

## NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER Urban Design Record #24007

APPLICATION TYPE Certificate of Appropriateness

ADDRESS/LOCATION 401 S 14th Street and 1335 L Street

HEARING DATE January 26, 2024

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS December 22, 2023

APPLICANT Lynn Rex, League of Nebraska Municipalities, lynnr@lonm.org

STAFF CONTACT Collin Christopher, 402-441-6370, cchristopher@lincoln.ne.gov

## RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL

## **Summary of Request**

The League of Nebraska Municipalities (LoNM) is proposing to demolish the buildings at 401 S 14th Street and 1335 L Street in order to make way for a new, two-story office building at the northeast corner of the block bounded by S 13th, S 14th, K and L Streets. The project would also include a 25-stall parking lot south of the building, as well as streetscape improvements on L and S 14th Streets. The building at 401 S 14th Street, known as the Woman's Club building, is a local landmark. As such, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is responsible for approving its demolition. On January 18th, 2024, HPC approved demolition of the building, with the condition that the LoNM develop a mitigation plan for memorializing the Woman's Club. That plan will need to come back to HPC for final review at a future date. The building at 1335 L Street, which serves as the current office building for the LoNM is not a landmark and thus requires NCEC approval for demolition. Likewise, any new construction on either property requires approval by NCEC.

The proposed two-story building is to be clad with a light brick with a considerable amount of glass window transparency. A dark cast stone will line the base of the building. A six-foot tall parapet wall will serve to screen the rooftop mechanical equipment. The proposed parking lot is well screened from the street, and the proposed streetscape improvements will serve to enhance the pedestrian experience along the block. One element of the streetscape that has been discussed but not yet included in the plans is a potential bumpout of the curb at the northeast corner of the block. This bumpout would serve to improve pedestrian connectivity across L and 14th Streets, as proposed in the 2018 Downtown Master Plan. Along the L Street side, the bumpout would essentially eliminate a lane of traffic during peak hours in the morning and afternoon, but under current conditions, Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU) has no concerns about traffic impacts. That said, there is still some additional discussion and analysis that will need to take place before a bumpout is agreed to.

Ultimately, the LoNM is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the building at 1335 L Street, as well as complete site work, streetscape work, and new building construction on the properties currently addressed as  $401 \, \text{S} \, 14^{\text{th}}$  Street and  $1335 \, \text{L}$  Street.

### **Compatibility with the Design Standards**

Given the fact that the project faces neither Capitol Square nor one of the four "malls," the requirements for conformance to the design standards are fairly straightforward. In addition to the Capitol Environs Design

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Standards, the landscpape standards for sites and parking lots will also apply. What follows is a summary of the relevant design standards and staff's analysis of the project's compatability with said standards.

## **Chapter 3.85, Design Standard 9: Facades**

New buildings in the District should be designed to enhance the setting of the Capitol and their immediate surroundings. When those surroundings have a high degree of cohesiveness, new designs should be compatible with their setting, strengthening the visual relationships found among existing buildings and landscape features. In areas that lack cohesion, designs should be proposed that offer themes and patterns that can be further expanded in future development.

Brick, stone, or other richly textured, highly durable masonry is desirable for building exteriors on Capitol Square, Centennial Mall, and Lincoln Mall. Permanence should be an overriding characteristic in the choice of exterior materials. Colors should be drawn from a muted palette of warm, earth tones or shades of white, with the context of surrounding buildings as a guide.

In the rehabilitation of existing buildings, retention of high-quality materials and use of new, durable, and high-quality materials is also desirable.

### **Guideline 9.1:**

Proposals for new buildings should strengthen interrelationships among buildings within a specific setting, while encouraging variations. Features that contribute to compatibility among buildings include similarities in:

- alignment and setback;
- spaces between buildings;
- silhouette, including height and roof pitch;
- building base--relationship of building to ground or site;
- materials and material scale;
- mass and scale;
- building shade and shadow pattern from massing;
- permanence and durability, with 100 year "life cycle" expected facing Capitol Square and 75 year
   "life cycle" expected on Centennial and Lincoln Malls;
- entrance position, scale, and features;
- color, finish, and texture;
- size, type, and proportion of openings;
- ornamentation and detail, particularly at street level and in the residential areas;
- landscape design and features;
- cornice heights.

**Compatibility per Staff Analysis:** The proposed building appears to meet the façade requirements for this part of the district. The brick cladding and building transparency fit very well with the surrounding context of the area, offering a timeless aesthetic that should age nicely. From a site development perspective, the building holds the corner of the S 14<sup>th</sup> and L Streets intersection, with just enough of a setback to allow for footings to be constructed on private property.

