

STAFF REPORT: MARCH 12, 2025 MEETING

PREPARED BY: A. DYE

APPLICATION NUMBER: HDC2025-00069

ADDRESS: 1090 VINEWOOD

HISTORIC DISTRICT: HUBBARD FARMS

APPLICANT: TIM FLINTOFF, 4545 ARCHITECTURE

PROPERTY OWNER: MARTHA POTERE & STEVEN WILTSE

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: FEBRUARY 18, 2025

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: FEBRUARY 28, 2025

SCOPE: ERECT ROOFTOP ADDITION/DORMERS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The parcel is located mid-block on the east side of Vinewood, between Porter and W. Lafayette Blvd. Erected ca. 1910, the 3-story structure sits high above the street. The dwelling is faced with solid, dark red brick on the façade and dark brown common brick on the side and rear walls. The raised basement allows for large at-grade window openings on each side of the dwelling, with undivided glass on the façade and glass block on the side and rear walls. The windows at the first and second floors are predominately one-over-one double-hung units, except for the leaded glass/fixed units within the façade’s two-story bay. Sub-divided casement or fixed units are in the third-floor window openings.

Ornamentation on this Queen Anne-style dwelling is exhibited through a steeply-pitched hip roof with front-facing cross gable that overhangs the wide two-story rounded bay, as well as a small three-sided dormer; a bay window on each side elevation; window openings with contrasting stone sills and headers; a 3-story tower with a conical roof; and a partial-width raised entry porch. The main roof is covered with asphalt shingles, while the conical roof retains slate shingles. The porch is accessed by stairs that are enclosed with two sets of masonry wing walls. The porch’s flat roof is supported by columns with ionic capitals.



Top: Google street view, showing the height differential between the street, sidewalk, and houses.

Above: Detroit Parcel Viewer.

Left: Façade. Staff photo, February 2025.

PROPOSAL

Remove chimney at rear

Erect two gable roofed dormers: one at north/side (★) and one at east/rear (▲)

Materials --

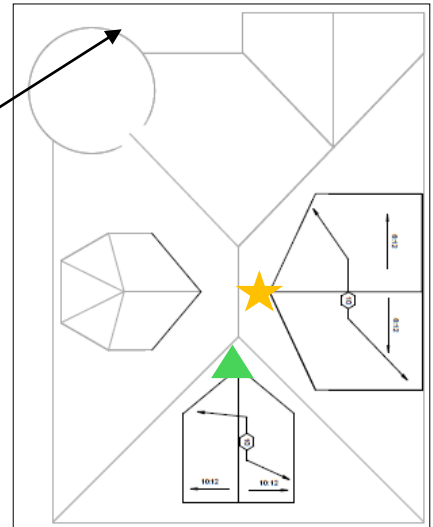
Roof: Asphalt shingles, color: black

Walls: Composite lap siding, smooth finish, color: grey

Windows: Aluminum-clad single-hung units, color: black



Front of house
- facing
Vinewood



STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Hubbard Farms Historic District was enacted on January 29, 1993.
- According to the Hubbard Farms Final Report:
 - In the early 1800’s, the Alexis Campau Farm had extended from the east side of Vinewood – where this property is located – to 25th Street.
 - Bela Hubbard purchased a portion of this farm and erected his dwelling by 1856. When completed, the 18-acre lot included the house, a pond, a garden, an orchard, curving drives and walk. He and his wife named the estate “Vinewood”. Vinewood Avenue was named after the estate when the street was laid.
 - This area was then Springwells Township and was incorporated into the City of Detroit in 1885.
 - Bela Hubbard was involved in the creation of the boulevard that circled the city. At his own expense, he built a road at the east edge of his property that traveled north from Fort Street. He deeded the street to the city in 1887; it became West Grand Boulevard.
 - Hubbard died in his home on June 13, 1896.

