



WEST HARTFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Town Hall - Room 407

Wednesday, 28th May, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

Special Meeting - Amended Minutes

Commissioners Present: Mitch Lewis, Chair/Secretary; Kevin Flood, Vice-Chair; Aileen Bastos, Member; Sherri Schwartz, Member and Brian Clemow, Alternate.

Absent: Robert Garrey, Member; Karl Fransson, Alternate and Matt Schreck, Alternate.

Chair Lewis called the West Hartford Historic District Commission (“WHHDC”) to order at 7:33 p.m., then introduced the Board Commissioners to those in attendance and gave a brief description of the WHHDC’s meeting agenda and procedures.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Lewis introduced the Chu Certificate of Appropriateness Application (“COA”).

Commissioner Lewis moved to open discussion on the Chu COA and was seconded.

Mark Chu Jr, owner of 136-152 Raymond Road, and Team, COA proposal for a development plan to build a new: 1 Duplex and 5 Townhouses/Carriage Houses with detached garages with driveways and parking all located on-site.

The Team comprise: Mr. Mark Chu Jr, owner; Mr. David Markowitz Attorney at Law with Hassett & George, P.C., Drew Kearns, Planning Consultant, Jack Kemper, Principal with Kemper Associates Architects, LLC; and Patrick Pinnell Consultant/Architect.

Mr. David Markowitz began by sharing that members of the Team met on May 12th with Brian Pudlik Senior Planner and Todd Dumais Town Planner to discuss their plans and that from that meeting it was understood that any new structures to the rear should be clearly visible from the street. Additionally, Mr. Markowitz shared that he believes the WHHDC should consider the Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 7-147 as concerns these matters, specifically:

7-147a “appropriate” means not incongruous with those aspects of the historic district which the historic district commission determines to be historically or architecturally significant and,

7-147f In passing upon appropriateness as to exterior architectural features the commission shall also consider, in addition to any other pertinent factors, the historical and architectural value and significance, architectural style, scale, general design, arrangement, texture and material of the architectural features involved and the relationship thereof to the exterior architectural style and pertinent features of other buildings and structures in the immediate neighborhood.

Additionally, Mr. Markowitz cited two cases he believes are instructive in this COA:

i) A Segursky case (citation?) and the concept of “substantial evidence”. It appears to require that a decision be based on a reasonable amount of evidence that a reasonable mind could accept as sufficient.

ii) Felician Sisters of St. Francis of Connecticut, Inc. v Historic District Commission of the Town of Enfield, 937 A.2d39 (Conn. 2008) A case that confirmed that the Historic District Commissions have legitimate regulatory authority, but that (1) the authority must be exercised fairly and consistently in the review of all applications, and (2) the deliberations and determinations of the Historic District Commission must be a matter of public record.

Patrick Pinnell, via conference, shared that he is familiar with the Raymond Road and Boulevard Historic District and while it is not particularly old from an historical perspective, it is still significant. He also noted that the proposed Townhouses/Carriage Houses would be visible from Trout Brook Drive in the Winter after the leaves drop.

Jack Kemper, shared two plans both include a two family Duplex with separate front entries directly along Raymond Road, and:

a) towards the lot rear and parallel along Trout Brook five Townhouses are now five feet further back from Raymond Road as their height has been reduced from an earlier Jan 6th Design Review plan, presenting a unbroken row of townhouses and garages and are to have rear decks. Detached three car garages bookend the plan to either side north and south. All the proposed structures are to be constructed of engineered materials for siding and trim and PVC is to be used considerably elsewhere. The windows are to be of clad wooded aluminum with simulated divided light. The roofing shingles are to be of asphalt in an architectural style. The parking area is a single large expanse to be of a permeable lattice that allows grass and drainage serviced by two new one-way driveways to Raymond Road. A plan for a continuous row of evergreen plantings to shield the rear development was optioned.

b) towards the lot rear and parallel along Trout Brook five Carriage Houses are approximately 1500 sq ft a piece and are to have side terraces. Each carriage house appears aligned behind an existing street direct house as if related. Detached three car garages bookend the plan to either side north and south. All the proposed structures are to be constructed of engineered materials for siding and trim and PVC is to be used considerably elsewhere. The windows are to be of clad wooded aluminum with simulated divided light. The roofing shingles are to be of asphalt in an architectural style. The parking area comprises individual lots for each house and carriage serviced by extending existing individual driveways. The parking areas are of a permeable lattice that allows grass and drainage and the plan is for trees to be planted to separate the parking areas.

Mr. Markowitz, then shared an analysis opinion that due to the “Rear Yard Exemption” provision in the WHHDC Handbook, (WHHDC Handbook, Part One, Section 3, A., pg. 5) that no COA was necessary for any of the rear yard development proposed work and that Mark was exempt from the COA requirement.

