

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 27, 2014 Meeting**

2. **CAR No. 14-33** (J. & J. Yates)

**1812 Monument Avenue
Monument Avenue Old and Historic District**

Project Description:

Reconstruct missing porch

Staff Contact:

C. Easterling

The applicant requests approval to reconstruct a missing porch at the front of a residence located in the Monument Avenue Old and Historic District. The upper portion of the original porch was removed prior to 1962, though the cast stone base and cast stone column plinths remain. The applicant proposes reconstructing the porch based on a 1908 photograph of the property and the remaining physical evidence. The applicant intends to use salvaged columns that match the original, and install new capitals and railing. The railing system will be constructed from painted PVC. The applicant has submitted plans to restore the missing shutters to staff for an administrative review.

Staff recommends approval of the project with conditions. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* emphasizes the importance of porches and front entryways, noting that they not only help to define a building's architectural style, but also serve as the primary focus for a historic structure (pg. 61). The *Guidelines* also notes that an entire porch "should only be replaced if it is too deteriorated to repair or is completely missing; replacements should match the original as much as possible" (pg. 61, #5).

The applicant has proposed restoring an important feature to the front of the residence. The plan and baluster details submitted by the applicant appear to match the appearance of the original porch features as depicted in the 1908 photograph included with the application. It is the assessment of staff that the proposal to use painted PVC for the railings complies with the Commission's guidelines for the use of substitute materials, as the proposed synthetic material conveys the appearance of wood when painted. The applicant should submit any paint color selections to Commission staff for final review and approval. Since the applicant has not included an elevation drawing, it is difficult to confirm the height and the placement of the new porch. As it is the intent of the applicant to replicate the original porch, staff recommends that the applicant submit an elevation drawing to staff for final review and approval.

It is the assessment of staff that, with the conditions noted above, the work outlined in the proposal complies with the Standards for New Construction outlined in Section 114-930.7(c) 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.