

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
June 23, 2015 Meeting**

10. **CAR No. 15-054** (Fulton Properties)

**115 S 15th Street
Shockoe Slip Old & Historic District**

Project Description: **Install new halo lit building-mounted signs**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to install two building-mounted signs to rooftop elements of the 5-story portion of a block long commercial structure which also includes a 2-story structure in the Shockoe Slip Old and Historic District. The proposed signs are as follows:

- 6 ½' by 8' aluminum fabricated reverse channel shape sign displaying the Bon Secours logo in blue. The logo will be LED rear lit in bright white and will be located on an existing parapet wall on the north side of the building facing East Cary Street. The logo will be placed on a 8' by 11' aluminum panel painted white which will be fastened to the masonry using 3/8" by 2.5" masonry fasteners.
- 6'-5" by 26' aluminum fabricated reverse channel letter and shape sign displaying the Bon Secours logo and the business name in blue. The sign will be LED rear lit in bright white and will be located in the center of the roof on wall of an existing rooftop structure on the south side of the building facing Dock Street. The illuminated sign will be installed on an aluminum panel which will be painted white and attached to the existing rooftop structure.

Staff recommends approval of the project, with a condition. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* Standards for Signage are found on pages 69-71. The guidelines state that "signs should not be internally illuminated" (pg. 71, #7). At the Commission meeting on April 28, 2015, the applicant presented plans for similar signage that was internally illuminated and therefore in conflict with this guideline. The applicant has modified the plans that were reviewed and deferred by the Commission at its meeting on April 28, 2015, to address the issues the Commission raised about the lighting of the signs. The applicant proposes to light the signs from the rear rather than the internal illumination as was proposed previously. This proposed method of illumination is more subtle than internal illumination and appropriate for signage in Old and Historic Districts.

The signs are located at the level of an elevated highway that is built to Interstate standards on which pedestrians are prohibited. Though the *Guidelines* state that large signs designed to address high speed vehicular traffic are not appropriate

in the District (pg. 69), the proposed signs are not overwhelming in scale and are difficult to see without the elevated highway in the same field of vision and only marginally from within the boundaries of the District. The *Guidelines* also state the signs should be easy to read and should not obstruct important architectural elements or details (pg. 71). The proposed font is easy to read, and the signs are simple and uncluttered with the use of limited text and a recognizable logo. Additionally, the applicant is proposing to locate the signs on rooftop elements, and they will not obscure important architectural features of the building. For the sign which will be installed on the parapet wall, staff recommends that the sign be mounted in the mortar joints, not through the brick, in order to preserve the brick.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the condition noted above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Signage outlined in Section 114-930.7(f) of the City Code, as well as with the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines*, specifically the page cited above, adopted by the Commission for review of Certificates of Appropriateness under the same section of the code.