

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

September 3, 2015

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Kevin Provencher, Chair
Andrew Shveda, Vice-Chair
Timothy McCann, Clerk
Robyn Conroy
Devon Kurtz
Karl Bjork, Alternate

*Chair Provencher only attended for the first item.

Commission Members Absent: Randolph Bloom
Cheryll Holley, Alternate

Staff Members Present: Deborah Steele, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

Approval of the Minutes: 8/6/2015, 8/20/2015 – Held.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 35 Hamilton Street (HC-2015-066)

Petition:	Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner:	Diocese of Worcester
Present Use:	Church Rectory
Year Built:	Circa 1914
Historic Status:	MACRIS-listed and fka St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church Complex
Petition Purpose:	Cover the copper on the ten dormers with copper colored roof membrane

Jordan O'Connor and Father Reidy appeared on behalf of the application. Mr. O'Connor stated that the project is 63% percent complete but an issue came up during their work and there is problem with the existing dormers. He stated that there are ten in total and they are sheathed in copper and occasionally when there is wind driven rain it blows up the flashing and it has become an issue and if they don't take care of it now it could be problem in future.

Mr. O'Connor stated that they would like to use a non-copper material to cover the ten dormers as the cost to cover in copper would be \$20,000. They would use sarnafil to cover the dormers and from a distance it would be hard to tell it was different from the copper.

Chair Provencher stated that the proposal is to apply the sarnafil over the existing copper. Mr. O'Connor stated that it was.

Chair Provencher asked what would happen with the copper seam. Mr. O'Connor stated it would be folded down and then it would be encapsulated.

Secretary McCann asked why they wouldn't remove the copper entirely. Mr. O'Connor stated that they could.

Secretary McCann stated that if they are having flashing issues currently does the church think they are going to remedy it by putting the sarnafil over it.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the sarnafil would be exposed and part of the scope of the work is taking out part of the slate and the problem is the joint of the roof and the exposed material on the top of the dormer.

Chair Provencher stated that the problem seems to be the flashing between the copper and the roof surface.

Mr. O'Connor stated that they had budgeted a certain amount for contingencies which is almost gone and they are trying to address their short and long term needs.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked what was the total project cost. Mr. O'Connor stated \$504,000 not including contingencies.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked what was the amount for contingencies. Mr. O'Connor stated \$50,000.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked what was the warranty on the sarnafil. Mr. O'Connor stated typically between 20 and 24 years.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if it was original copper on the dormers. Mr. O'Connor stated that it was.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if sarnafil was an approved substrate by sarnafil and will they warranty it. Mr. O'Connor stated that they would.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked how the material would be terminated at the eaves. Mr. O'Connor stated that the wood is not rotted and incredibly dry and brittle and could be salvaged and that they are trying to keep the hemmed edges and work a detail and part of keeping the copper is not to take the trim apart as it not going to come apart without it being terminated and their intent is not to take the hemmed edge of the copper that goes in as they can't take the apart as they will defeat the purpose of leaving the copper in place so they don't blow away the trim.

Chair Provencher asked if the additional cost to replace the copper would be \$20,000 and asked if that was on top of the PVC cost and stated that the original scope of work didn't include any work on the dormers and asked what the value of the PVC was. Mr. O'Connor stated that he did not have that but could get back to Commission.

Secretary McCann asked what would the cost relative to any other rubber member roof. Mr. O'Connor stated that these are smaller dormers so you going to spend more on labor than material.

Commissioner Bjork asked if doing this work will solve the water problem.

Mr. O'Connor stated that you are always going to get water in a building and the age of the copper you can't expect another 25 years without it starting to age and the ability to cover the copper with the sarnafil should solve the issue.

Secretary McCann stated that the loss of the copper will be detrimental to the building so should be considered under economic hardship and asked the other members of the Commission what they would think would be viable alternative to the sarnafil.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the church could always not fix the dormers at this time but the issue is one of finance and the dormers are important.

Commissioner Bjork asked if all the dormers have the same issue with water. Mr. O'Connor stated no as depends where the dormer is located.

Commissioner Conroy stated that the question to Mr. O'Connor would be how reversible would this be.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if it would be adhered membrane. Mr. Connor stated that it would be.

Commissioner Kurtz asked if the wood trim had the same amount of brittleness on all the dormers. Mr. O'Connor stated no but they need to be careful with all of it and on the street side where the sun hits the dormers is it is the most brittle.

