REDEFINING A SOUTHERN CITY'S HERITAGE: Historic Preservation Planning, Public Art, and Race in Richmond, Virginia

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ABSTRACT: Historic preservation is a planning technique employed in many American metropolitan areas. A local ordinance specifies those districts that deserve careful attention, then an Architectural Review Board determines whether or not the proposed redevelopment schemes are appropriate for the historic design character of those precincts. Today, there are over 1,800 such boards in place, making critical decisions on rehabilitations, infill development, urban amenities, and public art projects. This narrative examines the siting of a public art project within an historic district in Richmond, Virginia: The district is the Monument Avenue Historic District, and the public art project is the sculpture of Arthur Ashe, which is sited within that historic area. In the process that culminated in the Arthur Ashe statue taking its place on Monument Avenue, the activities of public planning institutions were central. But the ultimate decision was the product, as well, of local politics, racial attitudes, public art standards, and passionate concern for the integrity of an historic landscape. This article seeks to illuminate the intricacies of that local decision-making process.

Every Sunday morning I could see and hear on television Dr. Theodore F. Adams, minister of the huge, white First Baptist Church. That church confirmed its domination and its strict racial identity by its presence on Richmond's Monument Avenue, the avenue of Confederate heroes, with its statues of Stonewall Jackson, Jefferson Davis, J.E.B. Stuart, and Robert E. Lee. Didn't we in the black churches read the same Bible as whites in First Baptist? Didn't the whites know how Jesus felt about the equality of human beings, about justice, and about the meek inheriting the earth?

Arthur Ashe, Days of Grace

In 1996, on a cool July day in Richmond, Virginia, the community gathered to dedicate another statue on Monument Avenue, one of the "great streets" of the world (Jacobs, 1995). The Boys' Choir of Harlem sang with fervor while, at the edges of the throng, protesters milled around, holding placards that decried the profanation of "holy Confederate ground." In the protesters' view, the installation of the public sculpture—the figure of tennis champion Arthur Ashe—defiled the avenue by placing a black man who had played no role in the Civil War in the company of white leaders of the Lost Cause. That viewpoint had wound with several others through a debate, lasting years in Richmond, that had managed to entangle such a range of sensitive issues, so heatedly argued, that the national and even the international press had closely followed its course. The climax—the siting of Ashe's statue in a

JOURNAL OF URBAN AFFAIRS, Volume 21, Number 4, pages 437–453. Copyright © 1999 Urban Affairs Association All rights of reproduction in any form reserved.

ISSN: 0735-2166.

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local historic district—was seen by all those involved as signifying a notable evolution in Richmond's cultural landscape.

In the process that culminated in the Arthur Ashe statue taking its place on Monument Avenue, the activities of public planning institutions had, perforce, been central. But the ultimate decision was the product, as well, of local politics, racial attitudes, public art standards, and passionate concern for the integrity of an historic landscape. This essay seeks to illuminate the intricacies of that local decision-making process.

This article depicts the struggles of a diverse cast of characters: Local politicians jockeyed carefully for the high ground on the race issue and, at the same time, tried to mesh the statue's siting with possible urban redevelopment schemes. Neighborhood residents challenged the land use decision for circumventing the usual channels for public participation. Planners, city administrators, and city council members found themselves overseeing a contentious public art process, much of which centered on public attitudes toward race. Metropolitan residents formed fervent opinions about the appropriateness of installing the Arthur Ashe monument on a boulevard whose character and meaning were so closely linked to the Civil War. The national press corps scrutinized every detail of this public art drama, eager to deliver the story in black and white.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PLACE

Municipal Art has been an important aspect of urban development since the 1890s (Peterson, 1983). Contemporary urban analysts continue to acknowledge strong connections between design and the social life of cities (Sennett, 1990), and interest in public art has been reinvigorated in the 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, the process of choosing public art is integral to place formation (Chidester & Linenthal, 1995), particularly in a postindustrial economy centered on tourism development and the provision of urban amenities (Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993; Varady & Raffel, 1995).

Logan and Molotch (1987), Harvey (1989), Wolch and Dear, (1989), and Zukin (1991) have all viewed the construction of place as expressing political economic relations. They argue that the social relations of capitalism "invariably take on a geographical expression" (Wolch & Dear, 1989, p. 5). Theorizing a "socio-spatial dialectic" in the formation of postmodern landscapes, urban planners, geographers, and historians are increasingly interested in historic preservation planning as a technique for guiding both the shape and the meaning of urban places (Beauregard, 1989; Birch & Roby, 1984; Boyer, 1995; Costonis, 1989; Silver, 1991; Tiesdell, Oc, & Heath, 1996).

While the urban revitalization effects of preservation planning on metropolitan neighborhoods and urban centers has been documented assiduously (Hosmer, 1981; Collins, Waters, & Dotson, 1991), Hayden (1995) and Sandercock (1998) have investigated the role of historic preservation in community development and the celebration of alternative views of the past. Viewed in conjunction with historians' new focus on African-American history (Goings & Mohl, 1996; Thomas & Ritzdorf, 1997), a new stream of literature now looks at the effect of planning practice on communities of color (Thomas, 1997; Wilson 1998).

The siting of Arthur Ashe's statue is a local product of this political economy of place. The public art project produced a shift in the territorial and social character of "historic" Richmond. In this case, the results are politically progressive and socially inclusive; because of these rare characteristics, the story should be notable for those who are interested in the broader processes of progressive social change in capitalist settings.

