

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

CITY OF BALTIMORE



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

Investigative Report Synopsis

OIG Case # 24-0057-I

Issued: January 24, 2025



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
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City Hall, Suite 635
100 N. Holliday Street
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January 24, 2025

Dear Citizens of Baltimore City,

The mission of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is to promote accountability, efficiency, and integrity in City government, as well as to investigate complaints of fraud, financial waste, and abuse. The following synopsis is a condensed version of the full report provided to City management officials and does not contain all investigative information.

In April 2024, the OIG received a complaint alleging that several City of Baltimore (City) Confederate Monuments were vandalized while in possession of the City's Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAPS). The complainant also alleged that the vandalism was not reported to authorities until six months after the damages occurred.

Background

On August 16, 2016, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake (Rawlings-Blake) requested a Special Commission to be formed regarding Baltimore City's Confederate Monuments¹. The commission determined that the City owns the monuments, but the State of Maryland has an easement on them, established on March 14, 1984. The State of Maryland Historic Preservation Easement Program does not allow the City to relocate the monuments without the Maryland Historical Trust's (MHT) approval. On August 15, 2017, Mayor Catherine Pugh (Pugh) ordered the removal of four Confederate monuments: Roger B. Taney, Lee Jackson, Confederate Soldiers and Sailors, and the Confederate Women's Monument. After their removal, they were stored at a Department of Transportation (DOT) Yard.

Damage and Report to Police

The Law Department notified Risk Management of vandalism damages to the monuments on September 20, 2022. Over the next few days, the Executive Director for CHAPS (Executive Director) corresponded with the Insurance and Risk Manager (Risk Finance Manager) for Baltimore City regarding the damages. The Executive Director explained that he visited the DOT Yard on September 9, 2022, and discovered the monument had been vandalized. The Executive Director informed the Risk Finance Manager that they believed the damages were estimated at around \$20,000-\$30,000. According to Risk Management, the property coverage for the Fine Art Museum Policy provides liability coverage of up to \$675,000,000 for outdoor art. The Risk Finance Manager also informed the Executive Director that they should obtain an estimate and file a police report. The Executive Director replied and indicated that they would follow the guidance.

The City's Administrative Manual (AM) Policy 505-1-1 Procedures for Filing Property Claims states that the agency head is responsible for notifying Risk Management within 24 hours by telephone or email of any damaged City-owned property. After the notification is made, the agency head must complete an incident report, providing detailed information about what occurred, what was damaged, how much the damages cost, and the police report information.

¹ Special Commissions Report: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ce643a_dec453d9aee640848c62dd23a3fb8764.pdf

According to the Executive Director, CHAPS is a regulatory agency, not a management agency. The Executive Director confirmed that an insurance claim was not pursued. They also stated that getting BPD to respond to the Yard was difficult when the damages were first observed. On March 21, 2023, the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) responded to the DOT Yard and took a report from a DOT superintendent (DOT Superintendent). The DOT Superintendent was unsure of when the damages occurred but noted that red paint splatter damages were present when they first arrived.

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) notified the City that the monuments were also inspected on September 18, 2023. During the inspection, members of the MHT discovered that several monuments were damaged by weather patina², red paint splatter, failure of a previous wax coating, several drilled holes, and active corrosion. The Confederate Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument's right arm of the shoulder had been cut off. A spot of abrasion with scratch marks revealing the bare metal is located on the left arm of the Confederate Women's Monuments soldier. The Lee Jackson Monument appeared to have a scabbard³ of Robert E. Lee, which has been cut off and missing, and several long scratches/marks were located on the right leg and saddle of the left horse. Figures 1-6 show each monument before and after damages occurred, as described above.

Figure 1: Before - Confederate Soldiers and Sailors



Figure 2: After - Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Right Arm cut



² Steel produces a stable rust layer called a "patina," a protective, corrosion-resistant barrier. This naturally developed protective patina regenerates continuously when exposed to weather.

³ Scabbard- A cover for holding a sword, dagger, or knife.