Chair Provencher stated that it seems like the church can address the leaks without effecting the appearance of anything and they could remove a few slates and address the flashing issue but the church is asking the Commission to approve covering over an existing historical material that is not leaking but believes what is being proposed is permanent alteration and once this membrane goes down the copper is finished and doesn't imagine anyone will put copper back so this would be a permanent alteration and with regard to cost he would like to know the cost of the PVC versus the \$20,000 to do the copper as this is a fairly modest job so he is not sure if there is a case for economic hardship and there is no immediate needs as the copper hasn't failed yet.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the wind driven rain is coming in under the slate and giving the age of the building he would say that the standing seams are somewhat suspect and in order to fix that they can fix the joint but without going over the material the potential problem still there.

Commissioner Bjork stated that it doesn't appeal to him that there wouldn't be copper on top of these dormers and if they have option of treating the leaks as they occur that would be the way to go instead of trying to cover at this point.

Secretary McCann stated that he does not know if the sarnafil is the product to solve this problem and since there is no immediate issue with the copper right now he doesn't see this will solve all the problems.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the copper is leaking.

Chair Provencher stated it was probably the copper flashing.

Mr. O'Connor stated that it probably a little bit of both and the way to get water away from the joint is to cover it and they are proposing a solution to keep water out of the building.

Chair Provencher asked if there was any consideration of replacing the copper with painted steel standing seam roof.

Mr. O'Connor stated he was not sure if there was.

Chair Provencer stated that there are alternatives to copper that give the same look.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he was not sure how he would come up with something regarding that as the church meets monthly on project.

Chair Provencher stated that as a compromise that if there was a more cost effective way to do the work that gives same look and feels he would be more comfortable voting for that than applying the sarnafil over the copper as that is only a Band-Aid. He would much rather see a more long term solution so the applicant could request a continuance to provide other options to the Commission.

Secretary McCann stated that another option would be that they amend the petition to ask petitioner to apply a metal standing seam roof and then allow for it and then applicant could put that on and if it doesn't work the applicant could reapply.

Mr. Connor stated that they have no estimates for standing seam metal so he would not be comfortable asking Commission to vote on that.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that another option is to leave the roof alone and they are going to have to take up slate to work on the flashing and that may solve the problem.

Commissioner Conroy and Vice-Chair Shveda both stated that they would need to see more financials on other options before they would be comfortable voting on the item.

Jo Hart stated that since this is a Catholic church that it should be original material being used.

Father Reidy arrived at meeting at 6:23 p.m.

6:23 p.m.-6:26 p.m. Commission recessed in order for Mr. O'Connor to discuss options with Father Reidy.

The Commission reviewed with Father Reidy the options they had discussed with Mr. O'Connor.

Father Reidy stated that his was concern that they have time constraints on the project.

Chair Provencher explained that they could continue item and the applicant could come back before Commission in two weeks to present other options to the Commission.

Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Commissioner Bjork the Commission voted 6-0 to approve a continuance of the item until the September 17, 2015 Historical Commission meeting and to extended the constructive grant deadline until October 2, 2015.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver received August 11, 2015 and dated August 11, 2015.

Chair Provencer left meeting and Vice-Chair Shveda assumed chair for rest of meeting.

2. 169 Austin Street (HC-2015-064)

Petition:	Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner:	Tom Hoang

Present Use: Two Family Residence
Year Built: Circa 1881
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed and fka Savilon Williard House

Petition Purpose:

- Remove and replace three tab shingle roof with architectural shingles
- Replace aluminum siding with vinyl siding

Vincent Zhang appeared on behalf of the item.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if the roof was leaking. Mr. Zhang stated that it was.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked Mr. Zhang if he knew whether the original siding was underneath the aluminium.

Mr. Zhang stated that he did not know but he needs to get this fixed as his insurance company dropped his coverage until it is fixed.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if new drip edge would be put on eaves and rakes. Mr. Zhang stated that it will be.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if any work was being done on the ornamental woodwork around the trim.

Mr. Zhang stated that they would like to remove it but if the Commission will not allow that they will just paint it.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that this home has quite a bit of decorative detail and he would not like to see any original trim work removed.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if the vinyl proposed would have the insulation board behind it. Mr. Zhang stated that it would.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if the roof on the covered entry porch was going to be replaced. Mr. Zhang stated that it will be.

