

**NEW HAVEN HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**Wednesday, August 12, 2020, Regular Meeting, 7:00 PM Location: Web-based meeting  
via Zoom**

**Commissioner Trina Learned calls to order the public hearing at 7:06 PM.**

**In attendance:** Aicha Wood (City Plan), Maya Vardi (City Plan), Trina Learned (Commissioner and Chair), Tom Kimberly (Commissioner and Clerk), Susan Godshall (Commissioner), Doug Royalty (Commissioner), Karen Jenkins (Commissioner)

**New Public Hearing**

1. 20-08-CA Owner: Gena Ruocco Lockery. Seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for Garage Renovation at 86 Chestnut St., Including Refurbish Windows and Installation of New Windows, Doors, and an Installation of a Fence and a Gate, at the adjacent lot at 82 Chestnut Street, Wooster Square Local Historic District.

**Gena Lockery, 520 Chapel Street, New Haven**

Ms. Lockery says she resides at 520 Chapel for 17 years and purchased the properties at 82-86 Chestnut St. 3 years ago. The garage at 86 Chestnut St. was neglected with boarded-up windows. Ms. Lockery says she had been cleaning the building and the adjacent lot, which she wants to turn into a garden and patio area. Ms. Lockery notes that she worked with the Historic District Commission 17 years ago when purchasing 520 Chapel St. Ms. Lockery says that she painted the doors of the garage (86 Chestnut St.) but did not replace them.

Ms. Lockery says that as the first phase of the project, she would like to install the fence, 29 feet by 4 feet opening, at 82 Chestnut St., along the sidewalk. The fence will consist of a 4-foot gate and four fence panels 5 feet 6 inches tall and 8 feet wide; the material is galvanized steel with powder-coated black paint. Spindles are 5 inches apart and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch thick.

Ms. Lockery says that phase two would be 86 Chestnut St. The window of the garage façade is broken, has plexiglass over it, and the wood is disintegrating. She proposes to replace it with the same sized window that exists; the material would be wood with aluminum clad, painted black.

Ms. Lockery says she is not proposing any work on the rear of the garage.

On the right side of the garage, Ms. Lockery would like to refurbish two existing windows that were boarded up. One of the windows is in the neighbors' back yard and is only visible to them. Ms. Lockery proposes to install in existing openings in her back yard, a window, and a door to access the garage from the back yard. The window would be wood with black aluminum clad, matching the windows on 520 Chapel St.

Ms. Lockery says that on the left side of the garage, four windows openings were filled with cinder blocks, the opening dimensions are 34 inches by 65 inches.

Ms. Lockery proposes to install on the first opening double-hung wooden window, the same size, with an aluminum-clad painted frame. In the second opening, she asks to install one door 62 by 82, full-length glass, steel frame, painted black. In the 3rd and 4th openings from the street, she proposes two full-length glass doors 36 inches by 80 inches, steel frame painted black.

Ms. Lockery presents pictures of 82 Chestnut St. vacant lot and specs of the gate and fence she wishes to install. Ms. Lockery notes that the gate is similar to an existing one on a neighboring property. Next, she presents pictures of the right side of the building, where she proposes to refurbish two windows and install one new window and one new door in two openings where there are no windows currently. Ms. Lockery moves on to present pictures of the rear of the garage where no work would be done and the garage's left wall where she would like to install new doors and a new window. This proposal is reflected in the diagrams that Ms. Lockery presents, showing the garage's right and left side. She also offers specs and product information for the windows and doors that she proposes to install.

Commissioner Learned notes that the Commission appreciates the work Ms. Lockery put into her presentation. Commissioner Learned asks about the scope of work on 82 Chestnut St., Ms. Lockery says that she is only asking for approval of the installation of the fence and the gate.

Commissioner Learned inquires if the only modification for the garage's façade (facing Chestnut St.) is a replacement in kind of the damaged window, with a new one in the same dimensions. Ms. Lockery confirms.

Commissioner Learned asks about the windows' size on the garage facade facing Ms. Lockery and her neighbors' back yard (right side). Ms. Lockery clarifies that the two openings on her back yard are 34 by 34, and the two windows on 518 Chapel are 34 by 62; both would be repaired in kind. Commissioner Learned says that the Commission does not have jurisdiction over repairs in kind.

Commissioner Learned asks about the two windows in the 520 Chapel back yard, referring to page 24 in the application, showing 36 inches by 30 inches, Ms. Lockery clarifies that she will put a costume window that is the dimensions of the current opening.

Commissioner Learned asks if Ms. Lockery has pictures of the openings that were filled with cinder blocks. Ms. Lockery presents a picture of the left wall. Commissioner Learned says she cannot distinguish one material from the other based on the photograph showed.

