
[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

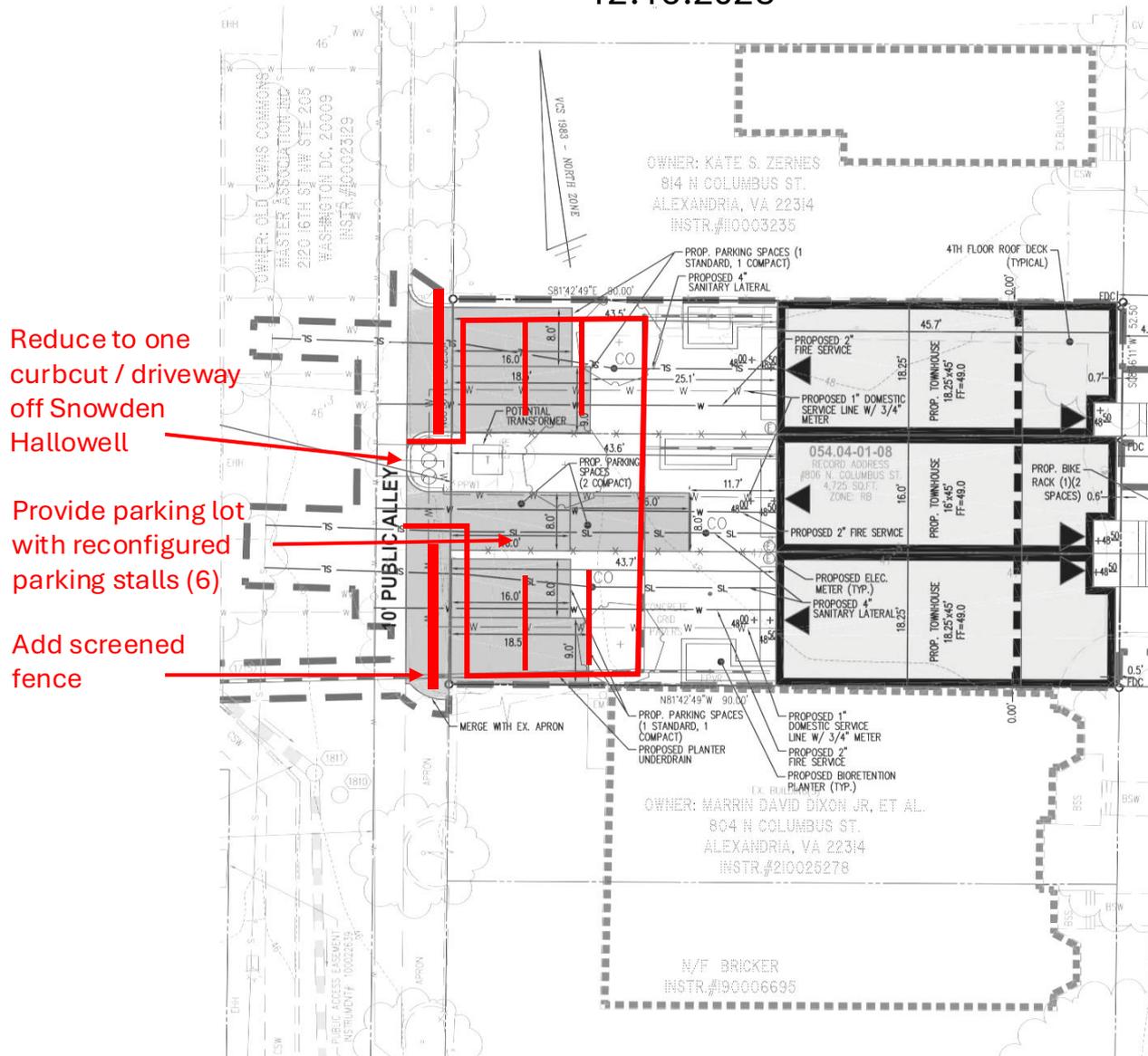
The height of the proposed townhomes significantly exceeds the heights of the existing historic townhomes on the west side of the 800 block of N. Columbus Street, which are all two stories. The concept proposes four level townhomes, which will be nearly twice the height of the existing homes. This proposal 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 1 - Recommendation to Alexandria Board of Architectural Review and Planning Commission for Changes to 806 N Columbus Townhouse Development

