



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**

Save the past. Enrich the future.

July 7, 2019

Mr. Al Cox, FAIA
Board of Architecture Review
City of Alexandria
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Letter of Support Regarding 10 Duke Street

To the Board of Architecture Review for the Old and Historic District;

I was invited to tour the building and site at 10 Duke Street based on my expertise at the National Trust with flood issues at historic properties. The proposed approach for the property's renovation was explained to me and I reviewed the Silman report. My input was requested for two matters:

- 1) Is it ok to lift the building 3'-0" above its current position to bring it out of the flood plain?
- 2) Is it ok to dismantle the building and reassemble it 3'-0" higher?

For the first point, the alternative is to leave the building as it is, which is below the surrounding development as floodplain regulations require new construction to be higher. This 'sunken' condition would eventually destroy the building through water inundation, causes flood insurance and ADA access complications and does not make sense urbanistically. Elevating the building to match the surrounding development is sensible especially considering the site was originally fill.

While the second point seems unconventional, the condition of the building - an under-structured, unreinforced two-story masonry building with deteriorated lime mortar joints - makes hydraulically lifting the building challenging. Because the building is fragile, dismantling and reconstruction is an acceptable approach. Care should be taken to preserve the patina by saving the pattern plates, not cleaning the brick too much, and retaining all character defining features so the building continues to look old. Photogrammetry will be necessary to maintain a record for reconstruction.

As coastal communities face the impact of sea level rise, flooding and disaster management, adaption strategies have become an imperative part of the preservation field. Solutions such as the one proposed for 10 Duke Street represent the normalization of flood mitigation techniques at historic properties. This flexibility in preservation standards allow for more heritage to be saved. Preservation should be resilient and solutions-oriented.

I am thrilled this building is being saved for our community and support the thoughtful approach.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AW', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ashley Wilson, AIA, ASID
Chief Architect, Graham Gund Architect
National Trust for Historic Preservation