



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

September 2, 2021

Ms. Julie Langan  
Director and State Historic Preservation Officer  
Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
2801 Kensington Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23221

Dear Ms. Langan:

The Society for American Archaeology is pleased to support the nomination of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. This property and the cultural resources it contains are more than worthy of inclusion in the Register, both to recognize their importance, and to protect them for the benefit of future generations.

The SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With nearly 7,000 members, SAA represents professional and avocational archaeologists, archaeology students in colleges and universities, and archaeologists working at Tribal agencies, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. SAA has members throughout the U.S., as well as in many nations around the world.

The 43 acre site provides a microcosm of the post-colonial society of Virginia, and the nomination seeks to show a more complete and inclusive picture of that history. Starting in 1799, the city of Richmond began using the area for a number of purposes, including a burial ground, hospital, gallows site, and powder magazine, among others. Today, there are three historic cemeteries contained within the boundaries of the property—the Hebrew Cemetery, Shockoe Hill Cemetery, and the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground. The latter is the only cemetery of the three not included on the National Register.

The nation's cultural resources preservation efforts need to more accurately reflect the presence and impact of all of the peoples who have called North America home, along with their contributions to our society. It is vital that places unique to the heritage of African-Americans and other under-represented groups be protected, and given the recognition they deserve. The nomination before you would help to achieve this, by presenting the entire property of concern in the wider context of the landscape it is part of, and by highlighting the historic dynamic that exists between the myriad cultural resources it contains.

The SAA is proud to endorse this nomination, and urges its swift approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deborah L. Nichols', written in a cursive style.

Deborah L. Nichols, Ph.D., RPA  
President