12.16.2025



Submitted by Graeme Douglas,
808 Snowden Hallowell Way,
Alexandria, VA 22314

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)

[EXTERNAL]Public Comment - 806 N Columbus Street - Jan 21st Meeting

From Joel Kaatz <kaatzjoel@gmail.com>
Date Wed 1/14/2026 6:16 PM
To Luke Cowan <luke.cowan@alexandriava.gov>

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Hello,

The updated proposal looks great, it is helpful to see additional detail.

Regarding the sanitary sewer and water lateral connections. Previously they were shown on SHW. I believe they should be made on Columbus as I doubt the trunk sewer lines on SHW were appropriately sized. Or was this assessed? Any detail that can be provided on this would be much appreciated. Making the lateral connection on Columbus would also help minimize distribution to residents on SHW.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Joel Kaatz, PE
Water Resources Engineer
kaatzjoel@gmail.com

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[EXTERNAL]BAR Review Meeting - Jan.21 2026: BAR#2025-00373

From Andy Brack <andy_brack@hotmail.com>
Date Wed 1/14/2026 7:34 AM
To Luke Cowan <luke.cowan@alexandriava.gov>

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Hello Mr. Cowan. I am writing to inquire about the Board of Architectural Review meeting scheduled for January 21. I searched on the City of Alexandria website to try and find the agenda for the meeting and the documents submitted by the applicant, but was unable to locate them on the City's event calendar or on the BAR webpage and was wondering if you could provide that.

I am interested in case BAR#2025-00373 and would like to voice concerns that me and some of my neighbors have concerning the proposed development. In short, I am a part of the Old Town Commons development which includes Snowden Hallowell Way which sits directly at the rear of the proposed townhomes in the aforementioned case.

Snowden Hallowell Way is considered a private street, not a public street. The Home Owners Association for Old Town Commons funds the maintenance of the street. As I understand, the applicant has indicated that Snowden Hallowell Way will serve as their vehicular garage access. The applicant has not reached out to Old Town Commons HOA to discuss the proposal or requested any formal access to the Private Street. There is also concern that construction traffic will be placed on Snowden Hallowell Way during the proposed construction period blocking access to the residents on Snowden Hallowell Way.

If you'd like to reach me by phone, you can call me at 202-903-9539 or by email at andy_brack@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

Andy Brack
Old Town Commons ARB Member

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Fw: [EXTERNAL]Public Comments for BAR#2025-00373 - Parker-Gray

From Preservation <Preservation@alexandriava.gov>

Date Mon 1/12/2026 10:25 AM

To Luke Cowan <luke.cowan@alexandriava.gov>; Ashley Casimir <ashley.casimir@alexandriava.gov>

From: Eric Bodley <ebodley@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 10:15 AM

To: Preservation <Preservation@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Public Comments for BAR#2025-00373 - Parker-Gray

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Hello

I would like to submit the following public comments as it relates to the above referenced BAR application scheduled for January 21, 2026..

Thank you

Eric Bodley

To: City of Alexandria Board of Architectural Review

Regarding 806 N Columbus St

Board Members:

I am again writing in opposition to the scale, size and massing of the project proposed for 806 N Columbus St.

There are several reasons why the Board needs to encourage the developer to significantly adjust their proposed structure to better align with the current conditions of the proposed location. Specifically.

In referencing the Design Guidelines for the Old and Historic Alexandria District and the Parker Gray district, the guidelines clearly disagree with the developers design as presented.