The landmarks that urban society preserves or erects often reveal community values and priorities. As the opening quote from Ashes' autobiography shows, he understood very well the social symbolism of Monument Avenue. In memorializing him, the proponents of the statue focused on countering the cultural "domination" he had noted by ensuring that the community honor this notable African-American on unmistakably equal terms with its earlier heroes. They embarked on a struggle to open the pantheon on Monument Avenue to a hero who was of the twentieth century, nonmartial, and African-American. It is no wonder the struggle was lengthy and intense: It opened Richmond's publicly honored heritage where it had been closed. To understand the ramifications of heritage in the

urban scene, it is worthwhile to briefly survey the course of historic preservation in this country in this century, before returning to the Richmond story.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Heritage as an Urban Resource

In 1931, the city of Charleston adopted an historic preservation ordinance to protect landmark buildings and sites in the urban core (Stipe & Lee, 1987). The ordinance represented a significant advance in preservation policy. Charleston's innovation was to employ the newly developed power of zoning; until then, the efforts in American cities and towns to preserve historic resources had been ad hoc—once having learned of a threat to an historic building, stepping into the breach to avert it. This reactive approach proved inadequate, so the preservationists in Charleston—and later in New Orleans (1936)—turned for reinforcements to the use of historic district designations. Such overlay zoning requires development review for any property in the historic district. In Charleston and New Orleans, this area zoning scheme allowed Architectural Review Boards (ARBs) to pass judgment on both demolition and redevelopment proposals, helping to ensure that fragile historic landmarks were not unduly harmed. Community leaders from throughout the country traveled to Charleston and New Orleans to learn more about such state-of-the-art planning for historic urban districts.

Until the 1960s, the spread of historic district zoning was limited; however, late in that decade, as concerns about the environment and also about community appearance came to the fore, area zoning for historic landmarks gained ground. Many of the early gains were in the South—Richmond adopted its first historic district zoning in 1957—but by the 1970s the idea had caught on elsewhere (Birch & Roby, 1984; Silver, 1991). Initiatives in neighborhood planning and historic preservation expanded dramatically in that era. However, many communities adopted conservation districts rather than preservation districts because they were apprehensive about the end results of gentrification (Palen & London, 1984).

Today, there are over 1,800 historic district commissions and ARBs throughout the country. Historic preservation has become a widely accepted public policy, with broad-based political support (Morris, 1992; Bradford & Roddewig, 1994). Gentrification continues to ring alarm bells, however; local administrators, politicians, and community groups grapple regularly with the distributive effects of this public policy approach (Hodder, 1996). Nonetheless, historic district zoning is widely accepted in the United States and, indeed, the world. The rationales vary, but they can be summarized as follows: preserving the meaning of place and community identity (Lowenthal, 1985); protecting and enhancing the physical design of place (Ashworth & Larkham, 1994); improving neighborhood conditions and appearance (Laska & Spain, 1980; Varady, 1995); enhancing tourist trade (Tiesdell et al., 1996); and supporting community economic development (Barthel, 1996; Tiesdell et al., 1996).

A diversity of rationales, then, undergirds preservation policy in the late twentieth century. It is generally agreed that a community's heritage is an important commodity in the global, postindustrial economy. The distinctive character of architectural and cultural landmarks attracts both regional and international tourists. Moreover, these historic resources, being woven into the metropolitan fabric, are integral to neighborhood landscapes. Hence, urban policy makers and politicians seeking strategies both to revitalize neighborhoods and to broaden their regional economic base often adopt stringent public regulations to preserve individual landmarks and significant concentrations of neighborhood heritage. Many localities recognize that neither traditional zoning nor subdivision regulations protect fragile historic landmarks adequately. To safeguard the design character of historic buildings, districts, structures, sites, and objects, more and more communities throughout this country have embraced historic district zoning. In many of America's metropolitan neighborhoods, the material character and quality of the rehabilitations, infill construction, urban amenities, and public art projects in neighborhoods must meet intense scrutiny. That is certainly the case in Richmond, Virginia, a southern city with a long history of high esteem for local landmarks.

The Richmond Scene

Richmond is a former capital of the Confederacy. The city of 195,000 people lies within a metropolitan region of approximately 900,000 population. As a state capital, the city has a large governmental presence in its CBD; it also is a financial services center, with a Federal Reserve branch located on the riverfront. In David Rusk's terms, it is an "inelastic" city, which for the last 20 years has not been permitted to grow through annexation (Rusk, 1995). The annexation that did occur in 1970 was tagged by many observers as an effort to dilute growing black political power (Moeser & Dennis, 1982); indeed, racial attitudes have been a defining feature of Richmond politics throughout the twentieth century. The city has a legacy of planning inequalities in urban renewal, infrastructure improvements, and Model Cities allocations, as well as in neighborhood and commercial revitalization efforts (Silver, 1984).

Richmond's economic base is fairly diverse; moreover, it has the corporate headquarters of nine Fortune 500 companies. Nevertheless, tourism has become increasingly important in the city's urban redevelopment strategy, and several large projects underway are aimed at enhancing the core city's attractiveness to heritage tourists. There also is a strong tradition in Richmond of shaping neighborhood revitalization through historic preservation planning efforts (Silver, 1991).

After intense urban deconcentration during the last 30 years, city planners in Richmond confront problems typical of many late-twentieth century cities: poverty and violence in certain core areas, neighborhoods strictly segregated by race and class, a public school system in disarray, and economic competition from affluent suburban jurisdictions reluctant to consider public services in regional terms. Such is the political and social environment for urban redevelopment initiatives in the Richmond of "The New South" (Abbott, 1987). Initiatives must also take into account a common consciousness of the historic built environment as one of Richmond's greatest assets: Its residents zealously guard the elements of the city's historic fabric.

ARTHUR ASHE ON MONUMENT AVENUE: THE STORY

Blockbusting and Public Art

When Henry Marsh was elected as the first black mayor of Richmond in 1977, one of his first acts was to lay a wreath at the Jefferson Davis monument, a gesture intended to quiet white fears about black majority rule. Although Marsh may have undertaken to be a "mayor of all the city," many in the black community still eyed Monument Avenue's parade of monuments with distaste. Norrece Jones, a Virginia Commonwealth University professor of African-American history and a black resident of Monument Avenue, expressed the widely help sentiment.

The Civil War, in essence, was fought to preserve a certain culture—that culture was predicated on the enslavement of hundreds of thousands of African Americans. When I see those monuments, I think of people who enslaved African Americans. I can never look at them dispassionately or indifferently ("A Street of Divided Passions," 1990, p. E2).

Over the last decade, then, blacks searched for a way to temper that majestic parade's message of racial exclusivity and pride in Confederate heritage. In 1991, as Chuck Richardson, a long-time black city council member, watched newly liberated citizens of the Soviet bloc tear down the Communist leaders' statues, he hatched an idea that resonated with many metropolitan residents, white and black alike. Richardson suggested that a statue of the then governor of Virginia, Douglas Wilder, be placed on Monument Avenue. Richardson believed that a statue of Wilder, a grandson of former slaves and the nation's first African-American governor, would signify contemporary ideals. It also would stand in clear contrast to the Confederate statues erected by "generations of Virginians . . . who believed in slavery and resisted its demise by continued resistance to equality and advancement for Blacks" ("Councilman Richardson Discusses Black Statue," 1991, p. 7).

