

5 October 2008

*Regarding:* the possible sale of parcels #145 and #149 on Ridge Street

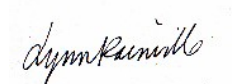
Dear City Councilors,

In the course of my research into historic cemeteries, I recently met Antoinette Roades. She reviewed her thorough and extensive research into the Hawkins Cemetery with me this past week (hence my tardiness in sending this letter). I am writing because I hope that an archaeological survey is conducted before any additional construction (or bulldozing) occurs on lot #157 (as explained below). I realize this site was extensively modified and bulldozed in the past, prior to approval, but the common practice of burying "six feet under" should have protected any preserved human remains.

Ms. Roades' copious research demonstrates that the Allen Hawkins family added a cemetery to their original, 1883 property deed (when they lived on Stillhouse Road, variously named, but today's 5<sup>th</sup> Street). In this document they make reference to "*the* family graveyard," not "*a*" family graveyard, indicating that the cemetery already contained burials as of 1883. An accompanying 1859 plat indicates 4 lots (shown on the enclosed figure in red). The Allen Hawkins home and property is #2, so the graveyard must be within this area. This area, in turn, corresponds to over a dozen modern-day parcels, all lying on the western-half of the block, north of Cherry. The lots to the north of Allen Hawkins' house contained homes in the late 19thC (as seen on the 1920 and 1929 Sanborn map). Eyewitnesses recall seeing gravestones in the 1950s, so the cemetery cannot be underneath these homes, eliminating lot #s 164, 165, 166, 167, and 168.

Several eyewitness accounts help narrow down where the cemetery is within the remaining lots. In the 1970s, the residents who lived at the Emma Gibson house (lots #160/156) did not recall a cemetery on their property, but a child playing in the woods "behind" the house did. That leaves lots #158 & 157. The former lot, 158, would have faced the major, public road that led to the Still House, an unlikely, but not impossible site for a cemetery. But the most convincing piece of evidence for the cemetery location comes from a man who remembers crossing a creek in circa 1955 and seeing a tombstone lying across the bank. Topographically, the only creek in this area runs slightly to the east of the present-day Flower Man Shop and west of the steep incline up to Ridge St. This narrows the location, within the 1883 Lot #2, to modern-day Tax Parcel 157.

Although I have not done justice to Ms. Roades detailed research in this brief letter, I am hoping that City Council will require a formal sub-surface search (preferably searching for grave stains, rather than bodies) of lot #157 as part of the pre-conditions of the sale of lots #149 and #145. Unfortunately I am out of town on Monday (October 6<sup>th</sup>) at a preservation conference in Richmond, but I can be reached via email if you have any additional questions. Thank you for taking the time to consider this request,



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Figure: overlay of three maps. (a) underlying map, in gray, is a modern-tax parcel map of the block bounded by Cherry, Ridge, 5th, and Oak. (b – in red ink) overlay of the four lots drawn on an 1859 deed and once owned by Allen Hawkins. A later, 1883 deed lists the cemetery as being located in lot #2, then owned by Mr Hawkins. (c) part of a 1920 Sanborn Insurance map, indicating some of the standing structures. Note, the left hand portion of the map is cut off, hence the still standing Hawkins Residence and the Emma Gibson house are not shown here.

