

From: [Cyane Crump](#)
To: [Rodney Poole](#); lawmanchem@yahoo.com; dave@johannasdesign.com; [Jack Thompson](#); max@sportsbackers.org; [Cuffee-Glenn, Selena](#) - CAO; [Vivek Murthy](#); [Elizabeth Hancock Greenfield](#); [Robertson, Ellen F.](#) - City Council
Cc: [Olinger, Mark A.](#) - PDR; [Ebinger, Matthew J.](#) - PDR; [Charles W. Hundley](#); [Meyers, Dave](#); [Danielle Worthing](#); [Pitts, Marianne G.](#) - PDR
Subject: ORD 2017-072 - Masons' Hall
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2017 9:41:57 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Members of the City of Richmond Planning Commission –

I am writing in support of ORD 2017-072 to designate Masons' Hall as a single property City Old & Historic District.

The Staff Report in the file is thorough and notes that, on January 24, 2017, the Commission of Architectural Review unanimously approved City O&H District status for Masons Hall and advanced the matter to the City Council for approval. City Council introduced the ordinance and referred it to the Planning Commission. Since this matter has already progressed through the CAR, I thought you might appreciate some background information on this matter.

Set forth below are a few key points for your information:

- Historic Richmond is working cooperatively with the Masons of Richmond Randolph Lodge No. 19 (the property owner) and Masons' Hall 1785 (an associated foundation) to help develop solutions for this historic structure. We are providing assistance - both technical and financial - with respect to a structural roof investigation and we are working to implement additional preservation protections, including designation of Masons' Hall as a City Old & Historic District.
- City of Richmond Old & Historic District status is well deserved and long overdue. Due to its age, history of uses and association with important personages, Masons' Hall at 1807 E. Franklin Street is one of Richmond's most significant buildings. Masons' Hall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as well as the Virginia Landmarks Register. Indeed, its historic, architectural and cultural significances is such that it is surprising that the Masons' Hall was not long ago designated as a City of Richmond Old & Historic District.
- Here are a few highlights:
 - **Age:** Masons' Hall is the oldest building in the United States erected for Masonic purposes and continuously used for that purpose. Built in 1785 by Richmond Lodge Number 13 (now, Number 10) of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons and now owned by Richmond Randolph Lodge Number 19, Masons' Hall is one of Richmond's few 18th century buildings to survive the vagaries of war, age and finance.
 - **History:** Richmond Randolph Lodge Number 19, founded in 1787, shared the Masons' Hall with Richmond Lodge Number 10 until 1878 when Lodge Number 10 moved to a different location. Masons' Hall also served as the Grand Lodge of Virginia for almost a century. Each of Lodge Number 10 and the Richmond Randolph Lodge has had a long and interesting history closely intertwined with the affairs of the city.
 - **History of Civic Uses:** Richmond's citizens met in Masons' Hall to instruct the

delegation to the Constitutional Convention. In addition, for many years, Richmond City Courts (including the Hustings Court, a predecessor to the current Circuit Court) and City Council met in Masons' Hall. During the 19th century, religious groups unwelcome elsewhere conducted services in Masons' Hall. During the War of 1812, the structure served as a hospital.

- **Association with important personages:** John Marshall (who received some of the earliest judicial training in Masons' Hall when it served the Hustings Court and who as Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court later established the judiciary as a co-equal branch of government) and Edmund Randolph (Virginia Governor, delegate to the Constitutional Convention, first U.S. Attorney General and second U.S. Secretary of State), were two of the distinguished members elected to be Grand Masters. Solomon Jacobs, one of Richmond's early mayors, a noted businessman and president of his congregation, also was a Grand Master associated with Masons' Hall. Some say that the actress Eliza Poe, mother of Edgar Allen Poe, last performed at Masons' Hall. Also, the Marquis de Lafayette and his son visited Masons' Hall in 1824 and were made honorary members. Their signatures are to be found in the lodge register. When Federal troops entered Richmond in 1865, a Union Army general (also a Mason) ordered a guard for Masons' Hall to prevent its being burned. The future English King Edward VII attended a lodge meeting at Masons' Hall.

I have copied Charlie Hundley on this email. Charlie, as Master (or President) of Richmond Randolph No. 19, sent a separate letter in support of City Old & Historic District status and a copy of that letter and his remarks are attached at the back of the Staff Report for your consideration.

We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Cyane



Cyane Crump
Executive Director

Historic Richmond
Building on history
4 East Main St., Suite 1C
Richmond, Virginia 23219

tel: 804.643.7407

fax: 804.788.4244

ccrump@historichrichmond.com

HistoricRichmond.com

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).