A troubling aspect of Richardson's proposal for many community members was that it was simply additive, but would not require unseating any of the heroes on what some called a Confederate Valhalla. Thus, Richardson's position was conciliatory even while calling for an African-American monument on the grand boulevard. "In this country, we don't have to tear down a statue to symbolize change. We can let different eras stand together" ("Monumental Issue Divides Old Dominion," 1991, p. B3).

In 1991, Richardson could garner little financial or political support for his proposal. The impediments were many. How would the statue be financed? What individual or group would best embody the contemporary ideals of equality? Would such a project be sanctioned by the Commission of Architectural Review, which had oversight of all redevelopment in the local historic district?

Nevertheless, Richardson's proposal had broached the subject of breaching the Confederate hegemony on Monument Avenue. And gradually the idea of creating an additional ceremonial piece of public art did take hold. As to support for such a project, however, a difficult question remained: What personage would best capture the spirit of the contemporary era in Richmond?

The Legacy of Arthur Ashe

Arthur Ashe was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1943. His father taught him to play tennis at an early age. But as a black child, he was barred from the segregated city's public tennis courts; the parks were open only to whites. His family concluded that only by growing up elsewhere could he develop his gift for the game, and they arranged for him to move to another state. Ashe grew up to become an international tennis star. He won the 1968 U.S. Open and 1975 Wimbledon crowns; in the 1970s, he ably guided the United States team to its Davis Cup victory.

Arthur Ashe's prominence as a tennis champion served him well as he undertook other challenges. He was instrumental in forming the Association of Tennis Professionals, the first union for tennis players. The same devotion to fair treatment and compensation led him to devote his energies to countering apartheid in South Africa. In a controversial move, he went to that ostracized country in the 1980s, breaking a boycott, because he believed that the country's black children needed positive role models; at the same time, he worked to demolish the machinery of apartheid. In the United States, Ashe became involved in the education of inner-city youth. To that end, he helped establish Virginia Heroes, a group of Richmonders dedicated to ensuring that disenfranchised youth encounter positive role models and are nurtured in both their formal education and their moral development.

A serious heart condition forced Ashe to retire from tennis. The condition required surgery and during that surgery, a blood transfusion infected him with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Complications from AIDS killed him in 1993.

People throughout the world mourned Arthur Ashe's death. Ashe had personified calm and dignity, and admiration of him extended far beyond the sphere of tennis. His life had blended a fervent commitment to personal ideals with unwavering respect for autonomous opposing views. He clearly was a remarkable man; his compelling story is told in the autobiography he completed before his death, Days of Grace (Ashe & Rampersad, 1993). By the time a Richmond sculptor, Paul DiPasquale, talked with him in 1993 about his interest in sculpting a statue of Ashe, that possibility had already intrigued local leaders.

The Civic Art Impulse Meets Planning Regulation

Paul DiPasquale had become interested in executing a public art project centered on Arthur Ashe after meeting him in 1992, when Ashe was with a group of aspiring young Richmond tennis players that included DiPasquale's son. When he called Ashe in January 1993 to discuss the proposal, Di-Pasquale had already talked about it with Clarence Townes, executive director of Richmond Renaissance, and Joe James, the city's Director of Economic Development. Believing that the statue would draw tourists, DiPasquale had explored the possibilities for sites with these leaders of Richmond's urban development. Both Townes and James had earlier proposed a more complicated projectconstructing an African-American Sports Hall of Fame in Richmond—and in fact had initiated preliminary discussions of that idea with Ashe.

In 1993, in a long telephone conversation from his home in New York City, Ashe expressed support to DiPasquale for his project, even specifying the features he would like to see included. Ashe wanted to be depicted wearing warm-ups, holding a tennis racket and books, and surrounded by children. He promised to put some photographs and memorabilia together for DiPasquale and said that once the sculptor had done some sketches, they would talk again. Ashe seemed genuinely pleased with the honor and excited about the project. But on February 6, 1993, he died suddenly from complications of AIDS. Thus, the only direct communication DiPasquale had with Ashe was limited to the exploratory phone call. Ashe's wife, Jeanne, however, forwarded the materials that Ashe had begun to assemble and suggested Virginia Heroes as a nonprofit group that might help to raise money for the monument.

In his work with Virginia Heroes, one of the projects that Arthur Ashe had discussed extensively was an African-American Sports Hall of Fame. Various names had been tossed around—the most recent was "The Hard Road to Glory" Sports Hall of Fame. Thus, Virginia Heroes had that project squarely in mind when DiPasquale approached the organization to help raise funds for the statue. It eagerly agreed to help raise the nearly \$400,000 that DiPasquale estimated would be necessary to produce and site his statue, reasoning that support for such a public art project might lead on to the private and corporate funding that would be necessary to construct an African-American Sports Hall of Fame.

With help from the former Governor Douglas L. Wilder, City Councilman Tim Kaine, and members of the corporate community, Virginia Heroes began to raise money and search for a prominent site. They approached the Richmond City Planning Commission about locating the statue at the corner of Hamilton Street and Monument Avenue because what they had in mind was a site outside, but adjacent to the historic district, in order to represent a chronological continuum and the forward movement of race relations in their southern city.

When the idea of an Ashe statue on Monument Avenue, albeit outer Monument Avenue, came to public attention, objections immediately arose to commemorating a non-Civil War personage anywhere at all on Monument Avenue. An intense local debate began. The mayor, Leonidas Young, responded by appointing an Arthur Ashe Memorial Committee to consider sites throughout the city in the hope of avoiding rancorous public hearings. In February 1994, however, that committee both accepted DiPasquale's statue proposal and approved the Hamilton and Monument location. In June 1995, the City Urban Design Committee also approved the statue at that location.

