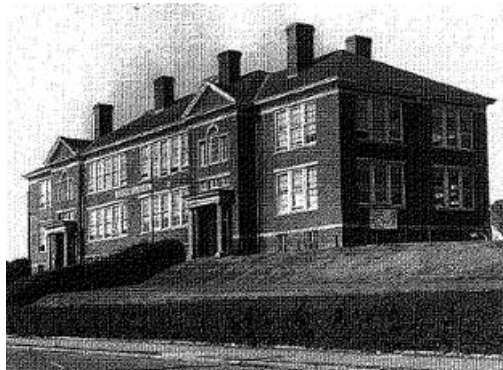
- Flexible learning pods

The ACPS is a leader in sustainable design in Alexandria and the new school will be a LEED Silver rated green building. This was a consideration in the initial site analysis for the building layout and will continue to inform exterior design features such as fenestration and materials.

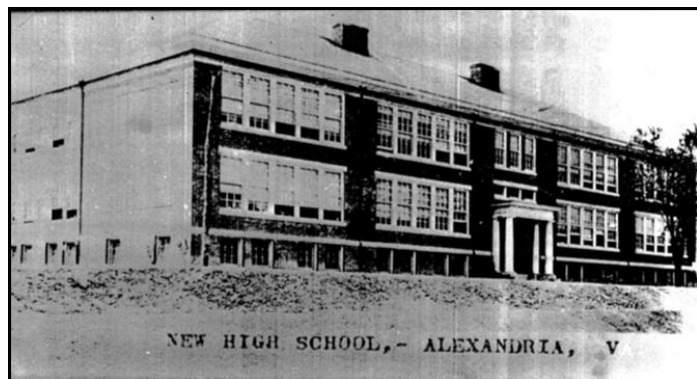
II. HISTORY

The project is located within the existing boundaries of the City's locally regulated Parker-Gray Historic District, as well as the National Register Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District. There is no period of significance defined in the local Parker-Gray historic district. Although the National Register nomination does have a period of significance, (c.1810-1959), the majority of the existing buildings on the property – the school (c.1970), the Head Start building, the pool and pool house – are considered non-contributing structures. The only historically significant building on the site is the one-story, six-bay Colonial Revival style Durant Center, which was designed by architect Ward Brown and constructed in 1942 as a USO club for white members of the armed forces. It was one of three USO club houses built in Alexandria during the war and one of the first club houses of this kind constructed in the United States. The Cameron Street USO building was transferred to the City in 1946 and has been renamed the "Dr. Oswald Durant Memorial Center for Visual/Performing Arts," in honor of an African American physician who came to the city from South Carolina in 1927 and who served in the military during World War II.¹

This site does have a long history of educational uses, as it was once home to two schools. The first to be constructed, in 1915, was the Alexandria High School (also known as the Jefferson Annex), which was located on Cameron Street at the visual terminus of North Peyton Street. The two stories with a raised basement stately school was located significantly above the street on a raised terrace. It was designed in a Georgian style with a hipped roof, Palladian windows and two prominent entrances. In 1922 a second, slightly more modest brick school was constructed on North West Street at the terminus of Queen Street. The Jefferson School (identified as New High School in the photo below) was two stories in height, with a single entrance and larger expanses of windows.



Jefferson Annex, former all White Alexandria High School



¹ Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District National Register Nomination, 2007. Terry Necciai

BAR Case History

The only recent BAR approval Staff was able to locate for this site was for an addition to the Durant Center, which included the physical connection between the Jefferson Houston School and the Durant Center. Until the mid-2000's the school abutted the recreation center but there was no interior connection between the two buildings. In 2005, the BAR approved an addition to the east elevation of the Durant Center allowing for new community meeting rooms and a physical connection to the school (BAR Case # 2002-0261 and 262, October 23, 2002).

On February 22, 2012, the applicant gave an information presentation to the BAR to introduce the present school project and give a status update on the site selection process.

III. ANALYSIS

In a concept review, the first phase of Certificate of Appropriateness review when other parallel regulatory approvals are required, the Board is confirming early in the design phase that the proposal complies with the Board's standards and Guidelines -- without getting into small details of the design. During this phase, the Board need only find that the proposed height, scale, building mass, solid/void relationship (fenestration pattern), and general architectural character, are appropriate and visually compatible with the historic context of the Parker-Gray Historic District. Taking this approach, the applicant does not vest an inordinate amount of time and expense obtaining DSUP approval for a building that is too tall or out of character with its historic context and might then be subject to future denial by the BAR. The applicant will return for final design approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness after City Council approves the DSUP.

BAR Staff has no objection to the height or scale of the proposed community school. While it is an indisputably large, civic building, it generally sits well on the site, frames a substantial green open space on the interior and provides a two story tall urban edge on North West Street. The three story portion of the building abuts the two story Jefferson Village complex to the north which sits up on a substantial berm and will be separated by a wide, landscaped private street used only by school buses. The two wings, connected by a bridge, allow the building masses to have a slightly different character and provide architectural interest for these long walls while still using the same design language to tie the school together, rather than appearing to be a "village" of disparate buildings.

However, Staff has significant concerns about the architectural character of the school, as it was originally submitted, and will explain below how the applicant has since responded to those concerns.

Urban Design Criteria

When ACPS went to the BAR in February, Staff made a brief presentation about the history of the site and the key urban design criteria to be used in developing the new school. The Board challenged the applicant to think of Jefferson Houston as more than just a neighborhood school, and to create a new civic building for the City of Alexandria, stressing that its urban architectural character involves location on the site, design quality, and durability of the materials. The Board noted the following urban design criteria:

- Provide an urban edge along Cameron and N. West Streets;
- Honor the axial alignment of the historic school buildings once on this site to North Payne and Queen Streets by placing either a building or a formal, public open space in these locations;
- Assure compatibility with the historic district in general and the historic homes in close proximity by providing appropriate transitions in terms of height, setbacks, bay spacing and architectural details;
- Design the structure to be a proud civic building in the tradition of historic civic and institutional buildings in Alexandria. A multi-story building will also maximize visual and active outdoor space;
- Frame the open/recreational spaces with new & existing buildings so that they have a dual recreational and formal civic function. Locate open space to be visible and accessible from the street(s);
- Celebrate the historic Durant Center as a building in a park. Maximize the potential for outdoor special events near the Durant Center.

May 8, 2012: First Conceptual Elevations

The first architectural elevations of the school were unveiled at ACPS's community meeting on May 8th, 2012. The plans, below, were schematic and the applicant's goal at the meeting was to solicit feedback from the community, both about the architectural character of the exterior and on different building materials which could conceivably be used on the building skin.



May 8 Community Meeting images: Bird's eye view of the school over the play fields from the southwest



May 8 Community Meeting images: Queen Street at North West Street looking west



May 8 Community Meeting images: North West Street looking northwest

This was the first time that BAR Staff saw any exterior architectural renderings of the school and Staff and the community had a number of concerns related to the architectural character. While the design is interesting and has clear references to a mid-20th century Modernist Revival now popular in the national architectural magazines, the details and materials have absolutely nothing to do with the rich historic heritage of Old Town Alexandria and the Parker-Gray historic

district. The building that was shown may be quite appropriate in another location -- but not on this site.

Building Style

The BAR Staff strongly supports the idea of a modern school building and in no way suggests that it should be designed to look like rows of Victorian townhouses. The BAR's *Design Guidelines* specifically state that the Boards do not intend to "dilute design creativity." However, any new building in a historic district should acknowledge the architectural context in which it is located and seek to be a respectful part of the community, not overwhelm its neighbors with contrasting and alien forms. Staff has no preference for a particular style, but the Boards generally encourage an applicant to reference a building style which has some historic precedent in historic Alexandria, stick with that single stylistic reference, and then reflect those architectural details and forms in a modern way. Staff has asked the designers to create a building that is contemporary, but not trendy, and that is classic, though not Classical.

Jefferson Houston school has a civic context beyond the immediate site and the historic wood frame and red brick Victorian townhouses or the adjacent red brick early 20th century rowhouses. While the core of Old Town is best known for its early Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival and Victorian period structures from the 18th and 19th centuries, the northwest quadrant also contains many residential, religious, commercial and warehouse buildings in the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles popular during early 20th century. Buildings using these styles also extend up Mount Vernon Avenue. Therefore, Staff suggested that a contemporary version of these distinctive styles may be more appropriate inspiration for a large school building on this site than the usual Colonial or Victorian Revival styles normally favored by local townhouse developers. Staff shared many images with the applicant of historic civic, institutional and commercial buildings within the area.

Art Deco and Moderne Style Commercial Buildings

The following description is condensed from the Uptown/Parker-Gray National Register Historic District nomination's description of architecture:

About a dozen commercial buildings were built in the district with more ornamental detail in the Art Deco and Moderne styles between the 1930s and 1950s. Most of these buildings were either built for retail establishments or as motion picture theaters. The two theater buildings on corner sites along Queen Street (1120 Queen Street and 300 North Henry Street) are among the most notable examples. Although the older and smaller of the two theaters, the Capitol Theatre, built in 1939 at 300 North Henry Street, is plain in comparison to the Carver Theater, which was built in 1948. However, both buildings incorporate curved brick walls at the street corner. While the Capitol Theatre building is a simple flat-roofed cubic form with a curved corner, the Carver Theater (later called the King's Palace) uses the curved brick forms to create an undulated façade that appears to be layered with curved walls placed symmetrically around a corner entrance. A block or two east of the theater buildings, at 301-305 North Patrick Street, architect Paul S. Lubienski designed a new building for the Royal Meat Market in 1941. Instead of curved forms, here the Art Deco style is expressed by way of rocket-like buttresses with stone-capped stepped tops. Although all three buildings have been modified to retrofit them to new uses, the Carver Theater retains more integrity than the Capitol Theatre and Royal Meat Market buildings. At the Royal Meat Market building, the commercial display windows have been greatly reduced in

size to retrofit the building for use as an educational annex to Ebenezer Baptist Church. A good example of the stone decorative features used on steel frame buildings in the Art Deco style is found in the form of a one-story retail building at 601-603 North Columbus Street. Under construction when the 1941 Sanborn map was prepared, it was later converted to offices by reduction of the display windows and insertion of Colonial Revival details in their place. However, it still has stone pilasters with bas-relief fluting that define the building's structural bays. Other Art Deco- or Moderne-style buildings include a building apparently built in the 1950s to house an established tin shop at 600 North Henry Street, the 1931 St. Joseph's School building at 721 North Columbus Street, and six or seven less prominent examples distributed throughout the district.





George Washington Middle School

One of the design alternatives studied for North West Street was the polychrome brick Art Deco version, below. While the colors, materials and articulation of the massing are very handsome, the school’s design team and Staff both agreed that the stylistic reference was, perhaps, too literal and too closely recalled the George Washington Middle School nearby on Mount Vernon Avenue. The goal is not to design a “historic” building (a temporal impossibility) but to create a contemporary building that recalls the historic character of the neighborhood.



Art Deco design study: North West Street

Initial BAR Submission for July 18, 2012 Hearing

The applicant submitted significantly revised elevations as part of their BAR application on June 18. The building proposed a more traditional Alexandria material – brick – and began to reflect some of the Art Deco/Moderne details found on buildings within the district. However, Staff remained very concerned that the scale of the building elements – large, unrelieved expanses of curtain wall and translucent white fiberglass -- did not relate to historic buildings nearby.



Initial BAR submission for July 18, 2012 hearing: Bird’s eye view from the southwest



Initial BAR submission for July 18, 2012 hearing: West Street elevation

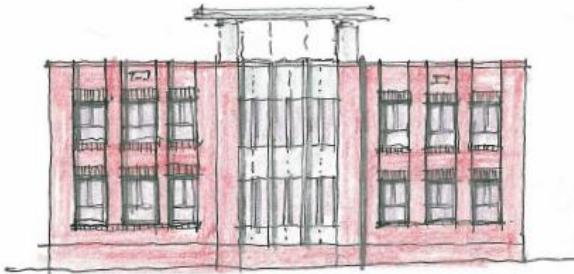


Initial BAR submission for July 18, 2012 hearing: South Entrance elevation

Subsequent Design Alternatives

After the materials were submitted, BAR staff and the applicant continued to have an ongoing dialogue about the appropriate balance of modern materials, historic references and human scale detailing. As a result, a number of progress studies have been submitted since late June. As the conceptual elevations continue to develop, Staff reiterates the importance of this civic building, in particular the following principal building elements:

Queen Street terminus: Although the main entrance to the school will be in the interior of the site, a major portion of the proposed North West Street façade will terminate the visual axis of Queen Street, though it will not be a building entrance. This portion of the building should, nevertheless, be a prominent architectural feature, just as the centrally located main entrance of the previous school visually terminated Queen Street. Civic buildings in Alexandria were often given pride of place and terminated a street axis, as do Christ Church, St. Mary’s School, the original Parker Gray School, George Washington Middle School, Aspinwall Hall, etc. Several of these buildings have towers, while others simply have a stepped parapet or material change that establishes a visual hierarchy on the facade. The termination of Queen Street will have to be carefully designed and landscaped so that it provides this civic function but does not confuse parents or children that it is an entrance. While the upper two studies below effectively terminate the street, they do so at a scale that lacks the secondary scale elements and are more appropriate to a much larger urban setting. The bottom two alternatives begin to break the building elements into a more appropriate size.