## **Design Standard 21: Landscaping Street Frontages**

The landscape zones between curb and sidewalk ("curb zone"), and between sidewalk and private property, should be used to provide visual continuity, interest, and physical separation between pedestrians and vehicles.

**Compatibility per Staff Analysis:** The proposed street frontage improvements along both L and St 14<sup>th</sup> Streets do effectively meet the intent of this standards.

## Chapter 3.50, 7.13 Screening for Downtown Lincoln

## A. Screen Location, Coverage, and Layout

- 1. Those properties located within the B-4 and O-1 Districts are subject to the following screening requirements:
  - a. Any on-site surface parking shall be paved and must be screened with plant materials, masonry walls, or masonry and metal (not chain-link) fences, or some combination thereof, to provide at least a 90% screen from grade to three feet above the grade.
  - b. Parking shall be set back six feet from the property line if only plant materials are used for screening or set back three feet if fence or wall are used.

## **Chapter 3.50, 7.14 Street Trees**

## A. Screen Location, Coverage, and Layout

- 1. As a requirement of the commercial building permitting process for new construction, street trees shall be required per the standards set forth in CHAPTER 2.35 DESIGN STANDARDS FOR STREET TREES.
- 2. CHAPTER 2.35 DESIGN STANDARDS FOR STREET TREES | Section 1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS provides direction on where street trees may be located within the City right-of-way. If the required street trees cannot be located in the right-of-way because of these requirements, or due to other unavoidable circumstances of the built environment, a portion or all of the required street trees may be exempted from being planted. This determination shall be made by the Parks and Recreation Department during the building permit review process.

**Compatibility per Staff Analysis:** The parking in the rear is almost entirely hidden from view from the L Street side, and while it is visible from the S 14<sup>th</sup> Street side, the proposed landscape screening appears to effectively limit its impacts from the street, as well as from the alley and the adjacent property. Additionally, new street trees have been shown per the requirements of the design standards. It should be noted that the material provided by the applicant does not include a final landscape plan with specific species selection. Planning Department staff will work with Parks staff to ensure that all proposed plant species are acceptable prior to the issuance of a building permit.

### **Recommendations**

In general, the plans are in conformance with the design standards, but the Commission should offer any final guidance to the applicant as it relates to items such as material selection. It should be noted that HPC's approval of the demolition of the Woman's Club building included a condition that they memorialize the Woman's Club in a meaningful way. Even if that memorialization takes the form of a plaque or some other kind of monumentation in the public right-of-way or on the façade of the new building, it is staff's opinion that HPC should be the body that reviews that particular element of the design at a future date.

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**Recommended finding:** The proposed demolition of the building at 1335 L Street, as well as the

proposed site work, streetscape work, and new building construction on the properties currently addressed as 401 S 14th Street and 1335 L Street

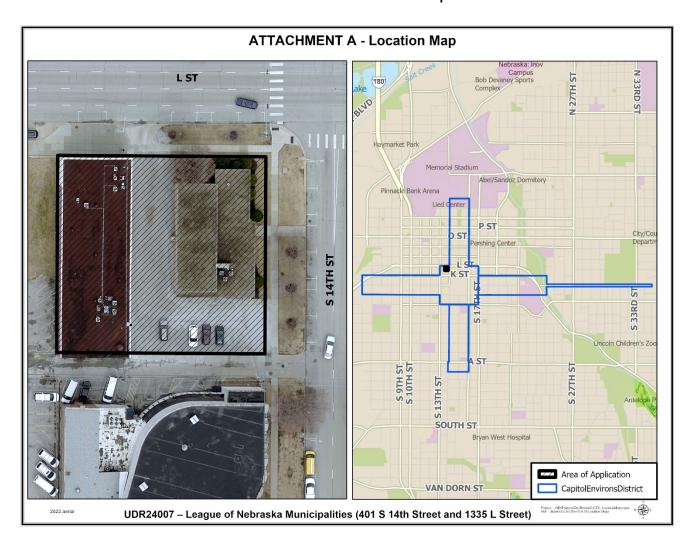
generally comply with the Capitol Environs Design Standards.