Then, on June 19, 1995, the City Planning Commission voted to move the statue to the intersection of Monument and Roseneath (see Figure 1). The consequences proved this to have been a curious decision, but it was championed by the city manager, Robert Bobb, who, in an unusual administrative arrangement, also sat on the Planning Commission. Bobb noted that placing the statue within the historic district "would probably add more historical value to the street. It will show the difference between what Monument Avenue was in the past to what it represents in the future" ("City Oks Monument Site for Ashe," 1995, p. A1). "The difference" idea espoused by the black city manager was plausible, but the most significant point about the decision was that it shifted the site into the historic district and triggered oversight of the monument by the Commission of Architectural Review. Moreover, vehement neighborhood opposition arose at once, in part because no public planning process or community participation in the deliberations had occurred before the Planning Commission voted for the move.

Neighborhood Resistance to the Site Decision

On all sides, opinion about the appropriateness of an Arthur Ashe statue on historic Monument Avenue quickly took shape. Notably, the opinions were not racially monolithic. A prominent black editorial writer for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* noted that "Richmond could not craft a stronger symbol of racial reconciliation than placing a black man of Ashe's heroic stature among the Confed-

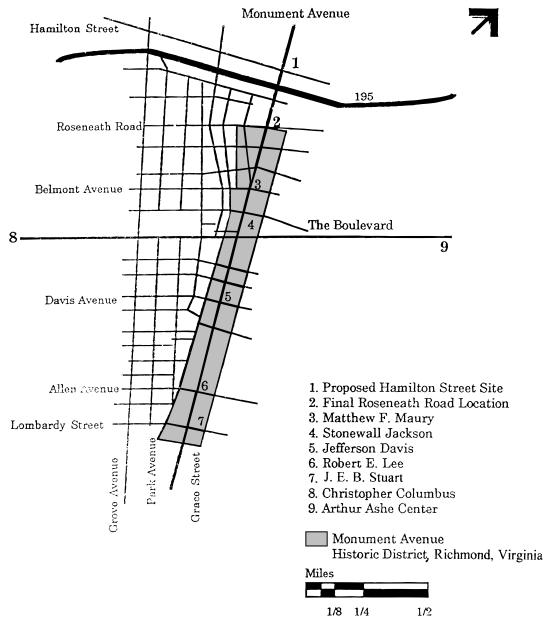


FIGURE 1 Richmond's Monument Avenue Historic District

erate monuments" ("Ashe Statue Could be Symbol," 1995, p. B1). Former Governor Wilder agreed, saying, "Virginia's place to be recognized by Virginians is Monument Avenue" ("Monumental Task," 1995, p. M1). However, not everyone in the black community saw the location as an honor for Ashe. A leader of the opposition in the black community was Ray Boone, editor of the Richmond Free Press, Richmond's largest black-owned newspaper. Boone contended:

Identifying Arthur Ashe with racist generals of The Lost Cause would scandalize our hero's shining memory. Subordinating him to a solid line of Confederate figures would intensify injustice, unfairly equating Arthur Ashe to a bronze row of history's most outstanding traitorous villains ("Debate on Ashe Memorial," 1995, p. 6).

Boone and other prominent blacks, notably Mayor Leonidas Young, developed an ambitious plan to construct the African-American Sports Hall of Fame in downtown Richmond, placing Ashe's statue at that location. Young questioned, "What would do him more honor? . . . To put [the statue] in a place where it has been perceived that only white heroes go, or to create a place of prominence in the center of the city?" ("Monument Site for Ashe Put in Doubt," 1995, p. A1). Governor Wilder discounted this analysis as "moronic." He noted that "Monument Avenue and Richmond were not good enough for Arthur Ashe when he had to leave them There are some who are saying it is not good enough for him, even in his death" ("Return to Square One," 1995, p. A1). Clearly, there was disagreement on this issue, but not along simple black and white lines. Many whites did want the statue on Monument Avenue, and their stances were similar to those of prominent blacks such as Governor Wilder and City Manager Robert Bobb.

Many residents in the neighborhood of Monument and Roseneath urged the Hall of Fame alternative. They argued, "We had no advance warning of this This would be modern art in a turn-of-the-century trolley car neighborhood" ("Monument Site for Ashe Put in Doubt," 1995, p. A1). The unilateral nature of the Planning Commission's decision angered many locals. Councilman John Conrad, whose district included the proposed site, recalled a citizen's complaint: "We have to get approval for painting our houses, and not for the statue?" ("Return to Square One," 1995, p. A1). Such neighborhood residents objected on the grounds that the statue would increase traffic, and they objected, as well, to the sculptural design. Others contended that the location would "destroy the historic significance of the street . . . If George Washington, the founder of our country, doesn't belong on Monument Avenue, Arthur Ashe doesn't belong on Monument Avenue" ("City Oks Monument Site for Ashe," 1995, p. A1).

Inundated by conflicting attitudes about the statue, City Council voted to delay the groundbreaking and hold a public hearing. Councilman Chuck Richardson, who had first raised the prospect of a statue of a black on Monument Avenue, insisted that the siting of DiPasquale's statue

would bring racial justice to Monument Avenue.... Everybody's dancing around the question, which is "Do we put a black man on Monument Avenue?" The hand-me-down ideals those individuals represent is the very thing that chased Arthur out of this city. The Civil War is part of our history. Now we have another part: Civil Rights.... For Arthur to take his final stand in the midst of what he has always fought, I think it would be fitting ("Monument Site for Ashe Put in Doubt," 1995, p. A1).

Meanwhile, one opponent of the site, asserting that Monument Avenue was "hallowed ground," put forth the argument that another site "would pay the proper tribute to a great athlete, without violating the historic sensibilities of Richmond's *Confederate-American* population" [emphasis added] ("Monument Site for Ashe Put in Doubt," 1995, p. A1).

Attention to the Imbroglio Widens

This public art proposal clearly had touched a racial nerve in a supposedly genteel southern city. Editors from the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* characterized the debate as "a racial and political donnybrook that will fester in the national spotlight for weeks to come" ("The Statue," 1995, p. A10). As the community searched for a way to resolve this issue, the executive director of Virginia Heroes, Marty Dummett, observed, "People all over the world are watching what we do" ("Ashe Due Spot Among Heroes," 1995, p.A1). And she was right.