Queen Street Terminus studies

North West Street: This street wall is perhaps the most challenging, as it encompasses nearly a full block between the Queen Street terminus and the Gymnasium and must consider the scale of the modest, two-story, late Victorian period vernacular wood frame townhouses across the street. The two story building mass will be set back approximately 15' and there will be landscaped terraces along a new wider sidewalk. While the bay windows on the brick study below begin to convey a rhythm that recalls the Queen Anne townhouses to the north on West Street, the large translucent fiberglass panels would glow from within when the interior is illuminated at night and detract significantly from the historic ambiance of the neighborhood. Staff believes that this elevation requires additional study.



North West Street elevations

Gymnasium: The gymnasium at the corner of Cameron and North West Streets will be another primary focal point of the building and will be available to the community after school hours. A small plaza is planned on the south side and will improve the aesthetic quality of the walk to the school or Metro. The gym will be visible from numerous locations, and viewed by both pedestrians and automobile passengers. This portion of the school creates an urban edge on Cameron Street before the site opens up to a park like setting beyond. This southern end of the east building wing frames the open space and will visually balance and compliment the historic Durant Center building to the west, as well as terminate the southern end of the North West Street block face. Similar to the way the activity in the Charles Houston Recreation Center gymnasium is visible to pedestrian and traffic on North Patrick Street, Staff has encouraged the applicant to visually open the southern end of the gym to provide pedestrian interest at this important intersection. Staff continues to recommend windows or a masonry pattern to articulate the large masonry walls and, again, to create a more architectural interest and human scale detailing.



Building Entrances: The south building entrance must be immediately recognizable and, as an urban design feature, this entry also functions as the visual terminus to North Peyton Street and becomes the signature element of the school. It must be bold enough to be read from Cameron Street through the street trees and across the play field. While the examples below certainly perform this task, they are somewhat overwhelming and lack the secondary level of scale and detail. The dark glass curtain walls are visually heavy and the masonry surfaces lack detail relief. The elements are civic but appear more appropriate to the architectural typology of a convention center than an elementary school.



Main Entrance/North Peyton Street terminus study



Main Entrance/North Peyton Street terminus study



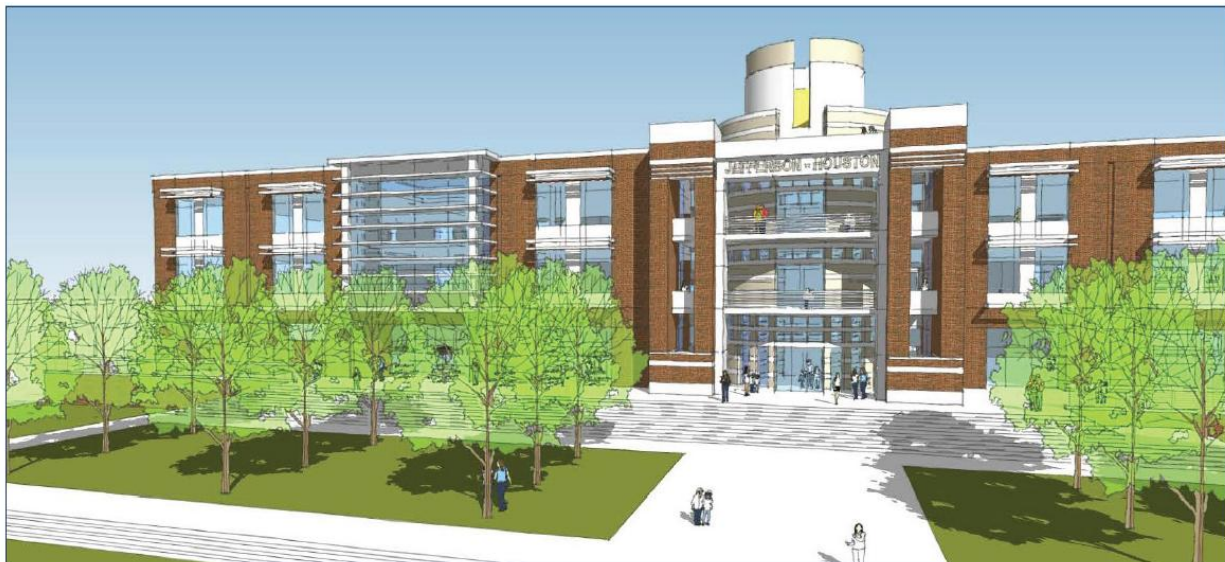
North Elevation and details

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

In the past few days, the applicant submitted an alternative that appears to successfully combine the desire for a contemporary civic building with the need to relate to the historic district. The proposed architectural detailing recalls the horizontal lines and corner windows of the Streamline Moderne style buildings in the district and surrounding area. Horizontal white lines break up the red brick building masses and provide a way for different building elements to relate to each other throughout the project. The detailing is very sophisticated and works together at multiple scales. White horizontal sun screens on the south side simply become horizontal window mullions on the north, where sun screens are not necessary. Flush windows with sun screens on the south side become bay windows on the north and these bay windows feature corner windows recalling the Moderne style, but in a very contemporary way.

A signature feature of this alternative is a rooftop observatory above the south building entrance. This observatory is potentially an outdoor classroom for children to learn about the seasons and their environment. It also extends down through the building and is visible through the entry wall. If carefully and softly illuminated at night, it would be an icon visible on axis from North Peyton Street, without disrupting the neighborhood.

Of course, this is only concept review and individual building elements will change as the design is fully developed and cost estimates are reviewed by the applicant. However, Staff believes that this alternative is, by far, the most interesting and shows the most promise for future development. The applicant will bring additional images of this alternative to the hearing for the Board's review.



JEFFERSON-HOUSTON PK-8 SCHOOL
SOUTH ELEVATION STUDY



JEFFERSON-HOUSTON PK-8 SCHOOL
NORTH ELEVATION STUDY

V. NEXT STEPS

The Board typically reviews DSUP projects at a conceptual level only once before the case is heard by Planning Commission and City Council. However, in this case, both Staff and the applicant agree that, while the height and scale of the proposed school are appropriate, the architectural character of the building is still evolving. As a result, it is the applicant's intention to return to the BAR for conceptual review a second time in the early fall.

As noted above, in addition to a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new school and alterations to the Durant Center, the applicant must obtain a Permit to Demolish for the demolition of both the Head Start building and the existing Jefferson Houston Building. Staff does not foresee any challenges with these additional approvals. As the case makes its way through the DSUP process there may be additional conditions which also apply to the school, some of which may be incorporated into the Board's review process.

Front Yard Requirement (North West Street)

According to section 3-706(A)(1), in the RB zone the front building line shall be the same as the front lot line or "such other line consistent with the character of the district that the Board of Architectural Review shall approve." Typically that character is determined by other buildings on the block. In this particular case, given the large street façade and lack of other buildings on the block, the applicant and Staff have worked together to establish a reasonable setback which provides an adequate room for retaining walls and landscaping, while still maintaining an urban edge. In addition, the setback along North West Street – an average of 15' from the property line – provides a sufficient transition between low scale residential uses on the east side of North West Street and the school on the west side of the street.

Height

As part of the Development Special Use permit, the applicant has requested that the portions of the lot zoned Public Open Space (POS) be rezoned to RB (Residential Townhouse), which the remainder of the site and the school are currently zoned. The height limit in the RB zone is 45 feet. However, zoning ordinance Section 7-2100: Increased density and height for public elementary and secondary schools also applies:

Notwithstanding any contrary provision of this ordinance, a public elementary or secondary school, located in a residential or mixed use zone, may be constructed, expanded or reconstructed to a size which exceeds the density and height otherwise permitted by the regulations in such zone; provided, that a special use permit is approved, and, provided further, that no increase in floor area ratio greater than .60, and no increase in height greater than 60 feet, shall be approved.

Staff finds that the proposed two and three story building is appropriate and compatible with the surrounding historic district. Staff also supports additional height at the main building entrance, for an observatory or other tower-like architectural feature and recommends that the BAR make this finding as recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Grading/Streetscape (North West Street)

There is a 5' grade change as the school site slopes from north to south. As a result, there will be some retaining walls, ramps and stairs along North West Street to accommodate the grade change. Staff encourages the applicant to continue to explore ways to adjust the building to follow the natural grade to keep the building as low as possible and to create a more pedestrian friendly elevation on North West Street. Staff understands that the applicant has begun to explore ways to accommodate some of the grade changes internally, resulting in slightly different massing of the building forms on West Street and reducing their scale.

Staff has no doubt that the new Jefferson Houston community school will be a very attractive, state-of-the art modern school building that not only meets the needs of today's students but also recalls architectural elements from the surrounding historic district. In the opinion of Staff, the applicants Moderne design studies show a quality of design and relationship to its historic district context that is both fresh and exciting and also has the potential to be a new landmark in the community.

STAFF

Stephanie Sample, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

VI. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Code Administration

F-1 The review by Code Administration is a preliminary review only. Once the applicant has filed for a building permit, code requirements will be based upon the building permit plans. If there are any questions, the applicant may contact Ken Granata, Acting Plan Review Supervisor at ken.granata@alexandriava.gov or 703-746-4193.

C-1 Demolition, building and trades permits are required for this project. Six sets of construction documents sealed by a Registered Design Professional that fully detail the construction as well as layout and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems shall accompany the permit application(s)

C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-3 Required exits, parking, and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11. Accessible bathrooms shall also be provided.

Transportation & Environmental Services

Recommendations:

1. Comply with all requirements of DSP2012-00011 and Site Plan. (T&ES)
2. The Final Site Plan must be approved and released and a copy of that plan must be attached to the demolition permit and building permit application(s). (T&ES)

Findings:

3. It is suggested that the Final Site Plan includes a construction phasing plan as well as a demolition plan if the Building Permits are to be applied for prior to the Demolition Permit. The Demolition Plan shall clearly represent the demolished condition. (T&ES)

Alexandria Archaeology

Open Space and Signage:

1. Hire a professional consultant to work with staff and the landscape designers to incorporate and interpret elements of the historical character and archaeological findings into the design of the open space and to prepare interpretive elements, which shall be erected as part of the development project. The site plan shall indicate themes and locations of interpretive elements. Prior to release of the final site plan, the consultant shall provide text and graphics for the signage subject to approval by the Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology and the Directors of P&Z and/or RP&CA.*
2. Design and develop a coordinated sign plan, which includes a color palette, for all

proposed signage, including, but not limited to site-related signs, way-finding graphics, business signs, and interpretive signage that highlights the history and archaeology of the site. The plan shall be included as part of the Final Site Plan and shall coordinate the location, scale, massing and character of all proposed signage to the satisfaction of the Directors of Archaeology, P&Z, and/or RP&CA, and T&ES.*

Archaeology Comments:

1. The applicant has hired URS Corp. as an archaeological consultant to complete a Documentary Study and an Archaeological Evaluation. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant shall complete a Resource Management Plan, as outlined in the City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards. Preservation measures presented in the Resource Management Plan, as approved by the City Archaeologist, will be implemented. (Archaeology)
2. The Final Site Plan, Grading Plan, or any other permits involving ground disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance) shall not be released until the City archaeologist confirms that all archaeological field work has been completed or that an approved Resource Management Plan is in place to recover significant resources in concert with construction activities. * (Archaeology)
3. Certificates of Occupancy shall not be issued for this property until interpretive elements have been constructed, interpretive markers have been erected, and the final archaeological report has been received and approved by the City Archaeologist.*** (Archaeology)

Archaeology Findings:

- F-1 The City should be aware that archaeological work shall be required for this project and funding for this work should be included in the project budget.
- F-2 In the early nineteenth century the Grimshaw-Slade Rope Walk was located in the general vicinity of the project area. A rope walk was housed in an elongated shed-like structure where cordage was spun and twisted into rope for ships. By the mid-nineteenth century, according to Civil War period maps, the subject property functioned as a commissary with a mill, an office, barns, stables, and feeding sheds. By the 1870s a portion of the property fronting on West Street between Cameron and Queen Streets was owned by one of Alexandria's more prominent citizens, Lewis McKenzie, who served as mayor of the city and in the U.S. House of Representatives. At this same time Townsend Baggett owned the remainder of the subject property. By the first decades of the twentieth century two schools were built on the property: a high school erected ca. 1915 fronting on Cameron Street, and shortly thereafter in ca. 1922 a second high school on West Street at the head of Queen Street known as Jefferson School.
- F-3 In 1998 a concentration of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century artifacts and a brick chimney base were uncovered during a grading project on the property located to the north of the existing school in the present location of the playing fields.

F-4 If this project is a federal undertaking or involves the use of any federal funding, the applicant shall comply with federal preservation laws, in particular Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The applicant will coordinate with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the federal agency involved in the project, as well as with Alexandria Archaeology.

