TOWN OF Herndon VIRGINIA

MEMORANDUM

To: **Chair Michael Romeo, Planning Commission**

From: **Chair Leslie Blaker-Glass, Architectural Review Board (ARB)**

Date: **February 5, 2026**

Subject: **ARB Review of ZMA #24-01, 250 Exchange Place**

This memo serves as a report of the ARB's preliminary review of the architectural designs included in rezoning application, ZMA #24-01, which proposes to redevelop the office park at 250 Exchange Place with a multifamily residential building and two-over-two stacked residential units. Site improvements also include the extension of Fairbrook Drive, construction of a new public street and private streets, a structured parking garage, and two publicly accessible park areas.

The ARB conducted preliminary reviews of this design proposal at its April 2, June 4, and August 6, 2025, meetings. This memo relays to the Planning Commission the items highlighted in the Board's discussion which includes comments that should be addressed prior to an official ARB application submission. As a preliminary review, the evaluation of the design was not deemed comprehensive and the comments below address general and high-level design matters where further dialog is essential is as the project progresses though town reviews.

The Architectural Review Board is highly supportive of this project overall and has greatly appreciated the applicant's involvement, and attention to feedback provided by the Board. The Board looks forward to ongoing dialog with the applicant through the next phase of the project when we review the fully developed designs in the future.

Should you have any further questions related to this memorandum, I would gladly make myself available at a convenient time for us to connect.

Board Discussion:
After presentations by Town staff and the project representatives, the board discussed the project and provided the following feedback.

Pediment Height. The Transit-Related Growth (TRG) Small Area Plan calls for a pediment height of 40' with building step-backs for floors above that height. While the

proposed design does not strictly conform to this guideline, it incorporates a prominent cornice line along all elevations to approximate the feeling of a building step-back. Renderings should be included in the formal ARB submission package to demonstrate the cornice design will effectively mask the stories above the 40’ height from the pedestrian viewpoint.

Horizontal Massing and Softscape. While mostly panelized, the cladding arrangement and patterning of reveals presents variety along the multi-family elevations. The overall design and massing of the Park Drive elevation (north) would be enhanced by detailing or a design element that further breaks up the massing horizontally. Furthermore, the ARB recommends introducing a softscape element within the hyphens between the stoops to soften the hard edge of the stoop wall along the Park Drive elevation.

Overall Design of the Park Areas. The materials reviewed by the ARB as a discussion item included only conceptual designs for the park area in plan paired with precedent images. Project specific design elements, sections, renderings, and material cutsheets should be included in the formal ARB submission package. Additionally, more details on the design of features like seating walls, site furnishings, lighting, and the focal feature at the corner of Exchange Place and Herndon Parkway should be included in the formal submission.

Stacked Townhouse Design Standards. The use of design standards instead of proffered elevations is a different approach than what has been previously done. While this approach may not be appropriate in most cases, if clear and enforceable standards are generated and properly committed to in the rezoning application proffers and depending on the building type, it may be appropriate. In the case of the proposed stacked residential units specific to this project, the Board is comfortable with the use of the standards in lieu of proffered elevations. That said, the Board identified a number of outstanding modifications that should be made to the design standards prior to submission of the formal ARB application. These items include but are not limited to allowable uncovered gable pitch and required concealment, screening and location standards for roof-top mounted units and dumpsters, and limiting the allowable architectural styles to traditional or contemporary.