That summer, after the city council postponed any decision on the site of the Arthur Ashe statue because of the boiling controversy, the issue blossomed into a full-fledged national debate. Mayor Young made an appearance on CBS' "This Morning" to air the issues; although Young used the

opportunity to plug his proposal for an African-American Hall of Fame, he also remained steadfast in his support for placing a black hero on Monument Avenue ("Ashe Family Has Diverse Views," 1995, p. A1). Articles following the course of the imbroglio appeared in national papers through the summer. The national press portrayed the struggle as the Civil War rejoined. Whites and blacks were depicted as vigorous opponents—"a bunch of yokels . . . getting ready to fight each other over the Civil War" ("Mayor Offers a Compromise," 1995, p. A1).

In Richmond, the decision to delay a hearing perturbed several parties with material interests in the project. Terone Green, a member of the Planning Commission, which had originally sanctioned the Roseneath site, complained, "It is somewhat insulting that the City Council is going to go back. . . . If you're going to go back and second guess, what's the purpose of a Planning Commission?" ("Panel Asserts Ashe Site Authority," 1995, p. A1). Most of the commission members agreed, including the Planning Commission chair, who reiterated Green's point, saying, "[council] needs to understand it needs to come back to us" ("Panel Asserts Ashe Site Authority," 1995, p. A1). The Planning Commission saw that without such a process it would effectively be disarmed by the Council. Another party disconcerted by the delay was, of course, the artist, Paul DiPasquale. Irked by Council's stalling, DiPasquale reminded everyone that formal transfer of the statue's ownership had not yet occurred and that he could summarily reject any site he had not approved.

As the July public hearing approached, it seemed that every Richmonder held a strong opinion. The letters to the Richmond Times-Dispatch about the Arthur Ashe statue filled the editorial page ("World Watches City Struggle," 1995, p. A1). Mayor Young and his ally, Richmond Free Press publisher, Ray Boone, continued to press the Hall of Fame proposal. Boone contended, "This proposal represents a rare opportunity for Richmond to appropriately honor one of its most outstanding sons, to lift its people, to lift its status as a world-class city and to promote community vitality through economic development" ("The Park Proposal," 1995, p. 6). Their enthusiasm failed to convince some members of the community. Ernest Brown wrote a letter to the Richmond Times-Dispatch editor, asserting that using Arthur Ashe "as an economic tool for stimulating downtown development is foolhardy and would never work Let him not be a pawn but someone we honor" ("Continuing Debate," 1995, p. A6). Arthur Ashe's family spoke out in support of the Monument Avenue site. Ashe's uncle, Rudy Cunningham, said, "Let bygones be bygones We should have more heroes on Monument, not just Arthur. Virginia has many heroes. It disturbs me that everyone is making this a political issue. Arthur would have been upset by that" ("Family Preference," 1995, p. B1).

Thus was the issue caught in the crosshairs of urban redevelopment, historic preservation policy and racial politics. In the next development, Mayor Young, assessing his support, saw that he did not have the votes on Council for the Hall of Fame option. As a compromise he proposed putting the Arthur Ashe statue in Byrd Park—near the statue of Christopher Columbus and the tennis courts from which Ashe had been banned as a child—and naming the major thoroughfare that intersected with Monument Avenue Arthur Ashe Boulevard ("Mayor Offers a Compromise," 1995, p. A1) (see Figure 1). Young's proposal would create a cross-axis to Monument Avenue, taking advantage of the Arthur Ashe athletic center that was already in use at the northern end of the street. But no enthusiasm appeared for this compromise on either side of the issue, despite a pledge by an anonymous donor to pay the entire \$400,000 bill if city council accepted Young's compromise.

On July 17, 1995, the public hearing occurred as scheduled, despite Mayor Young's misgivings about the "calculated risk" that the hearing could get ugly ("Finding Common Ground," 1995, p. 16). Councilman Tim Kaine characterized the imminent debate well: "The hearing gets at the heart of a lot of things by which this community defines itself race, history, notions of progress, our relations to one another" ("Clashing Views on Ashe Memorial," 1995, p. 1). Going into the hearing, the melodrama was palpable, as Richmonders and the national and international press gathering in council chambers.

Young (1995) opened the meeting with a characterization: "This debate has little to do with race, except in the hearts and in the minds of a very few individuals We are in unanimous agreement that the issue of Monument Avenue must be reconciled and we are, as well, determined to reconcile that issue." Everyone was quickly disabused of this hope, however, when Vice Mayor John Conrad spoke to a resolution supporting the addition of a statue on Monument Avenue that would commemorate not Arthur Ashe, but rather an African-American who had led the human rights movement in Virginia and the nation. He stated that "we need to reconcile Richmond's history with its future, and then we need to put our finger on the wound that has been festering in the City of Richmond and reconcile this history in a just and fair and appropriate fashion" (Young, 1995). As to the issue of reconciliation, Johnnie Ashe, Arthur's brother, spoke for the family, reiterating their support for the Monument Avenue location. Ashe asked the audience, "Will this become a modern-day war of hypocrisy or will the city of Richmond do the right thing?... [Arthur Ashe] would be thoroughly disgusted that this has happened and have nothing to do with it" (Young, 1995).

For six hours, speakers at the hearing shared their opinions. The neighborhood residents continued their staunch opposition to the statue's location. But in their opposition, one point in particular appeared salient. Pat Hudgins, referring to the unilateral decision of the Planning Commission, stated: "It's not what you do, but rather how it is done that is important" ("Public Hearing Excerpt," 1995). Another neighborhood resident, Mary Lou Carr, concurred, reiterating that "we want this [historic] designation in *order to control changes* (emphasis added) ("Public Hearing Excerpt," 1995). Residents were outraged that the utility of the historic designation had been diminished by the Planning Commission, the very body that should have honored the legitimacy of the district.

Most speakers were keenly aware of the site decision's symbolism. As Mayor Young said, the speakers were wrestling with "essential questions of collective identity." Most spoke in favor of the Monument Avenue site. Representative of this stance was Robert Waitt, who believed that "if we do not choose Monument Avenue we will be saying to the world that Arthur Ashe was not good enough to be on that street" ("Public Hearing Excerpt," 1995). On the other hand, there was the contingent that opposed the statue on Monument Avenue because it would defile "hallowed Civil War ground." Although overt racism was not expressed at the hearing, its presence in Richmond was demonstrated vividly by a caller that day to radio station WVGO. The unnamed caller said, "We need to protect our heritage. We don't need no blacks on Monument Avenue They've taken over our city; they've tried to take over our government. If you've got daughters like I've got daughters, they're trying to take them over too" ("Monumental Issue Sparks," 1995, p. A1). In contrast to such rancor, the speakers from all points of view at the hearing were very civil.