Code:

C-1 All required archaeological preservation measures shall be completed in compliance with Section 11-411 of the Zoning Ordinance.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

1 – Supporting Materials

2 – Application for BAR2012-0210 at 1501 Cameron Street

Jefferson-Houston Elementary School

1501 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

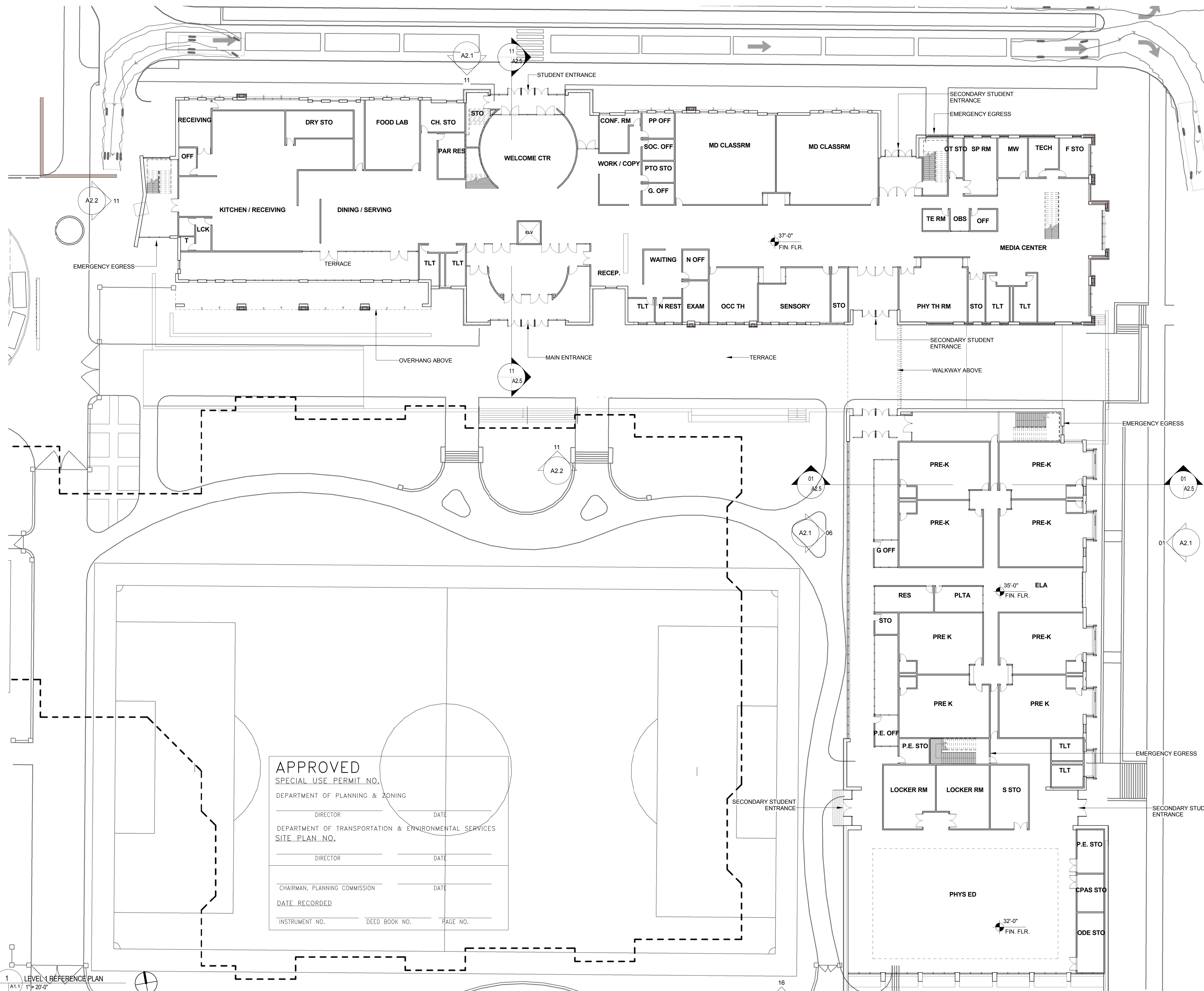
VMDO Project Number 1084

Checked By _____ Checker
Drawn By _____ Author

ISSUES AND REVISIONS
SUBMITTAL _____ DATE
CONCEPT II SUBMISSION _____ 06.22.2012

LEVEL 1 REFERENCE PLAN

A1.1



APPROVED
SPECIAL USE PERMIT NO. _____
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING
DIRECTOR _____ DATE _____
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
SITE PLAN NO. _____
DIRECTOR _____ DATE _____
CHAIRMAN, PLANNING COMMISSION _____ DATE _____
DATE RECORDED _____
INSTRUMENT NO. _____ DEED BOOK NO. _____ PAGE NO. _____

Jefferson-Houston Elementary School

1501 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

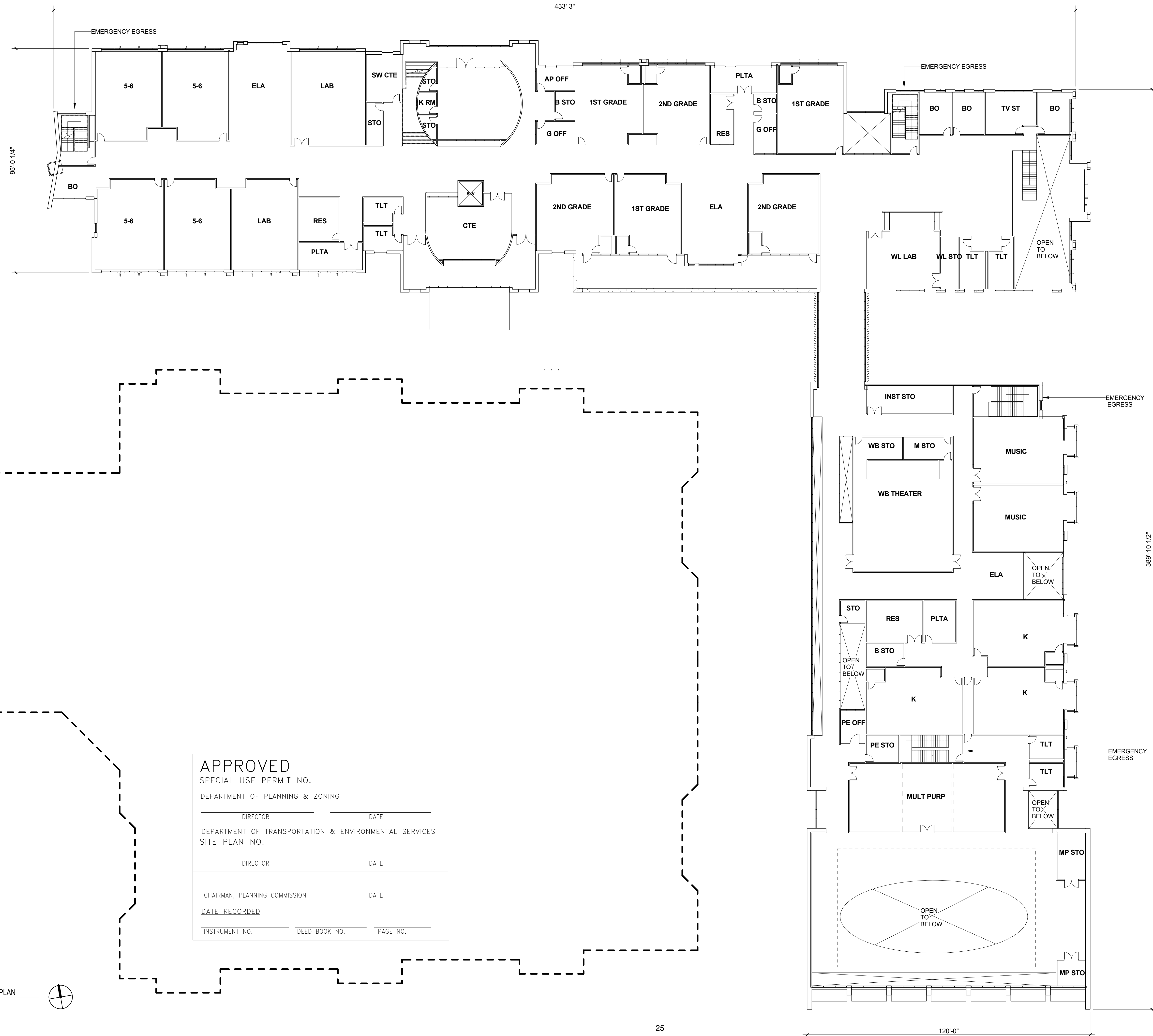
VMDO Project Number 1084

Checked By _____ Checker
Drawn By _____ Author

ISSUES AND REVISIONS
SUBMITTAL _____ DATE
CONCEPT II SUBMISSION 06.22.2012

LEVEL 2 REFERENCE PLAN

A1.2



APPROVED
SPECIAL USE PERMIT NO. _____
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING
DIRECTOR _____ DATE _____
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
SITE PLAN NO. _____
DIRECTOR _____ DATE _____
CHAIRMAN, PLANNING COMMISSION _____ DATE _____
DATE RECORDED _____
INSTRUMENT NO. _____ DEED BOOK NO. _____ PAGE NO. _____