Vice-Chair Shved asked if it was a metal roof and Mr. Zhang responded that it was not.

Secretary McCann stated that if they were just going to paint the fascia and keep the woodwork on the entry porch and take care of the head casings he would have no issue with the petition and no issue with replacing a three tab shingle with architectural shingles.

Mr. Zhang asked if it was okay if he covered the fascia with aluminum trim and put a soffit around it.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that he not sure how that would work.

Mr. Zhang stated that the most important thing to them is the siding and roof and if they can't do that they will leave it.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that it would probably be cheaper and better look for the house to not wrap and the Commission would prefer if it wasn't wrapped.

Secretary McCann stated that the applicant would save money by painting instead of wrapping.

Secretary McCann stated that he thinks when a motion is made that the motion should reflect that the head casing and any other windows casing are maintained and not allowed to be wrapped in aluminum or removed.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved with condition that there be no removal of any wood from the trim work.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver received August 6, 2015 and dated August 4, 2015.

3. 17-19 Grand Street (HC-2015-063)

Petition:	Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner:	Main South Community Development Corporation
Present Use:	Multi-Unit apartment building
Year Built:	Circa 1890
Historic Status:	MACRIS-listed
Petition Purpose:	Remove aluminum windows and replace with energy efficient vinyl windows

Larry Bedard appeared on behalf of the application.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that the 58 windows are aluminum so they are not original.

Mr. Bedard stated that the windows were probably changed before they bought the building and they purchased building in 1992 and haven't changed windows since then and frame will come out and the installation will be done from the inside.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that since they are removing non original material and doing the work from the interior and maintaining the casings he would not have a problem with the application.

Secretary McCann concurred.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Secretary McCann, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver received August 6, 2015 and dated August 4, 2015.

4. 660 Main Street (HC-2015-066)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Community Renewal, Inc.
Present Use: Multi-Unit apartment building
Year Built: Circa 1897
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, NRIND (National Register Individual Property, NRMRA (National Register Multiple Resource Area) fka Hotel Aurora
Petition Purpose:

- Repoint brick masonry on the side elevation with mortar to match existing
- Replace existing wood windows with aluminum to match existing
- Replace curved double hung windows with non-curved fixed window

Zan Bross from The Community Builders, Inc. appeared on behalf of the project.

Mr. Bross stated that this is known as the Aurora Hotel and the hotel is on the National Register of Historic Landmarks and the project has a total budget of less than \$1 million which includes hard and soft costs. He stated that this is not a historic tax credit project and they are just seeking to make the building more energy efficient without changing the character of the building.

Secretary McCann asked why the applicant did not seek historic tax credits.

Mr. Bross stated that the process is very long and this isn't a typical development project and they aren't taking a development fee and they have some money from Mass Housing to get the building up to par.

Secretary McCann asked who owned the building.

Mr. Bross stated Community Renewal c/o The Community Builder.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked what was the extent of the repointing.

Mr. Bross stated that the specific scope was outlined in the application submitted.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that the scope of work stated that the masonry is to be sealed with a masonry sealant and he has worked with preservation people in the past and usually that is not allowed as it changes the aspects of the façade and could be detrimental to it. It could also change the hue of the brick and could change the looks of the other facades and asked if the company being used has worked on historical buildings.

Mr. Bross stated that they are using Gilreys Masonry that has come before the Historical Commission with other projects.

Secretary McCann asked if there was any reason given why they were doing it.

Mr. Bross stated that it was to give area better protection and it is a side elevation.

Secretary McCann stated that the elevation is visible from Chandler Street.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if the brick is deteriorating.

Mr. Bross stated that it just needs to be repointed.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated there were three items scopes of work given to Commission and asked Mr. Bross which proposal is the applicant looking for the Commission to review.

Mr. Bross stated option 1 which is replacing all the existing wood windows with aluminum widows to match existing with the exception of the curved double hungs' on front façade. Those they would like to replace with a straight double hung.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked what is the current condition of the windows.

Mr. Bross stated that they are in rough shape and at the end of their life cycle and have lead paint.

Secretary McCann asked if any of the windows were ever replaced.

Mr. Bross stated that they are all original except for the ground floor retail and second floor.

Commissioner Bjork asked if the entire floor had curved windows.

Mr. Bross showed on photo where curved windows were located.