In the end, the council voted unanimously to site the statue on Monument Avenue at Roseneath Road. Young offered an elevated analysis: "At some juncture, our deliberations moved from being simply a matter of logistics to a matter of spirituality" ("Ashe Family Credited," 1995, p. 1).

Not every issue aired at the hearing, however, was quieted by the unanimous decision. A new area of controversy had been raised there by a group with the name Citizens for Excellence in Public Art (CEPA), who questioned the statue's artistic merits. Led by Beverly Reynolds, a local art gallery owner, they endorsed having an Ashe statue on Monument Avenue, but decried DiPasquale's design as second-rate. Speaking at the hearing, Reynolds proposed an international competition to choose an artist to execute a world-class statue of Arthur Ashe ("Public Hearing Excerpt," 1995). Council gave the proposal short shrift, and when the quiet groundbreaking ceremony occurred in August 1995, most Richmonders viewed the entire matter as settled. But that was not the end of it for CEPA. They continued their campaign against DiPasquale's statue, and their efforts would complicate further this already intricate public debate.

Design Excellence and the Sports Hall of Fame

Citizens for Excellence in Public Art (CEPA) had to organize quickly if they were going to influence the Ashe project. Their strategy was to persuade the Planning Commission and the City Council to revisit their decisions. To that end, Reynolds assembled a group of artists, art historians, and collectors to address the issue of artistic merit. In terms of the choice of the statue simply as a work of art, CEPA raised two distinct issues: the lack of a public decision-making process and the limited artistic merit of the statue. In a letter to the Richmond Times-Dispatch editor, Reynolds wrote

I am deeply concerned about the lack of a selection process for the statue itself and the flawed manner in which the current sculpture was adopted and advanced on the community. Lost in the issue of Monument Avenue was the issue of artistic process and quality. Many individuals are hesitant to speak out about the quality of the statue itself and the lack of a competition because of the high emotions surrounding the site, sensitivity to the Ashe family, and the fear of criticism being taken in racial terms. . . . There is widespread feeling throughout the city that the current piece is of very limited artistic merit and many feel that this current statue is more appropriate for mall art than Monument Avenue ("Letter to the Editor," 1995, p. B6).

This statement expressed genuine concerns, and people in the powerful Richmond arts community testified on CEPA's behalf ("With All Due Respect," 1995, p. G1). Pressure mounted for the Planning Commission and the Commission of Architectural Review (CAR) to reconsider the sculptural design. The CAR was now a new player in the public process, their emergence having been triggered by the statue's location inside the historic district's boundary.

Local people began to bombard the chairman of the CAR, Thomas E. Fahed, with calls imploring the commission to reopen the question of using DiPasquale's statue. The location was no longer the issue; the new debate raged over the sculpture's style and merit as art ("New Review for Ashe Statue," 1995, p. 1). The CAR relented so far as to hold a late December hearing on the statue's design. The vote was unanimously in favor of using DiPasquale's design.

Several commissioners did suggest small changes, to all of which the artist was amenable, since the foundry work had not yet begun. The changes were minor: They included repositioning the head slightly and adding some girth to Ashe's torso. One of the commissioners said that any significant changes would interfere "with a creation of a very unique covenant between the sculptor and the hero he was trying to represent" ("Artist's Statue of Ashe Approved," 1995, p. A1). Finally, as 1995 ended, both the statue's location and its design seemed to be settled.

On January 1, 1996, Richmonders opened their newspapers and found an open letter by Ashe's widow, Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe. A new strand of complexity was at hand. Having previously remained publicly neutral, Mrs. Moutoussamy-Ashe now set aside circumspection and openly sided with proponents of the Sports Hall of Fame. She wrote that Ashe had viewed the statue and the Hall of Fame proposal as inextricably linked. She argued that any attempt to separate the Hall of Fame enterprise into two parts dishonored her husband's memory.

[The statue project] all began with Arthur's own dream of creating an African-American Sports Hall of Fame . . . It was in this context that Arthur agreed to cooperate with the sculptor, Paul DiPasquale, for a statue that would go in front of the Hall of Fame No, I am not in agreement with the decision to place the "Arthur Ashe monument" on Monument Avenue I am afraid that a statue of Arthur Ashe on Monument Avenue honors Richmond, Virginia, more than it does its son, his legacy, and his life's work. I fear . . . in your haste to honor Arthur, you are missing the true gift he sought to bring you ("A New Year's Wish for Richmond," 1996, p. A7).

The letter injected a new challenge to the city into a process that had seemed complete: namely, the claim that urban egoism and shortsightedness had shaped the result. Coming as it did from Ashe's widow, that challenge forced many community members to reconsider the process, and it certainly buoyed Mayor Young's proposal to construct a Sports Hall of Fame ("Changes Made in Ashe Statue," 1996, p. A1).

As the result of Mrs. Moutoussamy-Ashe's letter, the Planning Commission voted to defer any action on the sculpture for 60 days. After that time, CEPA representatives would have to present a written plan for the funding and management of an international competition. Terone Green, a planning commission member, expressed regret that Mrs. Ashe had "not step[ped] up to the plate earlier." The chairman, Edward H. Winks, lent support to CEPA by observing that he did not believe that the high standard for statuary on Monument Avenue was being met ("Ashe Statue Delayed Again," 1996, p. A1).

The Planning Commission's decision stood in contrast to the Commission on Architectural Review members' favorable reception of the changes the artist had made to the wax model. The statue's defenders relied on DiPasquale's claim that the art issue was over, and on the continued determination of supporters such as Governor Wilder, who remained allied with DiPasquale and the Monument Avenue site ("Original Position Affirmed," 1996, p. A1).