Figure 3: Before - Confederate Women Monument



Figure 4: After - Abrasion Marks on Left Shoulder



Figure 5: Before - Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee



Figure 6: After - The Scabbard of Robert E. Lee cut off



Security Issues

The OIG received a prior, anonymous complaint in June 2020 that alleged the DOT Yard was not secured. The complainant also explained that they observed signs of vandalism, such as broken windows and glass from City work trucks. The complainant also stated that they could see the Confederate Monuments in plain sight from a local walking trail. The OIG sent a referral to DOT in June 2020 due to security concerns, and DOT responded that a fence would be placed along the property line and tarps would be purchased to cover the Confederate Monuments.

The DOT Superintendent reported that in August 2017, the monuments were dropped off at the DOT Yard without clear direction or information. To protect the monuments, DOT placed tarps over them. After

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

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This public synopsis is only a summary of a more comprehensive report of investigation submitted to the appropriate City management official

some time passed, the tarps began to be destroyed. DOT installed a fence around the monuments after the damages occurred. The DOT Superintendent informed the OIG that the DOT Yard is secured from the front by a security guard, but the property has had several break-ins in recent years before and after the monuments were stored there.

On July 10, 2024, the OIG visited the DOT Yard. However, the monuments were not on-site at the time. A large imprint was discovered where the monuments were stored. A bent barb-wired fence divided the yard in half (Figure 7). About 20 feet from where the monuments appeared to have been stored, another fence seemed to be the perimeter of the DOT Yard. The perimeter fence appeared to have an opening at the end, which leads directly from the woods to the DOT Yard. On January 13, 2025, the OIG visited the DOT Yard and confirmed that the fence line has a gap and leads to the woods.

Figure 7: DOT Yard (July 10, 2024)



Figure 8: DOT Yard (January 13, 2025)



Current Status

The monuments are currently stored in Los Angeles, California. They were moved from the DOT Yard on November 9, 2023. The monuments are on loan to be displayed at The Brick⁴. The exhibit titled Monuments will highlight worldwide monuments that were removed during the civil unrest in several American Cities. The monuments will be displayed as is, with the damage and paint covering them. The OIG also obtained a document identifying the value appraisal for the monuments before they were shipped to Los Angeles, California, which was \$190,000.00.

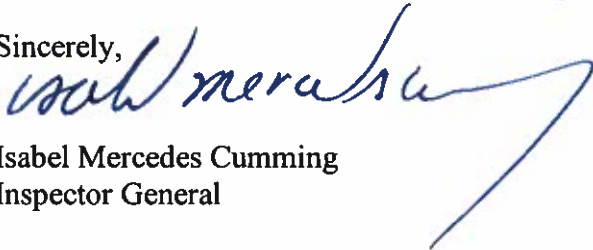
⁴ The Brick is a nonprofit visual art space that promotes developments in contemporary culture through exhibitions, publications, and public programs. It was founded as LAXART in 2005 as a platform for emerging and under-recognized artistic talent in Los Angeles.

Investigative Findings

The investigation revealed that the DOT Yard had security issues when the monuments were stored there. The monument's damage occurred between August 2017 and September 2022. The vandalism was discovered on September 9, 2022, and a police report was filed on March 21, 2023. Due to CHAPS not being a management agency and an insurance claim not being pursued, the OIG will defer to City management to determine if the delay in reporting the damages to Risk Management violated AM-505-1-1 Procedures for Property Crimes. Nonetheless, the OIG suggests that City management review reporting policies if damages occur for any other City monuments, statues, or artwork.

The OIG recommended that DOT review the perimeter of the DOT Yard to verify that the fence is secure and that there are no gaps or potential access points for trespassing. DOT responded by installing a locked fence and stated they are working to ensure there are no gaps or potential access points for trespassing, noting that it will be completed by the end of the 1st quarter in 2025. The OIG took a final site visit on January 16, 2025, and found three instances where there remain breaks in the fence and communicated these areas to DOT. DOT also stated they will ensure that all managers and relevant personnel are briefed on the AM-505-1-1 Procedures for Property Crimes to ensure compliance.

Sincerely,



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

CC: Hon. Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City
Hon. Zeke Cohen, Baltimore City Council President
Hon. Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council
Hon. Ebony Thompson, Baltimore City Solicitor