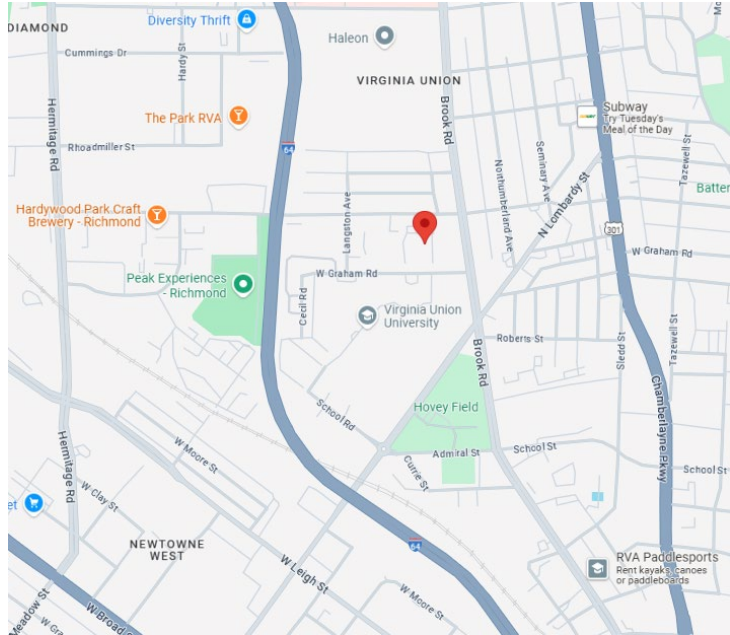




Staff Report City of Richmond, Virginia Public Art Commission

Write legislation/ordinance number here.	Meeting Date: 4/24/2025
Applicant/Petitioner	Monica Kinsey, Planner/Secretary, Public Art Commission
Project Description	<p>The Richmond Police Department has requested that the Richmond Police Memorial Statue become part of the City's Public Art Collection. Created by artist Maria J. Kirby-Smith in 1987, the statue was commissioned by the Police Memorial Fund. The value of the statue at the time of completion was estimated at \$35,000 and the current estimated replacement value is approximately \$250,000.</p> <p>The memorial features an 8-foot-tall bronze figure of a police officer in mid-stride as he carries a small child in one arm. The statue is situated atop a 7- to 12-inch-high rose granite base and is accompanied by a plaque commemorating Richmond officers killed in the line of duty.</p> <p>The memorial was originally installed near the Richmond Coliseum before being moved to Byrd Park in 2016, where it remained until 2020 when the statue was vandalized and it was placed in storage. In considering possibilities for its return to public display, the RPD has requested that the memorial be moved to the grounds of the RPD Training Academy located at 1202 W. Graham Road, where it will be situated within a Memorial Courtyard. The applicants feel that this is an appropriate location for the memorial as it will "provide exposure to the police cadets, enhance security [for the memorial], and [provide an] aesthetically pleasing environment for the statute and plaque."</p> <p>In October 2024, City Council voted for Richmond Police Memorial Statue to become City property via Ordinance 2024-239. However, the ordinance was not routed through the Public Art Commission and City Planning Commission, which "control the design and location of statuary and other works of art which are or may become the property of the City, and the removal, relocation, and alteration of any such work" (City Charter 17.05). In order to become part of the City's Public Art Collection and for the proposed location to be approved, these plans must be reviewed by the PAC and CPC and a new ordinance must be adopted by City Council to accept the memorial into the City's Public Art Collection and confirm its new location on City property.</p>
1202 W. Graham Road Richmond, VA 23220	
Richmond Police Training Academy	

Council District(s): <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> City-Wide	
PAC Recommendation	Approval
Staff Contact	Monica Kinsey, Planner/Secretary, Public Art Commission, (804) 646-3303, monica.kinsey@rva.gov
Conditions for Approval	

ARTIST BIO

Maria J. Kirby-Smith is primarily a figurative portrait sculptor. Based in South Carolina, she creates bronze sculptures in a variety of sizes—from medallion to larger-than-life—utilizing the lost wax method. Over the course of her career, Kirby-Smith has completed over two dozen commissions of public sculpture.

CONDITION OF ARTWORK

An assessment of the statue conducted in June 2024 concluded that it was overall in very good condition, although some minor repairs may be warranted.

CORRELATION TO THE PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN

Priority Sites & Projects (pg. 63-69)

Historically significant sites and events: Honoring people and their stories.

Proposed Memorials Policy (pg. 137)

The City of Richmond has established the following considerations for the topic of memorials:

1. The placement of memorials shall be limited to circumstances of the highest community-wide importance, both to maintain the significance of such memorials and to minimize conflicts with the active and variable use of public spaces.
2. Memorials should convey a powerful connection between Richmond, its natural setting, and its history.

3. Memorials should recognize significant circumstance, events, or people or provide information on topics approved by the Planning Commission, as set forth below:
- a. The contributions of individuals or groups who made a substantial impact upon the City of Richmond;
 - b. The history of Richmond or of the United States;
 - c. Historical, natural, or cultural influences on Richmond; or
 - d. Local innovation or creativity that has contributed to Richmond's growth and prosperity.

CORRELATION TO RICHMOND 300 MASTER PLAN

Goal 4: Urban Design (pg. 99)

Public art is critical to showcase a place's uniqueness, culture, and history.

Appendix A: Glossary (pg. 222)

The placement of this memorial aligns with the City's definition of urban design in Richmond 300, described as "the process of creating the public realm through the artful arrangement of buildings and site elements as cities grow and change; successful urban designs create meaningful spaces that foster positive social interaction, cultural advancement, and civic identity."

ATTACHMENT(S)

PDF containing:

Ordinance No. 2024-239

Letter from Richmond Police Foundation President to Donate Statue

Police Memorial Statue Assessment / Condition Report

IMAGES



