

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

**June 10, 2010
LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL**

Commission Members Present: Peter Schneider, Chair
Thomas Constantine
James Crowley
Janet Merrill

Staff Present: Edgar Luna, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

MINUTES

The Historical Commission accepted the minutes from the April 22, 2010, and May 13, 2010 meetings.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- 1. 950 Main Street (HC-2010-04) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Robert Longden and Frank Andriatola, representative for Clark University, petitioner, and Paul Bottis, Physical Plant Director at Clark University, presented the petition. Mr. Longden stated that the petitioner was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to replace two-hundred and forty (240) wood windows in the Jefferson Academic Center with aluminum windows; however, he stressed that the nine (9) stained-glass windows on site would not be replaced. He also indicated that the proposed replacements would match the original windows in shape and color. Mr. Longden further indicated that the majority of the existing windows are single glazed, do not contain weather stripping, most are inoperable and have been compromised from the effects of bee infestation. In addition, he also stated that due to these deficiencies, the existing windows had become a source of air infiltration and corresponding heat loss, as well as energy consumption. In addition, Mr. Longden stated that as required by the Historical Commission on April 22, 2010, he requested Nine Point Woodworking, Inc. and A&J Window Co., Inc. to provide cost estimates to highlight the difference between replacing the existing windows with wood windows versus replacing them with aluminum windows, and indicated that Mr. Andriatola would address the matter. Mr. Andriatola stated that the cost estimate to replace two-hundred and forty (240) windows with wood windows was \$725,000.00, and the cost estimate to replace two-hundred and forty (240) windows with aluminum

windows was \$484,300.00. He further indicated that the price difference of \$240,700.00 was a significant and important savings for Clark University. Commissioner Merrill asked if the petitioner had considered restoring some of the windows. Mr. Longden responded that the advanced state of decay of the windows prevented the petitioner from considering restoration, and stated that, in fact, he was not able to find a restoration company willing to provide an estimate for restoration. Chair Schneider asked if Mr. Longden knew if the windows had been painted with lead paint. Mr. Longden stated that he was unsure. Commissioner Constantine stated that effective April 30, 2010, new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations required special training and certification for window companies that remove and replace lead painted windows. Commissioner Schneider asked if the petitioner had done an inventory of windows that were in good working condition that could be preserved. Mr. Andriatola stated that all windows were defective, infested, and lacked insulation due to the fact that they were single-pane. Consequently, he concluded that the windows in place could not be restored or preserved, and indicated that the only logical solution was to replace them. Chair Schneider asked if the decorative details in the windows with semi-gothic arches would be kept. Mr. Andriatola stated that the profiles of the proposed windows would look like the windows in place, including the decorative details. Mr. Longden indicated that the petitioner was well aware that the windows were an important architectural characteristic of the building; therefore, he stated that the proposed windows were selected because they would closely match the existing windows in profile, color and texture. Commissioner Crowley stated that, in this case, delaying the Demolition Waiver for 12 months would be counterproductive. Susan McDaniel Ceccacci, Director of Education from Preservation Worcester, spoke in opposition to the proposed window replacement, indicating that the petitioner had not provided a second opinion regarding window restoration. She also added that the wood windows in place were a unique feature of the Jefferson Academic Center, and indicated that the proposed replacements would make a difference in the overall appearance of the building. Mr. Andriatola stated that, unfortunately, the windows in place were significantly damaged. Chair Schneider asked if some windows could be repaired. Commissioner Constantine stated that the petitioner's representative had stated that all windows in place could not be repaired. Jo Hart, a city resident, spoke in opposition to the window replacement. She stated that the wood windows were a unique characteristic of the building, and indicated that, in her opinion, the proposed aluminum windows would not look the same as the windows in place. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 1-3 (Commissioners Schneider, Merrill and Crowley voting no) that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester. The motion failed and the Historical Commission considered the petitioner's waiver based on undue economic hardship. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 3-1 (Commissioner Merrill voted no), that the petitioner had demonstrated undue economic hardship; therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

