

Historical Architectural Review Board

COA Preliminary Review Sheet

HDC-2025-00012

Address: 625 Liberty Street

District: Old Fairgrounds Historic District

Owner: Lewnesruch LLC

Applicant: Peter Lewnes

Proposal: Replace rooftop railing, install deck and door and lighting at existing signage.

Building Description: 625 Liberty Street is a two-story structure built in 1880 and has had extensive exterior modifications. The exterior is stucco, the windows both corner elevations are covered over. The first floor features a modern commercial entry.

Project Description:

The proposed work relates to existing signage and the rear roof area as follows:

- There is an existing metal pipe guardrail at the rear roof. A new all-wood railing is proposed to be located on the parapet wall, replacing (or installed adjacent) to the existing metal code-required railing.
- A proposed roof deck at the rear is intended to be 8' x 16', where it will be the full width of the building (16') and 8' deep from the existing rear wall, stopping before an existing vent stack.
- While there were two windows at the rear of the second floor, the applicant uncovered an old door that accessed the roof. The intent is to re-establish the door opening for roof access in the same size as the uncovered opening. The proposed door is a full view fiberglass door and a full view storm door.
- The second window at the rear is also rotted; since the area will be a closed utility closet, this window opening is proposed to be infilled.
- The existing sign at the front of the building is intended to remain. It was originally interior-illuminated. The proposed work is to provide a spot-style light on each side mounted from above to provide illumination.



Front corner elevation (Google Maps, April 2024)



Building rear along Park Street (Google Maps, April 2024)

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View from Park Street. 623 Liberty is on the left, and subject property 625 Liberty is on the right (Google Maps, April 2024)

1. A deck area photo



Air Conditioner
to be
removed
→ would like
to brick up this
window
→ moving to a
more discreet
location

Annotated image indicating extent of proposed roof deck, uncovered door opening (left), and proposed infill for window (right) (Applicant)

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1.8 - wood deck rail style



Example of proposed wood railing at roof deck. (Applicant)



1.c
Door opening
(no frame)
found - proposed
new door for rear
deck - the rotted
window fell out
during demo
which initiated
all this additional
work

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36 in. x 80 in. Right-Hand Inswing Full-Lite Low-E Glass Black Finished Fiberglass Prehung Front Door

by MP Doors >

★★★★★ (5)

- High-performance fiberglass flush glaze door for easy maintenance
- Full composite frame system, will never rot
- Lifetime warranty

Door Hanging: Right-Hand/Inswing

Right-Hand/Inswing

1. C Rear door style - will not be pre hung - we will frame full entry way re-establishing the void and put a full-view storm door.

Applicable Guidelines:

Section 3.5 – Windows

3.5.1 Retain and preserve historic windows and all associated components whenever possible, including window sash, frame, hardware, lintel, sill, trim, hood, shutters, and glazing (glass). Retain original windows in type, shape, size, operation, and material. Preserve existing glazing including stained glass as a distinctive feature of the window.

3.5.2 Keep historic wood windows in good condition by maintaining sound layers of paint at exterior and interior surfaces. Where wood has been exposed by paint failure, clean with the gentle methods possible and using lead-safe practices prior to repainting. Scrape peeling or flaking paint using hand tools down to the next sound layer of paint and ensure that the surface is clear of dirt and debris before priming and repainting.

3.5.3 Maintain operable windows, which have inherent energy-efficient advantages for air circulation. Remove paint that has sealed a window closed from the exterior and/or interior.

3.5.4 Inspect and test hardware. Ensure sash locks bring sashes together tightly to keep windows watertight.

3.5.5 Consider weatherization improvements that have minimal impact to historic fabric including sealing or recaulking around exterior and interior trim, installing weatherstripping, and installing storm windows (either exterior or interior) to improve energy efficiency.

3.5.6 Install storm windows customized to fit each window frame properly. Wood and aluminum materials are appropriate. The horizontal rails should align with window sashes. Window finishes should match the window trim or blend with the color scheme of the building. Interior storm windows may be recommended for windows with distinctive lites, artistic glazing, or irregular shapes to preserve the exterior appearance.

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

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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 nonoriginal windows, it is preferred to replace with wood windows rather than new alternate materials.

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 facade 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 facade.

3.5.11 Retain the historic pattern of window openings (fenestration pattern), especially on primary facades. Avoid inserting new windows into a facade or infilling existing windows. The position, number, and arrangement of windows defines the rhythm of a facade 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.

3.5.12 If replacing a single window on a facade, replicate the existing windows of that facade.

3.5.13 Replace single-pane glazing in-kind whenever possible. Install double-glazed windows with simulated divided lights only upon consultation with Staff/HARB. Replicate the dimensions, details, and appearance of the original window. Simulated divided light muntins should be attached to the window exterior, not sandwiched between the panes of glass.

3.5.14 Avoid reflective glazing in restored or new windows. Reflective glazing makes a window's lites and muntins difficult to see and alters the visual impact from the street. This change makes alterations in the historic district more conspicuous. Clear (non-tinted) and non-reflective glazing and low-e coatings are appropriate.

3.5.15 Replace deteriorated window trim or decorative elements only as necessary to match the size, profile, and material of the original elements. For window lintels or hoods that project from the facade plane and are vulnerable to water collection, consider installing of metal drip edges to shed water away from windows. Copper is recommended and should be left to weather naturally; aluminum is acceptable and should be painted to match surrounding materials. Avoid encasing wood sills with metal or vinyl, as this will trap moisture and may cause more damage.

