



City of Richmond, Virginia
Department of Planning and Development Review
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To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
File ID: UDC-092846-2021
Date: June 21, 2021
RE: **Final location, character, and extent review of the removal of a monument and pedestal; 0 N. 29TH Street; UDC 2021-23**

I. APPLICANT

Christopher Frelke, Director, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

II. LOCATION

Intersection of N. 29th Street and Libby Terrace

Property Owner:

City of Richmond

III. PURPOSE

The application is for final location, character, and extent review of the removal of a monument and pedestal and installation of temporary materials located at the intersection of N. 29th Street and Libby Terrace.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant proposes to remove the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors monument, pedestal, steps, and a decorative fence in a traffic circle located at the intersection of N. 29th Street and Libby Terrace. The statue portion of the monument was previously removed by order of the mayor.

The new location of the monument, pedestal, and related objects has not been determined and is not being considered as part of this application. This Location, Character and Extent approval will provide authorization for the removal of the monument, pedestal, and related objects, but City Council will make the final decision regarding the final disposition of the monument, pedestal and related objects. Once the removal is complete, the applicant proposes a temporary treatment of the space, installing granite cobblestone to match the existing cobble stone paving from the Department of Public Works inventory.

The historic preservation aspects of this application have been reviewed and approved by the City of Richmond's Commission of Architectural Review at their May 25th, 2021 meeting. The associated staff report for that review can be found here: <https://richmondva.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4951078&GUID=DADA7D60-15D7-483E-8A89-2F43400B6512&Options=&Search=>

Since the City of Richmond Urban Design Guidelines do not specifically address removal and relocation of objects, Committee staff utilized the City Code of Ordinance, specifically the zoning ordinance, available here:

https://library.municode.com/va/richmond/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH30ZO_ARTIINGE.

The Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve the final design with the following conditions:

- After removal of the monument and related objects, a center, raised island be kept that is circular in in form, rather than square

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The monument proposed for removal is located in East Richmond in the Church Hill neighborhood, and is located within the St. John's Church City Old and Historic District. The monument sits in the center of a cobble stone traffic circle surrounded by a decorative metal fence. The project area is surrounded by Libby Hill Park to the south, west, and north, and a residential neighborhood to the north and east. The area is zoned R-6 Residential (single-family attached).

b. Scope of Review

The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter for the removal, relocation, or alteration of structures/works of art.

c. UDC Review History

The Urban Design Committee has not previously reviewed any projects for this location.

d. Project Description

On behalf of the City of Richmond and in accordance with Ord. 2020-154, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities requests a final location, character and extent review to authorize removal of a monument pedestal and related items from Libby Hill Park in the St. John's Church City Old and Historic District. The Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument located at 0 N. 29th Street is an asset of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.

This application is based on the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) "Guidance Regarding Confederate Monuments." Per Section 15.2-1812 of the Code of Virginia (effectual July 1, 2020), the General Assembly has granted authority to the City Council to decide upon the future location/receivership of these City assets; therefore, this application for review does not speculate where any of these assets may or should end up. Further, beyond providing what the temporary restoration of each site could look like upon removal to maintain health, human safety, traffic flow, and landscape continuity, this application does not propose what should exist on these sites in the future.

Justification for this application for review is further rooted in the City Charter and the City Code. Code §30-100 outlines the purposes of the zoning ordinance. The ability to remove the monument and pedestal will (3) Promote health, sanitation and general welfare, as well as (7) facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community.

The site plans provided by the applicant show the removal of the monument including the steps, curb, and fence, and the replacement of the existing round-about within the intersection with cobble stone from the Department of Public Works inventory to match the adjacent cobble skirting. Existing spot lights will be turned off and removed, or replaced by pedestrian scale lighting as appropriate to the location.

No landscaping is currently planned for this location.

e. Master Plan

City-wide vision: In 2037, Richmond is a welcoming, inclusive, diverse, innovative, sustainable, and equitable city of thriving neighborhoods, ensuring a high quality of life for all. Information and analysis provided by the applicant states that the existing monuments are not in-keeping with the ideals in the city-wide vision stated in the City of Richmond's Master Plan, which emphasizes the importance of creating neighborhoods that are equitable, diverse, and welcoming to all visitors, current residents, and potential residents.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

In the Environment Section of the Urban Design Guidelines under Public Parks, it is stated that "*Historic elements should be surveyed and preservation should be considered for both facilities and landscapes*" (pg.9). The scope of this project was reviewed and approved by the Commission of Architectural Review at their May 25th, Meeting. Staff defers any matters of historic review to the City of Richmond's Commission of Architectural Review.

"The selection of appropriate paving materials should be based upon the following: desired visual image, compatibility with adjacent paving materials, performance, durability, maintenance requirements, and cost" (pg. 3). The applicant is proposing to use cobblestone for any repaving of disturbed areas. Staff finds that the use of cobblestone is in-keeping with the surrounding paving materials and is also a traffic calming measure that is sensitive to the character of the neighborhood.

"Intersections should be designed to serve pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists in a safe manner" (pg. 7). While the Urban Design Committee finds round-a-bouts to be unsafe for pedestrians and cyclist for their tendency to keep cars continuously moving, the subject round-a-bout is located on a corner, and serves more as a traffic calming mechanism, and mimics other small, landscaped, round-a-bouts with in Libby Park and within the Church Hill neighborhood, strengthening community character. Staff also finds that removal of this round-a-bout will eliminate a space that could serve another purpose in the future such as the installation of public art or landscaping.

“Traffic calming elements, when necessary, should be well designed so that they provide for an aesthetic contribution to the urban character of the neighborhoods in which they are placed” (pg. 8) The applicant is proposing to use cobblestone for any repaving of disturbed areas. Staff finds that the use of cobblestone is in-keeping with the surrounding paving materials and is also a traffic calming measure that is sensitive to the character of the neighborhood.

Code of Ordinances, Sec. 30-100, Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to adopt a comprehensive zoning plan designed to:

(2) Secure safety from fire, flood, panic and other danger;

(3) Promote health, sanitation and general welfare;

(7) Facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community;

VI. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**