



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION

REPORT: 955 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06103

For consideration: May 19, 2021

STAFF REPORT

TO: HARTFORD PRESERVATION COMMISSION
FROM: Paul Bengtson, Principal Planner
T. 860-757-9056 Email: paul.bengtson@hartford.gov

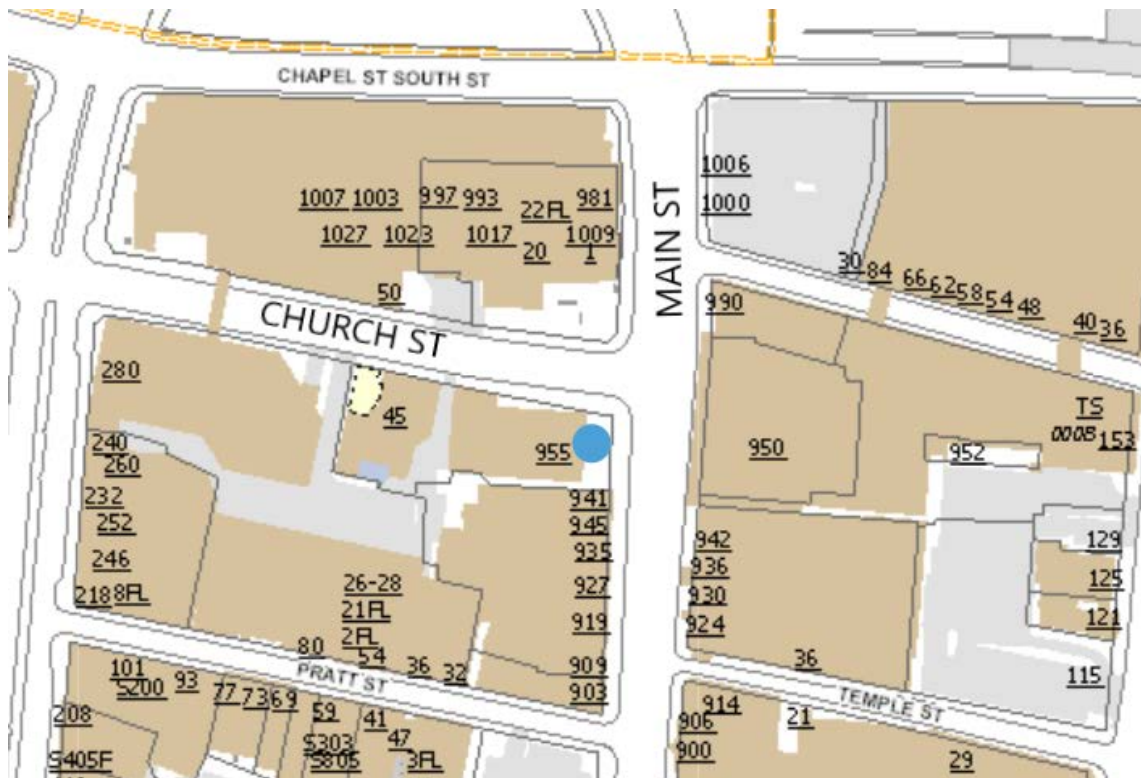
PROJECT: 955 Main Street
PARCEL ID: 268-344-005
ENERGOV ID: COMM-2021-0397

ZONE: DT-2 **HISTORIC DISTRICT:** National Historic Landmark

TYPE: ARTICLE XII HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Sec. 28-170 through 28-221

APPLICANT: NICOLE DESROSIERS, Duo Dickinson Architect

OWNER: Christ Church Cathedral



Location Map

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Christ Church was constructed between 1827 and 1829 of random-coursed brownstone ashlar. The building was listed as a national landmark in 1983.

Proposed Project: The applicant proposes to reconfigure the accessible entrance to the cathedral by moving it from the north entrance to the central entrance. The central entrance will be converted from a walkway with stairs to a ramp will have a 10 to 1 slope with a five-foot landing at both the top and bottom of the ramp. The ramp will be constructed of concrete and have a railing to match existing railings on site. The work will not affect the existing fencing, lighting or gates. The plans also indicate the expansion of the bluestone walkway to provide a walking path between all three entrance walkways.

