

December 14, 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

On October 28, 2023, the Arlington Historical Society (AHS) and Black Heritage Museum of Arlington dedicated the first three “stumbling stones” or plaques to honor the lives of the enslaved people who lived and toiled at the Ball-Sellers House. Before the dedication, plans for the plaques were submitted to the HALRB for review and a CoA was provided on August 16, 2023.

After the dedication, Cynthia Liccese-Torres, informed the Arlington Historical Society that it would need to submit a new CoA request because of the existence of a stamp on the rear of the concrete plinths that hold the plaques. The stamp has the names of the organizations responsible for creating the markers and the date of their dedication and the AHS logo. It reads: “Arlington Historical Society, Black Heritage Museum, Arlington Tech, 10/28/23.” Students from Arlington Tech placed the school’s name on the plaques as students from the high school manufactured the plinths and created the plaques. AHS did not know that they would put their name on the marker or the AHS logo (a drawing of AHS Museum), but does not object. Liccese-Torres felt the Society should have informed HALRB that a stamp would be placed on the markers before receiving the first CoA. While this is not disputed, in all honesty, this did not occur to the Society. No harm was meant by its exclusion.

Another issue brought to the attention of AHS was the absence of the Sankofa symbol on the bronze plaque. AHS and the Black Heritage Museum decided to forgo the symbol after receiving the original CoA. We decided it would detract from the rawness of just having the enslaved person’s name and vital information.

The Arlington Historical Society asks HALRB to provide a new CoA that takes into account the stamp on the back of each of the three cement plinths and the lack of the Sankofa symbol.

Thank you for considering this.

Jessica Kaplan
Arlington Historical Society

Plaques as they appear today



Stones placed between brick path and sidewalk



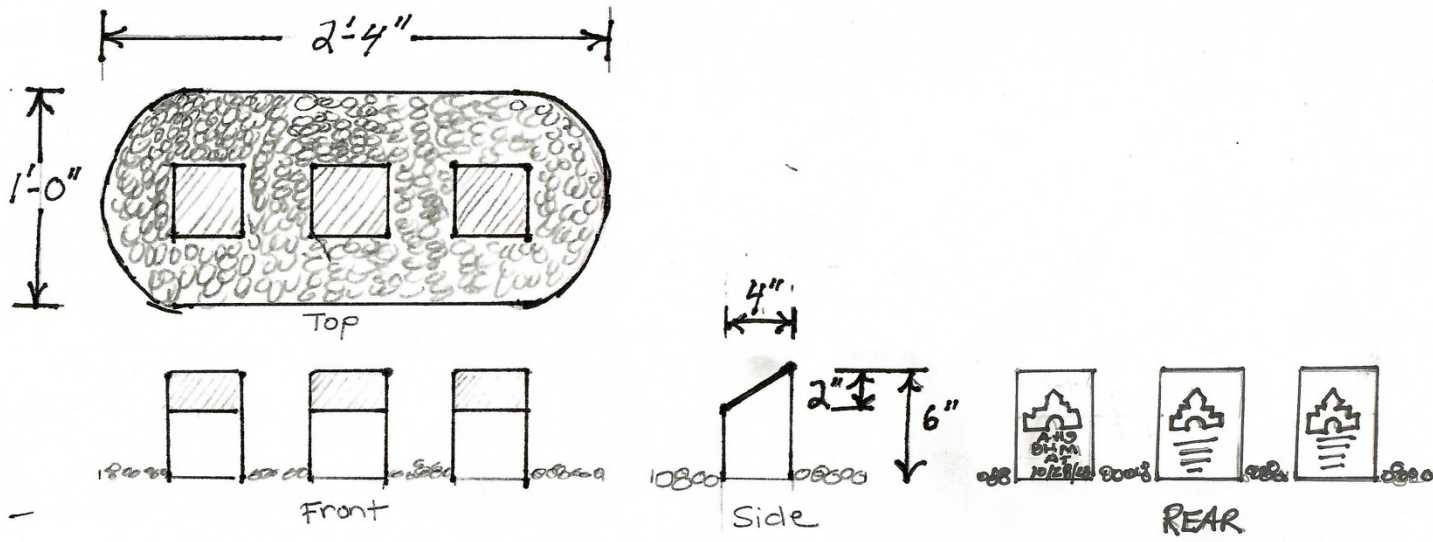
From above



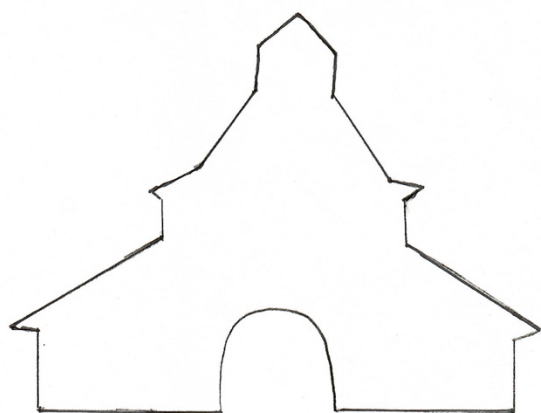
Back side

New Specs with Stamp on Back of Marker

3 View Drawing of stumbling
stone at the Ball-Sellers
House



Rendering of Wording Stamped on the Back of the Markers



Arlington Historical Society
Black Heritage Museum
Arlington Tech
10/28/23

Photograph of Rear Side of the Marker



Arlington Historical Society

Black Heritage Museum

Arlington Tech

10/28/23

Stumbling Stones for the Ball-Sellers House



Enslaved Here
Nancy
Female
Born ca. 1775
Died ca. 1831-1840

HALRB APPROVED

COA ISSUED ON August 16, 2023

**FIELD CHANGES TO EXTERIOR
COMPONENTS OF APPROVED PLANS ARE
NOT PERMITTED. FOR INFORMATION CALL
703-228-3830.**



Enslaved Here
Name Unknown
Male
Born ca. 1806-1820



Enslaved Here
Name Unknown
Male
Born 1844

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Sankofa – Embracing past lessons for a
brighter future