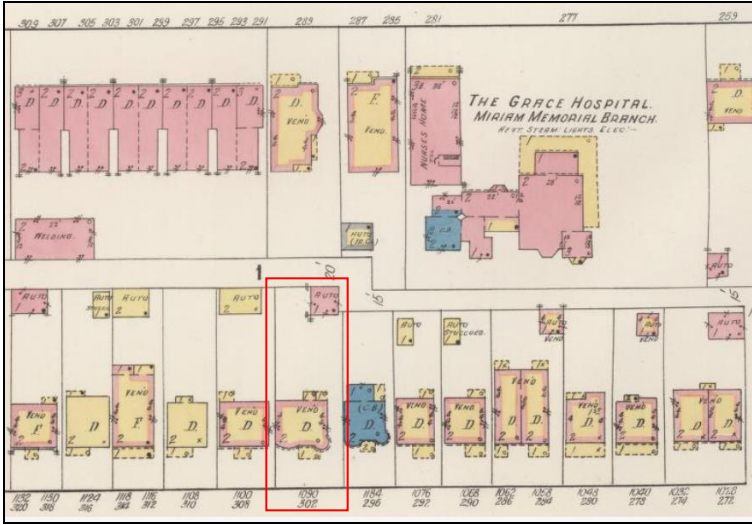


Above: The facade of Hubbard’s house faced south towards W. Lafayette Avenue.

Right: 1897 Sanborn Map, Vol. 1.



- In 1906, the Hubbard property was sold for the establishment of a medical institution. The house was adapted and expanded, and the additional land not used for the hospital was subdivided for housing.



Above Right: March 25, 1906 edition of the Detroit Free Press.
 Above: 1921 Sanborn Map, Vol. 1. 1090 Vinewood is identified.

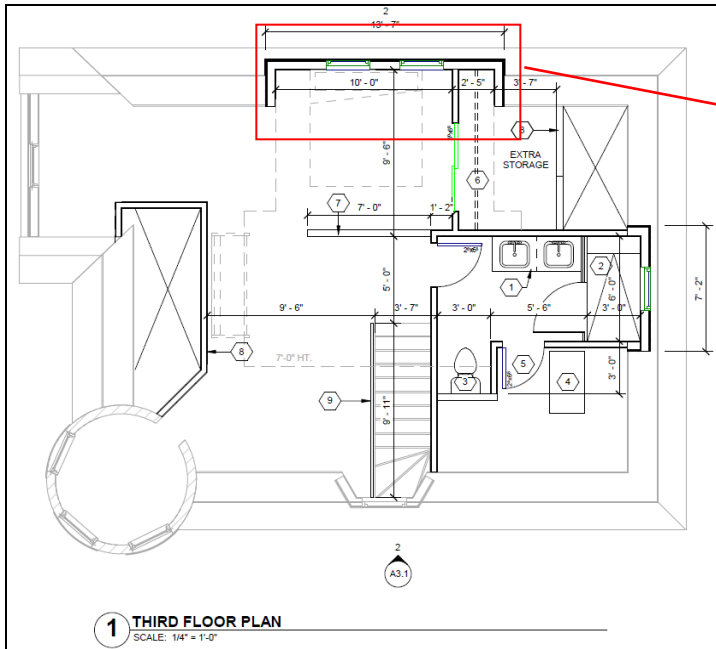
OLD MANSION IS SOLD FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES

BELA HUBBARD HOMESTEAD.

The Bela Hubbard homestead, located at Vinewood avenue, the Western boulevard and Lafayette boulevard, at one time one of the finest buildings in Detroit and once valued at upwards of \$60,000, has been sold to Frank A. Reed for \$35,000. The grounds have a frontage of 404 feet on the boulevard, the same on Vinewood avenue and 327 feet on Lafayette. The building will be refitted and used as an institution of learning for the Reed School for Stammerers. The building now occupied by the school will be used as a dormitory. The sale of the Hubbard homestead was made through Bryant Walker.