The northern entry will have the concrete ramp removed and replaced with concrete stairs with two steps and a new railing to match other railings on the southern entry. The southern entry will remain as existing.

The plans submitted also indicated the painting of the front doors and windows, which does not require historic review.

LEGAL STANDARD

The Commission reviews and acts upon all applications for Document of Suitability. No person or entity may, without first applying and obtaining the approval of the Commission, file an application for a demolition permit, or for a building permit for any protected property as designated in the Historic Preservation Ordinance Sec. 28-219.

STANDARD SPECIFIC TO THE USE

The commission shall adopt the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Hartford Guidelines for Renovations and Additions to Historic Buildings.

According to page 69 of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* the recommended actions for accessibility are as follows:

"Identifying the historic building's character-defining exterior features, interior spaces, features, and finishes, and features of the site and setting which may be affected by accessibility code- required work."

"Complying with barrier-free access requirements in such manner that the historic building's character-defining exterior features, interior spaces, features, and finishes and features of site and setting are preserved or impacted as little as possible."

"Working with specialists in accessibility and historic preservation to determine the most sensitive solutions to comply with access requirements in a historic building, its site, and setting."

"Providing barrier-free access that promotes independence for the user while preserving significant historic features."

"Finding solutions to meet accessibility requirements that minimize the impact of any necessary alteration for accessibility on the historic building, its site, or setting, such as compatible ramps, paths, and lifts."

FINDING OF FACTS

CURRENT USE:	Church	PROPOSED USE:	Church
YEAR BUILT:	1827-1829	STYLE:	Gothic Revival

Particular Mention in historic nomination: *“Christ Church is a Gothic Revival church constructed between 1827 and 1829. The tower was completed in 1839, and an addition containing chancel, chapel, and parish offices constructed in 1879.” “A cast iron fence separates the church property from the public sidewalk to the north and east of the church. This replaced an earlier wooden fence in 1853. It was cast to the design of a Mr. Althouse. The fence is comprised of a series of pointed arches with Gothic tracery. The corner posts and gateposts are in the form of battlemented turrets.”*

Current Conditions: The exterior of the building is in excellent condition.



Fig. 1 - Main Street Frontage – Google Streetview, October 2020

Condition of other properties in neighborhood: Other properties on Main Street are also in good to excellent condition.

COMMENTS RECEIVED (None received as of May 14, 2021)

ANALYSIS

The applicant has provided a very detailed plan sheet that clearly depicts the proposed alterations to the site.

The proposal is intended to continue to provide a handicap accessible entrance to the cathedral, but also return that entrance to the main entrance of the cathedral building. All improvements will be inside the cast iron fence that surrounds the church's property adjacent to Main Street. The cast iron fence will provide some screening of the alterations as well as the work is limited to concrete ramps, steps and similarly designed handrails.

Staff finds that the applicant has proposed a sensitive alteration that will provide accessibility and allow the central entrance to return to being the main entrance of the cathedral and recommends approval. A condition of approval has been included to allow staff approval of minor modifications to the plans that result from State Historic Preservation Office requirements.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this application with the following conditions:

1. Minor modifications of the plan required by the State Historic Preservation Office shall be reviewed and approved by staff.

A draft resolution follows.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Application Form
2. Architectural Drawing Set dated April 13, 2021

REVIEWED,

Aimee Chambers, Director



CITY OF HARTFORD
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION
955 MAIN STREET
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROPOSAL

Whereas, The City of Hartford Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the proposal to relocate the accessible entrance for Christ Church Cathedral; and

Whereas, The property is listed as a national landmark; and

Whereas, The structure is brownstone gothic revival house of worship; and

Whereas, All rehabilitation work will be done in a manner consistent with the historic character of the cathedral; and

Whereas, The applicant proposes to rehabilitate the existing structure as indicated on the architectural drawing set dated April 13, 2021; and

Whereas, The proposed work is consistent with the City's Historic Design Principals;

Now therefore Be It

Resolved, The City of Hartford Historic Preservation Commission hereby approves the proposed work with the following conditions:

1. Minor modifications of the plan required by the State Historic Preservation Office shall be reviewed and approved by staff.

Be It Further,

Resolved, This 19th day of May 2021.