2. **73 West Boylston Drive (aka 1 Stowell Avenue) (HC-2010-024) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Donald Bray, representative for the petitioner and Justin Forkuo, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Forkuo stated that he was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to make the following changes to the buildings on site: (a) clean and repair roof tiles, (b) remove and replace four windows, (c) remove and replace exit door, (d) remove and replace front entrance and sidelite, (e) install handicap ramp entrances, (f) remove rotted portion of roof over overhead doors, (g) install new overhead doors on Stowell Street and West Boylston Street sides of building, (h) cover existing stucco with new stucco, (i) cover office portion of structure with thin set brick veneer, (j) remove chimney and interior brick wall, (k) cover existing metal building with new plastic coated metal siding and (l), remove and replace existing shed roof between chimney wall and metal building. Mr. Forkuo stated that he recently purchased the site for the purpose of moving his auto-body repair business to this location. He also stated that he was pleased to learn that the building was MACRIS-listed and had historic significance for the City of Worcester. He further indicated that the site had been an auto-body repair establishment since it was built in 1930, and indicated that the proposed modifications to the site had been chosen to preserve, maintain and enhance the historical characteristics and architectural significance of the site. In addition, he stated that he was also planning to restore the interior of the building utilizing antique hardware, materials and architectural details to reflect its historic significance. Chair Schneider stated that, while visiting the site, he noticed that the building was in an advanced state of disrepair. He also indicated that the one of the most prominent features of the building was its roof profile, which he indicated appeared to be Spanish-Revival or Mediterranean style. Mr. Bray indicated that most of the exterior feature of the building would be retained, except for the installation of a brick veneer on one section of the wall fronting West Boylston Drive. Commissioner Constantine stated that the proposed work was a significant improvement to the current conditions of the building. Mr. Forkuo stated that his main goal was to preserve the old architectural features of the building. Susan McDaniel Ceccacci, Director of Education from Preservation Worcester, spoke in support of the proposed project. She stated that the Massachusetts Historical Commission building survey was completed in 1993, and indicated that the site was the only remaining original gas station of the City of Worcester. She further indicated that the style of the building was quite unique in that it incorporated Mediterranean architectural characteristics, typical of the picturesque architectural styles of the period. She also indicated that the building on site was one of the first gas stations in the City to incorporate an auto-repair shop to the business, which preceded the current multi-service auto-shops. In addition, she stated that the exterior stucco was original to the building and indicated that, in her opinion, the proposed installation of a brick veneer would deviate from the original style of the building. Commissioner Crowley stated that restoring and preserving the stucco exterior would enhance and maintain the historic characteristics of the building. He also said that the stucco treatment may be less expensive than adding a brick veneer. Mr. Forkuo stated that he was not sure if the stucco exterior was an original exterior feature of the building, but acknowledged that the stucco seemed to have been in place for long period of time. Ms. McDaniel-Ceccacci stated that during the period in which this

structure was built, gas-stations used brick walls as a fire-prevention measure; however, she indicated that this building seemed to have been covered with stucco since the beginning to enhance its Mediterranean style. Chair Schneider, stated that in his opinion, the stucco would be more appropriate to the architectural style of the building than a brick exterior. Mr. Forkuo stated that based on the comments received, he would withdraw the installation of a brick veneer from his petition. Upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner Crowley, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester; therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

- 3. 43 Belmont Street (HC-2010-026) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Stephen Madaus, representative for the Catholic Bishop of Worcester, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Madaus stated that the petitioner was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to demolish the entire structure on site, and indicated that the petitioner was ready to accept a denial from the Commission. Commissioner Constantine stated that the demolition of the building would be a great loss to the architectural resources of the City, especially, due to the fact that the building was in perfect condition. Commissioner Crowley asked Mr. Madaus if the petitioner was ready to present an undue economic hardship request in case the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was denied. Mr. Madaus stated that the petitioner would not consider such request. Commissioner Crowley asked if the petitioner was planning to sell the property. Mr. Madaus stated that there was a purchase and sale agreement in place, but indicated that the transaction had not been finalized. Deborah Packard, Executive Director of Preservation Worcester stated that the Board of Directors of Preservation Worcester was completely opposed to the proposed demolition of the church. She also indicated that the Catholic Archbishop of Worcester had stated in the past that closed Catholic churches would only be sold to other religious institutions for use as churches. Mr. Madaus stated that he was unaware of such policy. Ms. Packard stated that the petitioner would be best served by finding alternative uses for the church, instead of just proposing to demolish it. Rev. George Kohl, Senior Pastor of the Belmont Baptist church, adjacent to the site, expressed opposition to the demolition of the Building. He also stated that Rev. Michael Xu, Senior Pastor of the Chinese Gospel Church located at 21 Belmont Street, had expressed interest in purchasing the building and moving his congregation to the site. Mr. Madaus asked Rev. Kohl to provide him with Rev. Xu's contact information to address this matter with him, and he did. Mr. Luna read staff's memorandum expressing opposition to the demolition of the structure and indicated that the Church building at 43 Belmont Street was one of the three remaining churches in the historic Worcester Swedish Neighborhood, and stated that building had unique Neo-Gothic Revival architectural characteristics. He also indicated that given its historical and architectural significance as well as its prominent location, in his opinion, the demolition of 43 Belmont Street would be detrimental to the architectural and historical resources of the City of Worcester. More specifically, he said that the proposed demolition would permanently eliminate one of the best remaining examples of early twentieth Century Neo Gothic Architecture in the City or Worcester. In addition, Mr. Luna indicated that although the petitioner stated in the application that the proposed reuses of the existing building have proven to be financially unfeasible, the petitioner