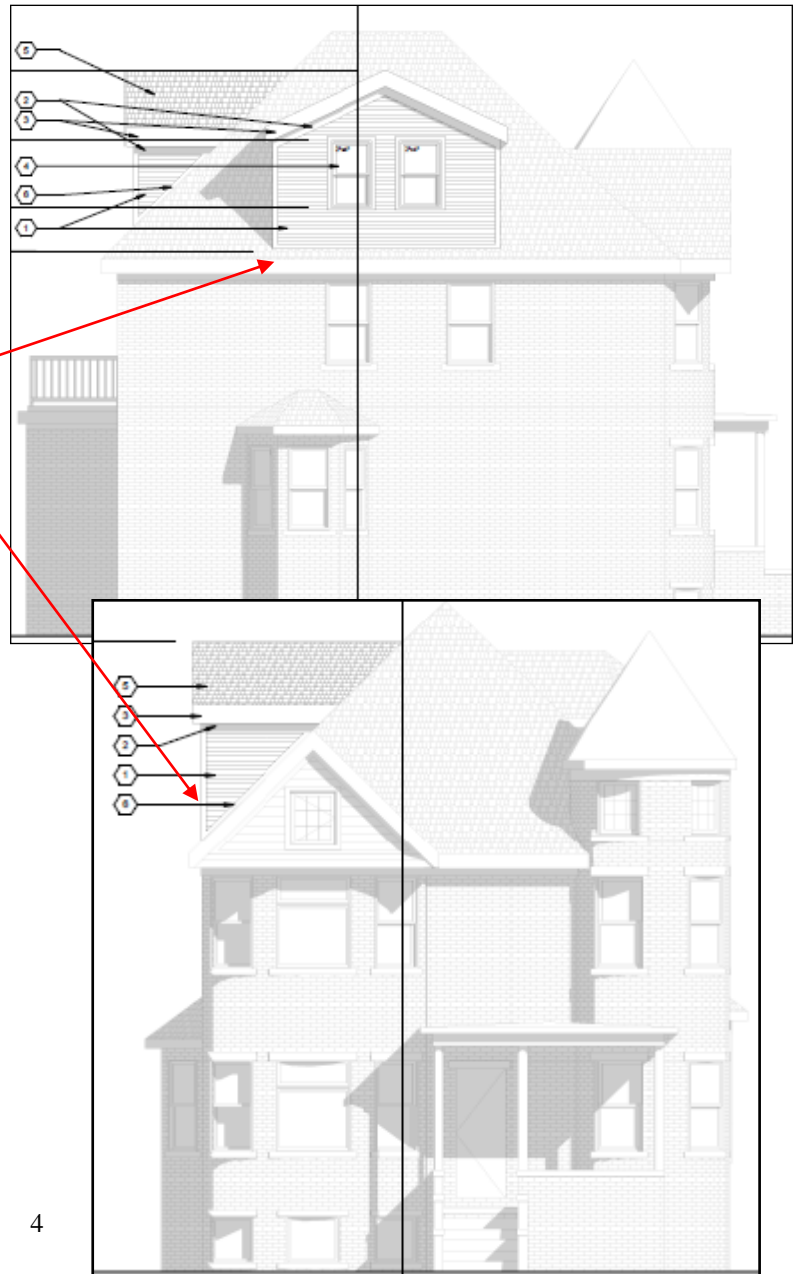
This view on Vinewood, looking directly east, documents the proximity of the adjacent house to the north. Staff photo, February 28, 2025.
 This photo was taken at the sidewalk, which is approximately three feet higher than the roadway. The lawns on this side of the street also rise from the sidewalk, the raised basement at 1090 Vinewood further increases the distance of the roof from the sidewalk, which will help obscure the proposed dormer from the street.



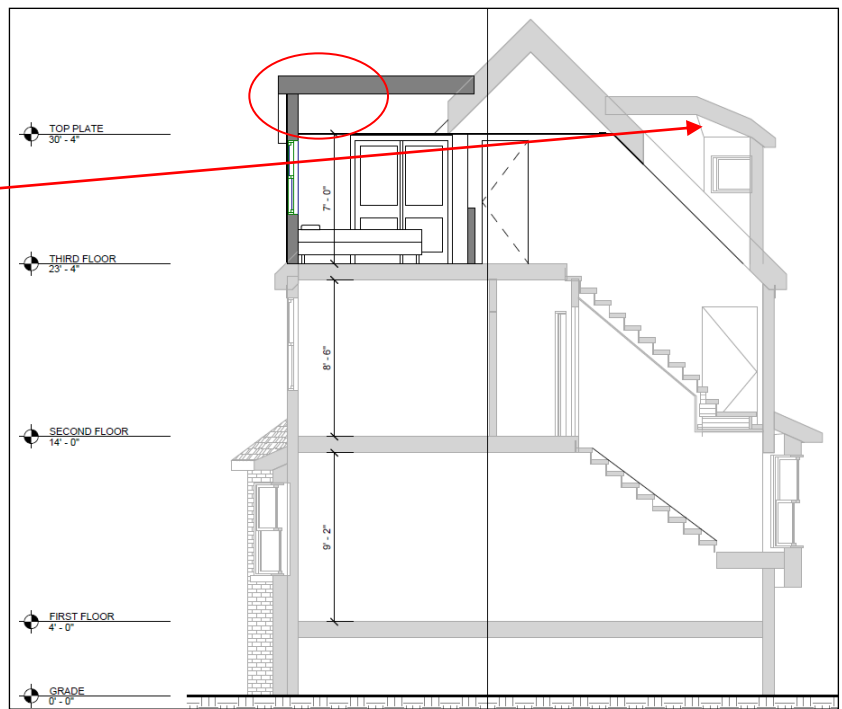
Above - Applicant drawing- floor plan.

