

April 30, 2019

Hand delivered to Alexandria City Hall, 310 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Mayor Justin M. Wilson

Vice-Mayor Elizabeth B. Bennett-Parker

Councilman Canek Aguirre

Councilman John Taylor Chapman

Councilwoman Amy B. Jackson

Councilwoman Redella S. 'Del' Pepper

Councilman Mohamed E. 'Mo' Siefeldein



**Re: Appeal from BAR Case Number 2108-00410 / 619 S. Lee Street
(Vowell/Snowden/Black House)**

Dear Mayor Wilson and Members of the Council:

Since 2004, I've owned and resided at 511 Queen Street, one of thirteen flounder houses in Old Town Alexandria. My husband and I had respectfully restored its exterior and interior, and we added an addition in 2007-2008, which is not visible from the street and does not change the appearance of the house and neighborhood. BAR policies were closely adhered to. We understood that preserving the historic appearance of Old Town was important to its charming, village-like setting, to its place in the growth of Virginia's architectural history, and certainly for its economic draw during tourist season. In essence, like my neighbors who own their homes, I've never regretted being a steward of our home. My neighbors also embrace the policies that keep our town historic and attractive, in addition to helping maintain property values.

Recently, though, the BAR's casual disregard of historic guidelines and policies, including certified landmarks such as the Hugo Black property is troubling. Previous renovation plans of other Old Town structures that residents have challenged were equally disconcerting, such as the redesign of the Ice House at Gadsby's Tavern and the proposal to transform a neighborhood home on the SE corner of Princess Street at Washington into an inn and restaurant with outside dining. These changes would have erased the protected historic appearance of these structures, as will the proposed changes for Justice Black's house. The modifications suggested for the Black house are significant, disregard some of the structure's historic details, and are entirely visible from two streets.

How do you decide what merits these changes and what must remain historic? BAR guidelines and policies were established for a reason, even though they sometimes are challenging. But we,

like others, invested in this historic neighborhood because we believed our home was protected, and its value would likely increase. If consistency in policy decisions for historic preservation aren't followed, then Old Town Alexandria is destined to become a mixture of tasteless renovations that permanently damage its historic character. I hope that each of you consider this when making your decisions on this appeal.

I am respectfully requesting that you deny the application for the planned development of the Justice Hugo Black property in this appeal.

Sincerely,

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

Rosemary Furfaro
511 Queen Street
Alexandria, VA 22314