



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
File ID: UDC-092846-2021
Date: June 21, 2021
RE: **Final location, character, and extent review of the removal of a monument, pedestal, and remains; Intersection of Hermitage Road and Laburnum Avenue; UDC 2021-24**

I. APPLICANT

Christopher Frelke, Director, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

II. LOCATION

Intersection of Hermitage Road and Laburnum Avenue

Property Owner:

City of Richmond

III. PURPOSE

The application is for final location, character, and extent review of the removal of a monument, pedestal, and remains and temporary replacement materials located at the intersection of Hermitage Road and Laburnum Avenue.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant proposes to remove A.P. Hill monument, pedestal, and remains located in a traffic circle in the intersection of Hermitage Road and Laburnum Avenue.

The City of Richmond will proceed with the appropriate permitting with the Department of Historic Resources for the excavation and relocation of human remains should authorization for the ability to remove this monument be deemed appropriate. Further, the City has remained in contact with the descendants of General AP Hill and intends to honor their wishes regarding a final resting place for the remains.

The new location of the monument, pedestal, and remains has not been determined and is not considered as part of this application. This Location, Character and Extent approval will provide authorization for the removal of the monument, pedestal, and remains, but City Council will make the final decision regarding the final disposition of the monument, pedestal and remains. Once the removal is complete, the applicant proposes a temporary treatment of the space, removing the associated curbing and re-paving the intersection in asphalt, matching the existing paving material.

The historic preservation aspects of this application have been reviewed and approved by the City of Richmond's Commission of Architectural Review at their May 25th, 2021 meeting. The associated staff report for that review can be found here: <https://richmondva.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4951421&GUID=CB15F-FAB-9A65-47D7-848C-61B6DDC2B05B&Options=&Search=>

Since the City of Richmond Urban Design Guidelines do not specifically address removal and relocation of objects, Committee staff 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.

The Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve the application with the following conditions:

- After the monument is removed, the City of Richmond's Department of Public Works prioritize this intersection to receive pedestrian enhancements

Staff Contact:

Alex Dandridge, (804) 646-6569 // alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com

V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The monument proposed for removal is located in North Richmond, and is within the Hermitage Road City Old and Historic District. The monument sits in the center of an intersection and is surrounded by a raised planting area. The project area is surrounded by the Rosedale Neighborhood to the west, the Laburnum Park Neighborhood to the South, and the Bellevue Neighborhood and Holden Elementary School to the North. These neighborhoods consist primarily of single-family detached residences.

b. Scope of Review

The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter for the removal, relocation, or alteration of structures/works of art.

c. UDC Review History

The Urban Design Committee has not previously reviewed any projects for this location.

d. Project Description

On behalf of the City of Richmond and in accordance with Ord. 2020-154, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities requests a final location, character and extent review to authorize the ability to remove a monument, pedestal, and remains from the Hermitage Road City Old and Historic District. The AP Hill Monument located at the intersection of W. Laburnum and Hermitage Rd is an asset of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.

Justification for this application for review is further rooted in the City Charter and the City Code. Code §30-100 outlines the purposes of the zoning ordinance. The ability to remove the monument and pedestal will (3) Promote health, sanitation and general welfare, as well as (7) Facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community. Code §30-930.2 (4) outlines the purposes of City Old and Historic Districts. Ability to remove the monument and pedestal will provide for (4) The enhancement of the quality of life for residents. Charter §

2.04 of the Charter provides the City power to make regulations for the preservation of the morals of the city and its inhabitants. The applicant asserts that the representation of white supremacy and the legacy of slavery in prominent public places through this monument is of questionable morality. Charter § 2.04 of the Charter provides the City power to prevent riots, disturbances, and disorderly assemblages. Based on the events of the last year, and similar events in other cities, the ability to remove monuments and pedestals could be considered such a prevention effort.

The AP Hill Monument is a burial site and contains at least partial human remains of General AP Hill. This is the third documented site of AP Hill's remains, prior to the construction of this monument his remains were buried at Hollywood Cemetery. The City of Richmond will proceed with the appropriate permitting with the Department of Historic Resources for the excavation and relocation of human remains should permission for the ability to remove this monument be deemed appropriate. Further, the City has remained in contact with the descendants of General AP Hill and intends to honor their wishes regarding a final resting place for the remains.

The AP Hill Monument was erected at the intersection of Hermitage Road and Laburnum Ave in 1892. The intersection has been one of the top 5 vehicular accident locations in the City of Richmond over the past 20 years according to the Virginia Department of Transportation. The site plans attached show the removal of the monument and the replacement of the space in the center of the intersection with asphalt.

No landscaping is currently planned for this location.

e. Master Plan

City-wide vision: In 2037, Richmond is a welcoming, inclusive, diverse, innovative, sustainable, and equitable city of thriving neighborhoods, ensuring a high quality of life for all. Information and analysis provided by the applicant states that the existing monuments are not in-keeping with the ideals in the city-wide vision stated in the City of Richmond's Master Plan, which emphasizes the importance of creating neighborhoods that are equitable, diverse, and welcoming to all visitors, current residents, and potential residents.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

In the Environment Section of the Urban Design Guidelines under Public Parks, it is stated that "*Historic elements should be surveyed and preservation should be considered for both facilities and landscapes*" (pg.9). The scope of this project was reviewed and approved by the Commission of Architectural Review at their May 25th, Meeting. Staff defers any matters of historic review to the City of Richmond's Commission of Architectural Review in regards to this application and supports that commission's approval.

"The selection of appropriate paving materials should be based upon the following: desired visual image, compatibility with adjacent paving materials, performance, durability, maintenance requirements, and cost" (pg. 3). The applicant is proposing to remove the traffic circle and curbing and repave the intersection to match the existing asphalt.

“Intersections should be designed to serve pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists in a safe manner” (pg. 7). Staff finds that the removal of this traffic circle and curbing in the center of the intersection will improve the circulation of pedestrians, bicyclist, and motorists at this location.

“Traffic calming elements, when necessary, should be well designed so that they provide for an aesthetic contribution to the urban character of the neighborhoods in which they are placed” (pg. 8). The applicant is proposing to remove the traffic circle and curbing and repave the intersection to match the existing asphalt.

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;*

VI. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**