

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2025

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

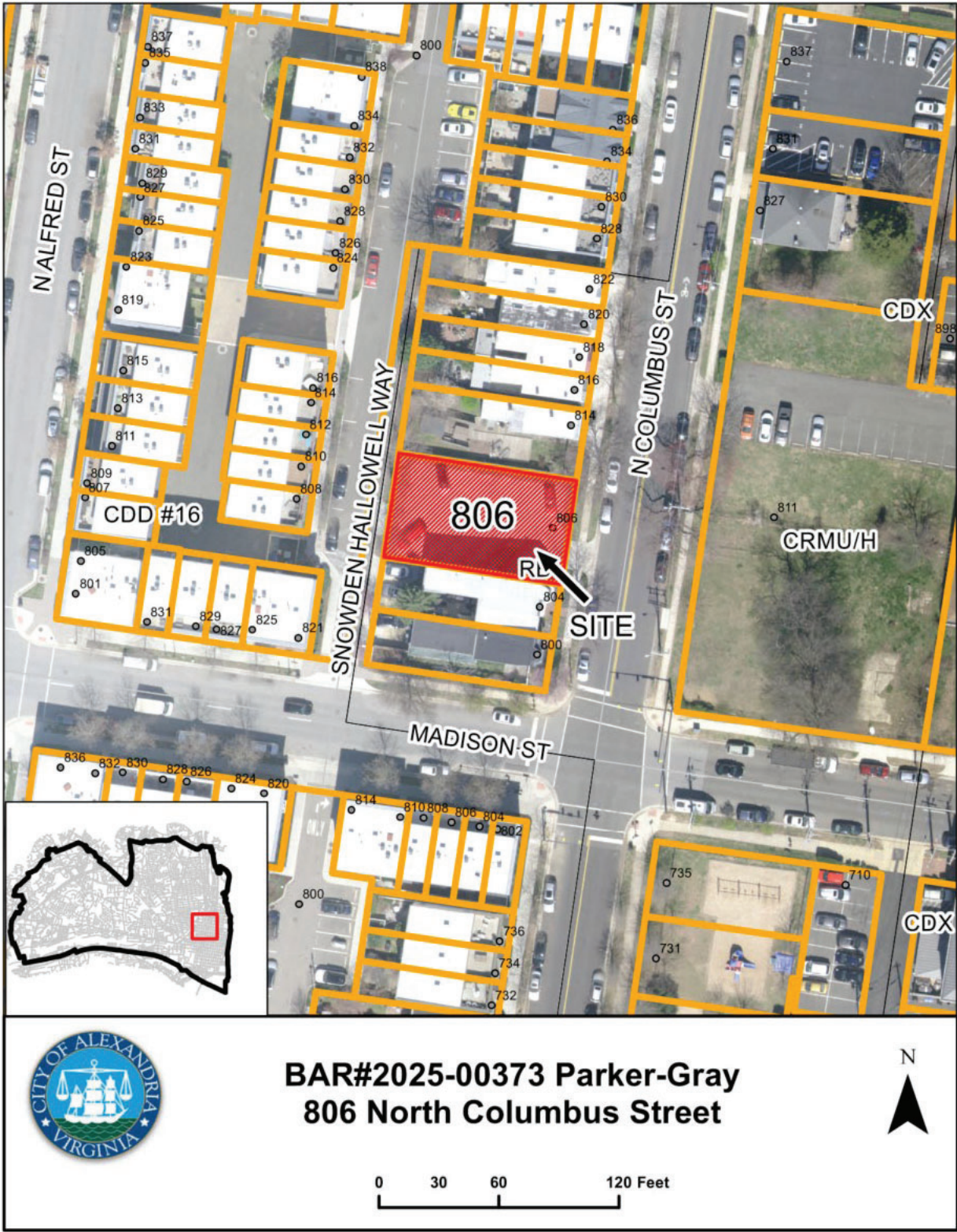
FROM: HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

SUBJECT: CONCEPT REVIEW OF 806 NORTH COLUMBUS STREET
BAR CASE # 2025-00373

I. SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting BAR Concept Review for the development of the vacant property at 806 North Columbus Street into three townhouses.

The Concept Review Policy was adopted in May 2001 and amended and restated in 2016 (attached). Concept Review is an optional, informal process at the beginning of a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) application whereby the BAR provides the applicant, staff, Planning Commission, and City Council with comments relating to the overall appropriateness of a project's height, scale, mass, and general architectural character. These comments are not binding on the BAR or the applicant. The Board takes no formal action at the Concept Review stage but will provide comments and may endorse the direction of a project's design by a straw vote. If the Board believes that a building height or mass, or area proposed for construction is not appropriate and would not be supported in the future, the applicant and staff should be advised as soon as possible. This early step in the development review process is intended to minimize future architectural design conflicts between what is shown to the community and City Council during the DSUP approval and what the Board later finds architecturally appropriate under the criteria in Chapter 10 of the Zoning Ordinance and the BAR's adopted *Design Guidelines*.



II. SITE CONTEXT AND HISTORY

Site Context

The project site is located on the west side of the 800 block of North Columbus Street. Snowden Hallway Way, a public alley, is to the west of the site. The group of three townhouses will be connected to one another and to the north side of 804 North Columbus Street immediately to the south of the project site. Given this configuration, the east and west sides of all three townhouses will be visible from a public right of way as will the north elevation of the north townhouse.

History

The 1877 Hopkins Map shows this block as empty with the owner of the property listed as JW Green. By 1912 the Sanborn Insurance Map shows structures at 804 and 810 N Columbus Street. According to these maps, the property at 806 and 808 North Columbus Street were a part of the property of 810 North Columbus until the middle of the twentieth century.

Phase 2 of the James Bland development was approved by the BAR in 2012 and includes the northern and western portions of the block on which the subject property sits. The structures immediately to the west of the subject property and at the northern edge of this block are part of this multi-unit townhouse development project.

III. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is requesting a Concept Review for a proposal to develop the site into three attached townhouses. The townhouses will be three stories plus a fourth floor set back from the front providing access to an accessible roof deck at the third level. The proposed townhouses will be brick on the front and extend to a portion of the north elevation where it changes to fiber cement siding, stretching across the rear of the structures.

IV. STAFF ANALYSIS

As a reminder, the BAR's purview in this concept review work session is limited to endorsing the project and providing feedback on its height, scale, mass, and general architectural character. The applicant will ultimately return to the Board for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for architectural details, finishes, and brick colors after City Council approval of the DSUP.

The applicant is proposing to build three new townhouses on the empty lot between 804 and 814 North Columbus Street. The townhouses will be built to the north and south property lines, resulting in the southern townhouse being adjacent to the building at 804 North Columbus and the northern townhouse being separated from the building at 814 North Columbus by the side yard. The townhouses will be aligned with the back of the sidewalk on the east side, similar to other buildings along the blockface.