The public hearing was closed and was followed immediately by the special meeting.

SPECIAL MEETING

Deliberation of Public Hearing Item:

Mark Chu Jr, owner of 136-152 Raymond Road, and Team, COA proposal for a development plan to build a new: 1 Duplex and 5 Town/Carriage Houses with detached garages with driveways and parking all located on-site.

The WHHDC agreed that it did not have sufficient information in order to make an informed decision on the COA and would not be putting the COA up for a vote. Instead, the WHHDC asks that the Team return with a revised COA development plan that addresses the concerns raised. The development plan proposed work for both the direct street facing and the rear yard cannot proceed without WHHDC COA approval.

The WHHDC in considering the proposal based on it's merits of being congruous with the Boulevard-Raymond Road Historic District (BRRHD), is, and will be, reviewing the plan for development harmony as relates to: relationship with other buildings, style, scale, and materials within the BRRHD neighborhood. Observations from tonight's two preliminary plans include: The Duplex building setback, scale and spacing and relation to open space appear in accordance with it's street facing Raymond Road neighbors. It is, however, distinctly different in the regard that the facade is perfectly symmetrical, it lacks a street facing shingled upper story gable and lacks a continuous front porch that appear prominently with it's neighbors.

As discussed, the WHHDC discourages the Townhouse approach with it's contiguous massing which is incongruous with the BRRHD.

The five carriage house buildings option present an improved alignment in keeping with the freestanding individual property build environment character of the neighborhood and utilizing the existing driveways maintains that individuality. The buildings are all two story, in a Craftsman-like style with prominent siding verticals and horizontals, recessed entries, metal roofing and gables.

That said, the WHHDC strongly discourages the use of engineered materials not in use when these houses were built back in the early 1900s. Natural wood, cedar shingles, and siding, board and batten, stucco, stone, brick, wrought iron, copper, aluminum, concrete and flagstone are all extensively used within the BRRHD and are all considered acceptable materials.

The WHHDC requests the Team submit detailed plans for the development site plan including: Duplex and Carriage House design/architectural plans, including material compositions list and indications.

April 30th Special Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of 30th April, 2025 was made by Mr. Clemow, and seconded.

Seated: Lewis, Flood, and Clemow.
The motion carried unanimously.

Belden House Letter

Commissioner Bastos has received feedback from the Belden House Letter legal material review request and will be incorporating the edits and preparing it for final mailing at her convenience. Thanks Aileen and Cynthia!

Commissioner's Concerns

Commissioner Clemow shared that he has spoken with various Hartford Golf Course area homeowners in passing as he is social with several of those folks and he lives nearby. His impression from the homeowners there is that they feel their neighborhood is already being conscientiously maintained and that people there are practicing positive stewardship for the distinctive architectural character of their homes. This is welcome good news. We may need to expand our search for potential other history district expansion candidates where preservation stewardship is experiencing challenges or unfortunate outcomes.

Chair Lewis sent a note to TPZ and Corporation Counsel informing them of the Carson WHAL parking lot lighting matter and has asked Jim to start keeping a log and to approach the WHAL directly to request they correct the parking lot lights' operation and that he will be following up with Jim later to see whether the issue has been satisfactorily addressed or if it needs escalating.

Move to adjourn the meeting was made at 9:16 p.m. by Mr. Clemow, and seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

