



Staff Report  
 City of Richmond, Virginia  
**Planning Commission**



<b>UDC 2025-09</b>	CONCEPT – Location, Character, and Extent <span style="float: right;">Meeting Date: 4/15/2025</span>
<b>Applicant/Petitioner</b>	Jeannie Welliver / Department of General Services
<b>Project Description</b>	UDC 2025-09 - CONCEPTUAL - Location, Character, and Extent review of the proposed Shockoe Project: Lumpkin’s Slave Jail Pavilion located at 1619 East Marshall Street.
<b>Project Location</b>	
<b>Address:</b> 1619 East Marshall Street	
<b>Property Owner:</b> City of Richmond	
<p><b>High-Level Details:</b></p> <p>The Lumpkin’s Slave Jail Pavilion is a key element of the Shockoe Valley Master Plan, designed to interpret and preserve one of Richmond’s most significant historical sites. Rooted in decades of advocacy by the Richmond Slave Trail Commission and the local community, the project responds to archaeological investigations conducted in 2006 and 2008, which uncovered the remains of the antebellum slave-trading complex nearly 15 feet below the current ground level.</p> <p>The pavilion will provide visitors access to this historic grade, exposing and interpreting the only confirmed physical evidence of Richmond’s role in the interstate slave trade. The semi-conditioned structure will protect the archaeological site while offering a space for education and reflection. Through layered interpretive experiences, the pavilion will ensure the long-buried story of Lumpkin’s Slave Jail is fully acknowledged and made visible to the public.</p>	
<b>UDC Recommendation</b>	Approval, with Conditions
	<b>The concept was approved April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025.</b>

	<p><b>The Urban Design Committee recommended approval with the conditions listed below.</b></p>
<p><b>Staff Contact</b></p>	<p>Kevin Costanzo - Kevin.Costanzo@rva.gov</p>
<p><b>Public Outreach/ Previous Reviews</b></p>	<p>Please see Applicant Narrative.</p>
<p><b>Conditions for Approval</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Staff recommends the inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable stormwater features to enhance site resilience and minimize runoff. Pervious paving is encouraged throughout walking paths and gathering spaces. Final details to be submitted for final review.</u></li> <li>• <u>Staff recommends the applicant ensure that the design incorporates ADA-compliant pathways and features throughout the site and strengthens pedestrian connections to nearby assets.</u></li> <li>• <u>Staff recommends the applicant submit final planting plans emphasizing native species and pollinator-friendly landscapes.</u></li> <li>• <u>Staff recommends that a maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase to include landscaping, sustainability features, and public spaces.</u></li> <li>• <u>Staff recommends a consistent design approach for wayfinding signage, with materials, typography, and layout complementing the contemplative character of the site. Site furnishings (benches, waste receptacles, signage) should be durable, vandal-resistant, weather-appropriate, and aesthetically compatible with the historic context of The Shockoe Project site area.</u></li> <li>• <u>Staff recommends, where appropriate and if feasible, that the applicant integrate public art elements into the site design, such as interpretive signage, sculptural features, or landscape installations that commemorate the site’s history and contribute to placemaking efforts.</u></li> <li>• <u>Staff recommends that final exterior materials be aesthetically and structurally durable, of high quality, and require minimal maintenance to ensure long-term resilience.</u></li> <li>• <u>Staff recommends that, where appropriate, anti-graffiti coatings be applied to exterior surfaces to reduce ongoing maintenance requirements.</u></li> <li>• <u>Staff recommends that the applicant provide samples or product specification sheets of exterior building materials for Final Review.</u></li> <li>• <u>Staff recommends the applicant provide final details on lighting plans to ensure fixtures are pedestrian-scaled, minimize unnecessary light pollution, and where possible, are Dark-Sky compliant to reduce environmental impacts.</u></li> <li>• <u>Staff recommends the applicant provide details regarding final design, dimensions, and materials for any future building or built features to be submitted to UDC for Final Review.</u></li> </ul>