Jefferson-Houston Elementary
School

1501 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

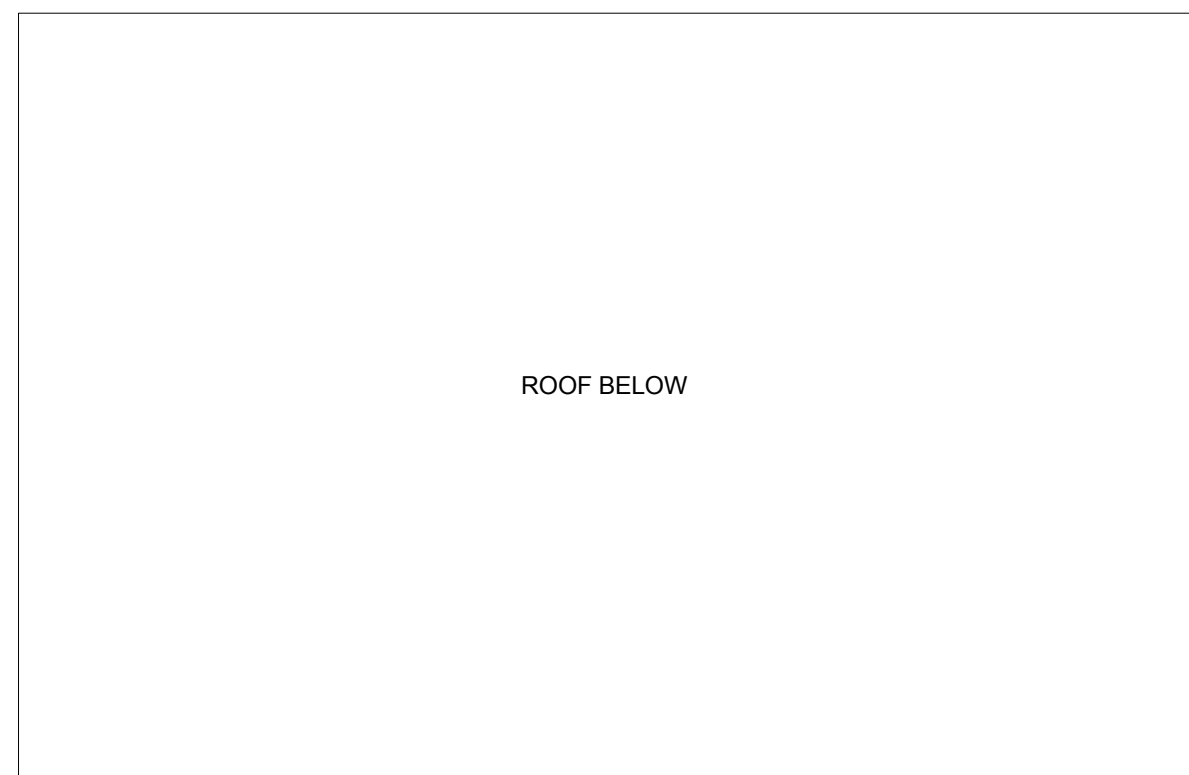
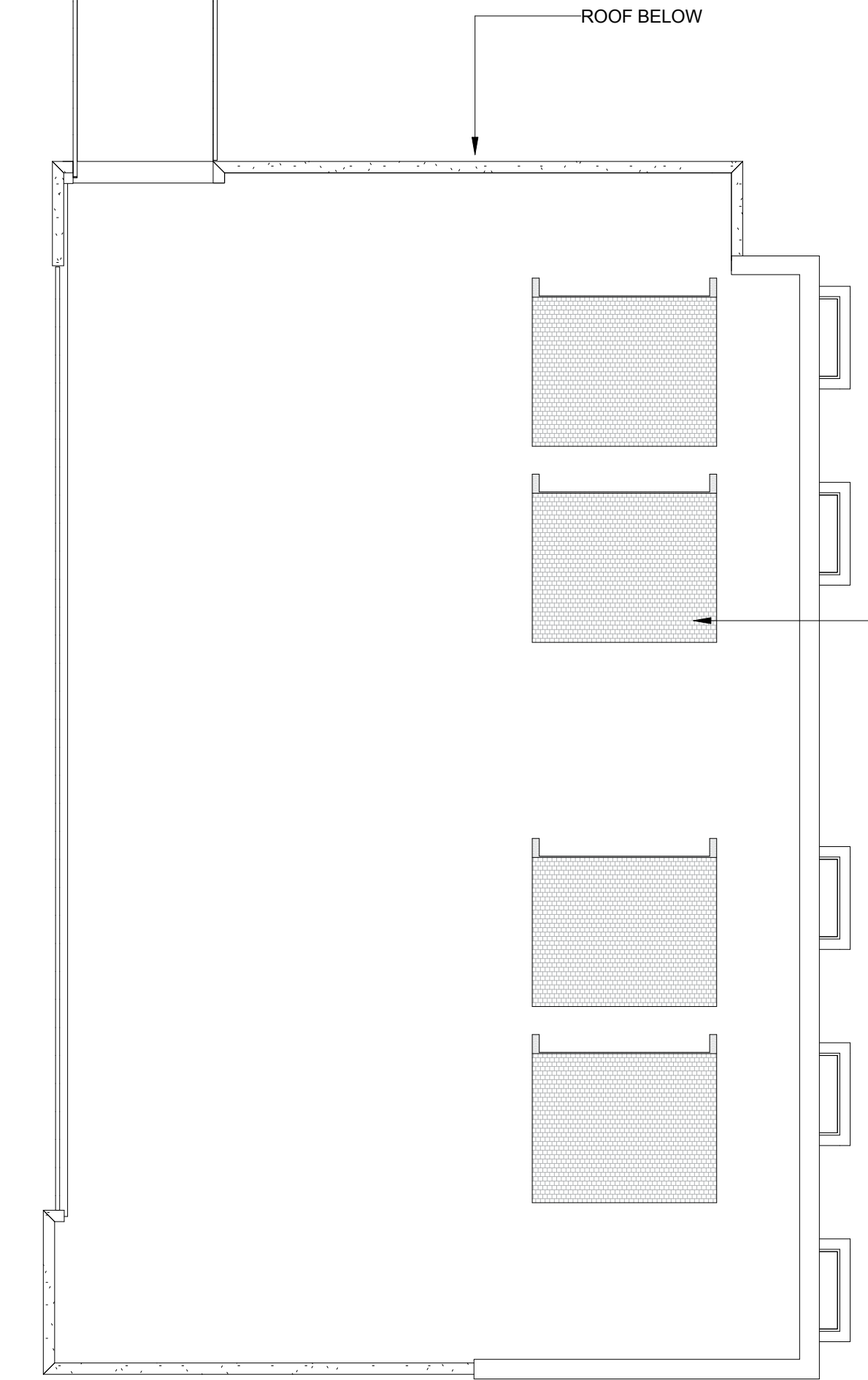
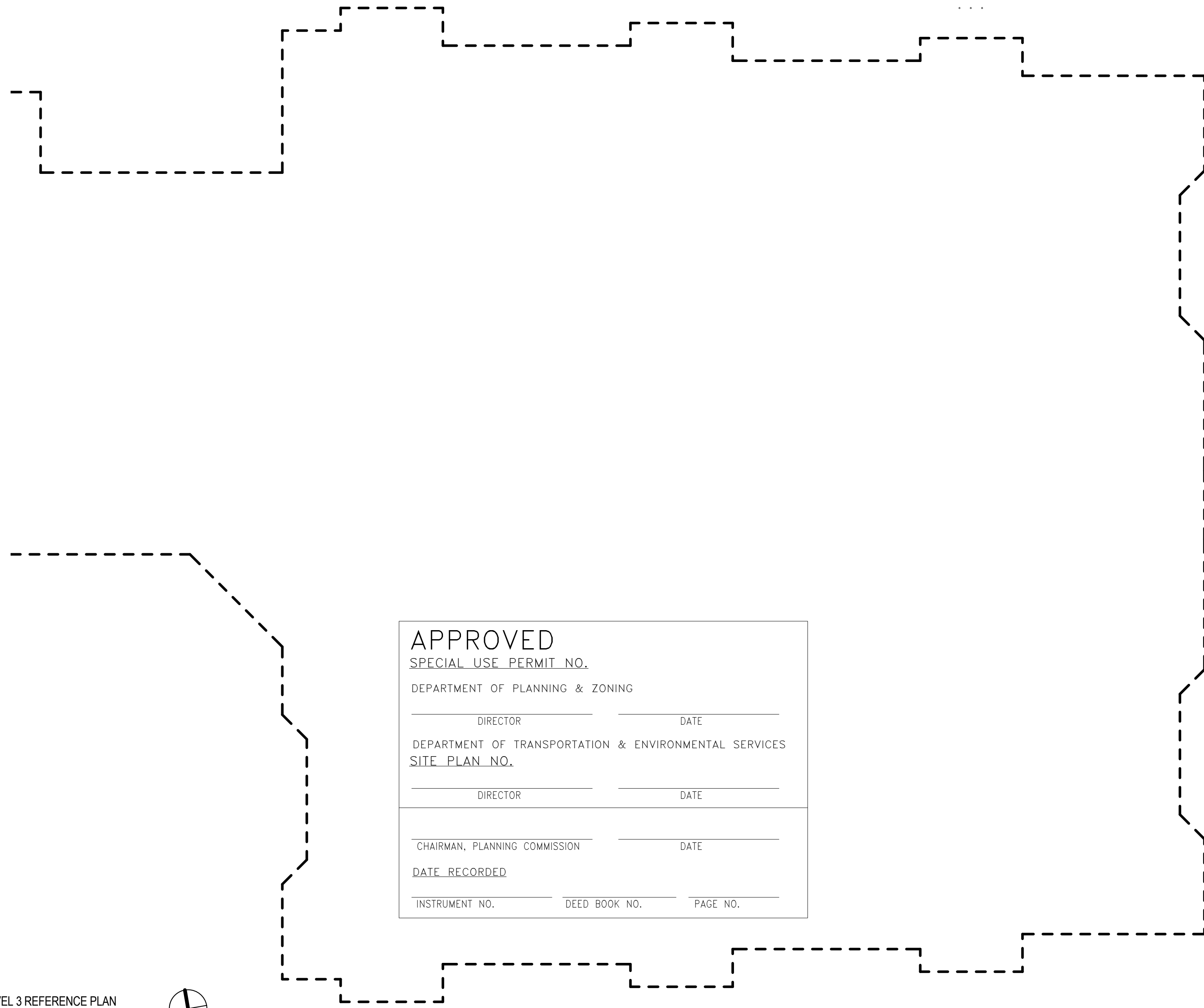
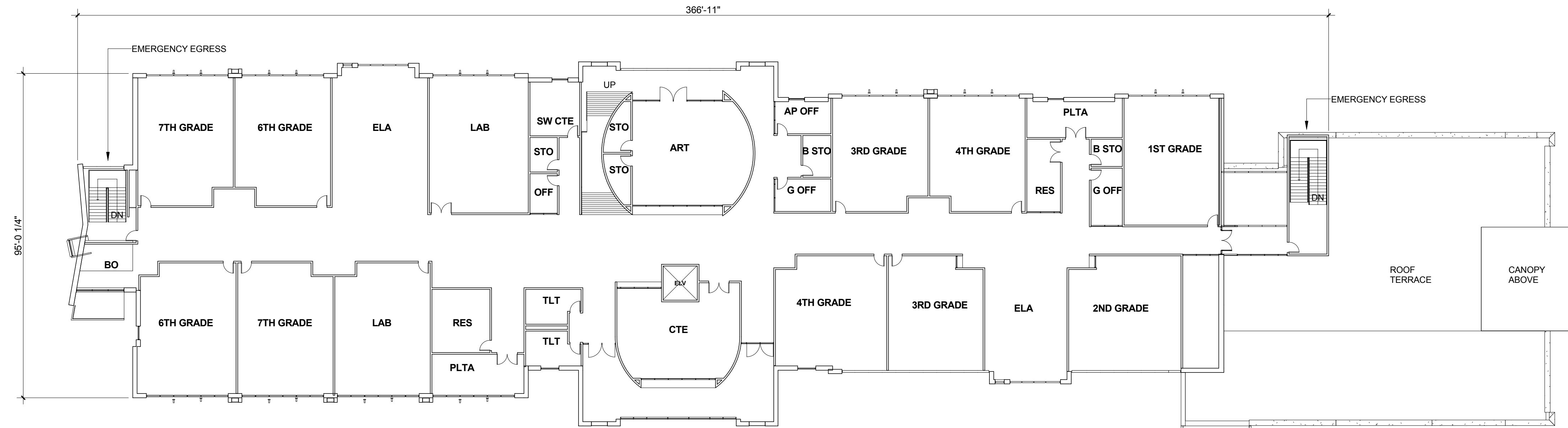
VMDO Project Number 1084

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Drawn By _____ Author

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SUBMITTAL	DATE
CONCEPT II SUBMISSION	06.22.2012

