

**Historical Architectural Review Board  
COA Final Review Sheet**

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**HDC-2023-00061**

**Address: 631 W. Allen Street**

**District: Old Fairgrounds Historic District**

**Applicant: Charles Lewis, owner**

**Proposal: Enlarge rear dormer**

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**Building Description:**

This 2½-story brick house, c. 1890, is federal style. The gable roof has shingles, a single chimney, and a single dormer with detail in the gable roof, projecting eaves and a cornice with brackets. The windows are 2/2 sash with simple wood lintels. There is a single glazed front door and visible basement window grille. There is a concrete porch with decorative panels and iron pipe railing. There is an Allentown porch roof with a concave profile, closed roof ends, decorative wood brackets, squared rafter ends and asphalt shingles.

**Project Description:**

This application proposes to demolish an existing rear dormer and construct an enlarged dormer to increase the interior ceiling height at the landing of the third-story stairs. The dormer would be extended to the east toward the adjacent property at 629 W. Allen Street and would be partially visible from Morris Street.



**Front and side façades of 631 W. Allen Street, 2023.  
(Google StreetView)**

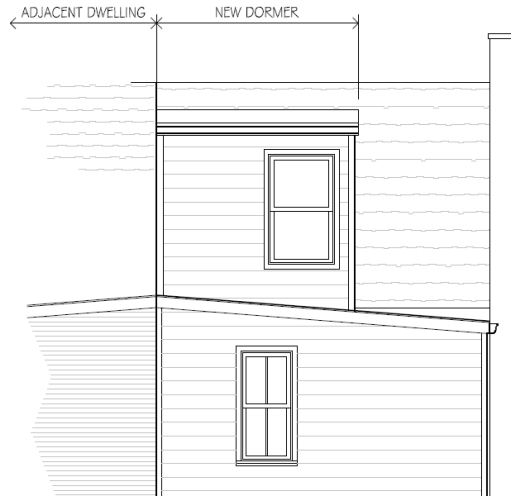


**View of rear from Morris Street prior to removal, 2023.  
(Google StreetView)**

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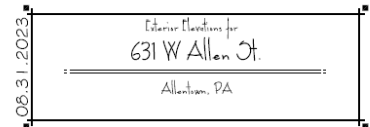
**View from Morris Street, 2023.  
(Google StreetView)**



**Rear elevation showing proposed dormer alteration.  
(Applicant)**



**West Elevation**  
1/4" = 1.0'



**West elevation showing proposed dormer alteration.  
(Applicant)**

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### Applicable Guidelines:

#### **Chapter 3.5 – Windows**

**3.5.7** Repair, restore, and reuse original windows prior to replacing them. Where one component of a window is deteriorated or broken, repair or replace the individual piece rather than replace the entire window unit. Repair or selectively replace in-kind existing hardware to ensure window operability, including sash cords, weights, and pulleys. Repaired windows have been shown to achieve energy performance levels comparable to replacement windows.

**3.5.8** Replace windows in-kind if original windows are deteriorated beyond feasible repair. Wood is the preferred material for most replacement windows. Replacement windows should match the original as closely as possible in material, size, type, operation, profile, and appearance. Replicate the existing dimensions of glazing, configuration of muntins, or unique decorative lites. Match sash and frame thickness and window depths. For existing non-original windows, it is preferred to replace with wood windows rather than new alternate windows.

**3.5.9** Replace windows with alternate materials if in-kind replacement is not feasible. Replacement windows must match the original as closely as possible in type, size, operation, profile, appearance, and configuration of lites and muntins. Aluminum-clad wood windows are an appropriate alternate because they can replicate the original appearance and material. Composite wood or fiberglass windows with paintable exterior surfaces can be appropriate alternates if they match the original appearance, but are not recommended from a sustainability perspective. Vinyl windows are not appropriate due to short lifespan, poor performance, and inability to match historic profiles.

**3.5.10** Preserve the ratio of window openings to solid wall surfaces. Increasing or reducing openings can impact the proportions of a façade and can look out of place within the larger streetscape. Changing the size of openings will also require a Building Permit because it changes the amount of enclosed space on a façade.

**3.5.11** Retain the historic pattern of window openings (fenestration pattern), especially on primary facades. Avoid inserting new windows into a façade or infilling existing windows. The position, number, and arrangement of windows defines the rhythm of a façade and can be a character-defining feature of an architectural style or a type of building use. If creating new openings or infilling existing ones is necessary for a project such as an adaptive reuse, locate openings on side or rear facades.

### Observations & Comments:

The design guidelines provide a hierarchy of facades (p. 13) that outlines which facades should be classified as primary, contributing secondary, non-contributing secondary, and non-visible. Staff finds the rear of the property to be a non-contributing secondary façade, which is defined as “the rear of a building, a façade that is only visible from an alley, side facades that are only partially visible from a public right-of-way or do not influence the overall design, or are not visible.” Staff considers the west elevation to be a contributing secondary façade.

As part of the proposed work, the dormer’s roofline would be altered from a gable to shed roof. The window would remain in its current location, and a new wall would be constructed east toward the adjacent property at 629 W. Allen Street. The dormer’s westernmost wall would remain in its current location and would be minimally visible when standing north on Morris Street.

Staff finds the proposed work to be appropriate, given the non-contributing classification of the façade and minimal visibility of the dormer from Morris Street. However, staff recommends that the new window be wood, aluminum clad wood, or a paintable composite and that the siding be wood or fiber cement clapboards.

When the application was received, staff notified the applicant that a violation had been issued in 2020 for painting the first-story brick at the front and Morris Street facades. Staff had pursued the violation with the previous owner for several years, but was unable to resolve the issue. The violation remains open and would require a second application either to the staff or the HARB. Staff recommends removing the paint from the masonry.

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### **Staff Recommendation:**

Approval, provided the window is wood, aluminum-clad wood, or a paintable composite and that the siding is wood or fiber cement clapboards, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.5 Windows.

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### **HARB Discussion:**

The property owner, Charles Lewis, questioned whether he could install aluminum siding to match the existing siding at the rear ell and asked why he cannot continue painting the exterior masonry. Ms. Keller responded that the staff recommended wood or fiber cement clapboard siding, because no siding material was proposed in the application and aluminum does not comply with the design guidelines. The painted masonry, she continued, resulted in a notice of violation and should be removed, because the design guidelines explicitly state that unpainted masonry should not be painted. Mr. Lewis asked how to remove the paint. Ms. Keller responded that he would need to use a paint stripper appropriate for masonry.

Mr. Lewis stated that the basement window grilles are missing and asked what he can do to return the grilles to the windows. The HARB responded that either a fabricator could construct a new grille to match or one could potentially be found at an architectural salvage shop.

The HARB commented that Mr. Lewis inherited a problem with the painted brick and will need to remove it. Mr. Lewis responded that he would attempt to remove the paint.

The HARB agreed that the applicant could install new aluminum siding to match the existing; the board further noted that while the aluminum siding does not meet the design guidelines, it could be allowed to maintain consistency. The HARB also argued that because the expanded dormer would be minimally visible from a right-of-way, the HARB would not have jurisdiction over the material.

### **Action:**

Mr. Jordan moved to approve the application presented on 9/5/2023 as submitted to enlarge the rear dormer window at 631 W. Allen Street, pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 3.5 Windows, noting that there are unique circumstances in that the window is inconspicuous from a public right-of-way. Mr. Hart seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support.