## Findings of Fact

Site Description	The site is located in Shockoe Valley, north of Main Street Station, and is bounded by Interstate 95 to the west, Interstate 95 Exit 74C and Oliver Hill Way to the north and east, and Grace Street and Main Street Station to the south. The project area currently consists of open green space, active parking lots, Lumpkin’s Slave Jail, and the Winfree Cottage, which is scheduled for relocation prior to development. The surrounding area includes a mix of commercial, industrial, institutional, and mixed-use developments.
Scope of Review	The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.07 and review and recommendation under section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter.
Prior Approvals	N/A
Project Description	<p><b>Overview:</b> The applicant, on behalf of the City of Richmond and in coordination with the Shockoe Project Team, proposes the construction of the Lumpkin’s Slave Jail Pavilion at 1619 E. Marshall Street. The Pavilion is a significant component of the broader Shockoe Valley redevelopment and memorialization initiative. The proposal is the culmination of extensive archaeological investigation, decades of community engagement, and long-standing efforts to publicly recognize and preserve the site’s historic significance. The proposal intends to re-expose the excavated Lumpkin’s site and shelter the space within a semi-conditioned pavilion.</p> <p><b>Background &amp; Context:</b> The project site, often referred to as “The Devil’s Half Acre,” was the location of Lumpkin’s Slave Jail—a notorious antebellum slave trading complex. Buried beneath nearly 15 feet of fill and urban development, the site was rediscovered through archaeological investigations conducted in 2006 and 2008. These efforts revealed the remains of the jail and associated structures, providing a rare and indisputable link to the internal slave trade that shaped Richmond’s history.</p> <p><b>Proposal Summary:</b> The proposed Pavilion will serve as a semi-conditioned structure designed to both protect and interpret the exposed archaeological remains. Key elements of the design include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lowered entry experience that brings visitors down to the original historic grade</li> <li>• An entry theater and exhibit spaces designed for interpretation and education</li> <li>• Elevated walkways and platforms for observation of preserved jail foundations</li> <li>• Reflection spaces and ADA-accessible circulation throughout the site</li> <li>• Exterior site work aligned with historic maps and features, including approximations of Shockoe Creek and the African Burying Ground</li> </ul> <p><b>Schedule and Funding:</b> The Pavilion is scheduled to break ground in 2026. The project is funded through contributions from the City of Richmond and the Commonwealth of Virginia. It follows the recent launch of the Shockoe Institute and is part of the phased implementation of the 2024 Shockoe Project Master Plan.</p>

## Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	<i>Text</i>	<b>Staff Analysis</b>
<b>Master Plan</b>		

<p><b>Big Moves:</b></p> <p>ii. Re-Imagine Priority Growth Nodes (R300, p.187)</p> <p>iv. Provide Greenways &amp; Parks for All (R300, p.197)</p> <p>v. Reconnect the City (R300, p.199)</p> <p>vi. Realign City Facilities (R300, p.201)</p>	<p><i>ii. Target growth in jobs and population to Downtown, Greater Scott’s Addition, Route One Corridor, Southside Plaza, and Stony Point Fashion Park.</i></p> <p><i>iv. Develop parks and greenways so that by 2037 100% of Richmonders live within a 10-minute walk of a park.</i></p> <p><i>v. Cap highways to reknit neighborhoods destroyed by interstates, build/ improve bridges, introduce street grids, and make the city easier to access by foot, bike, and transit.</i></p> <p><i>vi. Improve City buildings (schools, libraries, fire stations, police stations, etc.) to provide better services in efficient, shared-use, accessible facilities to better match and serve the growing city.</i></p>	<p>Shockoe Bottom is identified as a Priority Growth Node for economic and cultural growth. This project would serve as an asset to growing Downtown Richmond and Shockoe valley in social, economic and cultural significance.</p> <p>Lumpkin’s Jail site will be a portion of a larger contribution to create shared space for Richmond and its visitors. New public open space contributes to equitable park access.</p> <p>Project enhances pedestrian and micro modal connectivity and works to reknit Shockoe Bottom into Downtown.</p> <p>Educational and interpretive space aligns with providing accessible shared-use facilities and aids in continuing efforts to commemorate, memorialize, and interpret sites of historical and cultural significance in Shockoe.</p>
<p><b>Urban Design Guidelines</b></p>		
<p><b>Transportation:</b> <i>Paving and Surface Materials (pg. 4)</i></p>	<p><i>“The selection of appropriate paving materials should be based upon the following: desired visual image and compatibility with adjacent paving materials, sustainability, performance, durability, maintenance requirements, and cost. Consideration should be given to the coverage of impervious material, the heat impact of paving material, and the potential for stormwater runoff. Landscaping should be used to break up and soften large expanses of impervious paving material.”</i></p>	<p>The applicant has provided a conceptual plan and design of the proposed Lumpkin’s Jail Pavilion. Details as to the specifications of hardscape materials were not provided for this conceptual review, however the applicant has provided multiple visual simulations of proposed design and material selection which Staff found acceptable and in keeping with the character of the historic space.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends the inclusion of permeable hardscape materials and sustainable stormwater features to enhance site resilience and minimize runoff. Pervious paving is encouraged throughout walking paths and gathering spaces. Final details to be submitted for final review.</u></p>
<p><b>Environment:</b> <i>Universal Design (pg. 9)</i></p>	<p><i>“Public park design should incorporate design elements that ensure equal access to all users. Site limitations should be</i></p>	<p>While the application references the inclusion of ADA accessibility options throughout the project area, it is important to remain intentional and</p>