Commissioner Learned says she doesn't have a clear sense of how the doors would be installed-how openings will be cut, how the headers will be supported above the doors, how the doors would be framed in. Ms. Lockery notes that the new doors will have a steel lintel going across the top, framed in wood.

Commissioner Learned notes that this kind of work might require a structural engineer due to the openings' size.

Commissioner Learned notes that she is not sure that the Commission has enough information to understand what method the applicant intends to use and what the end product would look like, particularly in the door where the applicant proposes altering the size of the opening.

Commissioner Godshall notes that the openings on the right side have a brick archway and that there is no clear picture of the openings on the left side of the garage and asks if the openings there also have brickwork.

Ms. Lockery replies she does not have a picture of the left side openings but says that they do not have a brick archway and that they are perfect squares. Ms. Lockery says that the openings on the two sides of the garage do not match because 82 Chestnut St. was a building in the past.

Ms. Lockery presents a different picture of the left side of the garage. Commissioner Godshall determines that there are brick archways on the first and second openings and asks if the applicant is considering the decorative brick. Ms. Lockery states that she will not change the arch.

Commissioner Learned notes that the second arch is where the applicant intends to install a double door, thus it will have to be altered.

Ms. Lockery says that the door will be installed under the arch, and the arch will remain in the brick.

Commissioner Godshall notes that the arch would be only above one side of the door.

Commissioner Learned says that having a double door under a single arch creates a disparity and can be difficult from a structural perspective. Ms. Lockery says that they will install a steel lintel underneath the arch and preserve the arch in the brick.

Commissioner Godshall asks that the Building Department will be able to verify what the Commission has approved and suggests adding a drawing, as the steel lintel will look different than the wood infill.

Ms. Lockery says that the steel lintel will be installed under the last brick on the right that is vertical to the last brick on the left that is vertical. The gap would be filled with concrete.

Commissioner Learned says she is concerned about negating the arch by putting a horizontal lintel underneath it and extending it to make a double door.

Commissioner Godshall suggests that the applicant will consider installing a single door under the arch.

Commissioner Learned notes that concrete infill reacts to temperature changes differently than old masonry and mortar, and using concrete infill may result in unintended damage.

Ms. Lockery asks that the first phase- fence and gate on 82 Chestnut St. would be approved immediately and that she will continue working on the doors and window on the building's left side.

Commissioner Godshall notes that the presentation was thorough and asks about the window on the right side of the garage bisected by the fence. Ms. Lockery clarifies she would repair it and that the neighbor gave her his blessing to repair the window facing his back yard.

Commissioner Royalty says that there is a level of detail associated with the doors and arches that require drawings for the Commission to discuss it and echoes the concerns regarding the double door under the singel arch.

Commissioner Godshall suggests moving the double door to one of the openings that do not have a decorative arch above it.

Commissioner Godshall highlights that any location for a double door will require cutting into the brickwork and asks for additional information about it.

Ms. Lockery says that she will keep the brick exposed, after the concrete blocks will be removed, the bricks will be cut evenly, neatly, with no rough edges.

Commissioners Kimberly asks how the door will fit into the space after the bricks are cut. Once the bricks are cut in half, they look different from the ones that were not cut.

Ms. Lockery says that they will make a wooden frame painted black, similar to the garage's front door.

Commissioners Kimberly asks for details regarding the flashing of the new doors. Ms. Lockery says that the doors would be flushed with the outside of the wall.

Commissioner Godshall says it would be useful for the Building Department to have documentation to check the finished product against. Commissioner Godshall suggests a frame covering a portion of the bricks to give the rough edge some cover.

Ms. Lockery refers to the front door of the garage as an example of the proposed work. Commissioner Learned notes that the door is in stone and not bricks, bricks have fired surfaces, cutting a brick exposes non-fired surfaces.

Commissioner Godshall notes that the front door is not flashed.

Commissioner Learned says that the front door could not be used as a like for like comparison because the materials are different.

Commissioner Royalty asks if the fence will be identical to the fence on the façade of 520 Chapel St. Ms. Lockery replies that the fence on 82 Chestnut St. will be taller and will not mimic the one on 520 Chapel St. because the model is not available anymore, it is the same material and color. The gate will be placed closest to the garage, not attached to it, using a post next to the garage.

Commissioner Learned inquires about the style of the fence was chosen. Ms. Lockery replies that they chose it for its industrial look and that it exists in the house at Olive and Grand. Commissioner Learned notes that Olive and Grand is outside the Local Historic District.

Commissioners Kimberly asks if the gate is higher than the fence. Ms. Lockery replies that it is not.

