



**National Trust for  
Historic Preservation**

*Save the past. Enrich the future.*

**Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park  
Comments of the National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Rob Nieweg, Senior Field Director  
Before the Richmond City Council on March 27, 2017**

Thank you for the opportunity to address the City Council. I am here on behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the country's largest nonprofit dedicated to historic preservation and a longtime partner of Preservation Virginia.

The National Trust sees historic Shockoe Bottom as a National Treasure that should be treated with the greatest care and transformed into a Site of Conscience for truth and reconciliation. Shockoe Bottom is a nationally important archaeological and cultural site where Richmond can establish a model for addressing nationally significant issues. To that end, the National Trust strongly supports the community-generated proposal for a Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park.

We join with our local allies, including the Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project, to ask the City Council to support the following actions:

1. We ask the City to expand the current scope of the Lumpkin's Slave Jail Project to embrace the proposed Memorial Park. As a precaution, the City should protect the 9-acre footprint of the Memorial Park against irresponsible development. One approach to secure the historic resource would be to investigate, document, and designate the area as an Old & Historic District.
2. We ask the City to establish an interpretive center in Shockoe Bottom – as part of the Memorial Park – that combines the values of a traditional museum with innovative interpretive programming to acknowledge Richmond's unvarnished historic, recognize modern-day impacts of slavery, and promote dialogue among residents and visitors. This is an essential element of the Site of Conscience.
3. We ask the City to prepare a master plan for Shockoe Bottom with the community that incorporates archaeological investigation, heritage tourism planning, and sustainable economic redevelopment that is aligned with the City's own 2011 *Shockoe Economic Revitalization Strategy*.

We have shared our thinking about expanding the scope, establishing an interpretive center, and preparing a master plan during the "Richmond Speaks" public conversation and we are sharing this same thinking during the SmithGroup's meetings about the Lumpkin's Slave Jail Project, which began on March 7, 2017.

In conclusion, the National Trust for Historic Preservation strongly supports the community-generated proposal for a Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park, and we respectfully recommend that Mayor Stoney convene a meeting of stakeholders to advance the local community's vision for Shockoe Bottom.

**Washington Field Office**

The Watergate Office Building 2600 Virginia Avenue NW Suite 1000 Washington, DC 20037  
E [info@savingplaces.org](mailto:info@savingplaces.org) P 202.588.6040 [www.PreservationNation.org](http://www.PreservationNation.org)