LEVEL 3 REFERENCE
PLAN

A1.3



APPROVED

SPECIAL USE PERMIT NO. _____

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

DIRECTOR _____ DATE _____

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

SITE PLAN NO. _____

DIRECTOR _____ DATE _____

CHAIRMAN, PLANNING COMMISSION _____ DATE _____

DATE RECORDED _____

INSTRUMENT NO. _____ DEED BOOK NO. _____ PAGE NO. _____

Jefferson-Houston Elementary School

1501 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

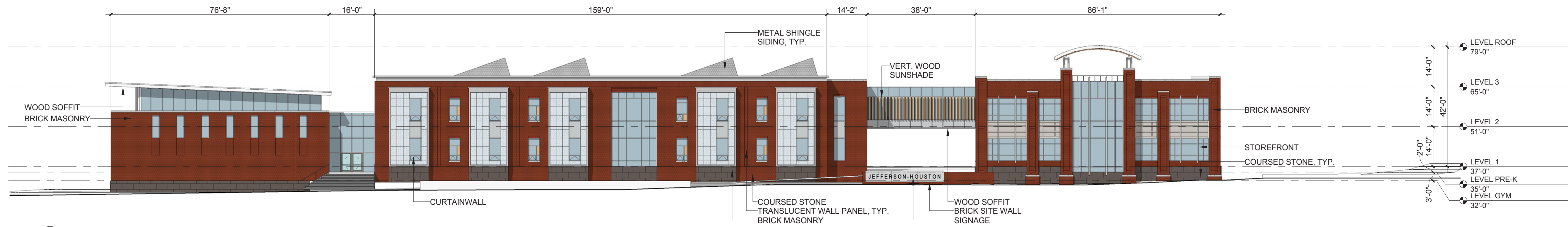
VMDO Project Number 1084

Checked By Drawn By
Checker Author

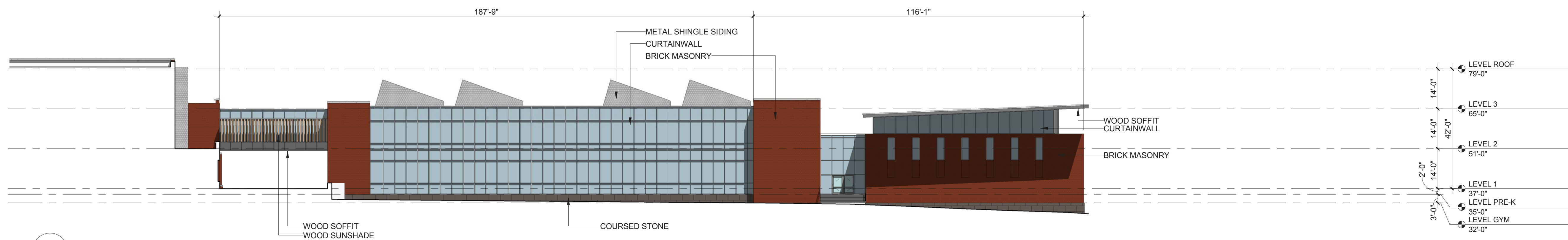
ISSUES AND REVISIONS
SUBMITTAL DATE
BAR CONCEPT SUBMISSION 06.18.2012

REFERENCE BUILDING ELEVATIONS

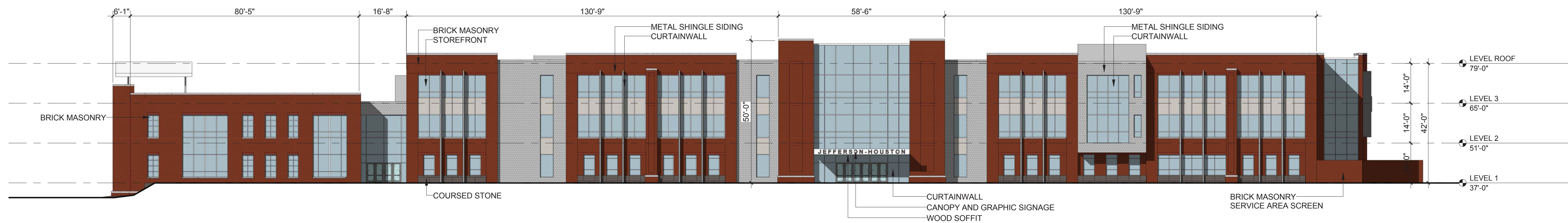
A2.1



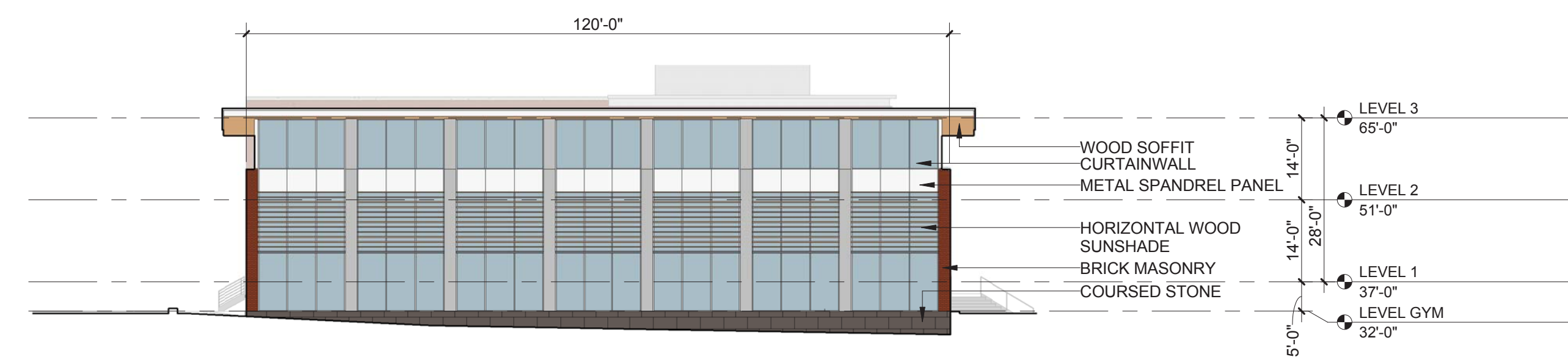
01 EAST ELEVATION
A1.1/A2.1 1" = 20'-0"



06 WEST ELEVATION
A1.1/A2.1 1" = 20'-0"



11 NORTH ELEVATION
A1.1/A2.1 1" = 20'-0"



16 SOUTH ELEVATION - GYM
A1.1/A2.1 1" = 20'-0"

Jefferson-Houston Elementary School

1501 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

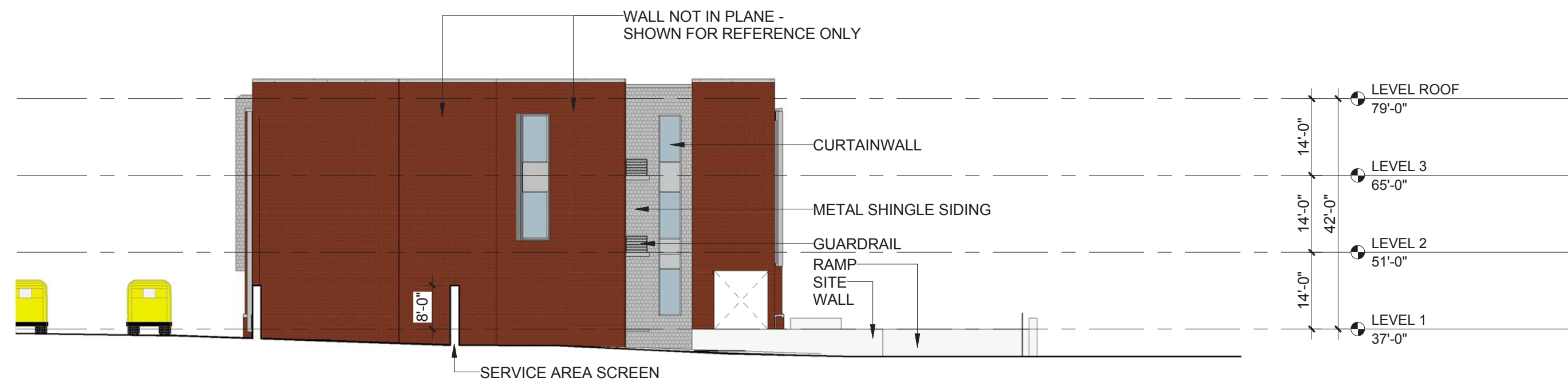
VMDO Project Number 1084

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Drawn By _____ Author

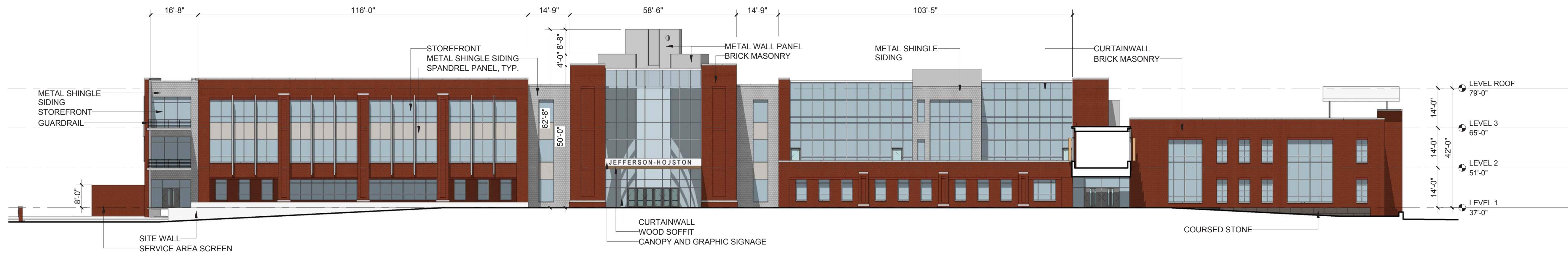
ISSUES AND REVISIONS	
SUBMITTAL	DATE
BAR CONCEPT SUBMISSION	06.18.2012

REFERENCE
BUILDING
ELEVATIONS

A2.2



01 WEST ELEVATION
A1.1/A2.2 1" = 20'-0"



06 SOUTH ELEVATION
A1.1/A2.2 1" = 20'-0"

Jefferson-Houston Elementary School

1501 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

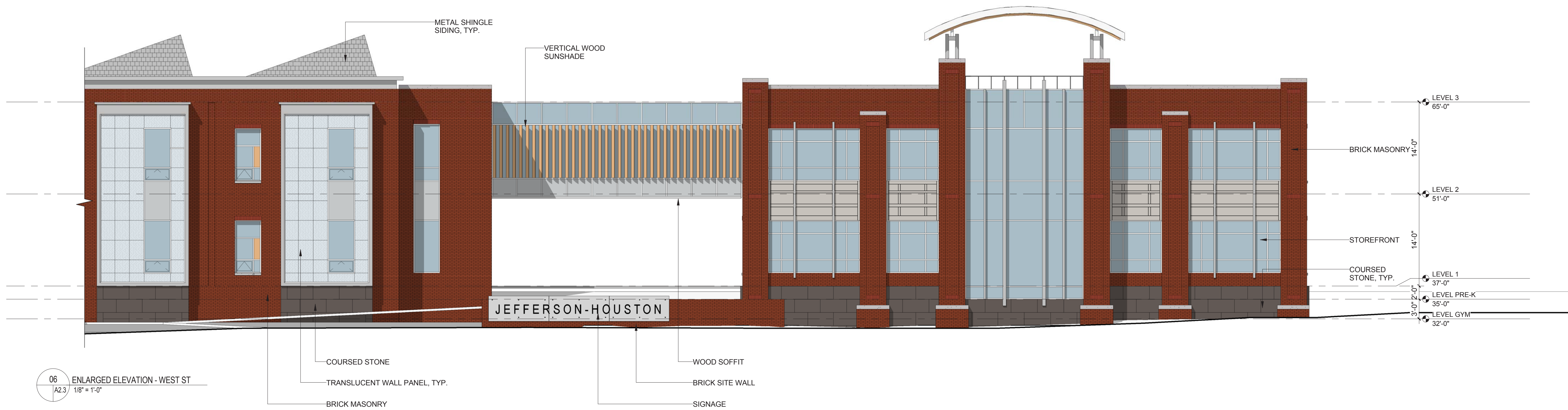
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Drawn By _____ Author