Directly across the street from the subject property is the five-story multi-unit residential building at 805 North Columbus Street. Directly on either side of the buildings are two-story frame

townhouses with a single slope roof. The remainder of the blockface is made up a variety of two-story townhouses with the exception of three-story buildings at the north end of the block. The James Bland development project included the north end of this block; these make up the three-story buildings, including two with side gable roofs and the northernmost building which is two stories with a set back third floor.

The proposed townhouses are three stories at the front side and step up to a fourth floor approximately 13'-0" from the front face of the building (Figure 1&2). The front part of this setback area will be occupied by a roof deck and solid parapet. The fourth-floor massing will include a low slope roof that slopes towards the rear of the building.

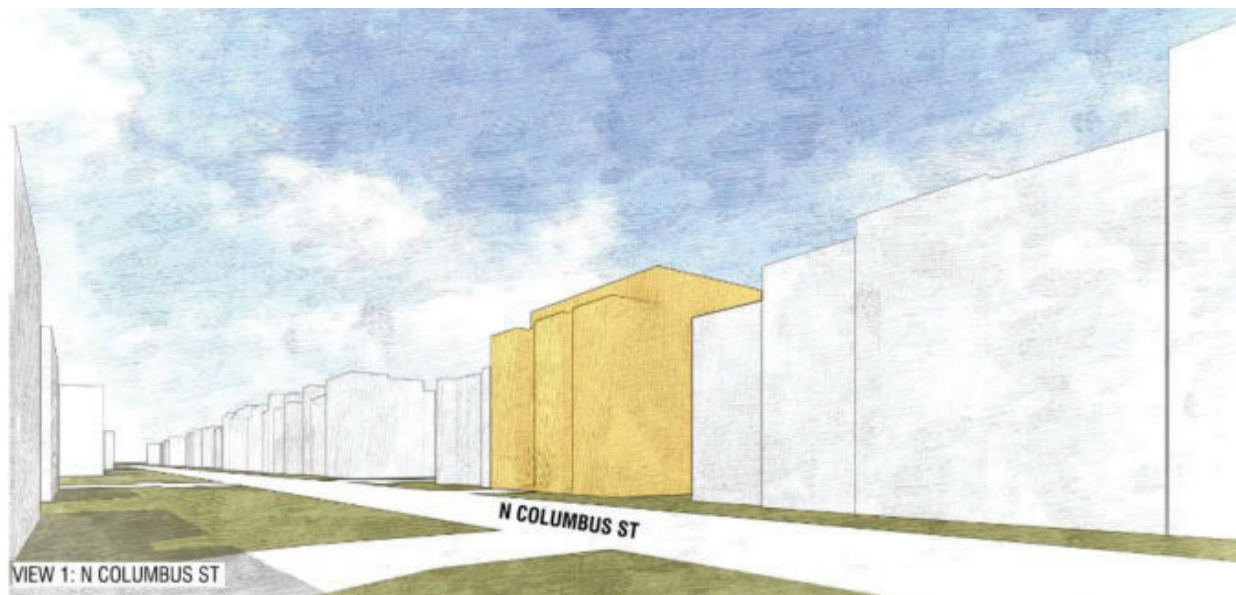


Figure 1: View of proposed townhouses looking south on North Columbus Street



Figure 2: View of proposed townhouses looking north on North Columbus Street

The proposed townhouses will be clad in a combination of brick and fiber cement siding (Figures 3&4). The two outer townhouses will be 18'-3" wide and feature a projecting bay of three punched windows with the entry door located in the recessed section of the façade. The center townhouse will be 16'-0" wide with a projecting bay of two punched windows and the entry door below punched windows in the recessed section. The street facing elevation of the fourth floor will include operable glazed doors and a transom. The front portion of the building will be clad in brick with the transition to fiber cement siding occurring on the sides aligned with the set back fourth floor. This siding will encompass the fourth floor and the rear of the building. At the rear of each townhouse, the fourth floor will be set back 3'-6" from the lower floors and will include simple glazed doors. A grouping of three punched windows will be located at the second and third floors above an operable glazed door at the ground floor.



Figure 3: Proposed front and rear elevations



Figure 4: Proposed side elevations

V. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The *Design Guidelines* state that “Building height should generally reflect the existing heights of buildings in the immediate vicinity of the proposed new construction.” 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. Directly across the street from the proposed buildings is a five-story multi-unit residential building and the James Bland development lies to the west. This townhouse development contains a variety of different townhouses types including three- and four-story buildings, most of which include a set back upper level similar to the proposed townhouses. While much of the surrounding context is modern in nature, when considering the proposed height the Board should determine whether the proposal will overwhelm the historic structures that remain.

The proposal includes elevations for the visible portions of the exterior; however as it is early in the design process there remains a greater level of detail and three dimensional views to be produced. The buildings will be clad in brick at the street facing elevation and this brick will extend across a portion of the long elevation to align with the front of the set back portion of the fourth floor. The street facing façade will be dominated by punched window openings at the second and third floors and a large, ganged window at the ground floor. Staff finds the use of brick transitioning to fiber cement siding to be compatible with the nearby structures. The use of punched windows is similar to windows found on historic structures; however the solid to void ratio of the proposed design includes more glazed areas than typically found on historic buildings.

The rear of the buildings will be visible from the adjacent public right of way and is therefore under the purview of the BAR. These elevations are clad in fiber cement siding with a central three bay wide ganged window on each floor above a similar door at the ground level. At the fourth floor of each building is a set back massing and roof terrace. The drawings seem to indicate windows facing these roof terraces but presumably some of these will be doors providing access to the terrace. While it is typical for the rear elevations of townhouses to be more simple than the primary elevation, staff finds that given the high level of visibility of this portion of the building, the window composition could be more decorative than currently submitted.

As the design progresses, the applicant should continue to develop the design with some of the following factors:

- Examine the amount and spacing of windows on the front façade to be compatible with the solid to void ratio typically found on structures in the historic district.
- The proposed windows on the front façade use a four over four lite configuration. This configuration is not typically found in the historic district. The applicant should consider alternate lite configurations.
- The submission shows a brick base at the front façade, a stone base at the rear and no base at the side. A singular base detail should be developed to tie the different portions of the building together.
- Corner boards are inconsistently shown at the corners of the fiber cement siding. This detail should be further refined.

STAFF

William Conkey, AIA, Historic Preservation Architect

Tony LaColla, AICP, Land Use Services Division Chief, Planning & Zoning

VI. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C- code requirement R- recommendation S- suggestion F- finding

Zoning

C-1 Proposed concept review for new three new townhomes will comply with zoning.

C-2 Proposed lots must adhere to RB (Townhouse) regulations under Sec. 3-706.

C-3 Proposed lots show parking not in compliance with Sec. 7-1005:
- Parking cannot exceed 50% of any required yard.

C-4 Proposed concept review must follow all conditions of CDSP2025-00011 and SUB2025-00006.