On January 9, 1996, Mayor Young proudly announced a two-site plan, which accommodated many of the parties' interests. According to this plan, DiPasquale's statue would be cast and sited on Monument Avenue and then *moved* to the African-American Sports Hall of Fame once it had been built downtown. Then, a search would be launched for another black to grace Monument Avenue, perhaps even a black who had made material contributions to the Civil War. Once details of this plan had been absorbed by the community, a *Richmond Times-Dispatch* poll found 35% agreeing, but 53% opposing, any statue of Arthur Ashe on Monument Avenue. Other polling data showed 49% agreeing with the mayor's two-step proposal and only 38% disagreeing. At that point, even as members of the Commission on Architectural Review traveled to the foundry to see the stylistic changes to the statue, the city was gearing up to hire an executive director for the Sports Hall of Fame—paying him or her \$87,000 to raise funds to build it—and CEPA was fundraising to support an international public art competition ("City Officials View Ashe Statue," 1996, p. B1; "Council Again Gives OK," 1996, p. B1). The situation had become complex, indeed, as the public and the private sector mounted two separate campaigns in the service of the same civic memorial.

In early March, the Planning Commission voted to approve the two-monument plan, which included Mayor Young's proposal for the Hard Road to Glory Facility; that proposal was then forwarded to City Council. The Council resolution stipulated that the DiPasquale statue would become permanent if CEPA did not have a sculpture ready by June 30, 1999. Robert Hobbs, a CEPA representative, applauded Council and informed it that nearly \$200,000 had been raised to date, reflecting "a public mandate for an international competition" ("Planners OK Ashe Statue Plan," 1996, p. A1).

Despite that moment of ostensible agreement, however, the type of public policy machinations that had characterized the process to date were not at an end. City Council's review of the proposal in early March produced a new turn: Council asked whether CEPA would be willing to apply the funds it raised to create not a second statue of Ashe, but a statue of *another* African-American hero. Councilman Tim Kaine, who had been active in Virginia Heroes and an early advocate of an Arthur Ashe memorial on Monument Avenue, took a revised stance: "Maybe one statue of Arthur Ashe is enough." CeCe Bullard of CEPA responded that although the funds already solicited were for a statue of Arthur Ashe, "we're willing to consider the option" ("Ashe Contest Proposal Doused," 1996, p. A1). CEPA did not have very long to focus on the option, however; in late March, City Council effectively eviscerated CEPA's proposal by adopting a plan that both placed Arthur Ashe firmly on Monument Avenue and supported the development of a Sports Hall of Fame. The Council resolution gave approval for CEPA's work only on two conditions: that the CEPA board be diversified—of the 29 board members, only one was black—and that the international competition produce a monument to someone other than Arthur Ashe. As what would have been Arthur Ashe's 53rd birthday approached, the statue was almost complete.

Endurance in the Race

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

> Hebrews 12:1 [Inscription on the pedestal of the Ashe Statue]

On July 10, 1996, the rocky road to the siting of an Arthur Ashe monument of Richmond's Monument Avenue ended with the unveiling of DiPasquale's statue. Many people at the ceremony testified to Arthur Ashe's greatness, and the event took on a religious character. Governor Wilder said with emotion, "Today is not just any day in Richmond. Monument Avenue is now an avenue for all people. Today I feel more pride and relevance in being here on Monument Avenue than I have at any time in my life" ("An Avenue for All," 1996, p. A1). Tom Chewning, one of the Virginia Heroes contingent and a boyhood friend of Ashe, expressed the conviction that "if we had more people who had the character and respect for his fellow man that Arthur Ashe had, we'd be a different society than we are today" ("Ashe Monument Symbol of Decency," 1996, p. C1). Richmond had finally memorialized a black on Monument Avenue—a man whose message had been one of education, personal integrity, social justice, and perseverance.

The "Confederate-Americans" did show up for the ceremony, but they stayed on the margins, were few in number, and were not vocal. Standing in silence around the gathering's perimeter, they held placards that challenged the presence of Arthur Ashe on their boulevard of heroes. One of the banners flown described the statue's siting as a "hate crime." Most of those in attendance, however, expressed disagreement with the protester's concept of "heritage" and the unspoken message of racial exclusivity. Some counterprotesters even brought their own homemade broadsides, one of which described "Confederate Heritage" as "boring." The statue itself was hailed by many as beautiful. "It's time for a change," said attendee Walter Baskerville. "I am very proud to be an African-American today. And I am very proud to be an American. Maybe this'll finally bring everybody together" ("Amid Pageantry, Pride-A Cloud," 1996, p. A3).

Richmond had struggled mightily to erect a statue of Arthur Ashe on Monument Avenue, and the community had debated the subject under close scrutiny. The ceremony on what would have been Arthur Ashes 53rd birthday embodied a measure of racial reconciliation and symbolized a significant change in the city's cultural landscape. Even those who had opposed the location and the work's artistic merit recognized the social and ideological value of Arthur Ashe's figure gracing Monument Avenue. Though in disagreement on particulars, almost no one in the city had ever doubted the manifest personal qualities of Arthur Ashe. Now, his call for "endurance in the race" having been met, Richmond had added a social symbol of paramount importance to its storied heritage.

CONTESTED TERRAIN AND THE PROSPECT FOR URBAN CHANGE

Heritage areas pervade the contemporary landscape. In cities and towns throughout the United States, local ordinances establish historic precincts; architectural review boards then assess their rehabilitation, infill development, and urban amenity projects and judge whether they are compatible with the design character of those districts. Every self-respecting urban place has an historic neighborhood as well as an historic commercial area. Seldom, however, does the oversight triggered by the local ordinance focus on the meaning of these districts. Instead, issues of design appropriateness dominate the work of review bodies because that physical aspect of development is the most immediately apparent and tangible. Nevertheless, the meaning of urban places remains an important feature of historic districts, and the messages that are delivered through urban features and interpretive schemes hold the power to either reproduce the status quo in community relations or advance them.

The controversy over a statue of Arthur Ashe on historic Monument Avenue in Richmond revealed the deeply held values of the various constituencies throughout the metropolitan community. The story of this public art project displays the confluence in a Southern city of sharply distinguishable perspectives: race, public art, historic preservation, and urban redevelopment. The statue of Ashe that now stands on equal ground with the Confederate heroes symbolizes a distinctive, revised urban heritage. The story of the statue's creation and siting embodies insights that are key to the junction of planning and history: the vitality of "heritage" as a construct in shaping community and regional identity; the importance of the process by which public planning institutions shape community development; the utility of historic district zoning in urban settings; and the continuing importance of race in contemporary political decisions about urban redevelopment.