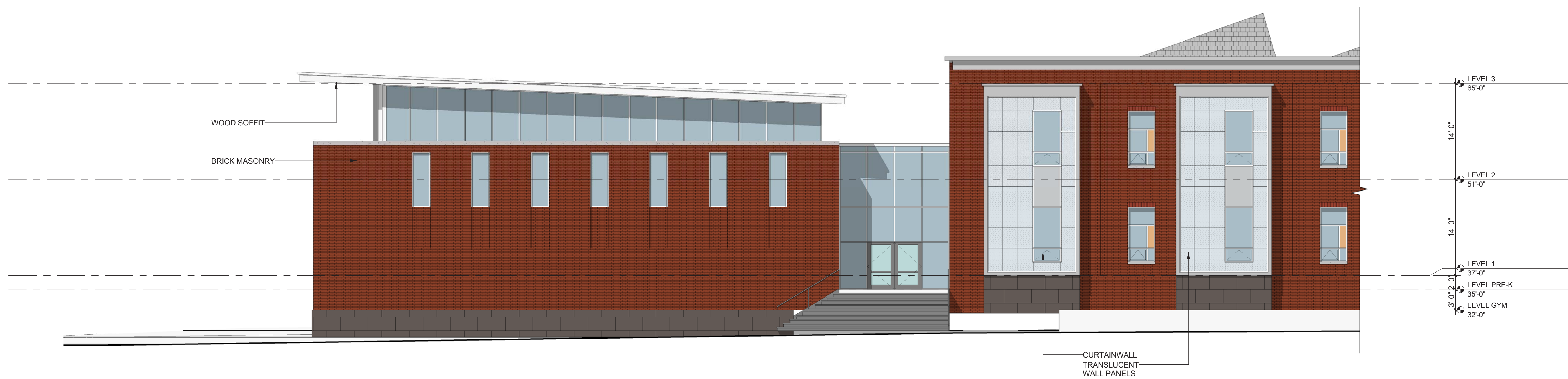
ISSUES AND REVISIONS	
SUBMITTAL	DATE
BAR CONCEPT SUBMISSION	06.18.2012

ENLARGED BUILDING ELEVATIONS

A2.3



06 ENLARGED ELEVATION - WEST ST
A2.3 1/8" = 1'-0"



16 ENLARGED ELEVATION - WEST ST
A2.3 1/8" = 1'-0"

Jefferson-Houston Elementary School

1501 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

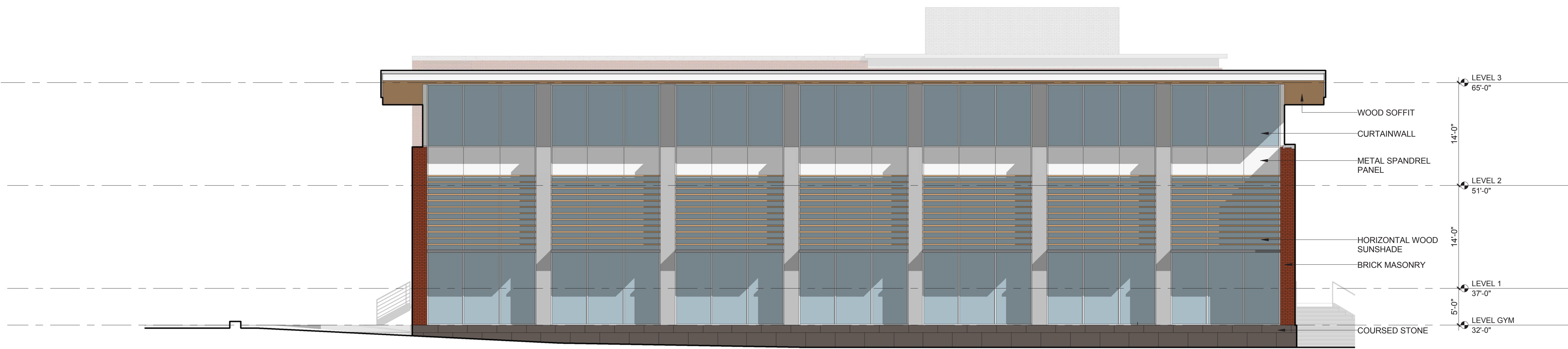
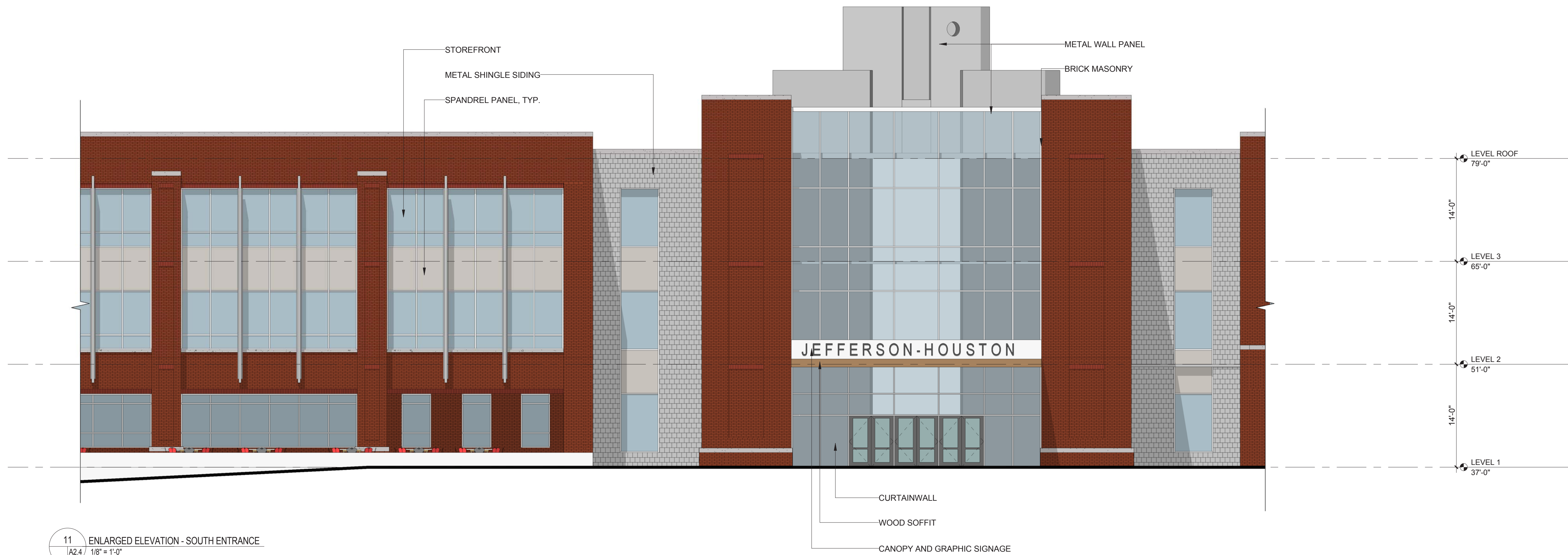
VMDO Project Number 1084

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Drawn By _____ Author

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SUBMITTAL	DATE
BAR CONCEPT SUBMISSION	06.18.2012

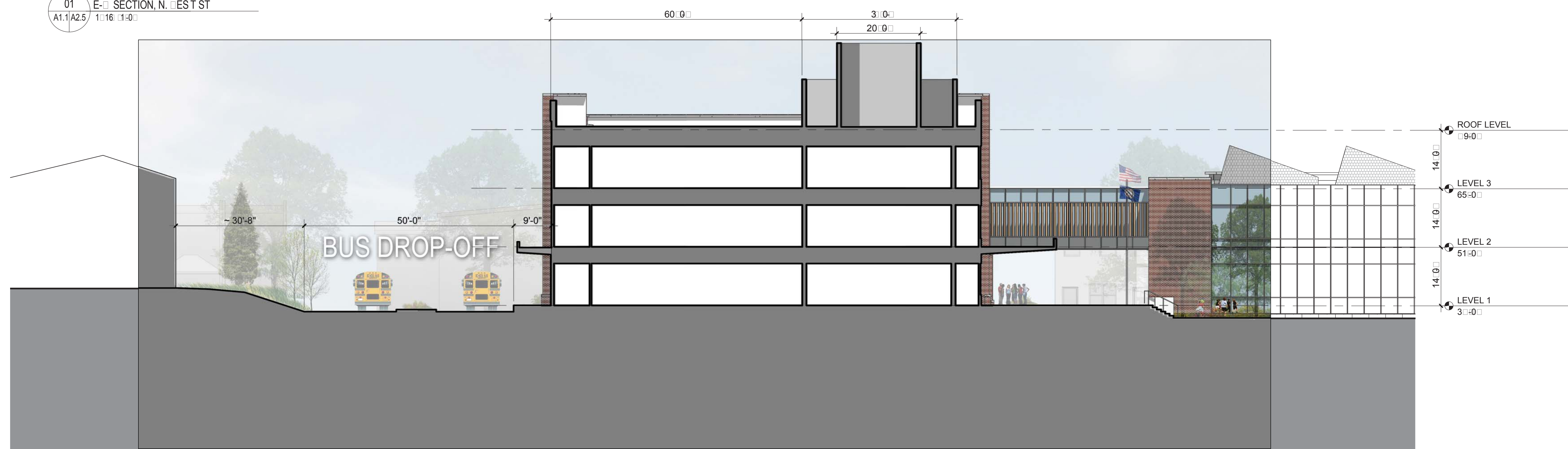
ENLARGED BUILDING ELEVATIONS

A2.3





01 SECTION, N. WEST ST
A1.1/A2.5 1:16 (1-0)



11 SECTION, N. WEST ST
A1.1/A2.5 1:16 (1-0)



Jefferson-Houston Elementary
School

1501 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

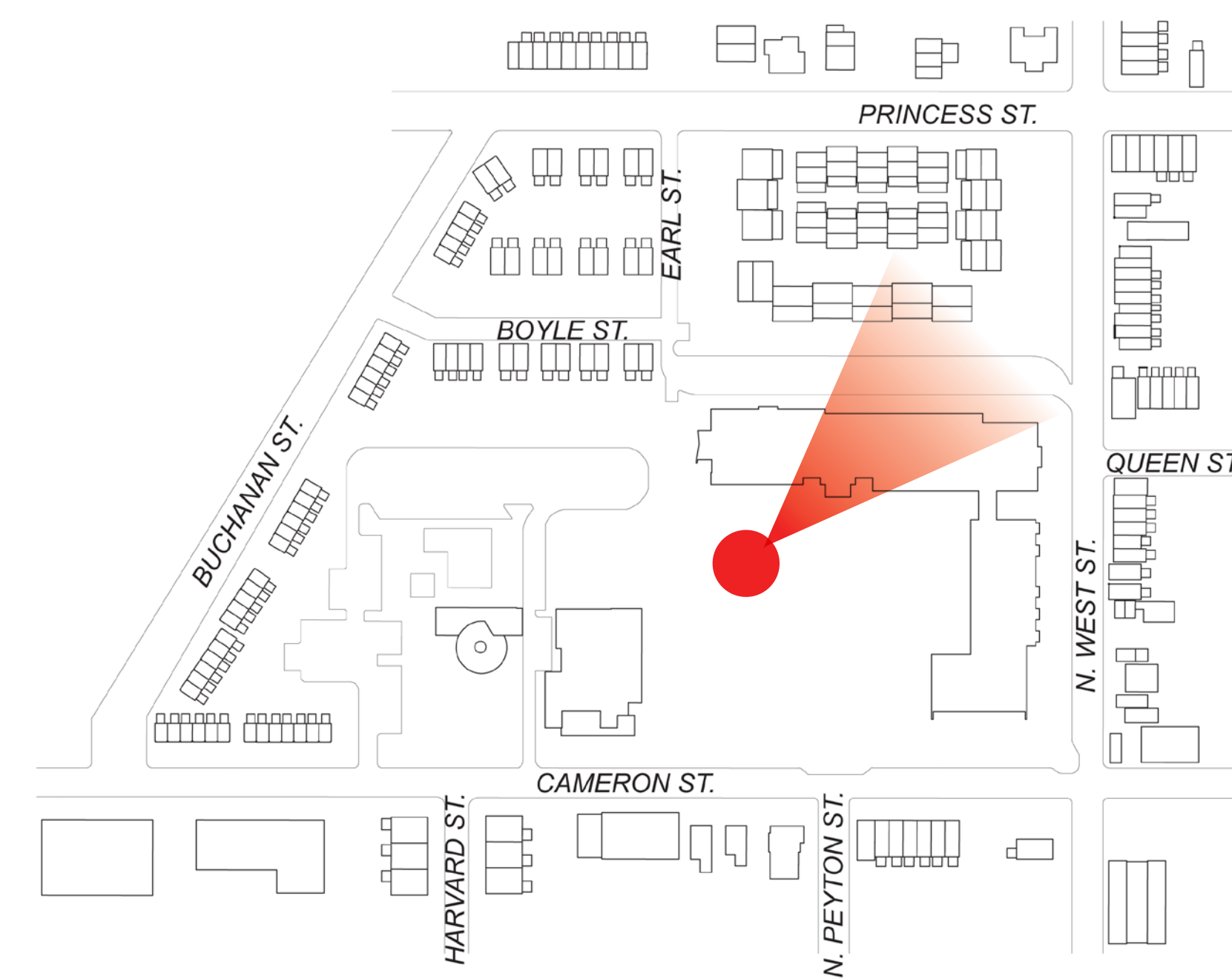
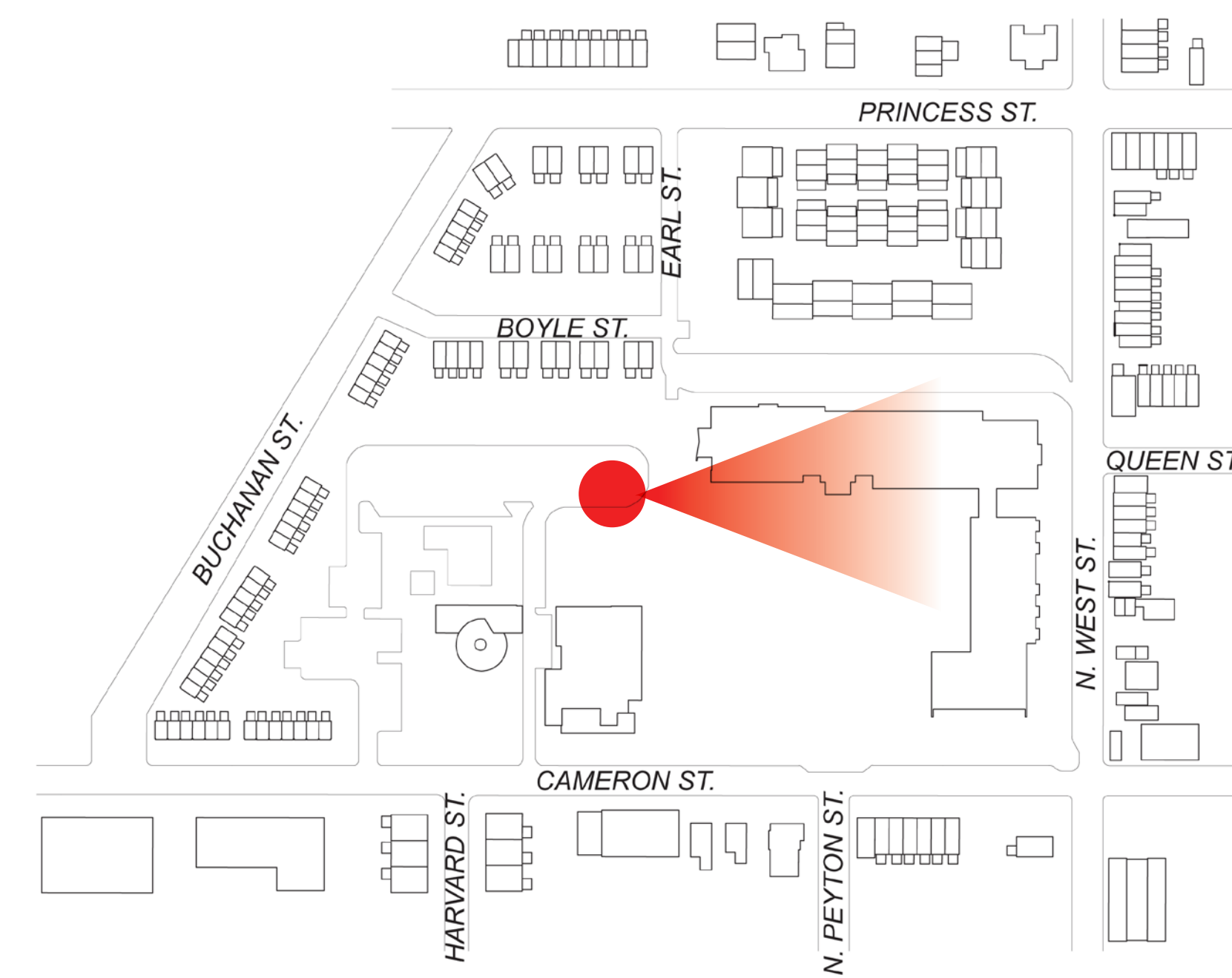
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SUBMITTAL	DATE
BAR CONCEPT SUBMISSION	06.18.2012

