

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER**

August 17, 2017

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Andrew Shveda
Robyn Conroy
Devon Kurtz
Mark Wamback

Commission Members Absent: Randolph Bloom
Courtney Ross Escobar, Alternate

Staff Members Present: Stephen Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Susan Arena, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Shveda at 5:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Review of the July 24, 2017 and August 3, 2017 minutes.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the meeting minutes from July 24, 2017.

Quorum was not available for a vote on the August 3, 2017 minutes.

Old Business

1. 4 Congress Street – HC-2017-039

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
Petitioner: Emilio Mendez and Rukia Bilal
Present Use: Single-family Residence
Year Built: 1850
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, within Crown Hill Local Historic District and Oxford - Crown National Register Historic District, fka James Andrews House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace one decorative leaded window

No one was present for the item so it was passed over and returned to after Item 4.

Emilio Mendez and Rukia Bilal, owners, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Mendez stated that he had ordered a replica window from A1 Wholesale Window Company and that it would consist of a solid piece of glass with applied lead to both the interior and exterior. Chair Shveda noted that the other remaining window has a textured glass, and asked whether the new one would match. Mr. Mendez confirmed that it would.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 3-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 3-0 that the changes proposed to 4 Congress Street, consisting of the replacement of a single window on the west elevation, is appropriate for the Crown Hill Local District and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated May 17, 2017 and received May 19, 2017.

2. 12 Page Street – HC-2017-049

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Redemption Christian Center International
Present Use: Church owned residence
Year Built: c1886
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka the George S. Bond – J. A. McKinstry House
Petition Purpose:

- Install vinyl siding (partially retroactive)

Quorum was not available for the item.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wambach and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 4-0 to continue the item to the August 24, 2017 meeting, and extend the constructive grant deadline to August 28, 2017.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated July 6, 2017 and received July 6, 2017.

New Business

3. 332 Main Street – HC-2017-054

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Kathryn Krock for 332 Main Street Properties Inc.
Present Use: Mixed-use, high-rise
Year Built: 1925
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register listed as part of the Worcester MRA, fka the Central Building
Petition Purpose:

- Remove wood windows and replace with aluminum windows
- Replace storefront windows and doors; make two entrances handicapped accessible
- Replace aluminum entrance and service doors

Brian Lever, Epsilon Associates, Inc. appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Lever explained that this application had previously been heard and approved, but that the decision had expired. The owners had been applying for tax credits, which had recently been secured and they were now ready to move forward. He stated that there had not been any changes to the design, noting that the plans included in the submission are still dated 2015.

Public comment:

- 1) Susan Ceccacci, Preservation Worcester, asked about the replacement of the storefront windows, noting they are an important feature. She asked what the plan was for those. Mr. Lever stated that historically there were a couple different designs, some of which had been replaced over time. The goal is to make them consistent, based on historic photos.
- 2) Stuart Loosemore, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, spoke in favor of the proposed project. He stated that the Chamber supports the repurposing of this building as it will bring density and vitality to the downtown area. Mr. Loosemore submitted a letter reiterating his statement.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated July 20, 2017 and received July 20, 2017.

Exhibit B: Letter from the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, dated August 17, 2017 and received August 17, 2017.

4. 5 Crown Street – HC-2017-055

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
 Petitioner: Eric Cruze
 Present Use: Two-family residence
 Year Built: 1848
 Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, National Register listed as part of the Oxford – Crown Historic District, located within the Crown Hill Local Historic District, fka the Rev. Jonathan Aldrich – Francis Southgate House

Petition Purpose:

- Upgrade exterior electrical meter stack
- Install boiler, requiring exterior venting pipe
- Install fenced area and extend porch railing

Tomo Sakai, spouse of the owner, appeared on behalf of the application.

Ms. Sakai stated that for the fence, they were originally considering wood, but have found a metal fence they feel is historically appropriate. Chair Shveda clarified the location of the fence and railings. Regarding the vent pipe, he requested that the installation is kept to the minimum possible height to reduce visibility.

