
[EXTERNAL]806 N Columbus Street Proposed Development (BAR Comments)

From Lynn Beasley <widget_lmb@yahoo.com>

Date Fri 12/12/2025 4:26 PM

To Luke Cowan <luke.cowan@alexandriava.gov>; Kendra Jacobs <Kendra.Jacobs@alexandriava.gov>

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Dear Mr. Cowan and Ms. Jacobs -

The purpose of this email is to provide concerned homeowner opposition to the BAR #2025-00373-ParkerGrey (BAR Concept 2) as was revised and submitted for Alexandria's Board of Architectural Review on or about November 6, 2025, by Ken Wire for 806 North Columbus Street. The revised concept continues to raise several concerns for me, as the property owner of 826 Snowden Hollowell Way, Alexandria, VA 22314.

The Conceptual Layout Plan ("the concept") included in the submission labels the street behind the proposed townhomes as "Public Alley." The street is Snowden Hollowell Way which is a private road maintained by the Old Town Commons Homeowners' Association. **The applicant must understand that unlike North Columbus Street, it is not a public road.**

The concept includes parking areas behind the townhomes which will rely on the private road for access/egress and maintenance – including snow and leaf removal, and paving as required. All other historic homes that back to Snowden Hollowell Way (excepting 802 North Columbus – grandfathered) do not have rear parking. I oppose the proposal that would allow for rear parking that is reliant on Snowden Hollowell Way for access. The rear of the properties must include fencing that is consistent with the existing fences of the historical properties that back to Snowden Hollowell Way and not include space for parking. I will also note that the historic homes in the 700 block of N Columbus Street also have fenced back yards and do not include parking spaces that depend on access to/from the 700 block of Snowden Hollowell Way (see attached photo – 700block).

While the height of the proposed townhomes was reduced by 3 feet, the height still exceeds reasonable expectations for the specific lot(s). The concept indicates that the townhomes will be 4 levels. This is widely out of sync with the existing historical properties along the 800 block of North Columbus Street. The adjacent townhomes are 2 story. The BAR Concept Submission includes **neighborhood photos that are misleading in that they are not adjacent to the proposed townhomes, rather they are of the Old Town Commons' properties – of which these homes will not be associated with (i.e., not in the Homeowners' Association)** and one (2/3 781 Montgomery Street) is of another condominium building. The condominium building has underground parking that is accessed from Powhatan Street. The Massing Concept Images are also deceptive as they do not portray the true impact of 4 story townhomes wedged between 2 story townhomes.

The front and rear facing roof patios add to the intrusiveness of the properties over the existing 2 story townhomes. The height-to-width ratio of the 4 story townhomes will not be in harmony with their historical and architectural setting and environs (see Article X – Historic Districts and Buildings, Sec. 10-101(G)).

I understand that the BAR review is one step in this process; unfortunately, I am not well versed in the entirety of the process. Should I also be working with the Planning Committee to address my concerns? Particularly the misidentification of Snowden Hollowell Way as a public access. If you can offer any insight into the process, I would greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Lynn Beasley

571-276-1794

Graeme Douglas
808 Snowden Hollowell Way
Alexandria, VA 22314

December 16, 2025

Dear Members of the Alexandria Board of Architectural Review (BAR):

I am writing to provide the BAR with my concerns regarding BAR Concept # 2025-00373-ParkerGrey (associated with three townhouses located at 806 N. Columbus Street). I have resided at 808 Snowden Hollowell Way for the past 10 years. The back side of the proposed townhouse development at 806 N. Columbus Street sits directly across from my home.

Use and Impact of Snowden Hollowell Way

The Conceptual Layout Plan labels the street (Snowden Hollowell Way) behind the proposed townhomes as a "Public Alley." Our understanding is that Snowden Hollowell Way is a private street that is maintained by the residents of Old Town Commons Homeowners Association (OTCHOA), thru quarterly homeowner dues. This includes snow removal, landscape maintenance, trees, lighting, resurfacing and storm sewer / utilities. Our dues also pay for trash and recycle pick up. The concept plan shows that all private parking for the three townhouses will be accessed from Snowden Hollowell Way. No existing homes along N. Columbus that are not part of Old Town Commons have access to this street. The former alleys were converted into private streets under council approval of Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) #2008-0013 for the James Bland Redevelopment in Alexandria, VA. This was approved at an October 18th, 2008 Alexandria City Council hearing for conditions. I believe all utility and construction access easements at the time have now expired. Only the Emergency Vehicle Access Easement remains.