**Recommended action:** Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the building at

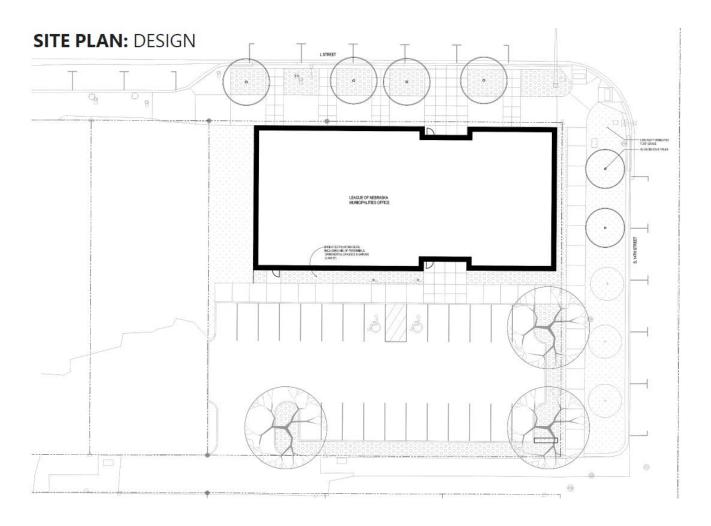
1335 L Street, as well as the proposed site work, streetscape work, and new building construction on the properties currently addressed as  $401\,\mathrm{S}\,14^{th}$ 

Street and 1335 L Street.

## ATTACHMENT A - Location Map



## ATTACHMENT B - Site Plan



## ATTACHMENT C - Renderings





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### DRAFT - Excerpt from **MEETING RECORD**

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND**Thursday, January 18, 2024, 1:30 p.m., Hearing Room 113, PLACE OF MEETING:
County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN Nancy Hove-Graul, Jim Johnson, Greg McCown, Jim McKee and Dan

**ATTENDANCE** Worth; (Melissa Gengler and Greg Newport).

OTHERS INStephanie Rouse, Paul Barnes and Clara McCully of the PlanningATTENDANCEDepartment; Hallie Salem of Urban Development Department;

Travis Barrett; Bob Ripley; Lynn Rex; and other interested citizens.

STATED PURPOSE Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

OF MEETING:

# <u>CERTIFICATE UDR23135 FOR DEMOLITION OF THE WOMAN'S CLUB LOCAL LANDMARK AT 401 S. 14TH</u> STREET

PUBLIC HEARING: January 18, 2024

Members present: Hove-Graul, Johnson, McCown, McKee and Worth; Gengler and Newport absent.

Rouse stated the applicant provided a more detailed analysis with an engineer opinion on the structural integrity of both the League of Municipalities and the Woman's Club buildings, as well as mitigation for a plaque. If they do nothing to the building they would leave. If they remain, the building would need a new roof and they would need to remove the lead and asbestos. If they replace the building, they would demolish and add a plaque. Staff review of additional material was challenging with the strict interpretation of hardship to support demolition. However, the building is in a state of disrepair.

**Travis Barrett, applicant,** stated he went to the Women's Club following the last meeting and began a structural analysis. Jeff Castle, Clark and Enersen structural engineer, found it in adequate condition. The roof is rotted and the metal structure is rusted. The basement walls are structurally fine, though there is some cracking. The condition of the finishes prohibited them from looking further into the walls due to mold and lead paint, likely asbestos as well. There are cost prohibitive measures for keeping the building. The space is far below what the League needs. A one-story addition would not make it a well-used space downtown. It is a hardship of using for our needs or for use by anyone in the future.

**Bob Ripley, citizen,** stated individuals come to the Capitol Environs Commission early in the process. Parking is also an issue. The proposed building is urban in its design and has the ability to claim parking on the alley side. He entered the Women's Club about two years before it was bought by the League, about 2012 or 2013. The building was in rough condition then, with obvious moisture and water damage and damage to finishes. He is disappointed that the Women's club had not been a more aggressive steward of

their own property. They applied for landmark status, but hadn't done more to maintain their landmark. The Leage has been candid from the beginning that their interest is building new on the site.

**Lynn Rex, applicant,** stated their ideas for commemorating the Lincoln Women's club. Through History Nebraska, they found 50<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary photos. They found a yearbook from 1932-1933, articles of incorporation and constitution and bylaws.

Ripley stated this building may be a mid-century modern international style. The landmark was more to an institution than to architectural or cultural aspects. The Woman's Club was looking to leave a legacy in money, you can't assert any type of landmark value to the building.

Hove-Graul asked if the organization disolved entirely.

Rex stated they don't know. The Women's Club sold cookbooks as late as 2010, 2011 but haven't been in the building.

McKee stated Mary Jane Nielsen is his last contact. She was the last president. His understanding is the organization is gone.

