

Company Profile

Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc. (NYSE:ARE), an S&P 500® company, is an urban office REIT focused on collaborative life science and technology campuses.



ALEXANDRIA®

Objectives

- Offer design inspiration for tenants.
- Showcase exterior and interior applications for smart-tinting glass.

Solution

- Remodel Alexandria's San Francisco office.
- Install Halio™ smart-tinting glass in a skylight and as interior walls.



Smart-Tinting Glass for Light & Privacy

For Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc., a Class A property is necessary in order for its innovative tenants to “successfully recruit and retain world-class talent and inspire productivity, efficiency, creativity, and success.” The company looks to smart technologies to deliver on its commitment to sustainability and wellness for its tenants. When the company upgraded its San Francisco office, they incorporated Halio™ smart-tinting glass to showcase what the new technology can do for tenants. Halio was installed to highlight two applications:

1. **Skylight to demonstrate Halio’s ability to control heat gain and eliminate glare.**
2. **Interior walls to demonstrate Halio’s ability to extend natural light to more areas while delivering privacy on demand.**



Weekend Retrofit

When compatible frames are installed, installing Halio smart-tinting glass is a simple glass swap. Because Alexandria planned for Halio, replacing the interim conventional glass took place over a weekend.

Each Halio panel has its own controller, so select panels can be tinted while others remain clear.

SKYLIGHT

During the office demolition for a remodel, the architects discovered framing for a skylight that had never been installed. The area was the designated break room. Until then, it had no windows, so Alexandria jumped on the opportunity to bring in natural light and used Halio to manage it.

Because the Halio delivery date would come a few months after the completion of the remodel, Alexandria installed standard glass while waiting for the smart-tinting glass to arrive. It proved to be a good “before and after” test of a plain glass skylight versus a Halio skylight.

Howard Yao is Assistant Vice President of Real Estate Development & Design at Alexandria, responsible for new construction and tenant improvement projects in San Francisco. Trained as an architect, Yao says of the conventional skylight that was installed while they waited for Halio delivery, “Everyone loves natural light until they realize they hate the glare. With the big skylight and no means of controlling the glare, it limited the use of the space.”

The pre-Halio skylight was disruptive to vendor presentations and trainings that made use of audiovisual equipment; it also brought unwanted heat. “With the regular skylight, there was little control,” says Yao. “Depending on the time of year and the angle of the sun, it could be really disruptive—and there’s nothing you can do about it. You’re just stuck unless you start rearranging the room to work with the sun. But that’s not practical, because then you have to change the layout every few weeks.”

Then Halio was installed. “With our smart-tinting skylight, we can take it down a notch to take the edge off, or go dark to make the space suitable for video presentations,” says Yao. Halio also blocked ultraviolet rays and reduced heat from solar gain, making the room much more comfortable without having to use air-conditioning in San Francisco’s naturally mild climate.



Halio delivers maximum control: decide which to tint and by how much. Halio delivers an unlimited number of tints between clear and dark.

INTERIOR WALLS

Alexandria's sleek office has an open floor plan that features areas for desks, a break room, several conference rooms, and a "living room" area with a fireplace, couch, and armchairs. Halio was installed in a conference room and the living room to allow in natural light while providing the option to add privacy on demand. The walls to the hallways now tint to create privacy or minimize distractions. Because Halio panels are individually controlled, they can be tinted all at once, or in patterns, such as a checkerboard or stripes, to create what some Alexandria employees call a "soft barrier," a subtle way to convey that the room is occupied.

"We are sensitive to confidentiality issues and understand that privacy is a critical issue for our tenants and prospective tenants," says Yao. "Halio has become part of our office tour—to show prospective tenants what their options are. Halio always gets oohs and aahs."

Because everyone craves natural light, Yao sees Halio as one of the many options for conference rooms to create privacy walls. "There are many high-end glass manufacturers that are etching glass to make beautiful patterns to create a sense of privacy. This is a fixed solution. Ten years from now, you will look at it and say that's outdated. Halio eliminates the need for film, art glass, shades, or blinds—you can have privacy when you need it."

**Yao elaborates further:**

“If you look at the western side of a building, probably 80% of the blinds are down. And they tend to stay down because people don’t get up to change them.”

THE FUTURE FOR HALIO

Out of the three Halio installations at Alexandria’s San Francisco office—the skylight, the main conference room, and the living room—the skylight is, for Yao, the most significant. “It is the exterior envelope application,” he says. “Because of California’s Title 24, we are getting pulled two ways: tenants want more and more clear glass—not ones with a bronze, green, or blue tint. They want perfectly clear glass. But with the energy codes getting more and more stringent, it’s getting very difficult to get a glassy building to be compliant. With Halio, clear glass and energy efficiency are no longer mutually exclusive.”

Halio aligns with Alexandria’s goals of sustainability and smart building systems. “As I see it, the glass and heat gain from the building envelope is just another variable in the building management system,” says Yao. “Halio would help with the heat load from the sun. By installing Halio, we could eliminate motorized window shades to reduce glare and solar gain.”

“It’s weird. You pay a premium for a building that has amazing views and what most people do is put down the blinds, and once down, they stay there.” With programmable smart-tinting glass like Halio, that problem goes away.