F-1 Proposed lots are less than 25 feet in width and therefore have no required side yard setbacks.

F-2 Zoning cannot verify FAR compliance until after concept review.

Code Administration

No comments received

Transportation and Environmental Services

F-1 Comply with all requirements of CDSP2025-00011. (T&ES)

F-2 The Final Site Plan must be approved and released and a copy of that plan must be attached to the demolition permit application. No demolition permit will be issued in advance of the building permit unless the Final Site Plan includes a demolition plan which clearly represents the demolished condition. (T&ES)

Archaeology

F-1 According to historic maps and aerial photographs, a single townhouse was built on this lot in the early 20th century. By the 1990s the building was no longer standing, and the property was converted to a small parking lot. The property has the potential to contain significant archaeological information pertaining to the early 20th-century development of north Old Town.

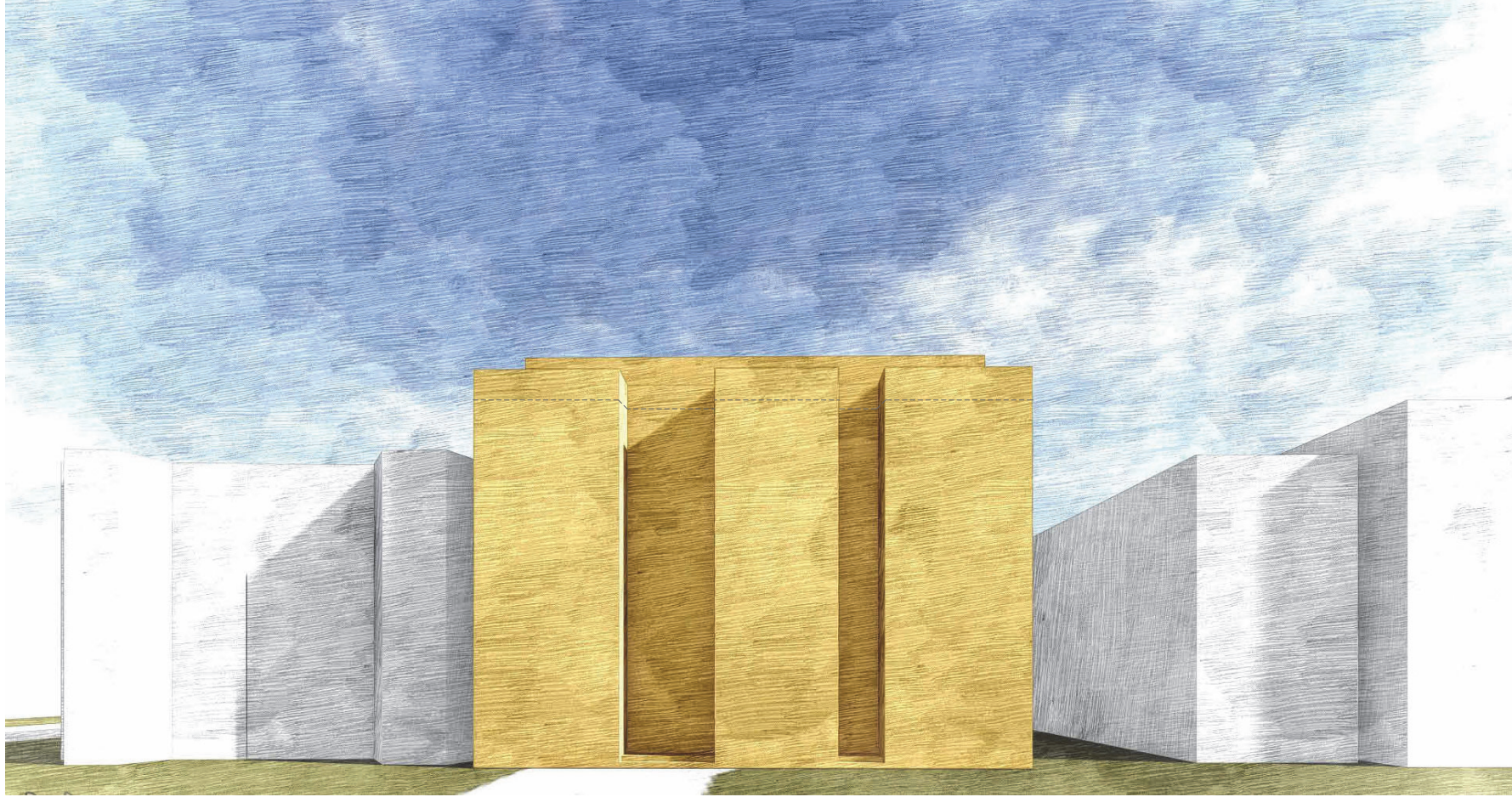
R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-746-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds. The language noted above

shall be included on all Final Site Plan sheets involving any ground disturbing activities.
(Archaeology)

- R-2 The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, or allow independent parties to collect or excavate artifacts, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology. Failure to comply shall result in project delays. The language noted above shall be included on all Final Site Plan sheets involving any ground disturbing activities. (Archaeology)

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- Application Materials
- Completed application
- Plans
- Material specifications
- Scaled survey plat if applicable
- Photographs
- Supplemental Materials
- Public comment, if applicable
- Any other supporting documentation