Above right: Staff photo looking southeast from the sidewalk. February 2025. This vantage point offers greater visibility of the proposed north dormer.

- Staff finds some of the design features proposed for the north dormer to be incompatible with the house, specifically related to its placement, roof style and window openings -- the dormer should be a secondary feature against the historic dwelling's massing.
- The north elevation drawing shows the front wall of the dormer set in slightly from the roof's edge, but the façade's elevation drawing shows this minimal setback aligns the dormer wall with the house's north wall, making it look as if the dormer is a physical extension of the house.
 - Further recessing the dormer's primary wall will allow the new construction to clearly read as a dormer, rather than as an extension of the house.
- The two separate window openings should be combined into a single mullied unit, which is a common design feature for window openings on a historic building when there are multiple windows within a small wall surface. A factory-mullied double-window would be a contemporary, compatible option.

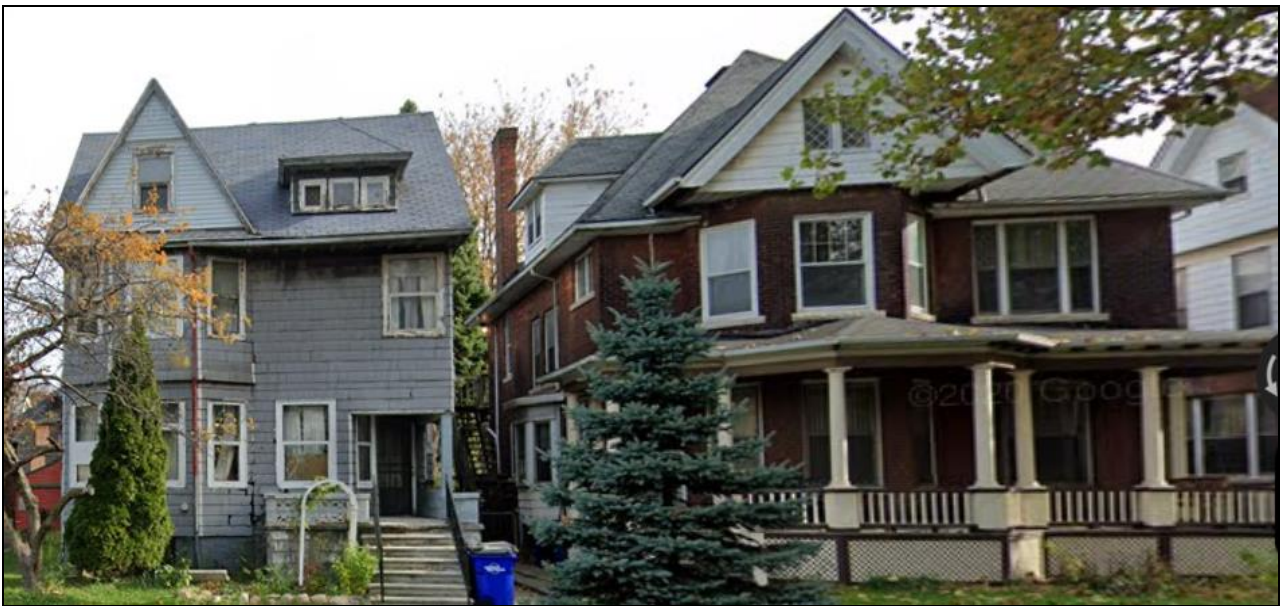


- Using a hip roof (rather than the suggested gable) would echo the angular profile of the house's hip roof and match the profile of the southern roof line of the historic dormer. This would reduce the visual impact of the dormer while allowing the applicant to retain the majority of the requested interior vertical space.