BUILDING SECTIONS
AND PERSPECTIVES

A2.5



VMDO ARCHITECTS

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www.vmdo.com

concordia
community centered planning + design

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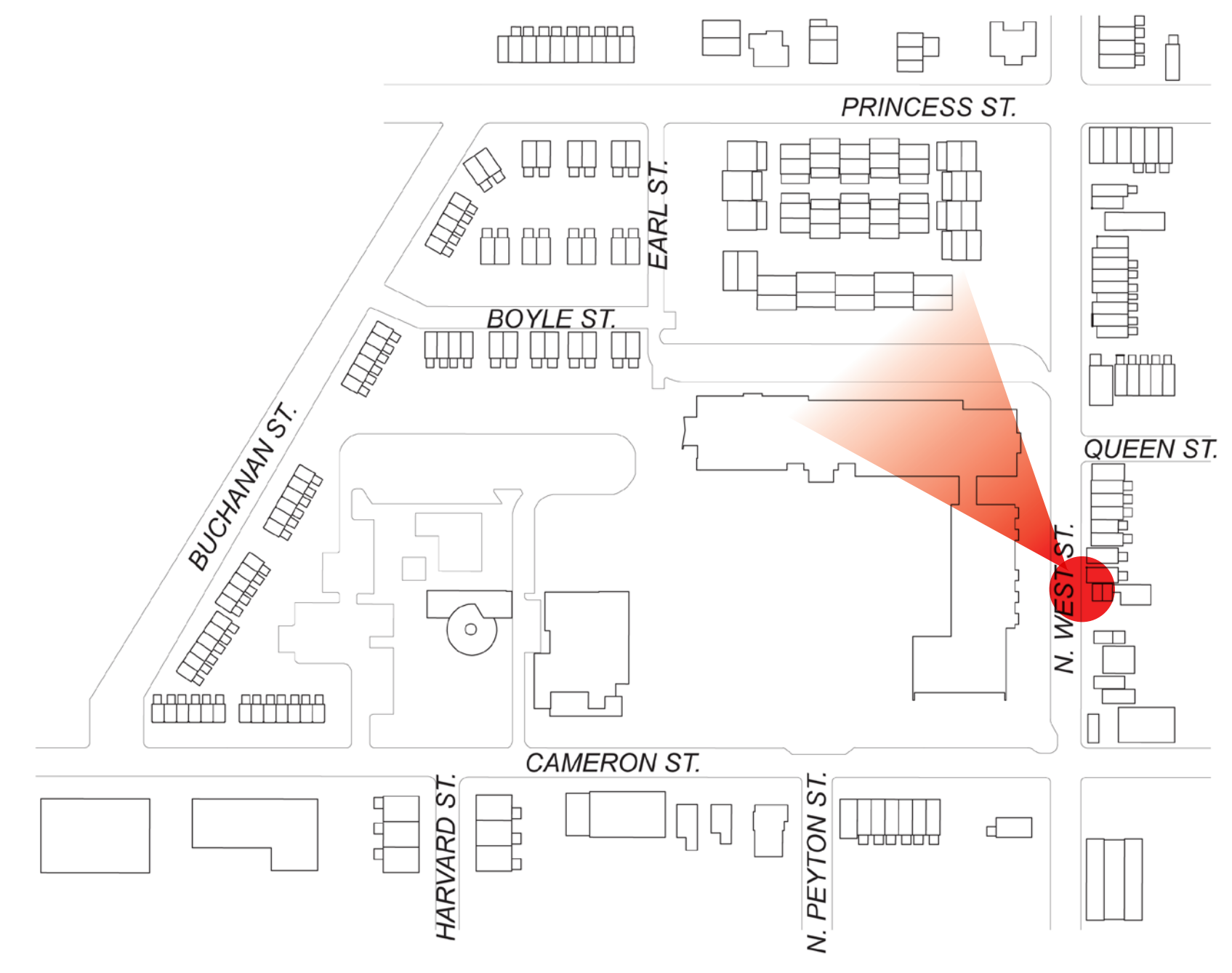
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SUBMITTAL _____ DATE
BAR CONCEPT SUBMISSION 06.18.2012

PERSPECTIVES

A5.1



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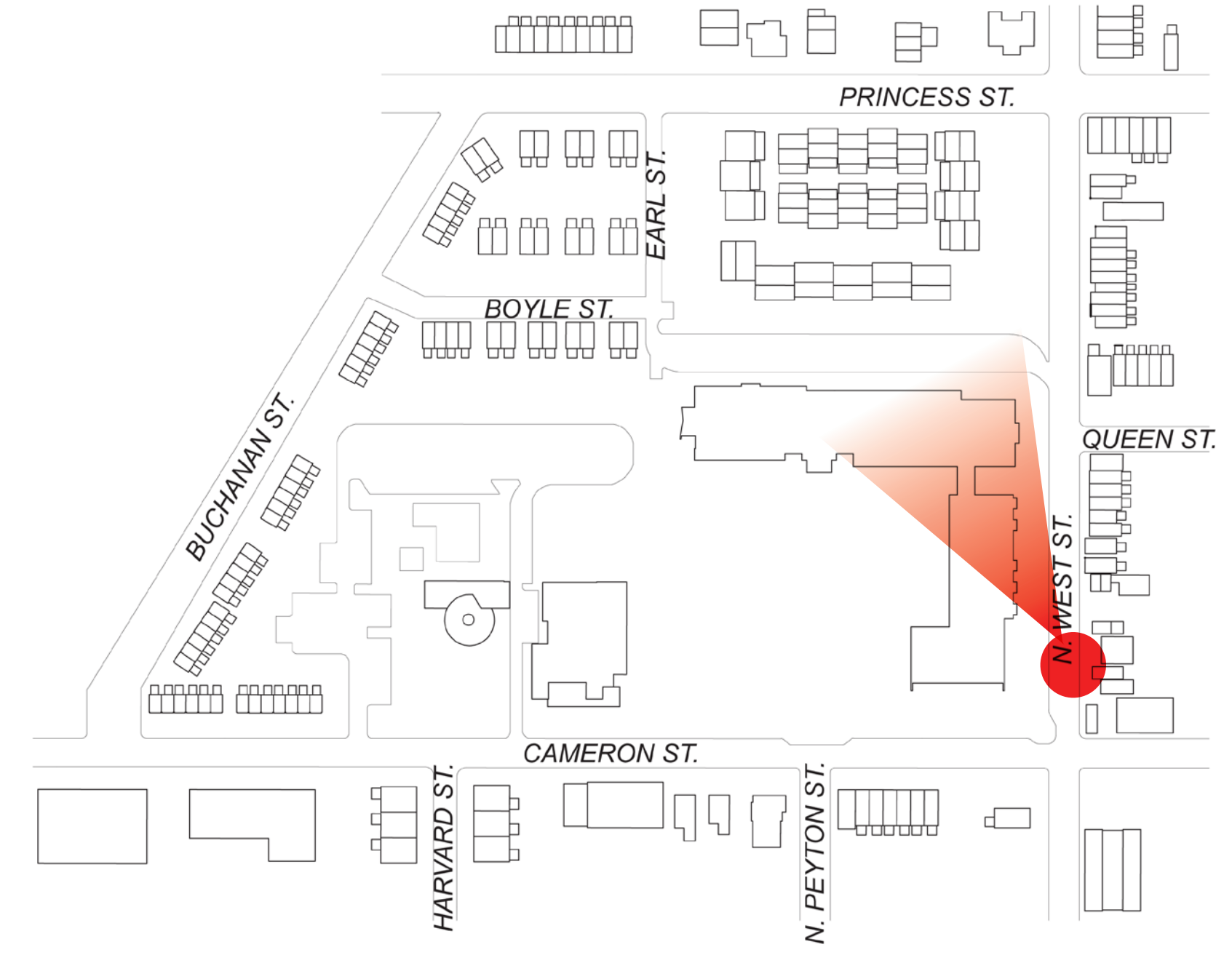
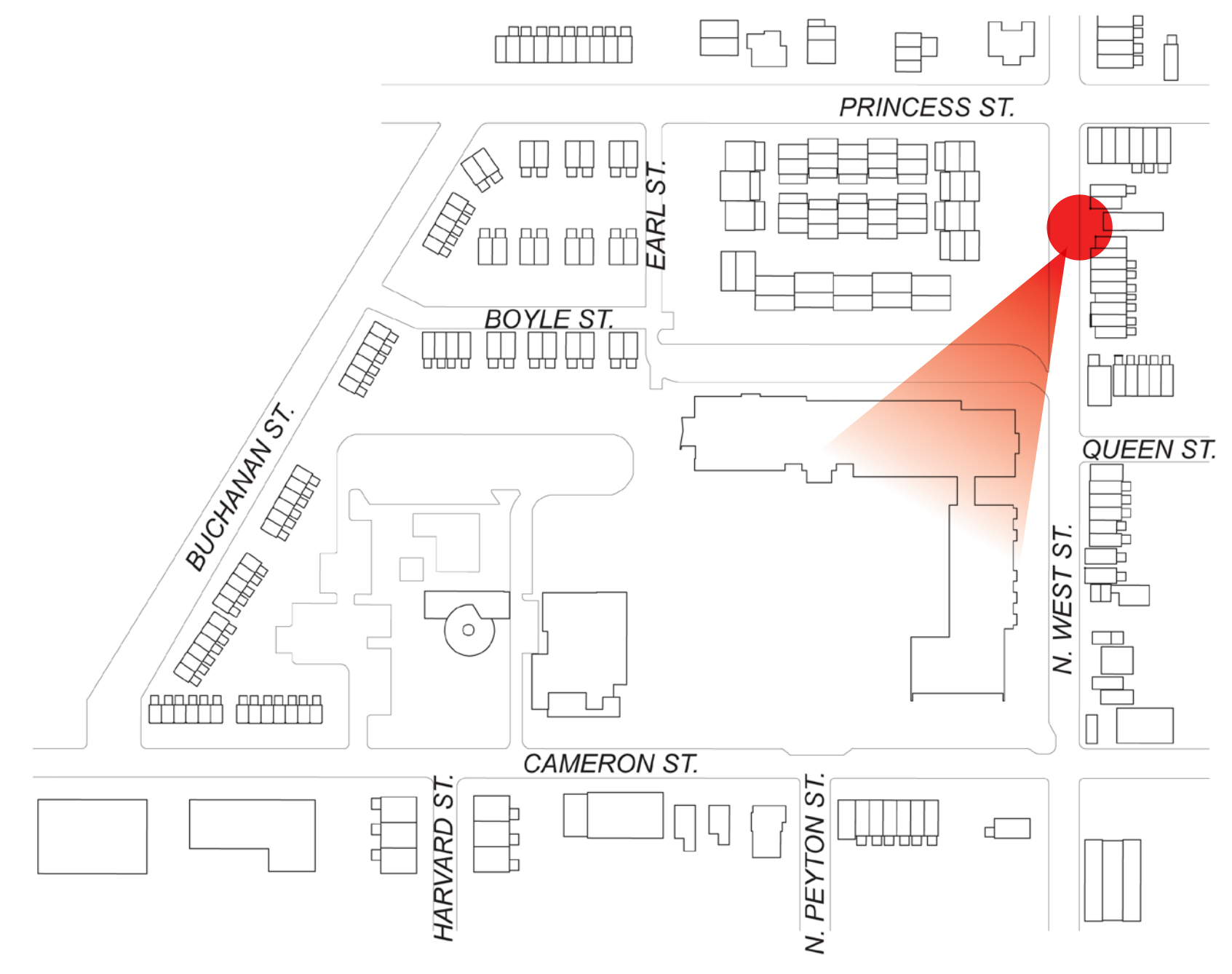
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PERSPECTIVES

A5.2



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SUBMITTAL	DATE
BAR CONCEPT SUBMISSION	06.18.2012