Rouse stated the application focuses on social history, but they also submitted the application under architectural style. Bonnie Coffee is the contact name on the Planning Commission report, but it was brought forward by the Planning Department on behalf of the Woman's Club.

Christopher stated the League presented new construction plans to the Capitol Environs Commission and the commission was supportive. He gave background at that meeting to the Capitol Environs Commission as to why no decision was made by the Historic Preservation Commission.

McCown stated he didn't like how the landmark status had no real bearing for the Woman's Club and the League of Municipalities. Along the way, even with due diligence and bringing in Clark and Enersen and Jeff Castle, it seemed slanted toward demolition the whole time. There is no fault to be placed, but we as a commission are in an unenviable place of agreeing that it has no historic gravitas. He would approve but only because of how it is at this point. He would like to see a whole separate area designated, like a small museum. It needs to have a record and emphasis on what it meant to the city as a conciliation. A local landmark status should have a weight to it.

Worth stated it is hard to come to grips with removing a local landmark. Lincoln has lost way too many landmarks over time. He hoped a structural assessment would reveal that this is too far gone. There is rusting of 1<sup>st</sup> floor decking. If it has been rusting for 20 years, the decking may have lost its integrity. Mitigating that would be expensive and tough. He is starting to see the signs this building is at that tipping point. It becomes a matter of mitigation and documentation. Part of the solution would be to search out a historian to research the Woman's Club history and important figures. It would be valuable to do an oral history of members who are still alive. Document floor plan and photos of the building.

McCown stated to dedicate a page to the Woman's Club on the League website.

Hove-Graul stated to include a historical narration that goes along with the building architecture at the height of their influence in Lincoln. History is part of the building.

Worth stated to consider the Woman's Club and the building that's there is more suburban but friendly and accessible. It has texture and character. Instead of defaulting to something precast and stoic, the new design should be toward something more respecting the building that's there.

Barrett stated the current building is beige with sandstone.

Hove-Graul stated the streetscape is pedestrian-friendly, don't want monolithic, it will not be friendly.

**Hallie Salem, Urban Development,** asked what is the approval process for the mitigation plan? Are they relying on staff to make the approvals?

Rouse stated it would come back to HPC for approval.

Salem asked if it needs to occur prior to demolition.

Rouse stated it doesn't need to come back before demolition proceeds.

Worth asked about the timeline.

Barrett stated they are wrapping up the design documents in May, Hampton will start in the summer, and they will be open in the summer of 2025. They would be back to HPC in April and over the year of construction refine those details if needed.

Worth stated HABS documentation does need to happen first.

Rex asked for a historian recommendation.

Worth stated the Nebraska State Historical Society has a list.

### **ACTION:**

Hove-Graul moved approval of a certificate of exception to demolish the Women's Club Local Landmark Building, with the condition to mitigate the loss by installing a plaque or other similar commemorative marker or permanent acknowledgement to the history of the Woman's Club as well as the importance of what once stood as a local landmark be installed on the property for the public to view, with involvement of a historian to document history of the Woman's Club in Lincoln, women involved and impact on the City, oral history, web page and archival photos, and Historic American Building Survey plans; seconded by Johnson and carried 5-0: Hove-Graul, Johnson, McCown, McKee and Worth voting 'yes'; Gengler and Newport absent.