BAR CONCEPT SUBMISSION

806 N Columbus St
Alexandria, VA

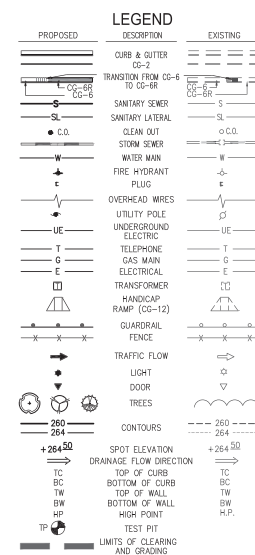
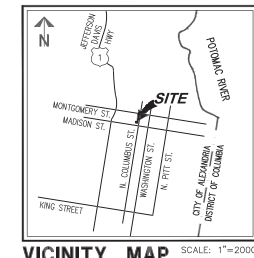
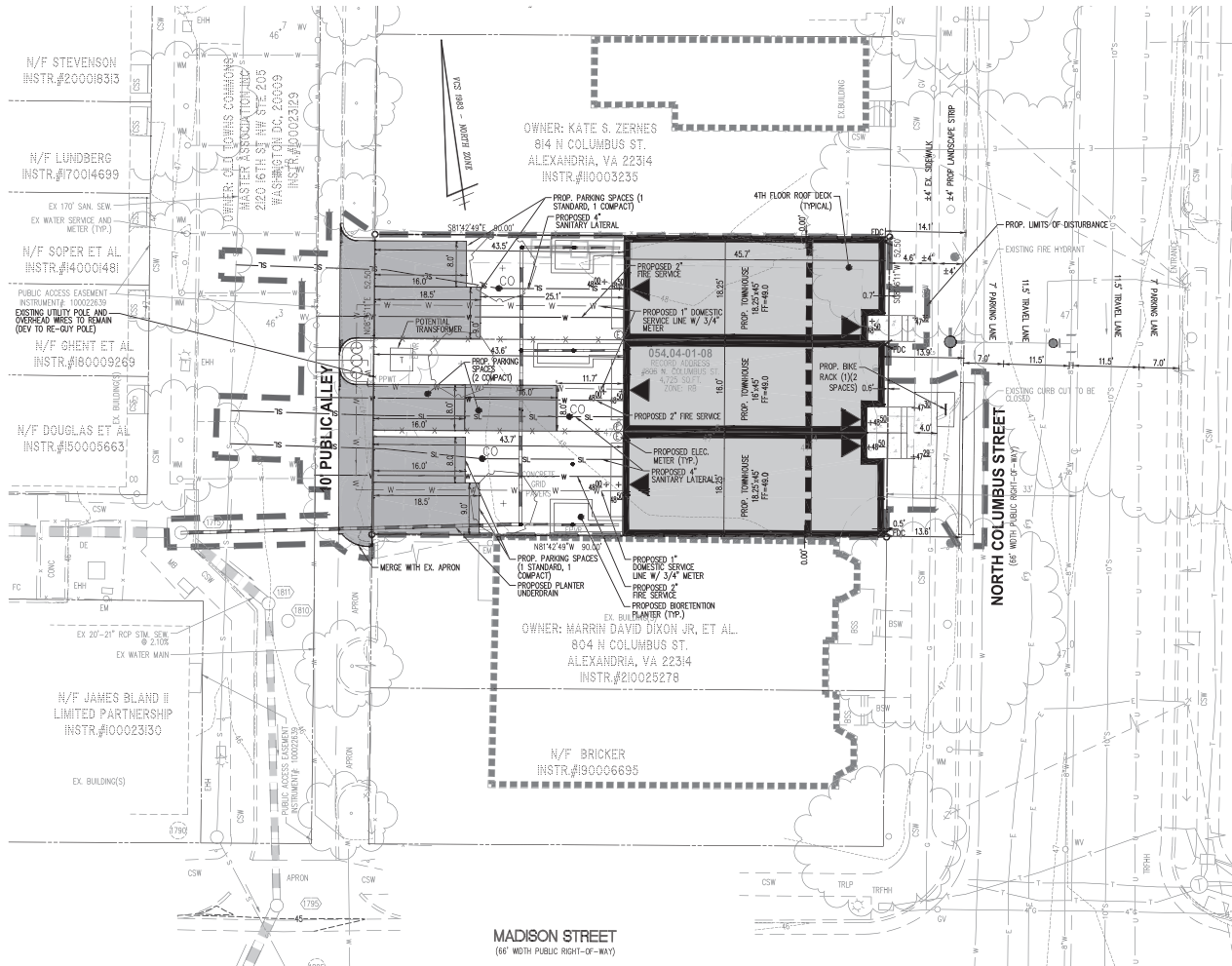
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09/08/2025

BAR Concept Review

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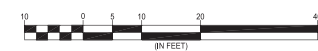


- NOTES**
- THIS PLAN IS BASED ON A FIELD SURVEY PERFORMED BY WALTER L. PHILLIPS, INC.
 - THIS PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN A COMBINED SEWER AREA.
 - NO RIPS OR EXISTING SWM FACILITIES ARE CURRENTLY KNOWN TO EXIST ON THIS PROPERTY.
 - THE PROPERTY IS LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN.
 - THERE ARE NO STRUCTURES ON THE CITY LIST OF 100 YEAR OLD STRUCTURES ON OR ADJACENT TO THE SITE.
 - SEE COVER SHEET FOR PROPOSED ZONING AND PARKING TABULATIONS.

- ARCHAEOLOGY NOTES**
- THE APPLICANT SHALL CALL ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY IMMEDIATELY (703-746-4399) IF ANY BURIED STRUCTURAL REMAINS (WALL FOUNDATIONS, WELLS, PILES, OISTERS, ETC) OR CONCENTRATIONS OF ARTIFACTS ARE DISCOVERED DURING DEVELOPMENT. WORK MUST CEASE IN THE AREA OF THE DISCOVERY UNTIL A CITY ARCHAEOLOGIST COMES TO THE SITE AND RECORDS THE FINDS.
 - THE APPLICANT SHALL NOT ALLOW ANY METAL DETECTION AND/OR ARTIFACT COLLECTION TO BE CONDUCTED ON THE PROPERTY, UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY. FAILURE TO COMPLY SHALL RESULT IN PROJECT DELAY.

TRASH COLLECTION NOTE

TRASH WILL BE COLLECTED THE REAR YARD AND ROLLED TO THE ALLEY FOR COLLECTION ON COLLECTION DAYS.



WALTER L. PHILLIPS, INC.
INCORPORATED
Engineers • Surveyors • Planners • Landscape Architects • Archeologists
207 PARK AVENUE FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA 22046
(703) 524-4193 Fax (703) 532-1501 www.WLPHINC.com

SCALE: 1" = 10'
DATE: 07/26/2025
SCALE: 1" = 1000'

AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION ON COLUMBUS
806 NORTH COLUMBUS STREET
STAGE 1/2 CONCEPT PLAN
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT PLAN