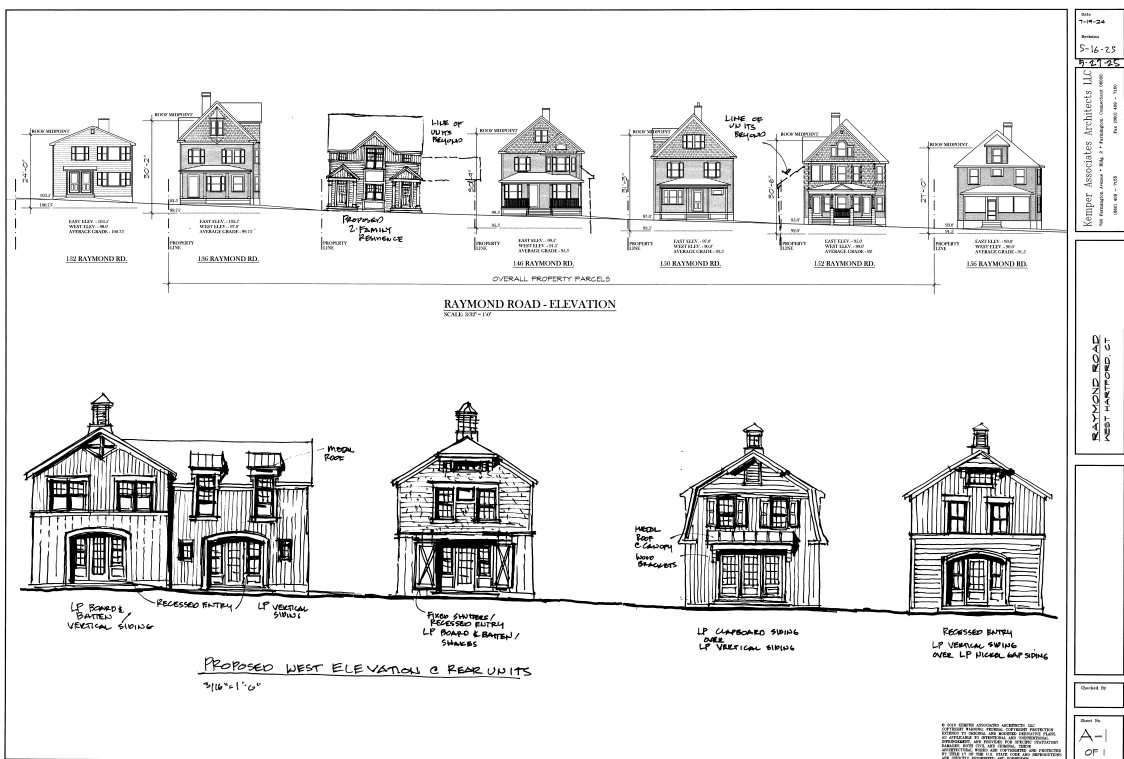
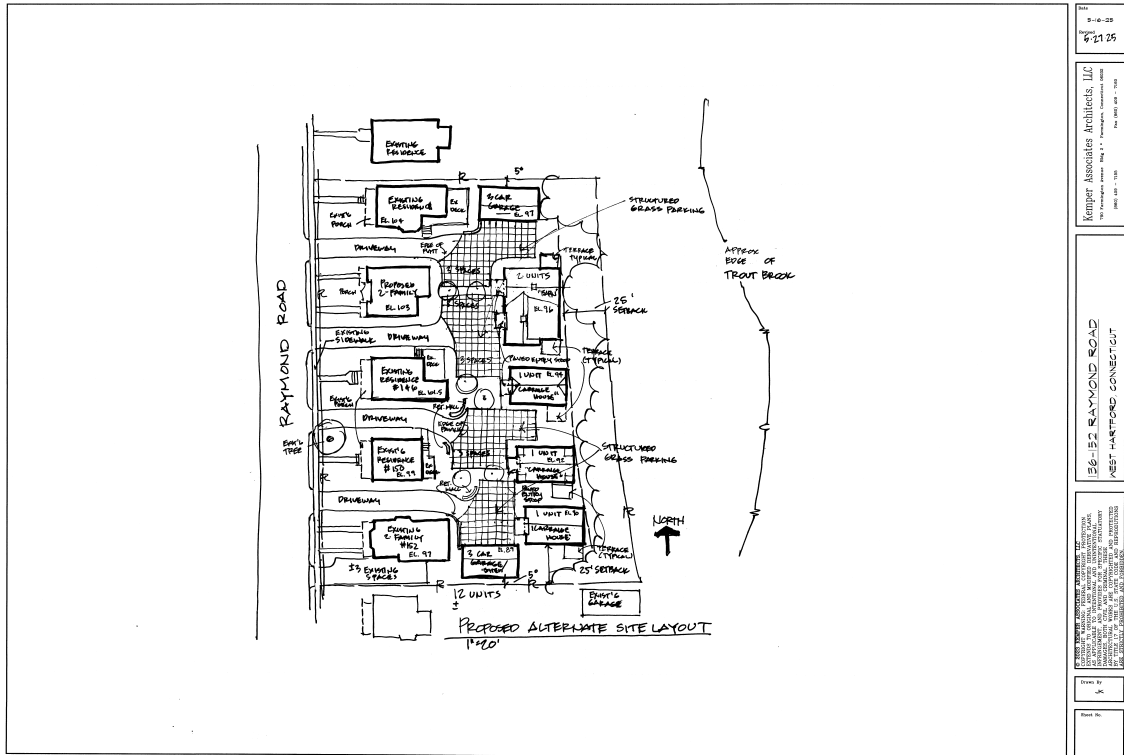
The next meeting of the Historic District Commission will be held on Monday 23rd June, 2025 in Town Hall Room 312 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mitchell Lewis Historic District Commission Chair/Secretary

Encl.



Connecticut General Statutes, Section 7-147 (a,f subsection full text citation)

Sec. 7-147a. Historic districts authorized. Definitions.