PERSPECTIVES

A5.3



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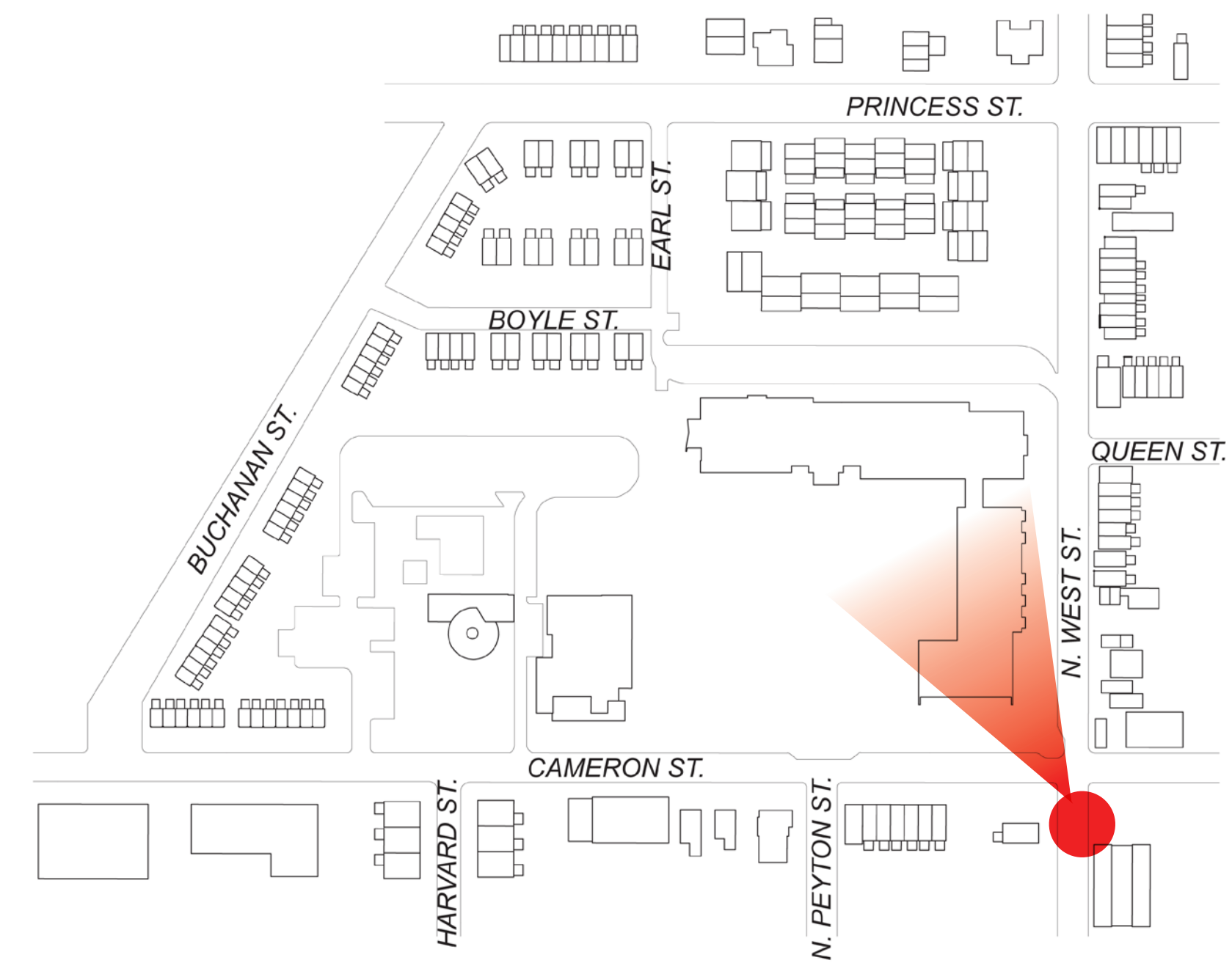
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Jefferson-Houston Elementary
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1501 Cameron Street
 Alexandria, VA 22314

VMDO Project Number 1084



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ISSUES AND REVISIONS
 SUBMITTAL _____ DATE
 BAR CONCEPT SUBMISSION 06.18.2012

PERSPECTIVES

A5.4

BAR Case # **2012-00210**ADDRESS OF PROJECT: 1501 Cameron StTAX MAP AND PARCEL: 064.03-01-01ZONING: RB - ResidentialAPPLICATION FOR: *(Please check all that apply)* CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS PERMIT TO MOVE, REMOVE, ENCAPSULATE OR DEMOLISH
(Required if more than 25 square feet of a structure is to be demolished/impacted) WAIVER OF VISION CLEARANCE REQUIREMENT and/or YARD REQUIREMENTS IN A VISION CLEARANCE AREA (Section 7-802, Alexandria 1992 Zoning Ordinance) WAIVER OF ROOFTOP HVAC SCREENING REQUIREMENT
(Section 6-403(B)(3), Alexandria 1992 Zoning Ordinance)Applicant: Property Owner Business *(Please provide business name & contact person)*Name: Alexandria City Public SchoolsAddress: Alexandria City Public SchoolsCity: Alexandria State: VA Zip: 22311Phone: (703) 824-6600 E-mail: meisenho@acps.k12.va.usAuthorized Agent *(if applicable)*: Attorney Architect Project ManagerName: Jay Brinson, Brailsford & DunlaveyPhone: (703) 824-6600E-mail: jbrinson@programmanagers.com

Legal Property Owner:

Name: Alexandria City Public SchoolsAddress: Alexandria City Public SchoolsCity: Alexandria State: VA Zip: 22311Phone: (703) 824-6600 E-mail: meisenho@acps.k12.va.us

- Yes No Is there an historic preservation easement on this property?
 Yes No If yes, has the easement holder agreed to the proposed alterations?
 Yes No Is there a homeowner's association for this property?
 Yes No If yes, has the homeowner's association approved the proposed alterations?

If you answered yes to any of the above, please attach a copy of the letter approving the project.

NATURE OF PROPOSED WORK: *Please check all that apply*

- NEW CONSTRUCTION
- EXTERIOR ALTERATION: *Please check all that apply.*
 - awning
 - doors
 - lighting
 - fence, gate or garden wall
 - windows
 - pergola/trellis
 - HVAC equipment
 - siding
 - painting unpainted masonry
 - shutters
 - shed
- ADDITION
- DEMOLITION/ENCAPSULATION
- SIGNAGE

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK: *Please describe the proposed work in detail (Additional pages may be attached).*

(See attached narrative)

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

Items listed below comprise the **minimum supporting materials** for BAR applications. Staff may request additional information during application review. Please refer to the relevant section of the *Design Guidelines* for further information on appropriate treatments.

Applicants must use the checklist below to ensure the application is complete. Include all information and material that are necessary to thoroughly describe the project. Incomplete applications will delay the docketing of the application for review. Pre-application meetings are required for all proposed additions. All applicants are encouraged to meet with staff prior to submission of a completed application.

Electronic copies of submission materials should be submitted whenever possible.

Demolition/Encapsulation : *All applicants requesting 25 square feet or more of demolition/encapsulation must complete this section. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.*

- N/A
- Survey plat showing the extent of the proposed demolition/encapsulation.
- Existing elevation drawings clearly showing all elements proposed for demolition/encapsulation.
- Clear and labeled photographs of all elevations of the building if the entire structure is proposed to be demolished.
- Description of the reason for demolition/encapsulation.
- Description of the alternatives to demolition/encapsulation and why such alternatives are not considered feasible.

Additions & New Construction: Drawings must be to scale and should not exceed 11" x 17" unless approved by staff. All plans must be folded and collated into 12 complete 8 1/2" x 11" sets. Additional copies may be requested by staff for large-scale development projects or projects fronting Washington Street. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- N/A Scaled survey plat showing dimensions of lot and location of existing building and other structures on the lot, location of proposed structure or addition, dimensions of existing structure(s), proposed addition or new construction, and all exterior, ground and roof mounted equipment.
- FAR & Open Space calculation form.
- Clear and labeled photographs of the site, surrounding properties and existing structures, if applicable.
- Existing elevations must be scaled and include dimensions.
- Proposed elevations must be scaled and include dimensions. Include the relationship to adjacent structures in plan and elevations.
- Materials and colors to be used must be specified and delineated on the drawings. Actual samples may be provided or required.
- Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
- For development site plan projects, a model showing mass relationships to adjacent properties and structures. [We intend to include this with updated designs]

Signs & Awnings: One sign per building under one square foot does not require BAR approval unless illuminated. All other signs including window signs require BAR approval. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- N/A Linear feet of building: Front: _____ Secondary front (if corner lot): _____
- Square feet of existing signs to remain: _____
- Photograph of building showing existing conditions.
- Dimensioned drawings of proposed sign identifying materials, color, lettering style and text.
- Location of sign (show exact location on building including the height above sidewalk).
- Means of attachment (drawing or manufacturer's cut sheet of bracket if applicable).
- Description of lighting (if applicable). Include manufacturer's cut sheet for any new lighting fixtures and information detailing how it will be attached to the building's facade.

Alterations: Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

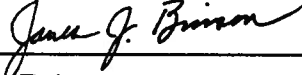
- N/A Clear and labeled photographs of the site, especially the area being impacted by the alterations, all sides of the building and any pertinent details.
- Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
- Drawings accurately representing the changes to the proposed structure, including materials and overall dimensions. Drawings must be to scale.
- An official survey plat showing the proposed locations of HVAC units, fences, and sheds.
- Historic elevations or photographs should accompany any request to return a structure to an earlier appearance.

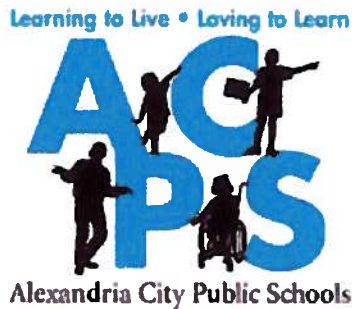
ALL APPLICATIONS: *Please read and check that you have read and understand the following items:*

- I have submitted a filing fee with this application. (Checks should be made payable to the City of Alexandria. Please contact staff for assistance in determining the appropriate fee.)
- I understand the notice requirements and will return a copy of the three respective notice forms to BAR staff at least five days prior to the hearing. If I am unsure to whom I should send notice I will contact Planning and Zoning staff for assistance in identifying adjacent parcels.
- I, the applicant, or an authorized representative will be present at the public hearing.
- I understand that any revisions to this initial application submission (including applications deferred for restudy) must be accompanied by the BAR Supplemental form and 12 sets of revised materials.

The undersigned hereby attests that all of the information herein provided including the site plan, building elevations, prospective drawings of the project, and written descriptive information are true, correct and accurate. The undersigned further understands that, should such information be found incorrect, any action taken by the Board based on such information may be invalidated. The undersigned also hereby grants the City of Alexandria permission to post placard notice as required by Article XI, Division A, Section 11-301(B) of the 1992 Alexandria City Zoning Ordinance, on the property which is the subject of this application. The undersigned also hereby authorizes the City staff and members of the BAR to inspect this site as necessary in the course of research and evaluating the application. The applicant, if other than the property owner, also attests that he/she has obtained permission from the property owner to make this application.

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Signature: 
Printed Name: Jay Brinson
Date: 06/18/2012



June 18, 2012

**Jefferson-Houston PK-8 School
BAR Concept Narrative:**

Alexandria City Public Schools is seeking approval of a Development Special Use Permit in order to construct a new Pre-K through 8th Grade Community Centered School on the existing Jefferson-Houston School site. The Jefferson-Houston school will eventually replace the existing school building while maintaining the functionality of the existing school throughout construction. In order to achieve this, the new school will be constructed largely within the field at the north edge of the site that is currently zoned as Open Space. ACPS intends to replace and enhance the scale and quality of the open space, which will relocate to the south along Cameron Street.

An existing Head Start facility on the corner of North West Street and Cameron Street will be maintained for as long as is possible by phasing the school building construction. While this program is not currently planned to be incorporated into the new school building, its future location is an ongoing consideration and may be housed on site if it is determined the best solution.

As a result of the close proximity and relationship to RPCA facilities, the Durant Center, Old Town Pool and Buchanan Park, the site plan seeks to create a strong relationship between the school and these facilities, while maintaining the integrity or their larger public use. As the existing school is removed from the site, the Durant Center will be repaired and reconstructed to function as its own building within the larger site. We will work to integrate it with its new surroundings and shape the site to honor its presence. Buchanan Park looks to be relocated adjacent to the Durant Center which should create a stronger site with the two combined.

The new Jefferson-Houston School building will be composed of mostly two stories along North West Street and mostly three stories along the northern edge adjacent to Jefferson Village. The building will total approximately 125,000sf in size, housing 600-800 students. The new facility will replace an existing facility of approximately 83,385sf which currently houses 350 students. The school site will contain play areas and structures for all grade levels, PK-8, including a VHSL regulation-size synthetic turf playing field.

The basic form of the new design is derived from local expressions of the Art Deco style found with in Alexandria City and more locally in the Parker-Gray Historic District. Some of the most

prominent features of this style in the design of educational facilities such as monumental entry porticos, broad vertical classroom windows and strong, vertical, masonry rhythms, have been integrated into the Jefferson-Houston School design. The noble forms of Art Deco articulation have been interpreted and simplified in the new design to create a more contemporary feel that speaks to the forward-looking educational mission of the school while building upon the architectural heritage of the District's schools.

Another prominent feature of the new design is its response to opportunities in urban design. Building heights have been shaped to respond to site boundaries and scale of surrounding buildings. In addition, three major building elements have been placed and shaped to respond to strong contextual relationships. First, a spacious, transparent gymnasium has been placed to provide a civic presence at the Cameron and North West Street intersection. Second, the school's media center has been designed to serve as a monumental terminus for Queen Street, the top of which will be capped with a canopy/trellis structure which will shape the elevation and provide a covered learning area for the children on what will likely be a green roof as well. Third, the school's prominent public entry has been placed on axis with Peyton Street and strengthened by a dynamic tower set just behind the glass of the front entry. The tower will extend through and above the roof line to fully establish its presence on the exterior. The tower will be framed and articulated by the exterior architecture to establish its prominence despite its internal location. Additionally, the space of the tower on the roof will be utilized as an urban observatory with a monumental sundial and views intentionally framed to important neighboring Washington and Masonic National Memorial monuments.