

8. COA-091353-2021

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

May 25, 2021

PROPERTY ADDRESS

Laburnum Avenue & Hermitage Road

DISTRICT

Hermitage Road

Commission of
Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT



APPLICANT

Parks, Recreation, & Community Facilities

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jones

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

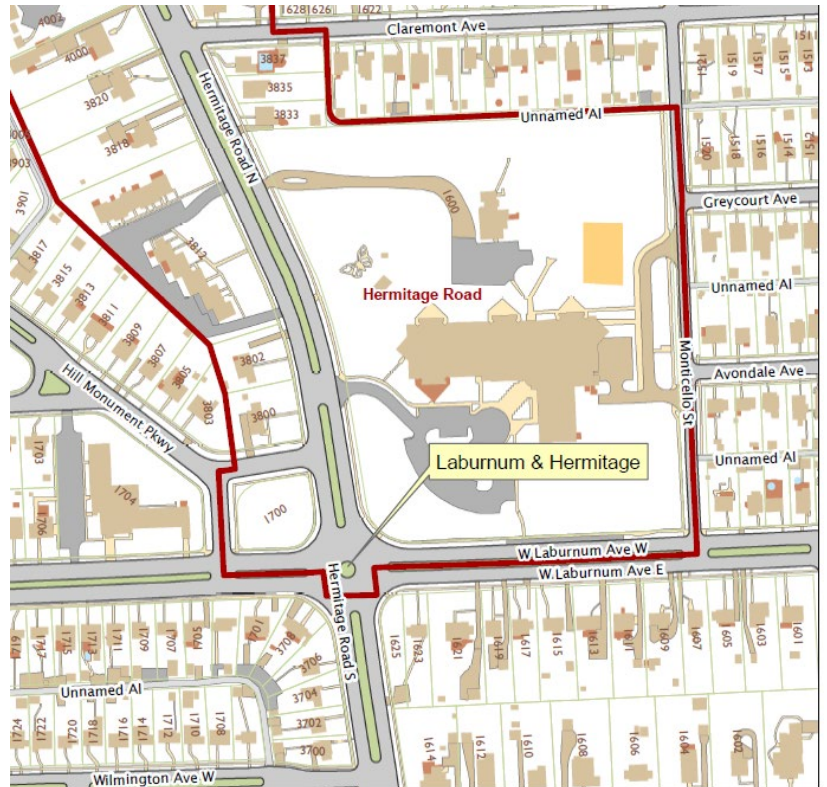
Remove a monument, pedestal, and remains.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes to remove a monument, pedestal and human remains associated with the A. P. Hill statue in the Hermitage Road City Old and Historic District.
- Once the monument, pedestal, and remains are removed, the existing median infrastructure will be completely removed and the area will be paved with asphalt.

The monument and related objects mark the location of the burial of A.P. Hill. The applicant proposes to remove the remains. Relocation of human remains requires a permit from the Director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The applicant is aware of the need for the permit. As this is a state process, the Commission will not address this requirement.

The location of the monument, pedestal, and remains has not been determined and is not considered as part of this application. Should any part of the monument and related objects be considered for reinstatement in a City Old and Historic District, an application to locate them in a City Old and Historic District will be necessary.



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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

Commission staff reviewed the project through the lens of the “Building Relocation” language of the Richmond Old and Historic District Handbook and Design Review Guidelines utilizing the Guidelines presented below. Since the Guidelines do not specifically address removal and relocation of objects, Commission staff also 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.

Staff also utilized the guidance provided by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) in their document titled: DHR Guidance Regarding Confederate Monuments, available here:

<https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Monument-Removal-Guidance-Letterhead.pdf>.

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The Commission has not previously reviewed this application.

STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- the gentlest means possible be used to remove the objects
- the objects be removed in a single piece if possible, or be disassembled at the original joints
- all removed pieces be stored in a secure environment before final disposition

STAFF ANALYSIS

Building Relocation, pg. 81

1. Will the proposed relocation would have a detrimental effect on the structural soundness of the building?

The applicant provides a preliminary process for removal including using a hand grinder to remove any mortar, cutting any internal/hidden bronze pins or straps, and possibly drilling holes into the hidden faces of some stone components to allow for pin insertion and lifting access. Staff finds that this is minimally invasive and recommends approval with the condition that the gentlest means possible be used to remove the objects.

2. Will the proposed relocation have a detrimental effect on other historic sites, buildings or structures in an Old and Historic District?

The applicant does not propose any changes to any other elements in the Hermitage Road City and Old Historic District. As such, staff finds that removing the objects associated with the monument will not have a detrimental effect on other historic sites, buildings, or structures in the Hermitage Road City and Old Historic District.

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;

As indicated in the application, the monument and associated objects are symbols of oppression and inequality in prominent public places that are associated with the era of legalized segregation, known as the Jim Crow laws¹, and the Lost Cause.² The applicant further states that the monuments have become locations that endanger public safety. Staff finds that the removal of the monuments and associated objects is in keeping with the City of Richmond Code of Ordinances.

DHR Guidance, Considerations for Appropriate Removal

- *Methods – remove in a single piece if possible. If not, disassemble at original joints*

Staff recommends the monument and associated objects be removed in a single piece if possible, or be disassembled at the original joints. Staff further recommends all

¹ *Why the COV Can Remove Richmond’s Lee Monument Despite its Designation to the State and Federal Historic Registers.* DHR webpage, accessed May 13th, 2021: <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/news/why-the-cov-can-remove-richmonds-lee-monument-despite-its-designation-to-the-state-and-federal-historic-registers/>

² *The Lost Cause: Definitions and Origins.* The American Battlefield Trust. Article published October 30, 2020 and updated March 25, 2021. Accessed May 13th, 2021: <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/lost-cause-definition-and-origins>

- *Safekeeping of associated plaques, time capsules, removal ornament*
- *Storage, Repurposing, Deaccessioning, Acquisition by another entity or institution*
- *Security*

removed pieces be stored in a secure environment before final disposition.

DHR Guidance, Implications Regarding National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register Listings

Concerning most historic districts in Virginia, removal of a monument/memorial that is a contributing object or structure likely would not cause the entire district to be delisted. Both the VLR and NRHP have a high bar for delisting a historic district, as the entire district must be found no longer to be a distinguishable entity with significance and integrity. That said, demolitions in one area on the edge of a district can result in changing the district's boundary to remove that area. Demolitions that eat up the center of a district likely would lead to delisting as the VLR and NRHP do not allow 'donut holes' in districts. But the types of monuments and memorials in most districts do not have that kind of scale.

The Hermitage Road City Old and Historic District is 66.2 acres and consists of 55 properties. The areas of significance for the district, as identified in the national register of historic places nomination form, are architecture and community planning and development.³ Staff finds that the removal of the monument and related objects will not impact the overall significance of the district. The architectural elements that contribute to the district's significance – namely the ornate and more modest dwellings of the Late Victorian, Revival, and American movement styles – will remain intact and will continue to be some of the best examples of early 20th-century architecture in the City. Staff also finds that the district will continue to convey its significant association with early twentieth century planning principles, including the City Beautiful movement. As such, staff finds that the district will retain its historic significance and integrity despite the removal of the monument and the related features.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction outlined in Section 30-930.7 (b) and (c) of the City Code, as well as with the Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines, specifically the pages cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.

³ Hermitage Road Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Available online at: https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR_to_transfer/PDFNoms/127-6076_HermitageRoadHD_2006_NR_final.pdf. Accessed May 20, 2021.

FIGURES



Figure 1. A.P. Hill Monument, current conditions.



Figure 2. A.P. Hill Monument, current conditions.