1. Referencing Page 165, the guidelines say the following on massing.

“**Massing:** Building massing is the enclosed volume which constitutes a building's exterior form. In the historic districts, new residential construction should reflect the building massing prevailing along the blockface. For example, uneven massing should be avoided along a blockface which has buildings of uniform massing.”

- When reviewing guidelines to compare massing, you see things like “**Height & Stories:** number of floors.” In this case the proposed project is 42.5 feet tall and 4 stories. The two adjacent buildings are both 2 stories with a total height of 32 Feet

for the building to the South and 25 Feet for the building to the north. The proposed project has a significantly greater mass.

- Guidelines for comparing massing also references “**Streetscape**: How it fits with neighboring buildings (scale, form). The project as proposed would put at 42.5 Foot tall Brick faced building between two wood sided buildings 32 feet tall and 25 feet tall. Again this seems like a significant massing difference to the existing streetscape.
- The staff report references the new 5 story building across the street, but I will highlight that the referenced guidelines use the term “blockface” specifically, and we should consider this project in the context of the West side of the street of North Columbus.

2. Referencing Page 165, the guidelines say the following on Height.

“Height: Building height should generally reflect the existing heights of buildings in the immediate vicinity of the proposed new construction. Single family houses Most single family houses in the historic districts are 2 or 3 stories in height. New single family residential construction should generally reflect this prevailing pattern.”

- In this case the proposed project is 42.5 feet tall and 4 stories. The two adjacent buildings are both 2 stories with a total height of 32 Feet for the building to the South and 25 Feet for the building to the north. The proposed project has a significantly greater height and would not be in alignment with the “prevailing pattern” as referenced by the guidelines.
- The city staff report and recommendation included the following rationale in justifying their concern to the board. “When considering the appropriateness of the proposed townhouses it is important to consider all of the nearby building context. The immediate blockface contains mostly two story buildings, including the ones directly adjacent to the project site.”
- Additionally, while there is a new 5 story building directly across the street from this proposed project, that property sits outside of the Historic Parker Grey district, and this project sits within the district. Columbus street is the dividing boundary for the Parker Grey District, with the West side of the street being inside the district and East side of the street being outside the district. I would argue that using a property outside the district as justification for a project inside the district is questionable and arguably not valid.

Moving beyond the Design Guidelines for the Old and Historic Alexandria District and the Parker Gray district we look to past precedence set by the Board of Architectural Review. In 2009, while considering the James Bland development, now called Old Town Commons and directly adjacent to this proposed project location, the BAR stated that “If there is a historic home, the max height for an OTC home directly next door is a recessed three stories..” This project is proposing a recessed four stories and is in contradiction to precedent previously set for this neighborhood. The BAR should maintain the previous standard and limit this project to two stories with a recessed third story.

This issue has been raised previously, and while not directly impacted by the BAR, I do think the developer’s proposal needs to begin to accurately reflect the projects ability to use the private drive known as “Snowden Hollowell Way. Specifically, via email on Monday December 15, 2025, Rob McGuire, Superintendent, Street and Sewer Maintenance for the City of Alexandria, confirmed that Snowden Hollowell Way is private, thus invalidating any intentions of this project to use such driveway unless they have obtained permission from Old Town Commons, which owns Snowden Hollowell Way. I would respectfully ask that the staff report correctly identify Snowden Hollowell Way as private and that the proposed project documents be updated to reflect the developments lack of access for parking until permission is obtained.

This is PT Blooms 4th project within a radius of about 1 block. Currently the developer is getting special permits on open space and parking and all sorts of other things for over 150 new units in a 1 block radius. Before we go and damage the integrity of the one block sitting in the Parker Grey historical district, why don't we stand by prior precedent and limit this development to something appropriate. Maybe we even ask PT Blooms to turn 806 N Columbus St into a park, creating some open/free space for his other developments within the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Eric Bodley

718 N Columbus St

Alexandria VA 22314

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