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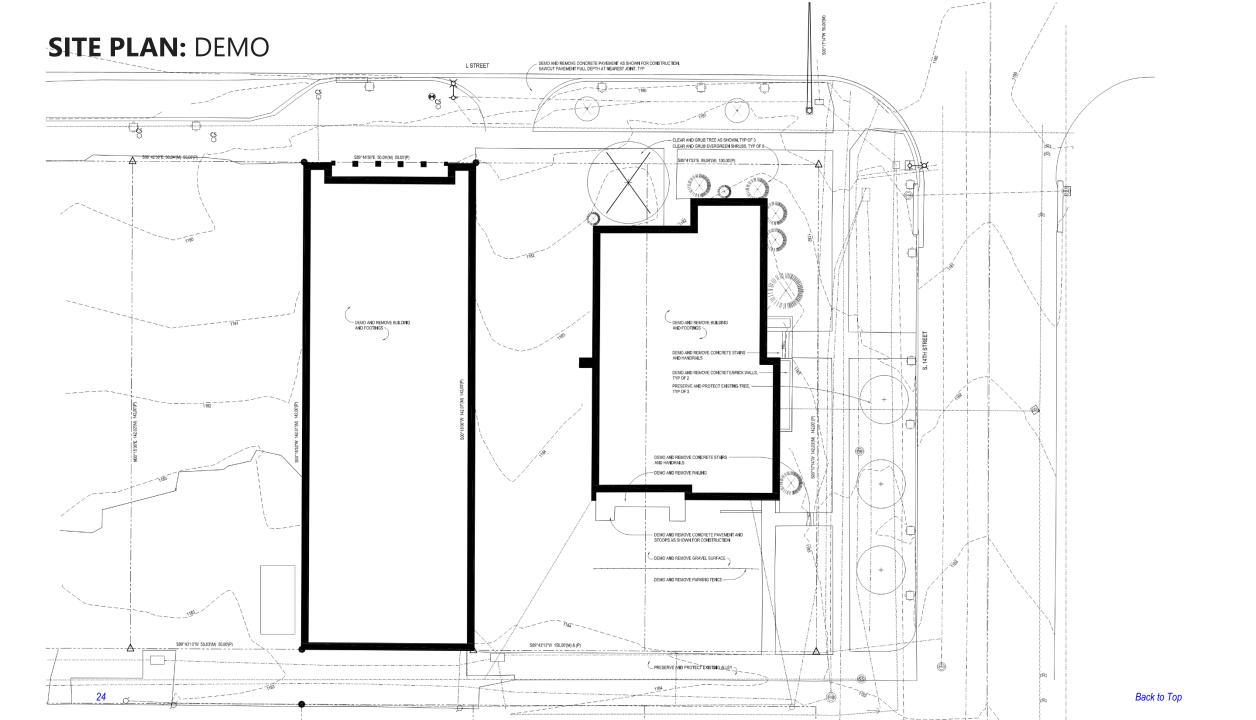