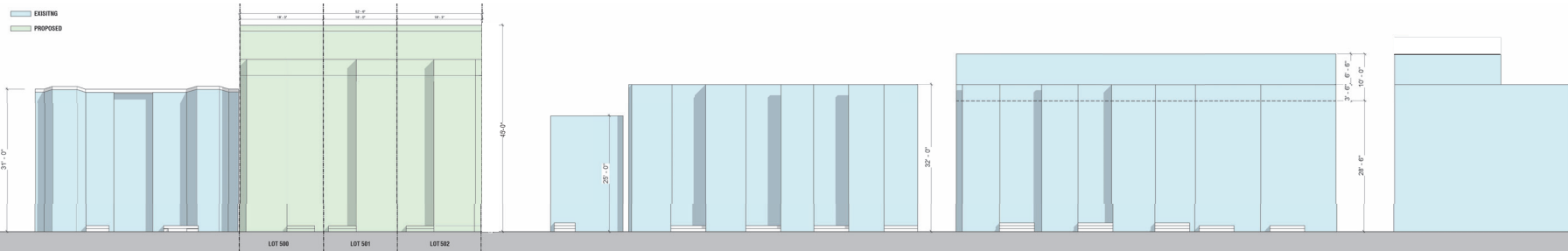
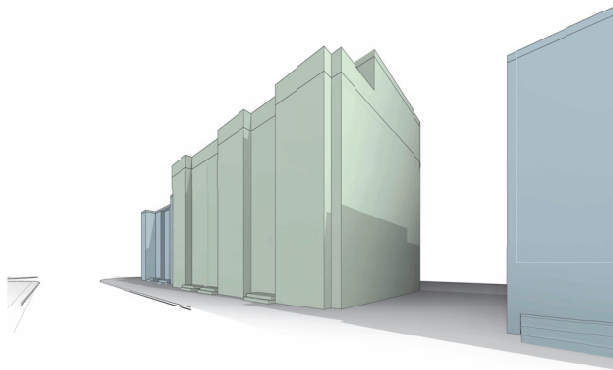
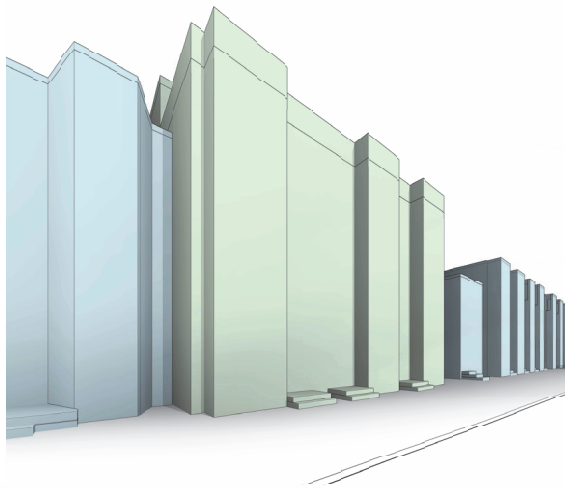
APPROVED
SPECIAL USE PERMIT NO. _____
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

DIRECTOR DATE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
SITE PLAN No. _____

DIRECTOR DATE

CHAIRMAN, PLANNING COMMISSION DATE
DATE RECORDED _____

INSTRUMENT NO. DEED BOOK NO. PAGE NO.



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SHEET NAME
MASSING STUDY

SCALE
1/8" = 1'-0"

SHEET NO.

BAR 2

MASSING CONCEPT IMAGES



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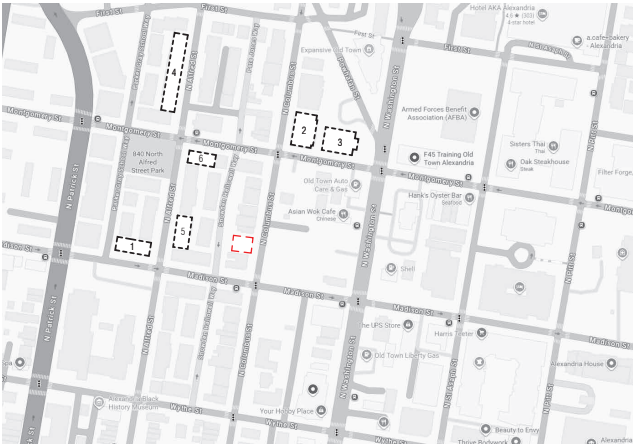
SCALE

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BAR 3

PRECEDENT PHOTOS:

■ SUBJECT PROPERTY
■ ADJACENT BUILDINGS



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SHEET NAME
PRECEDENT PHOTOS

SCALE
1/4" = 1'-0"

SHEET NO.

BAR 5

PRECEDENT PHOTOS:

- SUBJECT PROPERTY
- ADJACENT BUILDINGS



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PRECEDENT PHOTOS

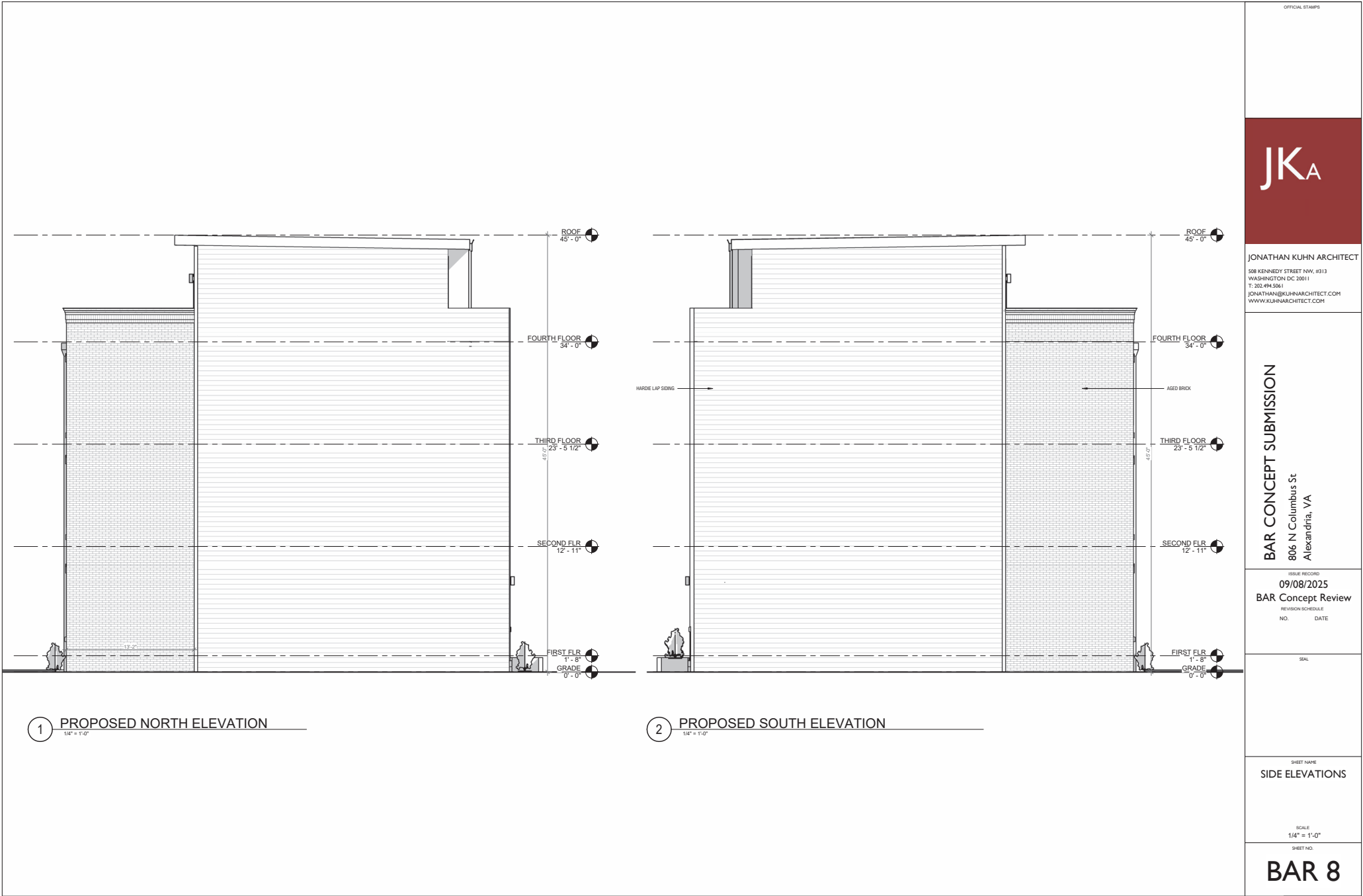
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SHEET NO.