Commissioner Bjork stated that the curved windows are quite unique.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked Mr. Bross to clarify that on the application under economic hardship it states that to restore all the existing windows would be cost-prohibitive and the intent is to limit the window restoration scope to the curved double hung windows at the bays and now in the same application it also asks to remove them.

Mr. Bross stated that they provided additional material that included prices for all options.

Vice-Chair Shveda reviewed the options in the scope of work.

Option #1 – Aluminum windows with straight double hung window lieu of curved windows at front façade. Pricing includes necessary carpentry modifications and panning details the cost would be \$573,460.00.

Option #2-Aluminium windows with two angled double hung windows in lieu of curved windows at front façade. Pricing includes necessary carpentry modifications and panning details the cost would be \$616,785.00.

Option #3-Aluminium windows with reproduced historically accurate curved windows the cost would be \$749,680.00.

Vice-Chair Shveda and Secretary McCann stated that they question the cost to restore the curve windows as according to what was being presented it would be \$15,000 a window and that seemed extremely high.

Commissioner Bjork stated that they do not really need to look at the financials as they need to look at the building and whether what is being taken away is historically significant and the curved windows are unique and should be maintained.

Vice-Chair Shveda and Secretary McCann stated that they agree.

Mr. Bross asked if that would open the door for replacing the window in kind with a curved window to match existing as they looked into and maybe there could be some give and take.

Commissioner Bjork stated that the numbers being presented have no context and maybe applicant renegotiate the prices because the numbers are too high.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that given the location of the windows and history of the building the curved windows are incredibly important to the architecture of this building.

Secretary McCann stated that he had no issue with the replacement of the flat double hungs windows, which constituted 90% of all the windows. But he couldn't think about replacing the curved windows with anything but a curved flat panel and the information presented was insufficient because he doubted the \$15,000 cost to restore each window.

Mr. Bross asked about replacing the existing curved double hung with a reproduction a true double hung.

Secretary McCann stated that they have to vote that either the current windows are not architecturally important or that it would cause an undue economic hardship and unfortunately they cannot say that as they question the veracity of the numbers presented tonight.

Commissioner Conroy stated she would agree with Secretary McCann and would need to see another quote as those windows make the building.

Mr. Bross stated that the existing windows don't even have glass in them. They have plexi glass so they technically are not removing a historical element at that point. The sash is historical but the plexi-glass is not.

Mr. Bross stated that the problem is they only have a million dollar budget and they think the best way to address problems is to do the exterior.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if the project cost presented were for the entire building. Mr. Bross stated that it was just for the exterior.

Mr. Bross stated that he feels that Commission will not approve the replacement true double hungs' and the Commission is looking for full restoration and he can go on record saying that it will be cost prohibitive for this project.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if they would consider replacing in kind.

Mr. Bross stated that he would and that they could go back and talk with the contractor but the restoration of the windows and staging the building alone will be a nightmare and in this construction market you can't find many people to do curve windows so that is why the price is so high.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that given the fact that glass was replaced with plex-glass doesn't limited their historic value so he is not prepare to make determination that those windows can't be refurbished especially with the financials presented and the question hasn't been answered whether they need to be replaced.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that he has no issues with the repointing. The problem is with a sealer being used and doesn't think that would be approved.

Mr. Bross stated that they could do without sealant.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked Mr. Bross if he like to continue the other portion of the application for the curved windows to present more information to the Commission.

Mr. Bross asked if the Commission would like to tour the building.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that a site visit would be helpful.

Commissioner Conroy stated that since they are going to view the building she would prefer to hold off on the other portion of the application regarding windows until they have toured the building.

Jo Hart suggested that applicant look into historical tax credits.

Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Commissioner Bjork the Commission voted 6-0 to approve a continuance of the two window portions of the application until the September 17, 2015 Historical Commission meeting and to extend the constructive grant deadline until October 2, 2015.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition for the repointing of the brick masonry on the north west elevation with mortar to match existing not to include the application of a sealant would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical with condition that resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waive received August 6, 2015 and dated August 6, 2015.

Exhibit B: Request to continue meeting form dated September 4, 2015 and received September 4, 2015.

OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Letter from Massachusetts Historical Commission re: Osgood Bradley Building, 18 Grafton Street; dated July 30, 2015 and received August 14, 2015. No comment.
- b. Letter from Massachusetts Historical Commission re: St. Joseph's Home for Working Girls, 52 High Street; dated August 18, 2015 and received August 24, 2015. No comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion the Commission voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.