(a) As used in this part: “Altered” means changed, modified, rebuilt, removed, demolished, restored, razed, moved or reconstructed; “erected” means constructed, built, installed or enlarged; “exterior architectural features” means such portion of the exterior of a structure or building as is open to view from a public street, way or place; “building” means a combination of materials forming a shelter for persons, animals or property; “structure” means any combination of materials, other than a building, which is affixed to the land, and shall include, but not be limited to, signs, fences and walls; “municipality” means any town, city, borough, consolidated town and city or consolidated town and borough; “appropriate” means not incongruous with those aspects of the historic district which the historic district commission determines to be historically or architecturally significant.

(b) Any municipality may, by vote of its legislative body and in conformance with the standards and criteria formulated by the Department of Economic and Community Development, establish within its confines an historic district or districts to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places associated with the history of or indicative of a period or style of architecture of the municipality, of the state or of the nation.

(c) The legislative body of any municipality may make appropriations for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this part.

(1961, P.A. 430, S. 1; February, 1965, P.A. 221, S. 2; P.A. 80-314, S. 1; P.A. 86-105, S. 1; June 30 Sp. Sess. P.A. 03-6, S. 210(e); P.A. 04-20, S. 3; 04-205, S. 5; May Sp. Sess. P.A. 04-2, S. 30; P.A. 11-48, S. 142.)

History: 1965 act added provision requiring district to conform to standards and criteria of historical commission; P.A. 80-314 added Subsec. (a) containing definitions and divided earlier provisions into Subsecs. (b) and (c); P.A. 86-105 added definition of “appropriate” in Subsec. (a); June 30 Sp. Sess. P.A. 03-6 and P.A. 04-20 replaced the Connecticut Historical Commission with the Connecticut Commission on Arts, Tourism, Culture, History and Film, effective August 20, 2003; P.A. 04-205, effective June 3, 2004, and May Sp. Sess. P.A. 04-2, effective May 12, 2004, both replaced Connecticut Commission on Arts, Tourism, Culture, History and Film with Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism; P.A. 11-48 amended Subsec. (b) to replace “Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism” with “Department of Economic and Community Development”, effective July 1, 2011.

Cited. 153 C. 160; 171 C. 199; 189 C. 727; 196 C. 596.

Subsec. (a):

Includes objects embedded in the earth, such as posts, stakes and foundations connected to objects rising above the surface and very heavy objects “affixed” to the ground by gravity, but not isolated objects that rest lightly on the surface of the ground that can easily be moved. 282 C. 672.

Sec. 7-147f. Considerations in determining appropriateness. Solar energy systems.

(a) If the commission determines that the proposed erection, alteration or parking will be appropriate, it shall issue a certificate of appropriateness. In passing on appropriateness as to exterior architectural features, buildings or structures, the commission shall consider, in addition to other pertinent factors, the type and style of exterior windows, doors, light fixtures, signs, above-ground utility structures, mechanical appurtenances and the type and texture of building materials. In passing upon appropriateness as to exterior architectural features the commission shall also consider, in addition to any other pertinent factors, the historical and architectural value and significance, architectural style, scale, general design, arrangement, texture and material of the architectural features involved and the relationship thereof to the exterior architectural style and pertinent features of other buildings and structures in the immediate neighborhood. No application for a certificate of appropriateness for an exterior architectural feature, such as a solar energy system, designed for the utilization of renewable resources shall be denied unless the commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district. A certificate of appropriateness for such a feature may include stipulations requiring design modifications and limitations on the location of the feature which do not significantly impair its effectiveness. In passing upon appropriateness as to parking, the commission shall take into consideration the size of such parking area, the visibility of cars parked therein, the closeness of such area to adjacent buildings and other similar factors.

(b) In its deliberations, the historic district commission shall act only for the purpose of controlling the erection or alteration of buildings, structures or parking which are incongruous with the historic or architectural aspects of the district. The commission shall not consider interior arrangement or use. However, the commission may recommend adaptive reuse of any buildings or structures within the district compatible with the historic architectural aspects of the district.

(1961, P.A. 430, S. 8; P.A. 73-473, S. 3; P.A. 80-314, S. 6; P.A. 81-326.)

History: P.A. 73-473 added specific provisions concerning certificates of appropriateness for parking; P.A. 80-314 added Subsec. (b) re exclusion of consideration of interior space except to recommend adaptive reuse and expanded considerations for certificate concerning exterior features with specific references to doors, windows, signs, etc.; P.A. 81-326 added provisions concerning issuance of certificate of appropriateness for exterior architectural feature designed for utilization of renewable resources.

Cited. 153 C. 160; 171 C. 199; 189 C. 727; 196 C. 596; 227 C. 71.

Subsec. (a):

Commission may consider historic value and significance of buildings in their existing locations, including outbuildings, as a “pertinent factor” in denying an application for alterations. 285 C. 755.