



218 North Lee Street, Suite 310  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
(703) 549-5811  
[www.HistoricAlexandriaFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricAlexandriaFoundation.org)

November 9, 2023

The Hon. Justin M. Wilson  
The Hon. Amy B. Jackson  
The Hon. Canek Aguirre  
The Hon. Sarah Bagley  
The Hon. John Taylor Chapman  
The Hon. Alyia Gaskins  
The Hon. R. Kirk McPike

Alexandria City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

**Re: November 14, 2023 Hearing— Master Plan Amendment #2023-00005; Zoning Text Amendment #2023-00007; 2020-2021 Housing Policy Amendments.**

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of the Council:

We write in opposition to the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that have been submitted for your consideration because they will have an irreversible negative impact on the vast historic resources present throughout our City.

Historic Alexandria Foundation (“HAF”) was formed in 1954 “to preserve, protect and restore structures and sites of historic or architectural interest in and associated with the City of Alexandria, Virginia, to preserve antiquities, and generally to foster and promote interest in Alexandria’s historic heritage.” In furtherance of this mission, we are vitally concerned with the proper administration of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance and its critical role in protecting the historic fabric of our community. Alexandria is home to

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important Historic Landmarks, National Register properties and Districts which you as members of the City Council have an important responsibility to protect. The decisions you make on zoning — especially those that increase zoning density — are not just for today, but for all time.

HAF is both an owner of real estate (410 South Washington Street) and the holder of preservation easements on numerous properties in the City of Alexandria. We provide tens of thousands of dollars in grants each year to support worthy and important historical research, scholarships, and restoration work on historic properties throughout the City. See [http://historicalalexandriafoundation.org/grant\\_recip.html](http://historicalalexandriafoundation.org/grant_recip.html). Our membership includes property owners throughout the City of Alexandria. As such, we are disappointed to see that the major changes proposed to the Zoning Ordinance make no apparent effort to protect the treasured historic resources of our City.

While the National Landmark status of the Old and Historic District (NRHP No. 66000928; VLR No. 100-0121) and the Parker-Gray District (NRHP No. 09001232; VLR 100-0133) of Alexandria is widely recognized, the historic resources of our City extend beyond the confines of those Landmark Districts. We are blessed with a panoply of nationally recognized and state designated historic places including:

- the **Town of Potomac** (NRHP No. 64500873 DHR File No.; 100-136)(see <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/41679434>) **with 690 listed contributing properties**;
- the **Rosemont Historic District** (NRHP No. 92001275; VLR 100-0137)(see <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/41679436>), **with 458 listed contributing properties**;
- the **Parkfairfax Historic District** (NRHP No. 99000146; VLR 100-0151) ([https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/100-0151\\_Parkfairfax\\_HD\\_1999\\_Final\\_Nomination.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/100-0151_Parkfairfax_HD_1999_Final_Nomination.pdf)), **with 288 listed contributing properties**;
- the **Fairlington Historic District** (NRHP No. 99000368; VDHR File No. 000-5772)([https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR\\_to\\_transfer/PDFNoms/000-5772\\_Fairlington\\_Historic\\_District\\_1999\\_Final\\_Nomination.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR_to_transfer/PDFNoms/000-5772_Fairlington_Historic_District_1999_Final_Nomination.pdf)), **with 1024 listed contributing properties**;

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- the **President Gerald R. Ford, Jr. House** (VLR 100-0165; NRHP 85003048)(<https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/100-0165-President-Gerald-Ford-House-1985-Nomination-NHL.pdf>).

In addition to these properties, the **African American Heritage Resources of Alexandria Multiple Property Documentation (MPD)**(VLR 100-5015; HRHP No. 64500873)(see <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/b1d423b1-be21-4088-9f89-8bedcce29ee3>), documents the City-wide presence of important African-American heritage properties, and the fact many such properties have been inadequately identified and documented to date.<sup>1</sup>

Consideration also needs to be given to the numerous buildings that are recognized as requiring protection on the City's list of 100-Year-Old Buildings. See Appendix 7 (attached).

HAF is proud to have provided direct financial support to the City of Alexandria's identification and nomination of properties for the statewide and national recognition that they deserve.

As hard as it is to recall, most of what is now recognized as the City's most valuable housing stock was — not so long ago — viewed as a decaying slum slated for wide-scale demolition. Contributing to these derelict conditions was the fact that many Town houses — including those neighboring City Hall — were broken up into boarding houses with one-room “cold-water flats.” Thankfully, the vibrant and desirable City we now enjoy was made possible through successful historic preservation and rehabilitation of our irreplaceable historic housing stock.