BAR 6

BAR 7

2 PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"



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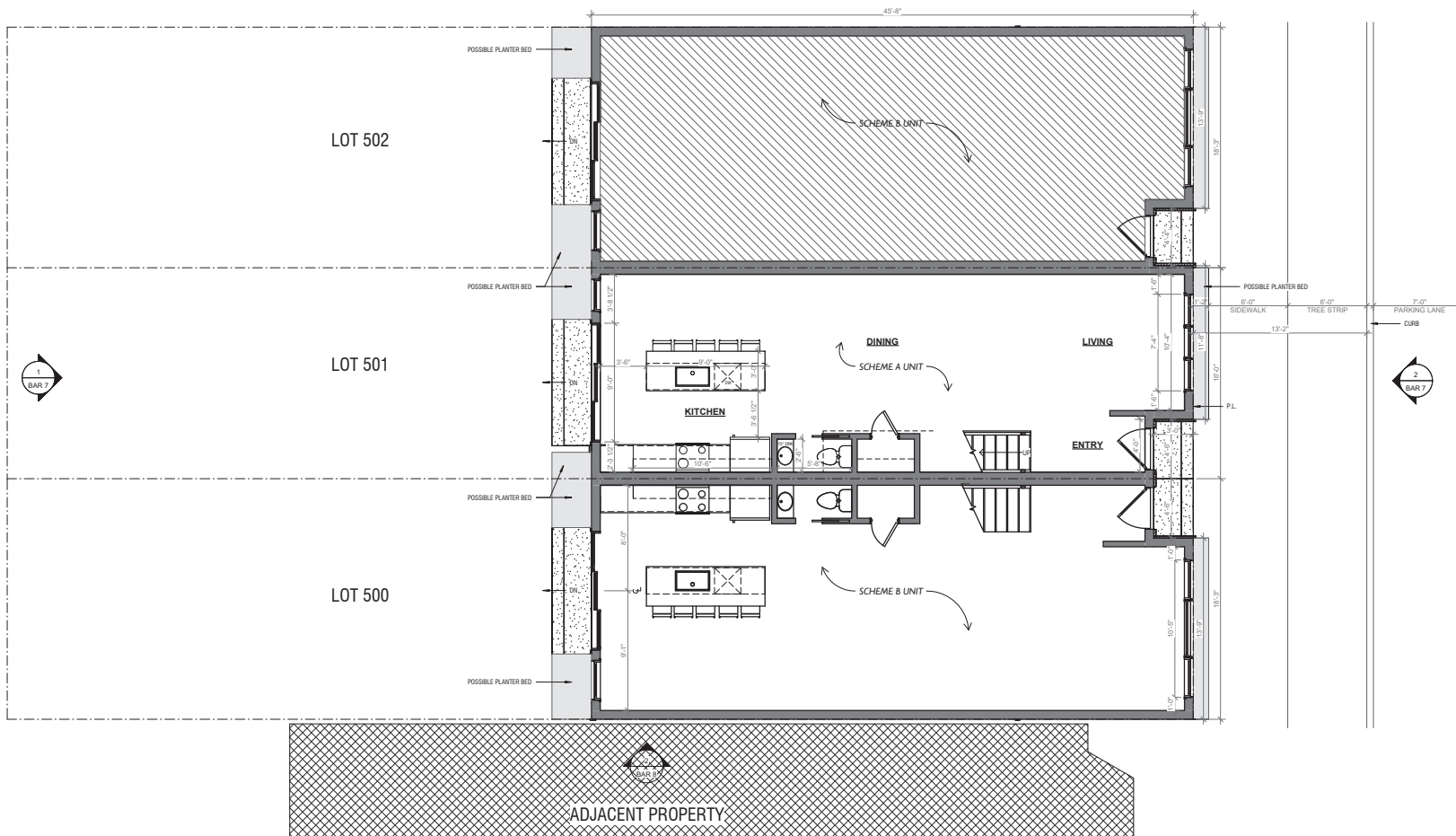
SHEET NAME
SIDE ELEVATIONS

SCALE
1/4" = 1'-0"

SHEET NO.

BAR 8

PUBLIC ALLEY



1 PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS

1/4" = 1'-0"

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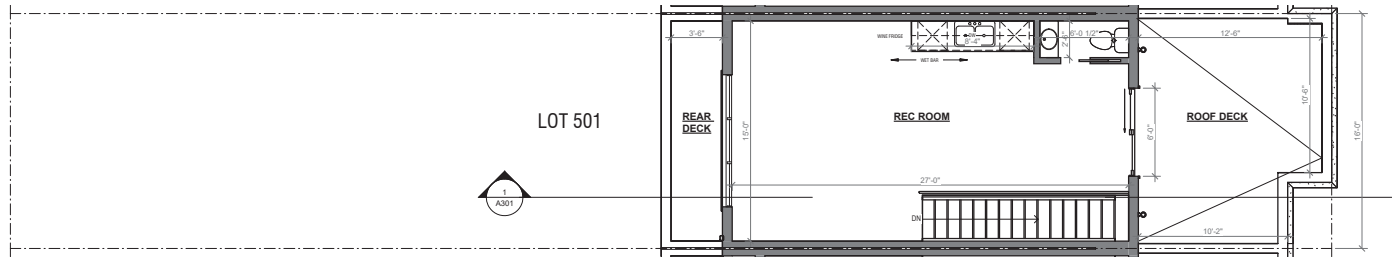
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SHEET NAME
LOT FLOOR PLANS

