

June 7, 2021

Richmond Urban Design Committee
c/o Alex Dandridge, Acting Secretary to the Urban Design Committee
Planning and Preservation Division
City of Richmond

RE: UDC 2021-24: Final location, character, and extent review of the removal of a monument, pedestal, and remains; Intersection of Hermitage Road and Laburnum Avenue

Dear Members of the Urban Design Committee:

I represent the Hermitage Road Historic District Association. In your June 10 meeting you are scheduled to consider the removal and replacement of the AP Hill monument at Hermitage and Laburnum Avenues. This monument and that intersection are part of the Hermitage Road Historic District and serves as the southern gateway to the District. I want to make clear our position on this process and hope that your discussions will reflect our priorities.

- 1) Our members unanimously support the removal of the AP Hill Monument; and, we would like to see that done as soon as possible. So, we support that aspect of the city proposal.
- 2) On the other hand, we are not happy that the city seems to be proposing the complete removal of the center island, and the paving over of the intersection with asphalt. We can understand why this might be necessary as a temporary solution, but we are not satisfied that this is the best final solution for the intersection.
- 3) Our Association has not been involved at all in the discussions for a final recommendation for that intersection, and we strongly feel we should be. The simple removal of the statue and pedestal represents a dramatic change in the fabric of our district and its appearance.
- 4) There are several ideas for what could be done with that intersection, including replacing the center island with something else with visual impact, and/or converting that intersection to a roundabout. Studies have been done in the past suggesting that a roundabout may help solve the traffic safety issues.
- 5) **We urge the UDC to forcefully promote the temporary nature of the proposed paving over of the Hermitage-Laburnum intersection and call for a process going forward to enlist community input into the final plan.**

We note that the removal of some of the monuments on Monument Avenue is accompanied by a city plan to replace them with plantings or other visually appealing structures. It would be a mistake for the Urban Design Committee and the City to simply remove these monuments and not develop a vision for the future design of the city. We strongly urge you to consider fully the plans the city is presenting for replacements of the AP Hill monument.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Balster, President
Hermitage Road Historic District

CC: Ann-Frances Lambert