Public comment:

- 1) Susan Ceccacci, Preservation Worcester, reminded the homeowner that there is a Preservation Restriction on the property and that the applicant needs to notify Preservation Worcester in writing of their proposed work.
- 2) Honee Hess, neighbor, spoke in support of the project. She stated that she appreciated Tomo and Eric's thoughtfulness in planning their work to best fit with the district. She complimented their dedication to what it means to live in a historic district.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition, is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 4-0 that the changes proposed to 5 Crown Street, consisting of the installation of an exterior vent pipe, fence, and porch railing, are appropriate for the Crown Hill Local District and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver and Certificate of Appropriateness Application dated July 21, 2017 and received July 24, 2017.

5. 6 Crown Street – HC-2017-051

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
Petitioner: Crown Hill Condominium Trust
Present Use: Condominiums
Year Built: c1865
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, National Register listed as part of the Oxford – Crown Historic District, located within the Crown Hill Local Historic District, fka the Edward Whitney House

Petition Purpose:

- Install gutters
- Remove and replace water damaged clapboards and baseboard as needed

Phil Magnussen, owner of one of the condos, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Magnussen explained that due to the lack of gutters sections of siding are exposed to splash back, which has led to rot. The main area of concern was between two bay windows on the south side. They would like to repair the siding and baseboard, and install gutters along the bays to prevent repeated damage. Mr. Magnussen stated that the siding will be replaced in kind with red cedar, and 1¼" pine on the baseboard.

Public comment:

- 1) Susan Ceccacci, Preservation Worcester, reminded the homeowner that there is a Preservation Restriction on the property and that the applicant needs to notify Preservation Worcester in writing of their proposed work.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition, is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 4-0 that the changes proposed to 6 Crown Street, consisting of the installation of gutters and repairs to clapboard, are appropriate for the Crown Hill Local District and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver and Certificate of Appropriateness Application dated July 24, 2017 and received July 24, 2017.

6. 14 Dale Street – HC-2017-057

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Dale Street Partnership
Present Use: Three-family residence
Year Built: c1890
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka the Theo H. Day – R. S. Griffin House
Petition Purpose:

- Remove wood siding on south, east, and west sides and replace with cementitious siding
- Repair/replace all window and detail trim
- Remove and replace windows
- Remove 2nd floor porch and extend porch roof to north side

Frank Zitomerski, owner, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Zitomerski explained that the proposed work would be very similar to that completed on the neighboring house, 16 Dale Street, a property he renovated sold. He stated that the siding and paint on the north side had been more protected and did not need to be replaced. Decorative elements, including brackets and scallops over the windows, would be replicated in composite material. He stated that the reason for this is that the original wood is old growth, which is why it has held up so long, but that new wood is not as durable and not an adequate replacement.

He explained that the 2nd story porch needed to be removed as the current railing is approximately 24” under the height required by code and that there is not enough space to raise it without almost enclosing the entire porch.

Chair Shveda complimented Mr. Zitomerski’s attention to detail on 16 Dale. He recalled some concerns about the removal of the porch when the project was before the Commission, but recognized the final product is suitable. Several Commissioners stated how helpful the photo of the finished house next door was in agreeing to support the proposed work. Commissioner Conroy specifically noted the loss of the porch, stating that having the side by side photo abated concerns about its removal.

Mr. Zitomerski states that the current windows are wood and in deteriorated condition, so they will be replaced with divided light units in beige to match the trim.

Public comment:

- 1) Susan Ceccacci, Preservation Worcester, stated that she was pleased to know the house will be preserved, but would like to see the 2nd story porch retained. She suggested restoring the present railing and adding a single horizontal rail above at a height to satisfy code. She noted that the porch is an important 3-dimensional feature of the design.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated July 21, 2017 and received July 26, 2017.

7. 106 & 112R Grove Street – HC-2017-058 (See Item d)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Grove Street Family Properties
Present Use: Warehouses
Year Built: c1869 and 1916
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register listed as part of the Worcester MRA, fka the Washburn & Moen North Works Manufacturing District Annealing House #10, and the 1916 Addition

Petition Purpose:

- Demolish the buildings and construct a parking lot

Patrick Doherty, Midpoint Engineering & Consulting LLC, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Doherty submitted a packet of supplemental photos of the site. He stated that the project will likely be phased, with #106 coming down first, but they wanted to present the entire plan at once. The removal of the buildings is necessary to create sufficient parking to fully utilize the remaining buildings. This plan retains the relationship of the buildings to the street, and keeps the parking in the rear.