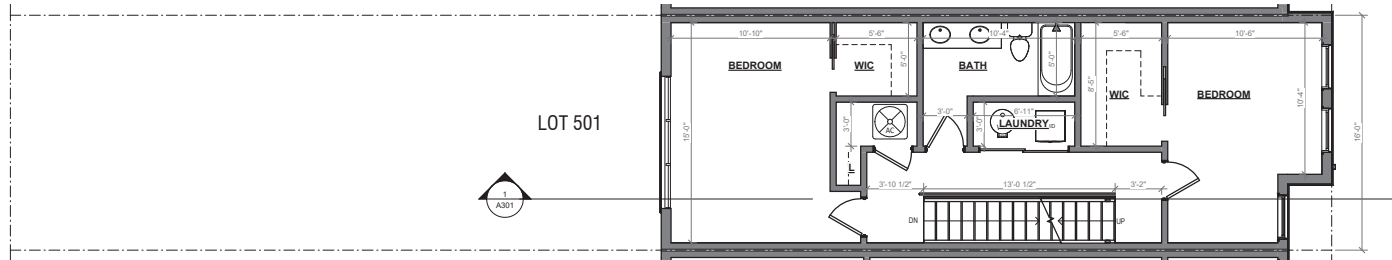
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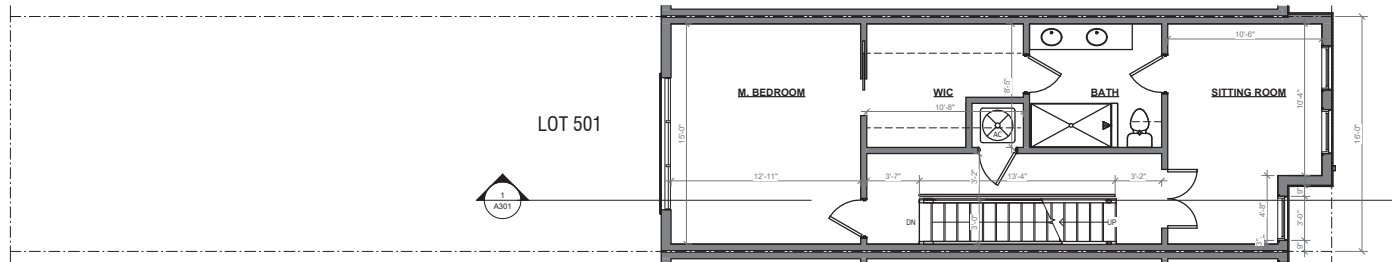
BAR 9



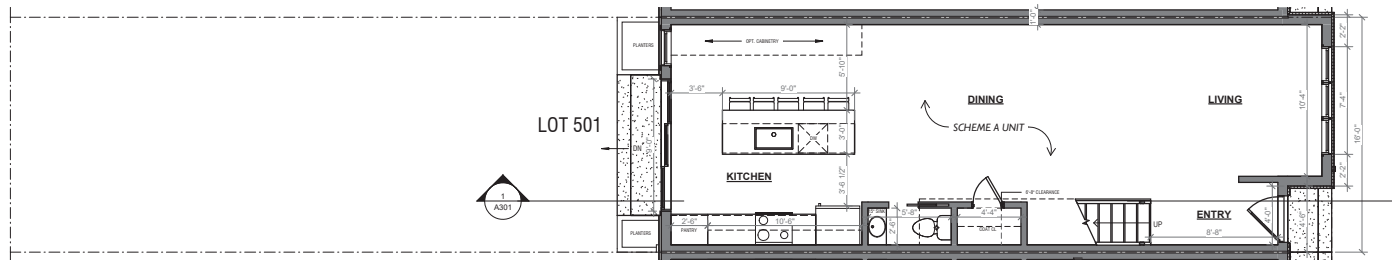
4 PROPOSED FOURTH FLOOR
1/4" = 1'-0"



3 PROPOSED THIRD FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"



2 PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"



1 PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN A
1/4" = 1'-0"



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SHEET NAME
PROPOSED FLOOR
PLANS - SCHEME A

SCALE
1/4" = 1'-0"

SHEET NO.

BAR 10

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Alexandria, VA

REAL

SCALE
1/4" = 1'-0"

SHEET NO. _____

BAR II

Floor plan of the second floor showing the REAR DECK, REC ROOM, and ROOF DECK. The plan includes dimensions for each area and a central staircase. The REAR DECK is 9'-0" wide. The REC ROOM is 24'-0" wide and 17'-1" deep. The ROOF DECK is 9'-0" wide. The central staircase is 8'-0" wide. The plan also shows a bathroom and a kitchen area with a sink and stove.

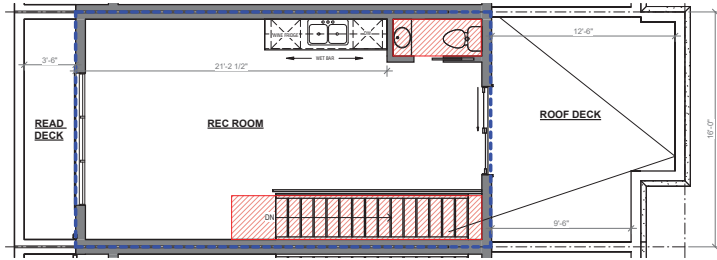
The second floor plan includes the following rooms and features:

- M. BEDROOM:** Located on the left side of the floor, measuring 17'-1" by 10'-10". It contains a **WIC** (Wardrobe In Closet) and an **HVAC** unit.
- M. BATH:** Located in the center, measuring 10'-4" by 5'-6". It includes a toilet, a bathtub, and a sink.
- M.ECH:** A mechanical room measuring 10'-11" by 5'-7", containing an **MB** (Mechanical Box) and an **WB** (Water Box).
- BEDROOM:** Located on the right side, measuring 17'-1" by 12'-5". It includes a **WIC**.
- Staircase:** Located at the top center, with a width of 3'-3" and a depth of 13'-1 1/2".
- Dimensions:** Various other dimensions are noted throughout the plan, including 3'-3", 7'-6", 11'-0", 8'-6", 10'-0", 5'-6", 4'-0", and 10'-4".

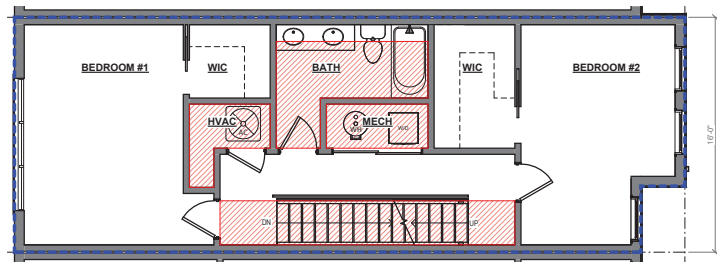
The second floor plan includes a bedroom (12'11" x 17'1"), a sitting room (10'4" x 12'5"), a bathroom (M. BATH, 5'0" x 6'5"), a walk-in closet (WIC, 6'5" x 9'8"), and a central hallway. A staircase is located at the top of the plan, with dimensions 9'2" x 9'2" and 9'2" x 9'2" indicating the width of the staircases. The plan also shows a central core area with dimensions 10'11" x 10'11".