	<p><i>evaluated, and access to all sites and site features should be universal."</i></p>	<p>consistent in application of inclusivity throughout the entirety of the Shockoe Project and specifically for the Lumpkin's Jail Pavilion.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends the applicant ensure that the design incorporates ADA-compliant pathways and features throughout the site and strengthens pedestrian connections to nearby assets.</u></p>
<p><b>Environment:</b> <i>Landscaping - Design (pg. 10)</i></p>	<p><i>"Landscaping should minimize human impact on the environment. Designs that include conservation landscaping, strategically minimize the urban heat island effect, or decrease stormwater runoff are strongly encouraged."</i></p>	<p><u>Staff recommends the applicant submit final planting plans emphasizing native species and pollinator-friendly landscapes.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that a maintenance plan be submitted during the Final UDC review phase to include landscaping, sustainability features, and public spaces.</u></p>
<p><b>Public Facilities:</b> <i>General Site Design - Site Features (pg. 13)</i></p>	<p><i>"The site should respond to its users through its design and by providing an appropriate array of amenities to serve those users and should incorporate sustainable design aspects.</i></p> <p><i>Connectivity from the site to adjacent areas should be considered during the design phase and include accommodations for non-motorized means of transit and other micro-modal transportation.</i></p> <p><i>The use of materials and features that increase sustainability, improve air and water quality, promote energy efficiency, and reduce the heat island effect are encouraged. Public facilities should strive to capture as much stormwater on site as feasibly possible through the implementation of stormwater management practices. Practices such as the use of green roofs, bioretention areas, permeable pavement and pavers, and planter beds are encouraged.</i></p> <p><i>The provision of plazas adjacent to buildings serving the public is encouraged. The design of such plazas should avoid large changes in grade from the street. Plazas should provide a pleasant transitional environment for pedestrians from the street to the building(s) it serves. Public plazas should use landscaping, public art, and historic preservation to create inviting spaces. Adequate seating, lighting and trash</i></p>	<p><u>Staff recommends a consistent design approach for wayfinding signage, with materials, typography, and layout complementing the contemplative character of the site. Site furnishings (benches, waste receptacles, signage) should be durable, vandal-resistant, weather-appropriate, and aesthetically compatible with the historic context of Shockoe Bottom.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends, where appropriate and if feasible, that the applicant integrate public art elements into the site design, such as interpretive signage, sculptural features, or landscape installations that commemorate the site's history and contribute to placemaking efforts.</u></p>

	<p><i>receptacles should also be provided in the design of plazas."</i></p>	
<p><b>Public Facilities:</b> <i>Building Design Detail (pg. 14-16)</i></p>	<p><i>"New materials should be appropriate for the size and architectural style of the building. Building materials should be aesthetically and structurally durable, of high quality, and require little maintenance. Where appropriate, substances that resist graffiti should be applied to building materials to reduce maintenance requirements. Additionally, a life-cycle analysis of all materials may help in determining appropriate applications.</i></p> <p><i>A building should have an easily recognizable, inviting, and accessible entrance on its facade. The use of special exterior paving, lighting, and landscaping is encouraged to highlight a building's entrance."</i></p>	<p>While no sample material palette has been provided, the applicant has included photo sims of potential building design of Lumpkin's Jail Pavilion and its surrounding exterior space. Staff finds the conceptual design proposed is generally acceptable with UDC Guidelines and is in keeping with the context of the surrounding space.</p> <p><u>Staff recommends that final exterior materials be aesthetically and structurally durable, of high quality, and require minimal maintenance to ensure long-term resilience.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that, where appropriate, anti-graffiti coatings be applied to exterior surfaces to reduce ongoing maintenance requirements.</u></p> <p><u>Staff recommends that the applicant provide samples or product specification sheets of exterior building materials for Final Review.</u></p>
<p><b>Community Character:</b> <i>Lighting - Outdoor Lighting (pg. 18)</i></p>	<p><i>"Lighting should be pedestrian-scaled and designed to minimize unnecessary light pollution and glare."</i></p>	<p><u>Staff recommends the applicant provide final details on lighting plans to ensure fixtures are pedestrian-scaled, minimize unnecessary light pollution, and where possible, are Dark-Sky compliant to reduce environmental impacts.</u></p>