Chair Shveda stated that he never likes to see buildings come down, but recognized the plan as a sort of necessary evil, that some less relevant buildings would need to be sacrificed in order to save the more prominent ones. Commissioner Kurtz appreciated the retention of the southerly end of the Annealing House, a one-story stone structure that has been rehabilitated.

Commissioner Conroy expressed doubt about being able to properly assess the scope and impact of the project without a site visit. The other Commissioners felt comfortable with the information that was presented. Commissioner Wamback stated that a site visit may be helpful, but the overwhelming point is still that the approval is necessary for the future of the complex as a whole.

Mr. Rolle interjected that from an urban design perspective, this complex consists of a lot of square footage without a lot of parking, and that the proposal does not seem excessive.

Addressing the letter from Seder and Chandler on behalf of the owners of 108 Grove Street (Exhibit B), Chair Shveda asked Mr. Rolle who would be the appropriate entities to handle those concerns, regarding storm water and foundation/structural issues. Mr. Rolle responded that Planning Board would review the storm water management plan, and Inspectional Services would likely handle structural concerns in the process of pulling permits.

Public comment:

- 1) Susan Ceccacci, Preservation Worcester, stated opposition to the proposal, specifically in regards to the demolition of 106 Grove, Annealing House #10. She gave a brief history of the company and the site, calling out the Annealing House as one of the earliest structures there, and the complex as a whole as one of the area's most intact and important industrial sites. Ms. Ceccacci urged the applicant to seek an alternative solution to their parking needs in order to retain as much of the historic fabric as possible, and offered Preservation Worcester's assistance with this. Ms. Ceccacci submitted a packet of current and historical images to illustrate her comments. She stated that Worcester has been too quick to demolish historic and interesting buildings, and that though she recognizes the need for additional parking, this particular section (Annealing House #10) deserves particular attention.

Mr. Doherty responded that the owner recognizes the historic importance of the complex, but that in assessing the buildings, no alternative has been found. He stated that the remaining section of the Annealing House is in poor condition and cannot be saved, and that the space is needed make the rest of the complex feasible.

- 2) Stuart Loosemore, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, spoke in favor of the proposed project. He complimented the owner's reactivation of 100 Grove Street, and the goal to reactivate more spaces. Additionally he asked that the Commission see this proposal not as a loss of a building, but as the restoration and reuse of the other buildings. Mr. Loosemore submitted a letter reiterating his statement.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 3-1 (Commissioner Conroy voted against) that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated July 27, 2017 and received July 27, 2017.

Exhibit B: Letter from Seder and Chandler Attorneys on behalf of Northworks Properties, Inc. received electronically August 10, 2017.

Exhibit C: Supplemental site photos provided by Mr. Doherty at the meeting.

Exhibit D: Historic and current photos provided by Ms. Ceccacci at the meeting.

Exhibit E: Letter from the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, dated August 17, 2017 and received August 17, 2017.

8. 41 Plantation Street – HC-2017-059

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: John Kelly
Present Use: Three-family residence
Year Built: c1916
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register listed as part of the Worcester MRA, fka the Edna Stoliker Three-Decker

Petition Purpose:

- Repair missing and damaged columns and railings on 2nd and 3rd floor porches (retroactive)

John Kelly, owner, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Kelly apologized for the retroactive nature of the application, stating that he did not realize the building required Historical Commission review. He provided an overview of work that had been done and presented several photos of other houses in the neighborhood that he claimed to have looked at as guidance.

Chair Shveda observed that though the railings did not appear to be original, the fluted columns did. Mr. Kelly stated that the columns had been replaced with 6”x6” posts for cost efficiency, but did retain the arched openings of the porches. Mr. Kelly stated that there had been water and ant damage leading to structural and safety concerns. Regarding the lack of permit, Mr. Kelly stated that his contractor was renewing his license at the time that work began, so they decided to start work while that was pending. They discovered the need for Historical Commission review when the contractor was applying for a building permit.