Commissioner Learned opens the discussion to public comment.

**Elizabeth Holt, New Haven Preservation Trust, 922 State Street, New Haven**

Ms. Holt says she worked with Ms. Lockery and will be happy to continue working with the applicant on some improvements in the doorways' plans. Ms. Holt expresses her hope that the Commission will approve the fence and the gate and supports the style that the applicant picked.

Commissioner Learned closes public comment.

Commissioners Kimberly notes that the windows facing 520 Chapel's back yard and a proposed door are not visible from a public way and do not need to be part of the application.

Commissioner Royalty agrees. Ms. Lockery said she included it to get a permit, she paid for a permit, but the city did not issue it because she did not have a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Commissioner Godshall says that even if the applicant needs a single permit for this job, the three windows do not require the HDC approval.

Commissioner Learned says that one option would be to ask for more information and continue the discussion next month and approve the application in its entirety. The second option is to separate the application into a few scopes.

Commissioner Godshall refers a question to Ms. Woods about the possibility to divide the application into two applications: the fence and the gate as application A and the work on the left side as application B and approve application A for the fence.

Ms. Woods says that it is possible, and that city staff could work with the Building Dept. and the applicant on the permits.

The Commission discusses the scope of the application and whether to split it into two applications.

Commissioners Kimberly suggests voting regarding the fence, gate, and window on the garage's façade. The other windows are considered as a replacement in kind and ask the applicant to come back for everything else.

Commissioner Learned sums the three parts of the application: A. the fence and gate on 82 Chestnut, B. front façade window replacement, and the façade window repair and replacement that faces the back yards, C. the work proposed on the façade that is facing 82 Chestnut St.

Commissioner Godshall moves to approve two components of the application: The fence and gate across 82 Chestnut St, replacement of the façade window in 86 Chestnut St. and the repair in kind of windows on the north side of 86 Chestnut St. The Commission will continue next month or in a future date the approval of the remainder of the application.

Commissioner Kimberly seconds.

**All in favor, 8:04 PM.**

Commissioner Knight joins the meeting.

## **Discussion**

### 2. 190-198 River St.- Damage due to Tropical Storm

Ms. Woods notes that this property has been discussed a few times previously with the Commission. City staff has been working during the last year on grants from SHPO for adaptive reuse and feasibility studies, and last April, the city commissioned a structure analysis.

Ms. Woods says that the storm damaged the building, some of the roofs have collapsed, some portions of the wall have collapsed, and roofing materials blew off- a safety concern for the surrounding area. The city is in discussion with state partners and FEMA. A site visit was scheduled for 08-13-2020 to explore any opportunity for emergency stabilization.

Ms. Woods notes that there are safety issues that could override preservation efforts. Ms. Woods says that if some portions of the building will have to be demolished, she hopes that the city staff could suggest a plan to stabilize the façade.

Commissioner Godshall notes that the New Haven Preservation Trust will send a letter to request that the city protect the public by weatherproof the building and serve as an educational tool to provide some background on the River St. Historic District.

Ms. Woods explains that demolition of the building will result in the loss of the district's listing and, thus loss of redevelopment benefits like historic tax credits.

Commissioner Godshall says that the Bigelow Boiler was the leading enterprise in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Commissioner Jenkins inquiries about the costs of studies and stabilization, as compared to the benefits.

Ms. Woods notes that the investment is small compared to the amount of federal funding that will be available for all property owners in the district if the listing will be maintained.

### 3. Vibrant Communities Initiative Grant- Strong School Revitalization

Ms. Woods says City Plan is in a facilitation role and has been collaborating with a group of residents from Fair Haven on a grant proposal for Preservation CT for a plan for adaptive reuse for the Strong School that has been vacant several years.

Mr. Cruz reviews the historical background of the Strong School Building at 69 Grand Ave. Mr. Cruz says that 2012 was the last time it was used, two years later, the city requested proposals for the building that was responded by three groups, but due to a funding gap, this effort did not come to fruition. The community organized and started advocating for the building's reuse as a performing art space. The community submitted two different proposals that the city found unfeasible financially. The building is at risk; it was broken into numerous times. In March, the building caught fire, and a community mural that was painted on the boarded-up openings on the façade was damaged.

Mr. Cruz says that the community appreciates the building's beauty and historical value and wants to see it restored. This funding opportunity could help the city hire a consultant to build off the community planning process that defined priorities and criteria and identify feasible reuse possibilities.

Commissioner Learned asks if there is an action item for the Commission.

Ms. Woods asks the Commissions to support the grant proposal with a letter. Ms. Woods notes that the building is bordering the Quinnipiac River Local Historic District and that this is a new grant by Preservation CT that focuses on the building as a catalyst for urban renewal.