If the three proposed townhouses will be using this private street as primary access to their parking, how will those townhouses be contributing to the maintenance of Snowden Hollowell Way? I am concerned about impacts to Snowden Hollowell Way, including traffic, noise, and use of a private street that is maintained by OTCHOA. The vehicles of future homeowners will be backing into Snowden Hollowell Way to access Madison Street, adding traffic to Snowden Hollowell Way.

The developer will require permission from the OTCHOA for any work impacting Snowden Hollowell Way.

Aesthetic Impacts of Proposed Parking

The parking lot being proposed for the townhouses is currently screened from Snowden Hollowell Way by a fence and landscaping / trees, with one curb cut for access to the lot. For the past three years, the residents along Snowden Hollowell Way have been impacted by construction staging use of the lot for the condominiums on N. Columbus Street (across from the proposed townhouse development), including noise, parking and aesthetics. The proposed site plan for the townhouses shows continuous parking spaces along the entire width of the lot that will be accessed from Snowden Hollowell Way. This parking area will affect the aesthetics along the alley and views from the existing townhouses directly across from it. Rather than a fence and landscaping, we would be subjected to a view of cars and no landscaping or screening. If the parking is to be accessed off Snowden Hollowell Way, the developer should consider a shared parking lot with one curb cut (rather than the multiple proposed) that can accommodate the same number of vehicles (6). A fence should be placed on either side of the curb cut to provide additional screening (See attachment 1). This proposed design will still allow for private back yards for each of the proposed townhouses.

Proposed Height of Townhouses

The height of the proposed townhomes significantly exceeds the heights of the existing historic townhomes on the west side of the 800 block of N. Columbus Street, which are all two stories. The concept proposes four level townhomes, which will be nearly twice the height of the existing homes. This proposal is out of character of the existing historic neighborhood. The attached photograph (See attachment 2) shows one of the three story townhomes in the Old Town Commons development next to one of the two story homes that existed prior to the Old Town Commons development. The photograph illustrates the dramatic height variation between the two buildings. A four-story building next to the neighboring two-story buildings would therefore be an extreme contrast in height. None of the concept documents provided by the developer show photographs of the existing buildings on either side of the of the proposed development. The diagrams included imply that the mansard roofs of these buildings constitute an entire story which is clearly not the case when seen in photographs (see Attachment 3.)

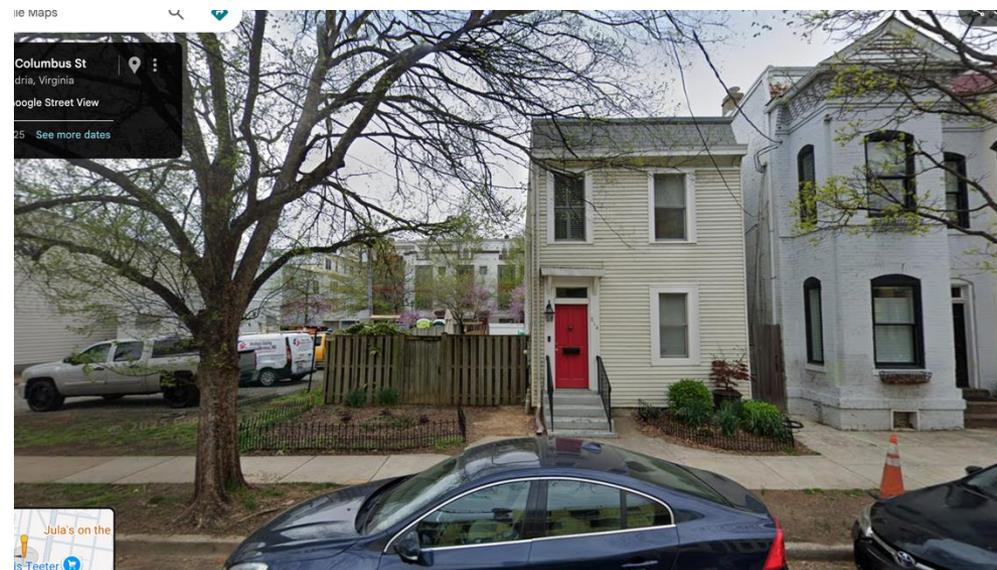
Sincerely,

Graeme Robertson Douglas

Attachment 3 – Existing Building Elevations / Photographs



802 & 804 N. Columbus St. (Immediately south of proposed development)



814 N. Columbus St. (Immediately north of proposed development)