Extensive discussion followed regarding the loss of the columns and how to amend the design to make it more appropriate. Upon suggestions from Chair Shveda, Mr. Kelly agreed to trim the top and bottom of the columns to match the originals as closely as possible.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 4-0 that the demolition was not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city, provided that the applicant completes the trim on the columns, making sure that the top and base matches closely to the original on the 2nd and 3rd floors, and voted retroactively to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated July 24, 2017 and received July 28, 2017.

Exhibit B: Supplemental photos provided by Mr. Kelly at the meeting.

9. 15 Hamilton Street – HC-2017-060

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: 15 Hamilton Street LLC
Present Use: Former office building (conversion to bar)
Year Built: 1929

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register listed as part of the Worcester MRA, fka the Billings Square Branch Library

Petition Purpose:

- Remove one window and install a door and exterior lift to allow handicapped access

Charles Youssef, owner, and Ron Harden, contractor, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Harden explained that in order to make the building handicapped accessible, instead of installing a ramp across the front, they opted for a lift on the rear elevation. This was decided to be the less intrusive option, only requiring the removal of a single window and the brick below it. The new door will be in line with the height of remaining windows.

Mr. Harden stated that the granite sill would be saw cut, so that the sides would still be visible. Chair Shveda recommended removing the sill whole, if possible, in order to preserve it. The applicant was receptive to this idea.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated July 28, 2017 and received July 28, 2017.

Communications

- a. *Communication from vhb re: Request for updated CLG opinion for Institutional District, received electronically July 21, 2017.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 4-0 to find the Institutional District, with modern additions, eligible for the National Register and concur with the opinion of staff.

- b. *Communications from vhb re: Request for **new** letter of support for a tax credit application for: Worcester County Courthouse, received electronically July 21, 2017; and request for **updated** letters of support for tax credit applications for: Bancroft Hotel, 50 Franklin Street; Duprey Building, 16 Norwich Street; Houghton Building, 82 Franklin Street; Indian Hill School, 155 Ararat Street; Melville Shoe, 44 Hammond Street; and Park Building, 507 Main Street, received electronically August 7, 2017.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 4-0 to provide a new letter of support for 2 Main Street, Worcester County Courthouse.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 4-0 to provide updated letters of support for Bancroft Hotel, 50 Franklin Street; Duprey Building, 16 Norwich Street; Houghton Building, 82 Franklin Street; Indian Hill School, 155 Ararat Street; Melville Shoe, 44 Hammond Street; and Park Building, 507 Main Street.

- c. *Communication from MHA Northeast re: Request for **updated** letters of support for tax credit applications for: Quinsigamond Firehouse, 15 Blackstone River Road; Worcester Boys' Club, 2 Ionic Ave; Worcester Boys' Club, Lincoln Square; Swedish Lutheran Home, 26 Harvard Street;

and Paul Revere Life Insurance Company Building, 18 Chestnut Street, received electronically August 9, 2017.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 4-0 to provide updated letters of support for Quinsigamond Firehouse, 15 Blackstone River Road; Worcester Boys' Club, 2 Ionic Ave; Worcester Boys' Club, Lincoln Square; Swedish Lutheran Home, 26 Harvard Street; and Paul Revere Life Insurance Company Building, 18 Chestnut Street.

- d. Communication from Seder and Chandler Attorneys on behalf of Northworks Properties, Inc. re: Demo Delay application for 106 & 112R Grove Street, received electronically August 10, 2017. (See Item 7)

No comment.

Other Business

- I. Informal discussion with representatives from vhb and Trinity Worcester Development LLC regarding proposed plans for the Worcester County Courthouse rehabilitation.
(Taken with items a. and b.)

Present for the discussion were Michael Lozano and Chris Stanley from Trinity, Phil Renzi from TAT, and Alisa Augenstein from VHB. A preliminary plan for the redevelopment of the property was presented to the Commission.

- II. Discussion of Local Historic District Rules & Regulations and Certificate application.

Held until next meeting.

Adjournment

Upon a motion the Commission adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.