Of particular significance here was the lack of an orderly process, both for deciding if a statue should be sited and for determining the artistic quality of the work. The Planning Commission's unilateral decision to move the statue into the historic area created the initial furor. Neighborhood residents challenged this decision because they were never consulted; it made no sense that historic district status required design approval for the color of one's front door, but a major public art project was not subject to the same intense scrutiny. They viewed the commission's decision as an unconscionable flaunting of the public participation process, and they reacted angrily to the situation. In addition to this aspect of public involvement, local authorities never submitted the public art piece to the public for approval. The lack of a process on this front exacerbated an already complex public decision, and it led to the creation of Citizens for Excellence in Public Art. So it was on two fronts that public authorities failed to allow for meaningful citizen involvement.

History, the Lost Cause, and the Arthur Ashe Statue

The Civil War is unquestionably one of the momentous epochs in our national history; many people, and particularly those in the South, continue to be conscious of the role that conflict played in their community's history and in contemporary circumstance. Tony Horwitz describes the battle between the North and the South as incomplete, by which he means that patterns of social behavior entrenched by the Civil War continue to inform everyday social relations. Looking at Civil War sites and how reenactors of its battles keep the cultural tradition of a noble South alive, Horwitz remarks on the potency of the mythology surrounding the Lost Cause and describes those aficionados' passion in sexual terms—The Civil Wargasm (Horwitz, 1997). Horwitz's analogy is not facetious. He both recognizes the powerful lure of Civil War images and tradition and understands how Southern Lost Cause devotees may trap themselves and their communities in the past.

Horwitz visited Richmond during the Arthur Ashe public hearing. Having seen the powerful feelings on each side of the issue, he asked an astute question, "Was there such a thing as a politically correct remembrance of the Confederacy? Or was any attempt to honor the Cause inevitably tainted by what Southerners once delicately referred to as their 'peculiar institution'?" (Horwitz 1997, p. 246). This was indeed the question that Richmonders grappled with as they reviewed the merits of the Arthur Ashe proposal. On one side of the issue were those who wanted the statue sited within the historic district because DiPasquale's sculpture, placed there, would demonstrate an advance in social and racial relations. This group believed that any diminution perceived in the sacred power of the street would be offset by the universal message of racial reconciliation. The group included Virginia Heroes, the CAR, Governor Wilder, many community residents, and, eventually, the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Opponents of the statue's location levied four distinct arguments: first, that the public art project should not be on Monument Avenue because Ashe's legacy was diminished by any juxtaposition with leaders of the Lost Cause (Boone's position); second, that placing such a public art piece with the Monument Avenue historic district detracted from the historic character of the street (the position of Confederate-Americans, neighborhood residents, and a few historic preservationists); third, that the preferable location for the statue would be downtown Richmond, where the statue would adorn an African-American Sports Hall of Fame (Mayor Young, Ray Boone, and Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe's position); and, fourth, that the DiPasquale statue should not grace Monument Avenue because the sculpture had limited artistic merit (CEPA's position).

These counterarguments all conspired to oppose the statue's siting at the intersection of Monument and Roseneath, but the social symbolism and the urge toward a racial reconciliation stance won the day. As Young put it, at the conclusion of the momentous public hearing, the debate was eventually decided by "matters of spirituality." Notable in this process were the positions taken by the various constituent groups. Attitudes were not racially monolithic, black pitted against white; rather, most of the stance were the product of careful thought, which resulted in groups coalescing according to their

intrinsic character. It is important to note that the installation of Arthur Ashe's likeness advanced contemporary social relations in the city. The controversy certainly held the possibility of merely affirming existing social relations. Instead, the dialogue that took place raised the consciousness of many community members about racial relations and, to some extent, helped alert people of all races to the significance of urban identity and meaning.

The Postmodern Practice of Historic Preservation

Harvey, Zukin, and Wolch and Dear have written extensively about the differentiation of urban spatial patterns; their assessment of the global urban scene is useful in understanding how postmodern practices inform urban structure. Historic preservation practice stands squarely in this tradition of postmodernism: Difference is applauded by protecting historic resources, the products of local circumstance. Ironically, the pursuit, ostensibly, of landscape heterogeneity often ends up creating eerily similar urban artifacts—compare Colonial Williamsburg with Sturbridge Village as a landscape type.

But occasionally such veering toward homogeneity is challenged through efforts to reinterpret place by using contemporary historical constructs (Hayden, 1995; Sandercock, 1998). The Arthur Ashe narrative depicts just such a movement: The deep structure has been forever changed by countering the hegemony of the Civil War mythology with a public structure of a prominent African-American. The message that people viewing Monument Avenue in 1999 bring away is one of increased tolerance. They are confronted by the juxtaposition of Civil War leaders with a black man of the highest moral integrity. Whether or not they embrace Ashe's ideals, they cannot close their eyes to the bronze statue that symbolizes them: tolerance, personal autonomy, and civic responsibility.

Today, Monument Avenue's message is more embracing of all Richmonders than it was before that statue's siting. Although efforts to build the African-American Sports Hall of Fame foundered, the siting of the Arthur Ashe monument reflects a significant shift in the contemporary social relations of Richmond. The tradition of reverence for Confederate heroes has been modified to include commemoration of an important African-American.

In 1961, Raymond Williams wrote about the culture of selective tradition and the social processes by which the "long revolution" would take place (Williams, 1961). This story is a wonderful example of that incremental, urban change process at work: whites and blacks alike contested Monument Avenue's terrain, and the upshot was that a previously marginalized group—Richmond blacks found one of their own honored on this "great street."

Kevin Lynch once referred to the city as a "gigantic teaching device" (Lynch, 1972). The lesson that is delivered by Monument Avenue today is one of increased tolerance and inclusion. Those who travel the entire breadth of the historic district encounter that message only because the community went through a difficult planning process. Given the nature of postmodern urban development, similarly difficult roads lie ahead for many urban planners, historic preservationists, city administrators, and city council members. This narrative is offered as a guide to illuminate the rocky road that must be traveled to advance the social meanings of urban heritage in contemporary settings.

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