Article XI of the Constitution of Virginia (1971) specifically adopts as the public policy of the Commonwealth the conservation of our historical sites and buildings. The City Charter of Alexandria, and the State repeatedly provides the City with the powers necessary to protect this heritage. The Virginia Zoning Code expressly requires that the City “**protect against destruction of or encroachment upon historic areas,**” Va. Code

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<sup>1</sup> An HAF funded grant provided support for the research underlying the African American Heritage Resources of Alexandria Multiple Property Documentation application, among others.

The documents referenced above are matters of public record that are lengthy and detailed, but necessary for a complete appreciation of the extent of historic resources that will be affected by the proposed zoning amendments. We provide the internet addresses to these documents and incorporate them by reference in this submission.

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§ 15.2-2283(v)(emphasis added), and “to protect against .... overcrowding of land, undue density of population in relation to community facilities existing or available, obstruction of light and air, danger and congestion in travel and transportation....” Va. Code § 15.2-2283(vi). All of these considerations weigh against the adoption of the proposed ordinance changes before the Council.

We at HAF have read with interest the thoughtful and well-reasoned Statement of Deborah Chalfie, Preservation Chair of the Art Deco Society of Washington to the City of Alexandria Planning Commission on Planning Staff Recommendations, Zoning for Housing Initiative November 1, 2023, which implored the City “to slow down and move more deliberately, and to examine the impact that this proposal would have on the City’s historic buildings and districts before approving them.” We commend that statement to your attention and join in this request.

Because the proposed zoning amendments do not appear to have been drafted with the required attention to the preservation demands of our historic community, we oppose their adoption.

Thank you for your consideration of our statement.

Respectfully submitted,

Historic Alexandria Foundation  
By: /s/ Morgan D. Delaney  
President

cc. Karl Moritz, Director, Planning & Zoning



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## Appendix

To HAF Letter to City Council of November 9, 2023

- 1) **Town of Potomac** (NRHP No. 64500873 DHR File No.; 100-136)(<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/41679434>)(visited 11/8/2023)
- 2) **Rosemont Historic District** (NRHP No. 92001275; VLR 100-0137)(<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/41679436>)(visited 11/8/2023)
- 3) **Parkfairfax Historic District** (NRHP No. 99000146; VLR 100-0151)([https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/100-0151\\_Parkfairfax\\_HD\\_1999\\_Final\\_Nomination.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/100-0151_Parkfairfax_HD_1999_Final_Nomination.pdf))(visited 11/8/2023)
- 4) **Fairlington Historic District** (NRHP No. 99000368; VDHR File No. 000-5772)([https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR\\_to\\_transfer/PDFNoms/000-5772\\_Fairlington\\_Historic\\_District\\_1999\\_Final\\_Nomination.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR_to_transfer/PDFNoms/000-5772_Fairlington_Historic_District_1999_Final_Nomination.pdf))(visited 11/8/2023)
- 5) **President Gerald R. Ford, Jr. House** (VLR 100-0165; NRHP 85003048)([https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/100-0165\\_President\\_Gerald\\_Ford\\_House\\_1985\\_Nomination\\_NHL.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/100-0165_President_Gerald_Ford_House_1985_Nomination_NHL.pdf))(visited 11/8/2023) .
- 6) **African American Heritage Resources of Alexandria Multiple Property Documentation (MPD)**(VLR 100-5015; HRHP No. 64500873)(<https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/b1d423b1-be21-4088-9f89-8bedc29ee3>)(visited 11/8/2023)
- 7) **Alexandria 100 Year Old Building List as of February 2021** (Attached)



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## Appendix

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Appx 7

**Alexandria 100 Year Old Building List as of February 2021**

## 100-Year-Old Buildings (02/21)

1. 113 N Fayette St
2. 114 N Payne St
3. 115 N Payne St
4. 116 N Payne St
5. 118 N Payne St
6. 120 N Payne St
7. 122 N Payne St
8. 124 N Payne St
9. 126 N Payne St
10. 128 N Payne St
11. 130 N Payne St
12. 132 N Payne St
13. 134 N Payne St
14. 305 Charles Alexander Ct (Formerly 2404 Russell Rd)
15. 400 Fontaine St
16. 406 Jenney's La
17. 510 Quaker Ln
18. 635 Kings Cloister
19. 1707 Duke St
20. 1018 Duke St
21. 1020 Duke St
22. 1450 Wilkes St
23. 2525 King St
24. 2605 King St
25. 3640 Wheeler Ave
26. 1030 Mission Ln
27. 3591 Aspinwall Ln
28. 3608 Bishop Walker Cir
29. 3610 Bishop Walker Cir
30. 3612 Bishop Walker Cir
31. 3614 Bishop Walker Cir
32. ~~3620 Bishop Walker Cir~~ 1220 Wilmer Ln
33. 3621 Deanery Dr
34. Hoof's Run Stone Bridge (structure not a building)