never submitted undue economic hardship documentation and/or, cost analysis demonstrating that the proposed demolition was the only viable alternative to redevelop the site. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 0-4 (Commissioners Schneider, Constantine, Crowley and Merrill voting no) that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester. The motion failed, and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was denied.

- 4. 10 Tuckerman Street (HC-2010-027) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Gregory O'Connor and Scott Dzik, representative for the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra, petitioner, and Paul Levenson, Executive Director of Tuckerman Hall, presented the petition. Mr. O'Connor stated that the petitioner was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to construct a new service wing on the south side of the structure. He indicated that the addition will conceal four existing window openings, three existing door openings, and partially conceal two window openings. He also stated that three existing windows will be removed and relocated to the new addition, and the existing mechanical space and existing addition will be demolished. In addition, Mr. O'Connor stated that the mechanical system and fire escape will be relocated, and indicated that the new wing will match the existing structure with brick and limestone and the doors will match existing doors with materials and details. Mr. Levenson stated that the architect had incorporated the previous comments from the Commission as well as additional feedback he had received from James Welu, Executive Director of the Worcester Art Museum. Commissioner Constantine expressed his support for the project and indicated that he was pleased to see that the pediment on the roofline would be kept, as they are prominent architectural features of the building. Commissioner Crowley asked if the proposed façade fronting Salisbury St. would include original architectural details. Mr. O'Connor responded that the proposed windows would include classic architectural details to blend in harmoniously with the other architectural features of the building. He also indicated that the petitioner was not able to use the same classic architectural details on the Tuckerman Street side. Mr. O'Connor stated that in the proposed plan, the mechanical equipment, currently exposed, would be kept inside the building. Deborah Packard, Executive Director of Preservation Worcester stated that the Board fully supported this project. Mr. Luna requested to be allowed to read a memorandum written by Joel Fontane, Director of Planning and Regulatory Services. He indicated that the proposed addition will address important functional limitations of the building in a way that is sensitive to its architectural and historic elements. He also said that he proposed design called for the utilization of exterior materials that are similar in color, texture and profile as the original materials, and indicated that although the proposed design includes the loss of some windows, the petitioner proposes to preserve the most prominent and important windows through use of mirrors within their existing frames. Mr. Luna further stated that the proposal also had the benefit of concealing air conditioning and electrical equipment, and indicated that, in staff's opinion, the applicant had carefully balanced the need for functionality with preservation of the building's character. Moreover, he said that the applicant had thoughtfully considered the alternatives and ideas presented by the Historical Commission and other stakeholders previously. In addition, Mr. Luna indicated that based on discussions with the applicant and an understanding of the market

within which Tuckerman Hall competes the proposed addition would help ensure that the building remains viable for its intended use. He further stated that given the concerted efforts made by the applicant to consider and develop the present proposal, there was no reasonable likelihood that an alternative will be found during the additional time afforded by a demolition delay. In fact, he said that the functional improvements proposed were necessary in order to adapt to the market demands on modern performance facilities; therefore, these proposed improvements would help preserve Tuckerman Hall by helping it remain competitive as a venue for performance. Upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner Merrill, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester; therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

OTHER BUSINESS:

5. **115 Heywood Street:** Mr. Luna informed the Commission that the Planning Division staff had received two (2) phone calls asking if the 115 Heywood Street parcel had been bequeathed to the Historical Commission. He indicated that the Planning Division staff was not aware of the accuracy of the information, but indicated that staff would research the subject and inform the Commission at a later date.

Adjournment: Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM.