

NEW HAVEN HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION AGENDA
Wednesday, February 10, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 PM
Location: Web-based meeting via Zoom

Commissioner Trina Learned calls to order the public hearing at 7:00 PM.

In attendance: Aicha Woods (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), George Knight (Commissioner)

Commissioner Learned reviews New Haven's Zoom meeting HDC policies and procedures and the point of New Haven's Local Historic Districts and the Historic District Commission.

Continued Public Hearing

1. 20-12-CA Owner: John R. Logan. Seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for Removal of A Door, A Window, and A Staircase and Installation of A New Window and Railing on the building façade. At the Rear, Construction of a Deck on top of Existing Flat Roof, Reopening of Existing Window and Installation of New Doors and Railing at 69 East Pearl Street., Quinnipiac River Local Historic District.

John R. Logan, 69 East Pearl Street, New Haven

Mr. Logan presents additional documents addressing specific questions raised by the Commissioners at the last meeting. Mr. Logan says that following the Commissioners' suggestions, he redesigned the railing of the second floor to be aligned with the side of the house and set back to be in line with the front of the house. Mr. Logan reviews the details of the custom-fabricated double arched window and notes that it would be casement (opening from the center) to create an opening that meets Building Code. Mr. Logan presents the proposed dimensions of the cornice returns based on surveying other properties in the neighborhood. For the second floor deck at the rear, four French-style sliding doors are proposed. Mr. Logan notes that due to elevation differences, the railing on the deck will block the view of the doors from the street almost completely. Mr. Logan also proposes a new horizontal sliding window to be installed over the kitchen sink.

Commissioner Learned says that the dimensions of the kitchen window might be out of proportion. Regarding the deck railing at the rear façade, Commissioner Learned refers to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties and notes that owners should avoid falsifying historic features that never existed. The rear facade is a new addition and a more modern looking railing might be a better fit.

Commissioner Kimberly asks if the dimensions of the cornice returns would be of the same size for both front and rear facades.

Mr. Logan confirms that all the cornice extensions would be the same size.

Commissioner Godshall asks if Mr. Logan considered other options for the kitchen window.

Commissioner Learned suggests a pair of smaller square awning style windows with four panes as a more appropriate solution.

Commissioner Learned and Commissioner Godshall ask for more information on the material of the window. Mr. Logan has no further information.

Commissioner Royalty recommends a wood window for the kitchen and says that a more contemporary railing could be a good option for the railing on the back.

Mr. Logan agrees to reconsider the railing design.

Commissioner Jenkins asks why carrying the same design from the front to the rear façade is inappropriate.

Commissioners discuss the principles of the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties.

Commissioner Learned opens the discussion to public comment.

Elizabeth Holt, New Haven Preservation Trust, 922 State Street, says she worked with the applicant and urges the Commission to approve the application and that she will help Mr. Logan find a better solution for the kitchen window and the railing.

Commissioner Learned closes public comment.

Commissioner Knight recommends consideration of a casement window for the kitchen window, as opposed to the sliding window and for the deck at the rear, an out-swinging pair of French doors with two flanking windows that would be the same size glass panes.

Commissioner Kimberly moves to approve the application as submitted with the exception of the kitchen window and the railings of the second-floor deck on the rear façade that would be approved by an executive decision by City Staff with the consultation of Ms. Holt.

Commissioner Godshall seconds.

All in favor 7:45 PM.

Discussion

2. Section 106

- 672 Congress Ave.

There are presently 12 antennas on the building. The project includes the replacement of 9 antennas and the addition of an antenna. The end result will be 13 antennas. The additional antenna will be within an existing antenna mount, so the overall view change is minimal.

- 1450 Chapel
They are removing 8 antennas, mounting 8 new antennas to the smokestack and relocating four pieces of equipment on the rooftop.

Commissioner Learned notes that she is not opposed to having installations on existing smokestacks.

3. Training topics

Ms. Woods says that City Staff has been working on a General training that will cover topics like Freedom of Information Act and ethics. There is also an intention to have more specific training relevant to the Historic District Commission. Ms. Woods asks Commissioners for feedback on training topics.

Commissioners discuss training and orientation for new members and suggest the following training topics: Historic windows, the architectural vocabulary of each of the three Local Historic Districts.

Commissioner Learned also suggests reviewing the Historic District Commission's design guidelines and potentially revising or rearticulating them.

Commissioner Jenkins says that she got insufficient training and that more robust orientation is needed, especially for new members without expertise in the field.

Commissioner Learned notes that members who did not have technical expertise but live in each of the districts took on an important role of advocacy for their district.

Commissioners agree that they could benefit from a training session.

4. Enforcement Follow Up

- 19 River Street

Ms. Vardi says that the property manager provided some pictures of the Gatehouse. In December 2020, they had all of the roof surfaces tarped and secured, and Mr. Leahy reported that no water or snow is getting into the building. They are hoping to have a scope of work for repairs later this year.

Commissioner Godshall asks if there is a way to make the owner repair the roof.

Mr. Ward recommends having a dialogue with the owner and will review the options that the City has to prevent demolition by neglect if the conversation is not fruitful.

- 489 Quinnipiac Ave

Ms. Vardi says that in November, the Commission sent a letter to the owner in regards to an unapproved sign that was installed without an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, asking the owner to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness, but the owner was not responsive. Ms. Vardi suggests sending a second letter in this regard addressed to the Zoning Officer. She will send a draft for approval and signature to Commissioner Learned.

- 22-24 Hallock Ave

Ms. Vardi notes that City Staff have no updates for this property but will keep following up.

Commissioner Godshall asks City Staff to review and update the Commission on the temporary windows on 250 Greene Street. Ms. Woods confirms that they will look into this matter.

Commissioner Learned asks about enforcement options for unapproved trash enclosure on 86 Chestnut Street and reviews the background of this case.

Mr. Ward recommends to contact the owner and guide them on how to rectify this violation if not willing to engage with the City, the City should decide what action may be deemed necessary.

Commissioner Godshall suggests that the application should be revised to include an accurate recital of the work being done, including trash enclosure, at minimum.

New Business

5. Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes- 12/09/2020

Commissioner Royalty moves to approve the meeting minutes.

Commissioner Kimberly seconds.

All in favor 8:42 PM

Commissioner Learned says that she was invited to a Zoom meeting with the Wooster Square Monument Committee appointed to determine an appropriate monument instead of the Columbus statue removed. Commissioner Learned notes that the pedestal and the wrought iron fencing are still at the park and that it is not completely clear if a Certificate of Appropriateness is required, yet the Wooster Square Monument Committee intends to update the Historic District Commission and will include the Historic District Commission in the discussion at the appropriate time.

Commissioner Knight moves to adjourn the meeting.
Commissioner Godshall seconds.

All in favor 8:45 PM

Respectfully submitted by Maya Vardi, Staff.