Applicant drawing. Building section, looking through the dwelling from westeast (front to rear). The north wall is at the left side of the drawing; the dark thick lines

- Staff conducted a visual survey of this block of Vinewood (via Google streetview) and noted the preponderance of hip roof dormers of varying sizes at front and side elevations of the neighboring houses. The photos below offer evidence of the visual effect and reduced massing created by hip roof dormers. Additionally, the windows within the front and side dormer at 1162 Vinewood are mullioned units.



1166 Vinewood – façade dormer

1162 Vinewood – north/side dormer



1135 Vinewood

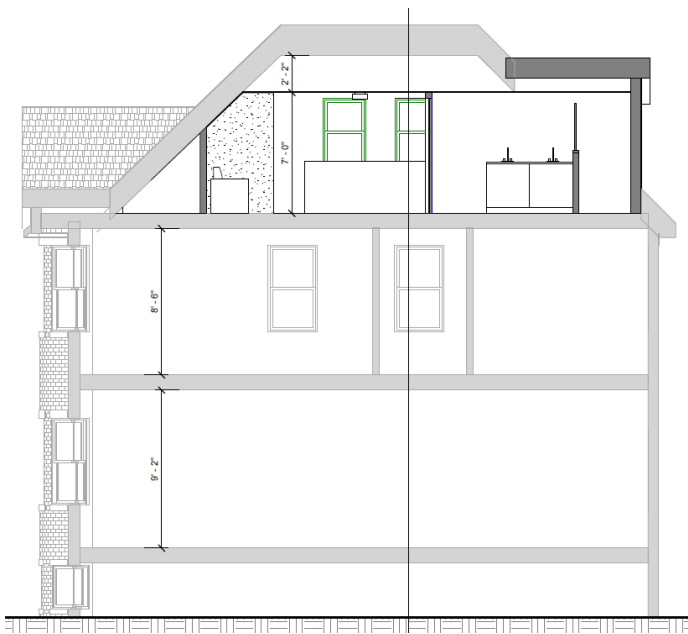
1145 Vinewood

Above: Streetview shows similarly placed north/side dormers within hip roofs.

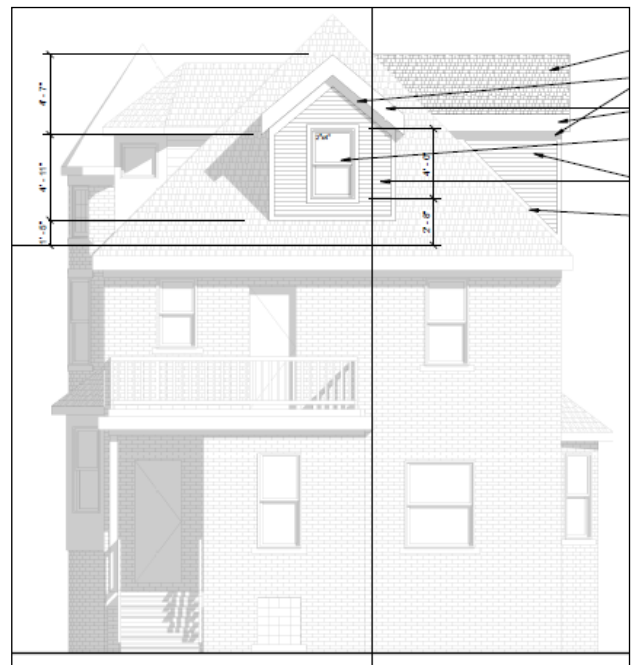
Right: Aerial view of the above houses (including 1151 Vinewood at bottom of photo), showing the large number of hip roof dormers used on these three houses.



- Staff does not have similar concerns with the placement and roof design for the rear/east elevation dormer. The recessed location of the dormer aligns with staff's previous recommendations for appropriate design and placement of dormers, and the gable roof with matching pitch of the historic hip roof doesn't compete against, but rather mimics, the existing roof shape and building massing at this rear location.



Applicant drawing -- Building section, looking through the dwelling from south to north. The east/rear wall is at the right side of the drawing; the dark thick lines illustrate the proposed roof and wall placement for the rear dormer.



Applicant drawing – Rear elevation. The placement of the dormer is proportional to the surface area of the roof. The dominant view of this dormer will be from the rear, therefore the primary profile of the dormer's gable roof matches that of the hip roof (in contrast to the dominant side view of the north dormer).