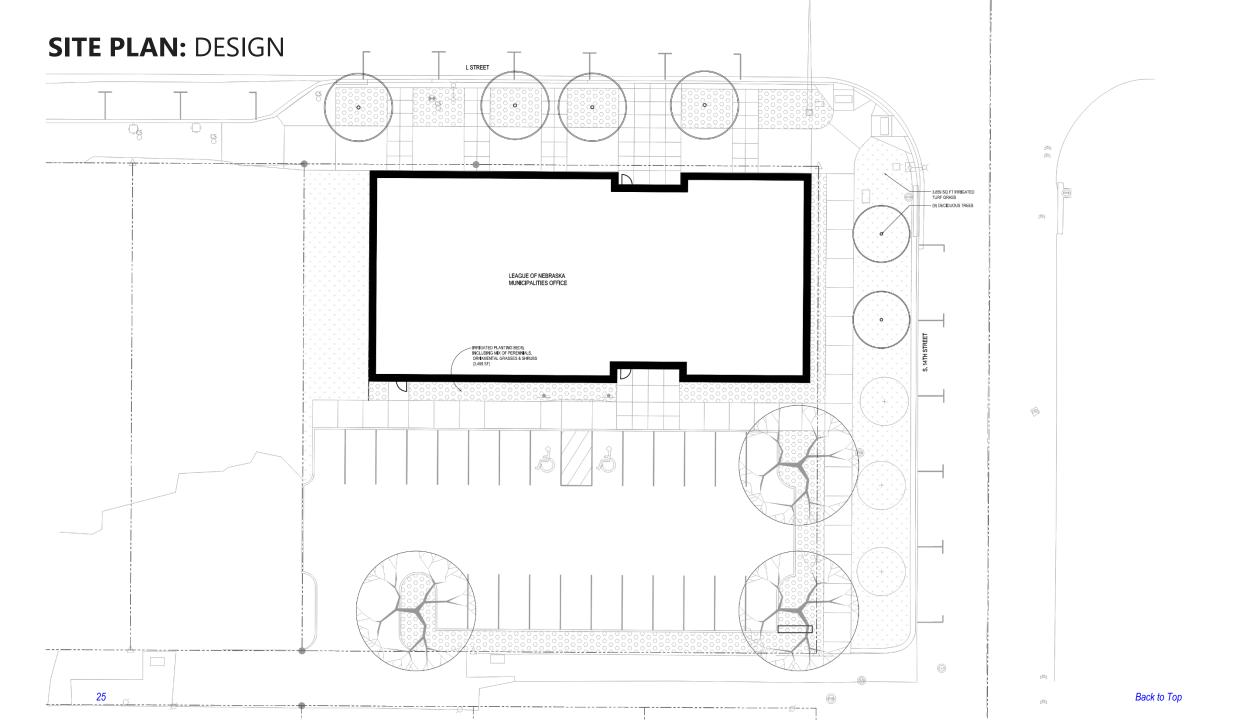


League of Nebraska Municipalities Office
Capitol Environs – Design Review

January 26, 2024



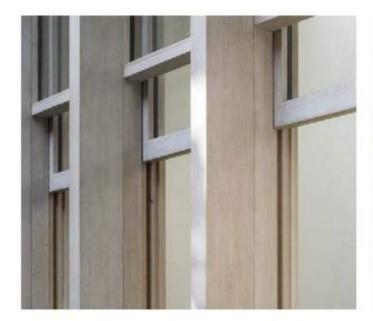




**DESIGN:** CONCEPTUAL DRIVERS

- **▶** Civic-representing
- **▶** Traditional government building
- **▶** Representing the city
- ▶ 50+ year outlook, timeless
- ▶ Not too modern
- **▶** Classically contemporary
- **Earthy materials**

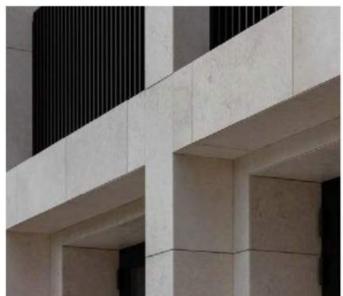
# **\ DESIGN:** CONCEPTUAL DRIVERS













# **DESIGN:** CONCEPTUAL DRIVERS













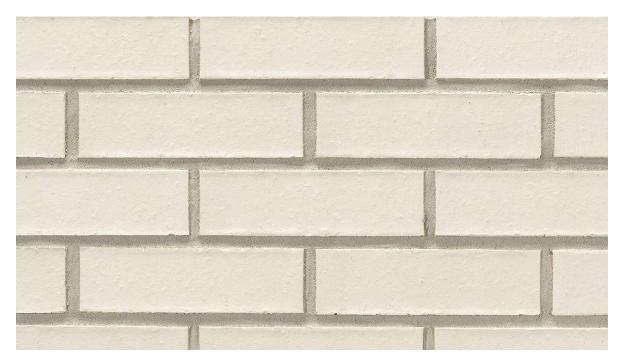
# **DESIGN:** FIRST FLOOR PLAN



# **DESIGN:** SECOND FLOOR PLAN



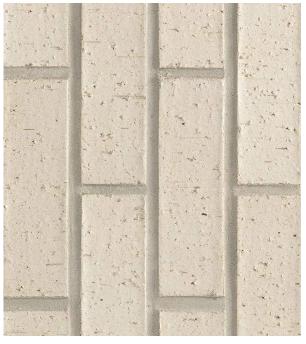
# **MATERIAL:** MASONRY



BRICK: ACME RIDGEMAR SMOOTH (OR SIMILAR)



CAST STONE: ECHELON CORDOVA MIDNIGHT GROUNDFACE (OR SIMILAR)



ACCENT BRICK: ACME RIDGEMAR VELOUR (OR SIMILAR)



INSTALL EXAMPLE

## **MATERIAL:** GLASS & ALUMINUM

ALUMINUM FRAMED SYSTEM:
KAWNEER 451T PERMAFLUOR BLACK (OR SIMILAR)

**GLAZING**:

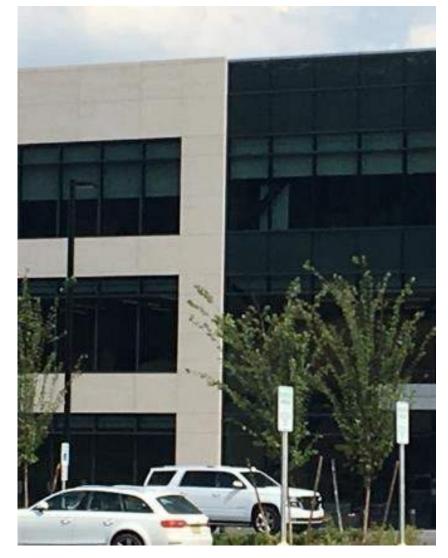
VITRO SOLARBAN 70 OPTIGRAY (OR SIMILAR)

**VLT: 46%** 

REFLECTANCE: 9%

SHGC: 0.23

ALUMINUM INFILL BETWEEN GLAZING SYSTEMS
MAPESHAPE INFILL PANEL MATTE BLACK (OR SIMILAR)



INSTALL EXAMPLE