The Commission asks to see the grant proposal before deciding about their support.

Mr. Cruz says that he seeks the Commission's support to have documentation that the community has reached out to the Commission in the early stages of the project and that any developer in the future should do the same and restore the building with respect to its historical context.

Commissioner Learned concludes that she will update the Commissioners via email regarding the next steps.

4. 90-Day Demolition Delay (Extended to 180 days total- Governors Executive Order 7I)
  - 783 Orchard St.- Expiration date: September 1, 2020

Ms. Woods says that this property is part of an affordable housing project in the Dixwell neighborhood. The developers are negotiating with SHPO, and it is going through a Section 106 process. If the building is demolished, the developers will have to propose a mitigation plan.

Commissioner Godshall inquires about the mitigation strategy.

Ms. Woods replies that there was a proposal to fund a cultural history project, but this is a work in progress. The city is an observer at this point.

- 143 River St.- Expiration date: December 13, 2020

The owner, New Haven Awnings, is proposing to demolish the front part of the building that is facing River St. to expand their work area. This property is part of the Historic District. The city does not have site control, and the owner is not getting any federal funding. Thus, Section 106 is not applicable. The city is in discussion with the owner to encourage consideration of alternatives and is working closely with SHPO.

Commissioner Royalty inquires about responses from the owners to the condition assessment report, noting it was heartening.

Ms. Woods replies that the city staff has not heard from the owner yet.

#### 5. Pinto House Relocation- The SHPO Review Board decision

Commissioner Godshall says that SHPO Review Board was held on June 12. They approved the application subject to additional documentation about archeology and geology aspects of the relocation. The consultants submitted the documents, which SHPO found adequate, and sent it to the National Park Service. After a 45-day waiting period, NPS will render a decision.

#### 6. SHPO Grants

Ms. Woods says this is an informational item. City staff has submitted two SHPO grant proposals that would be reviewed in SHPO's September meeting. Staff may have to revise the ask based on the developments with 198 River Street. The grants are for a stabilization plan and a more comprehensive plan for adaptive reuse in the historic district.

### **New Business**

#### 7. Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes- 05/13/2020

Commissioner Godshall asks for updates regarding the 576 Chapel application that was discussed in the May meeting.

Ms. Vardi updates that the owner is currently unable to access the building due to COVID-19 related restrictions, and will contact staff when he is ready to move forward with his project.

Commissioner Godshall moves to approve the minutes.



Commissioner Kimberley seconds.

**All in favor 8:45 PM**

8. 601 Chapel St.

Commissioner Royalty asks to add a New Business item – 601 Chapel St.

It is an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century building; the Commission has received a presentation about this property over a year ago. The Commission approved the removal of siding and some other elements. These elements have been removed, and since the building is in a neglected state. Commissioner Royalty says that the Commission approved the plan as it was presented as the first phase.

Commissioner Royalty notes that on the other side of the property, there is another historic building. The owners received permits and are working on the building. Commissioner Royalty asks why the owners got permits for the work on one building while not doing the basic mothballing required to prevent further deterioration on 601 Chapel St.

Ms. Woods replies that she assumes that the current permitted work does not include any major exterior alterations, but the city staff did not receive any updates about this property.

Commissioner Royalty says that he is more concerned about the condition of 601 Chapel St., as it is deteriorating. Its current state was not in the Commission's intent when they approved the removal of the siding.

Ms. Woods confirms that the city staff will check on this property's status and report back to the Commission.

Commissioner Kimberly inquires about the new condominium on Sea St. that is part of the Sea Street Condos and notes that part of that property is in City Point Local Historic District and that the owners did not apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Commissioner Jenkins inquires about the building at 342 Greene St. and notes that the owner appeared before the Commission twice and did not come back. Commissioner Jenkins says that the building is in bad shape and asks to know his application status and whether the city staff reached out to the owner.

Commissioner Learned notes that the pandemic may cause delays and financial hardships and suggests that the Commission will discuss to what extent city staff has a bearing on the work of the Commission. Commissioner Learned asks city staff to inform the Commission about the three properties that the Commissioners flagged.

Ms. Woods confirms that the city staff will report about the properties at the next meeting.

Commissioner Jenkins asks to know why the property owner at 342 Greene did not come back after appearing before the Commission three times, before the COVID shutdown.

Ms. Woods replies that the applicant was the contract working on the job and assumes that the owner made a financial decision.

Commissioner Jenkins moves to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Kimberly seconds.

**All in favor 9:02 PM**

Respectfully submitted by Maya Vardi, staff to the Historic District Commission.