- Staff has concerns with the proposed wall material and operation of the windows.
 - The use of cementitious siding on the body of a historic house is not compatible with the dwelling’s historic and architectural character in terms of durability, quality and visual appearance. Wood clapboard siding is readily available and should be used in these highly visible locations.
 - The scope of work lists single-hung windows will be installed within the dormers, but the submitted product information is for Anderson E-series double-hung windows . The scope of work should be clarified to require double-hung units. Single-hung windows are not a compatible design for historic houses as the upper sash is fabricated as part of the window frame. While the windows within these two dormers may not be highly visible (in comparison to the visibility of the dormers themselves), they will be components of the overall window system on the house and should match the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period of this house.
- The Hubbard Farms Elements of Design that directly relate to this application, and should be considered when reviewing the proposed design and materials, are:
 - 3) *Proportion of openings within the façade.* Proportion varies according to building type, age, and style. Generally, window openings in the district are predominantly taller than wide; several windows are frequently grouped into combinations wider than tall...
 - 4) *Rhythm of solids to voids in front façades.* Window openings are usually regularly arranged by floor, although there is most often variety between floor levels. In the Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque style buildings, openings are often irregularly arranged...Many of the residential buildings have dormers or gables that are fenestrated.
 - 7) *Relationship of materials.* Brick and wood are the primary building materials originally used. Brick buildings may have pressed brick front façades with common brick sides and rears. Many wood frame buildings are clad in clapboard.
 - 8) *Relationship of textures.* A variety of rich textural relationships exist in the district—those created by the juxtaposition of various materials, such as brick, stone, stucco, and/or wood, and those created by the repetition of the materials themselves, such as clapboard, wood fish scale shingles or decorative brick.
 - 10) *Relationship of architectural details.* Architectural details generally relate to style. Colonial Revival buildings display classical details, often in wood. Porches are commonly treated and usually have columns of a classical order. Buildings of Victorian substyles also tend to have details of wood located around the entrance, porch, windows, bays, towers, and dormers.
 - 11) *Relationship of roof shapes.* Most every roof type is represented in the district, from flat roofs on terrace buildings and commercial buildings to hipped, pitched, and gambrel roofs on single-family residences. Roof shapes are generally related to style. Bungalows, Arts and Crafts influenced, and Prairie-style houses have shallow roofs; Queen Anne and other Victorian substyles exhibit greater heights, intersecting planes, and steep slopes.

ISSUES

- The placement and design of the north dormer should create a secondary element to the massing, roof design and components of the historic dwelling.
 - The front plane of the dormer should be setback so that it appears to be its own design component and not an extension of the historic house.
 - The dominant roof design for dormers on this block of Vinewood is a hip roof. Using a hip roof (rather than the suggested gable) would mimic the profile of the southern front-facing roof line and reduce the visual impact of the dormer while allowing the applicant to retain the majority of the desired interior space.
 - Two closely placed single window openings divided by wall area is not a common feature on early 20th century houses, and should be modified to a single mullied, double-window opening.
- Regarding the proposed wall materials and operation of the windows:
 - The use of cementitious siding on the body of a historic house is not compatible with the dwelling’s historic and architectural character in terms of durability, quality and visual appearance. Wood clapboard siding is readily available and should be used in these highly visible locations.
 - The scope of work lists single-hung windows will be installed within the dormers, but the submitted product information is for Anderson E-series double-hung windows. The scope of work should be clarified to require double-hung units. Single-hung windows are not a compatible design for historic houses as the upper sash is fabricated as part of the window frame. While the windows within these two dormers may not

be highly visible (in comparison to the visibility of the dormers themselves), they will be components of the overall window system on the house and should match the general characteristics of a historic window of the type and period of this house.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Section 21-2-78, Determinations of Historic District Commission

Recommendation 1 of 1, Certificate of Appropriateness

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Hubbard Farms Historic District's Elements of Design, with the condition that:

- The north dormer will be recessed a minimum of an additional 12-inches from the wall of the historic house, and the roof design for the north dormer will be changed from gable to hip.
- Aluminum-clad wood double-hung, one-over-one windows will be selected, and the window openings will be modified to become a centrally placed and factory mulled, two window opening.
- Wood lap siding will be used on the walls of both dormers. Dimensions confirming the exposure and siding profile will be submitted for staff review.
- The scope of work, drawings and cut-sheets will be revised and submitted to staff for review.