[illegible]

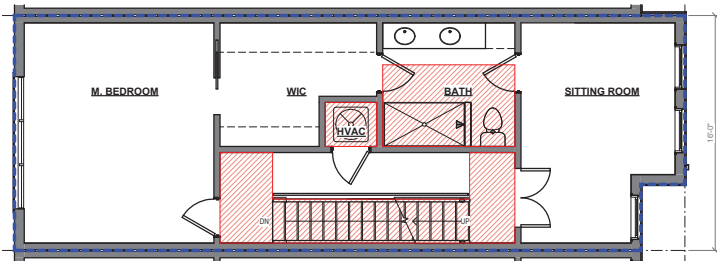
LOT 501 - 16 FT WIDE UNIT - SCHEME A



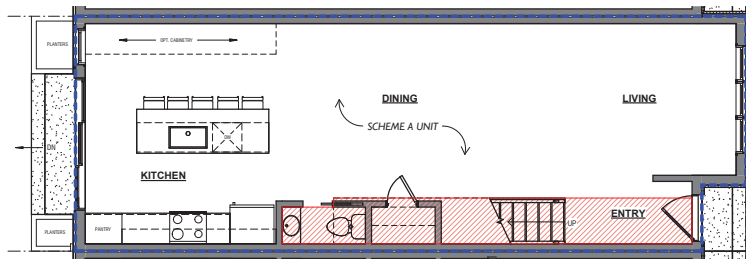
FOURTH FLOOR FAR DIAGRAM



THIRD FLOOR FAR DIAGRAM



SECOND FLOOR FAR DIAGRAM



FIRST FLOOR FAR DIAGRAM

LOT 501 - 16 FT WIDE UNIT - SCHEME A



EXCLUDED FAR:
BATHROOMS
MECHANICAL ROOMS
STAIRS + LANDING AREA

FIRST FLOOR:
GROSS FLOOR AREA: 717.17 SF
EXCLUDED FAR: 84.88 SF
TOTAL SQFT: 632.29 SF

SECOND FLOOR:
GROSS FLOOR AREA: 717.17 SF
EXCLUDED FAR: 141.80 SF
TOTAL SQFT: 575.37 SF

THIRD FLOOR:
GROSS FLOOR AREA: 717.17 SF
EXCLUDED FAR: 150.00 SF
TOTAL SQFT: 567.15 SF

FOURTH FLOOR:
GROSS FLOOR AREA: 452.31 SF
EXCLUDED FAR: 65.85 SF
TOTAL SQFT: 386.46 SF

SITE AREA: 1,448 SF
TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA: 2,602.82 SF
TOTAL EXCLUSIONS: 443.53 SF
TOTAL FLOOR AREA: 2,159.27 SF
TOTAL FAR: 1.50



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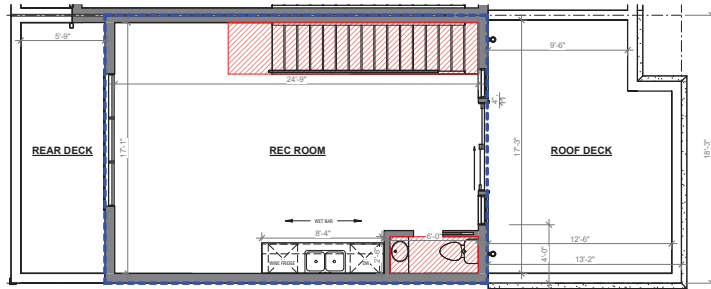
SHEET NAME
**FAR DIAGRAMS -
SCHEME A**

SCALE
1/4" = 1'-0"

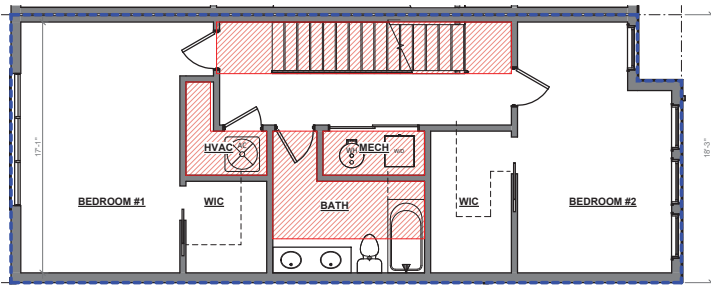
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BAR 12

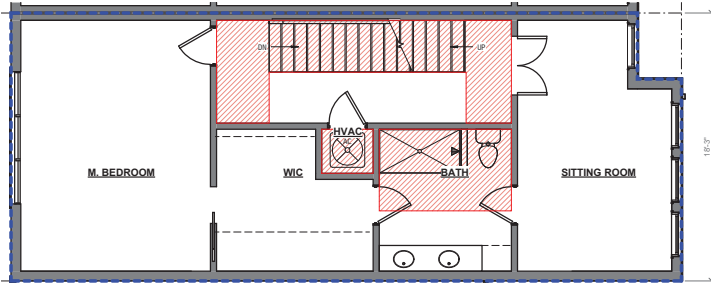
LOT 501 - 16 FT WIDE UNIT - SCHEME A



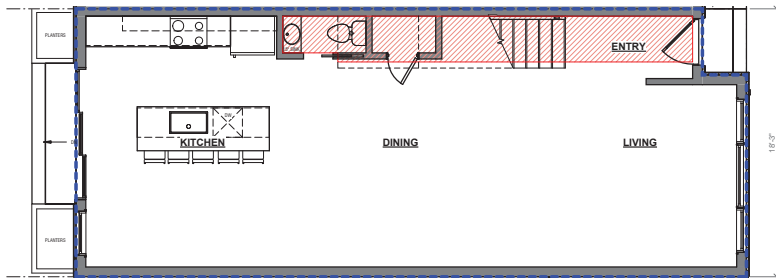
FOURTH FLOOR FAR DIAGRAM



THIRD FLOOR FAR DIAGRAM



SECOND FLOOR FAR DIAGRAM



FIRST FLOOR FAR DIAGRAM

LOT 500 - 18.25 FT WIDE UNIT - SCHEME B



EXCLUDED FAR:
BATHROOMS
MECHANICAL ROOMS
STAIRS + LANDING AREA

FIRST FLOOR:

GROSS FLOOR AREA: 819.92 SF
EXCLUDED FAR: 84.88 SF
TOTAL SQFT: 735.04 SF

SECOND FLOOR:

GROSS FLOOR AREA: 819.92 SF
EXCLUDED FAR: 154.83 SF
TOTAL SQFT: 678.42 SF

THIRD FLOOR:

GROSS FLOOR AREA: 819.92 SF
EXCLUDED FAR: 182.34 SF
TOTAL SQFT: 655.8 SF

FOURTH FLOOR:

GROSS FLOOR AREA: 475.20 SF
EXCLUDED FAR: 74.93 SF
TOTAL SQFT: 400.27 SF

SITE AREA: 1.842 SQ. AC
TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA: 2.324 SQ. AC
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL: 15.36 SQ. AC
TOTAL FLOOR AREA: 2.460 SQ. AC
TOTAL FAR: 1.5



OFFICIAL STAMPS

JK_A

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Alexandria, VA

ISSUE RECORD
09/08/2025
BAR Concept Review
REVISION SCHEDULE
NO. DATE

SEAL

SHEET NAME
FAR DIAGRAMS-
SCHEME B

SCALE
1/4" = 1'-0"

SHEET NO.

BAR 13