

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
March 22, 2016, Meeting**

4. **CAR No. 16-034** (Venture Richmond)

**100 – 200 Virginia Street
Shockoe Slip Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

**Installation of LED string lights over
the 100 and 200 blocks of Virginia Street**

Staff Contact:

M. Pitts

The applicant requests approval to string small LED lights over the 100 and 200 blocks of Virginia Street in the Shockoe Slip Old and Historic District. The lights will be connected to 114 Virginia Street, 111 Virginia Street, 1310 East Canal Street, 1323 East Cary Street, and three support posts in the parking lot adjacent to 1323 East Cary Street. The lights will be installed on catenary cables attached to the building facades with eyebolts. The proposed lights will have opaque white glass bulbs and will be 1.4W. The purpose of the proposed lighting is to enhance the pedestrian experience and connect the Slip to the Turning Basin and flood wall parking.

Staff recommends approval of the project with a condition. Though the *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* do not directly address this form of lighting, they note that lighting should not detract but rather reinforce the character of the district (pg. 72). Staff believes the proposed lighting will contribute to pedestrian environment and reinforces the commercial/entertainment character of the Shockoe Slip Old and Historic District.

As the lighting could be easily removed and can be viewed as a temporary addition to the District, staff's primary concern regarding this proposal is how the lighting will be attached to the contributing historic structures at 114 Virginia Street and 1323 East Cary Street. The Guidelines note that exterior alterations should not destroy historic materials (pg. 5, #9). For this reason, staff recommends the eyebolts 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 above, the application is consistent with the Standards for Site Improvements outlined in Sections 30-930.7(e) 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.