Section 3.6 – Doors

3.6.5 Repair and restore historic doors whenever possible rather than replace them. Historic doors include front doors, rear doors, and grocer's alley doors. Original materials should not be discarded. If repair and reuse is not possible, salvage may be an option and the existing feature used as a template for replication.

3.6.6 Repair, restore, and reuse existing door frames, jambs, threshold, fixed transoms, and similar components. Existing components are usually historic wood. Replace in-kind if existing materials are severely deteriorated. Replicate the profile and width of door frames, jambs, and transoms in order to preserve the solid-to-void ratio of the entrance.

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3.6.7 Repair, restore, and reuse hardware whenever possible. Replace hardware in-kind if necessary. New hardware should match the original hardware as closely as possible if the original hardware remains. If not, hardware that is compatible with the era of construction and style of the building is recommended. Avoid replacing historic hardware with digital locks, combination locks, keypads, or similar technology.

3.6.8 Replace doors in-kind if repair is not feasible. Replacement doors should duplicate the original in material, design, size, profile, and operation. Original doors may be used as a template for replication. Wood is the most appropriate material for residential doors. Paneled wood doors should have the same number, size, and profile of panels as the historic door. If the original design is unknown, the building's style and date of construction should inform the appropriate replacement.

3.6.9 Replace with durable alternate materials if in-kind replacement is not feasible. Composite wood doors and fiberglass doors are acceptable replacements if new doors match the original in size, style, configuration, detail, and appearance. However, these products are not recommended from a sustainability perspective. They have shorter lifespan and deteriorate when exposed to moisture, weathering, and temperature variation. For replacement doors, avoid metal doors (including metal doors that imitate paneled wood), as they do not have the same appearance and texture of historic wood. Avoid pre-hung doors (doors that are purchased already installed in a frame) when replacing a door, because these require the removal of historic fabric and can change the size of the opening.

3.6.10 Preserve the size of the existing door opening. New doors should be custom sized if necessary. Avoid enlarging or filling in original door openings to fit new stock sizes. This alteration will impact the historic character of the building. This action will also require a Building Permit because it changes the amount of enclosed space on a façade.

3.6.11 Consider replacement of a previously altered door with a historically appropriate wood door.

3.6.12 Avoid replacing of a historic door solely for the purpose of improving thermal performance. This intervention is not appropriate for historic material. Install weatherproofing or a storm door prior to replacement.

3.6.13 Avoid creating new door openings on the primary façade. New side or rear doors should be minimally visible from the street. The size and location of new openings should be compatible with the rest of the façade. This type of work will also require a Building Permit.

Observations & Comments: 625 Liberty had been heavily altered in its commercial use and has low integrity. Its remaining integrity lies in its keeping of its overall massing; while exterior finishes and fenestration have been removed/covered, the structure retains its contextual height, width, and depth.

- **Rear Railing:** If approved, it would be preferred for the existing metal pipe railing to be removed and replaced with the wood railing; having both may be redundant. Installing a wood rail would create balance on the streetscape, as on the other side of Park Street, 623 Liberty has a rear second floor porch with wood railing. More information would be helpful to understand the proposed extent of the proposed railing – would it go the length of the deck, or the whole length of the exterior wall? It would be appropriate/preferred for the railing to extend the length of the deck.
- **Roof Deck:** The extent of the proposed deck (8' from the rear wall) is in proportion with other typical historic rear balconies and porches.
- **Proposed Door:** A full view fiberglass door in a previous doorway is appropriate per the guidelines. A full-light storm door is also appropriate.
- **Proposed Window Infill:** The second window at the rear is a replacement window in an opening that had been previously reduced from its original size. Given the extent of exterior modifications and alterations on the entire structure, infilling this window would not have a negative effect on the streetscape.
- **Sign Lighting:** It would be helpful to understand the intended light fixture. From the application description, spot lights mounted on each side of the existing sign to illuminate the sign would be generally appropriate. Light fixtures should be simple, and directed only to the sign, avoiding excessive illumination of areas outside the sign. Uplighting is not appropriate.

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Staff Recommendation: Staff recommend approval with the following conditions:

- The wood railing replaces the existing pipe railing (as allowable by code official), and extends the length of the deck.
- The second floor window infill is finished in such a way as to match the finish of the exterior wall around it.
- Sign light fixture is a simple fixture directed only at the sign, avoiding excessive illumination of areas outside the sign, and fixture information is submitted to staff for approval.

Presenters:

- Ms. Baade presented the application.
- Peter Lunes represented the application.

Discussion: Mr. Lunes provided some clarification to the application. The deck railing would only be the length of the deck, not the full length of the roof. The front sign light would provide simple illumination. The window air conditioner would be removed, and a new mini split would be out of view. Where the rear window is removed, the infill will be applied with stucco and finished to match the exterior wall around it. The full view door will allow for more light into the interior living room behind, and the wood railing is intended to be painted. Mr. Huber noted that the application as a whole seems to be in accordance with the Guidelines, and Mr. Encelewski agreed.

Actions: Ms. Westerman moved to approve the application as presented on April 7, 2025, for the rear roof and second floor modifications and sign light fixture installation at 625 Liberty Stret, following sections of the Guidelines for Historic Districts: Chapter 3, 3.5-Windows, 3.6-Doors, 3.13.27-30 Lighting Guidelines, 4.1- Additions to Existing Buildings and found no circumstances unique to the property. Mr. Encelewski seconded the motion, which carried with unanimous support and no abstentions.