

**COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
May 26, 2015 Meeting**

2. **CAR No. 15-058** (J. Buzzard & S. Synder) **1828 Monument Avenue
Monument Avenue Old and Historic District**

Project Description: **Replace balcony railing**

Staff Contact: **M. Pitts**

The applicant requests approval to replace an existing second story balcony railing on a house in the Monument Avenue Old and Historic District. The applicant is proposing to replace the current simple metal railing with in-kind materials but at a height of 42" which is required by the building code. The applicant states that the current railing is 12 inches in height though staff observed the existing railing to be at least 2 feet in height.

Staff recommends approval of the project. The *Richmond Old and Historic Districts Handbook and Design Review Guidelines* acknowledge that when restoring a railing, it may be difficult to maintain the original height while meeting current building codes (pg. 67, #6). The *Guidelines* note that when replacing features, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, other visual qualities, and materials when possible (pg. 5, #6). By replacing the existing railing with in-kind materials, the historic appearance of the second story balcony and the building's façade will be maintained while complying with the building code and allowing the safer use of the second floor balcony. Currently, there are several homes in the District within the same block which have taller railings as is being proposed by the applicant. As the proposed design matches the existing in terms of materials and design other than the increase in height, staff recommends approval of this project.

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