

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

February 4, 2021

CITY HALL*

Commission Members Participating: Devon Kurtz, Vice-Chair
Diane Long, Clerk
Randolph Bloom
Tomi Stefani
Janet Theerman
Erika Helnarski, Alternate

Commission Members Not Participating: Mark Wamback, Chair

Staff Members Participating: Stephen Rolle, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services
Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services

*Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 23, 2020 Order, as amended, imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting was conducted through remote participation. The meeting was livestreamed from the City of Worcester website and via the local cable access channel and is available for streaming online. Public participation was facilitated through a call-in number, 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1608081191#), which was publicized on the posted meeting agenda and during the video broadcast.

CALL COMMISSION TO ORDER

The Commission was called to order by Vice-Chair Devon Kurtz at 5:35 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 7, 2021: On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to approve the January 7, 2021 meeting minutes.

January 21, 2021: On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the January 5, 2021 meeting minutes, with Commissioner Bloom not voting due to his absence at the January 21, 2021 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

1. 30 Highland Street – HC-2021-001 (MBL 02-036-00002)

Petitioner: Serrato Signs o/b/o Alana Giannopoulos

Year Built: 1790

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register District (NRDIS),
FKA the Salisbury Store

Petition Purpose:

- Install a wall sign

Andy Serrato of Serrato Signs spoke in regards to the application. He stated the intent of the application, which is to install a rail-mounted sign, which was shown in the presentation.

Commissioner Kurtz asked what the letters in the sign would be made of. Mr. Serrato stated that the letters would be made of PVC, and that the rails that they will be mounted on will be aluminum.

Ms. Johnstone gave an overview of the Commission's purview, stating that what is being considered by the Commission is limited to whether the penetrations in the wall will be detrimental to the building, and not the design of the sign.

Commissioner Stefani asked if there would be two screws per letter, and what type of screws would be used. Mr. Serrato stated that there would be two screws per word, and that 1/8" drywall screws would be used.

Commissioner Bloom asked if the building is currently in use. Mr. Serrato stated that he was unsure if the building is currently in use.

No public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition at 30 Highland Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester, and thus approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A. Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated January 12, 2021, and received January 19, 2021

2. 7 Northampton Street – HC-2021-002 (MBL 01-009-0008A)

Petitioner: Jim Brooks and Ken Wolanin, City of Worcester o/b/o Geraldine E. Connell, owner

Year Built: ca. 1890

Historic Status: Located in an historic area (Grant Square – WOR.AE)

Petition Purpose:

- Replace windows
- Repair fascia & trim
- Repair porch & associated elements

Ken Wolanin of the City of Worcester spoke in regards to the application. He stated the intent of the project, which is to get apartments in the building ready for occupancy. He stated that most windows have been replaced, that the house has vinyl siding, and the porches have been removed, and that the building is in disrepair and dangerous. He noted that about 8 or 9 windows will be replaced; that the porch will be demolished and rebuilt in a similar layout; that the fascia and trim will be repaired to match the existing fascia and trim.

Commissioner Helnarski asked if the windows proposed for infill would be covered with siding, or if a smaller window to match a first-floor window would be installed. Mr. Wolanin stated that they are proposed to be covered with siding, but if the Commission preferred, they could install windows instead.

Ms. Johnstone noted that the Commission needs to have two discussions about the property: first, whether the property falls under the Commission's purview given the significant alterations to the building; and then if it is decided that the Commission does have purview, a discussion of whether or not a Building Demolition Delay Waiver should be issued.

Commissioner Long stated that given the alterations to the home and that it is no longer eligible for listing in the National Register, she was of the opinion that a Leave to Withdraw should be issued.

Commissioner Bloom agreed with Commissioner Long, and noted that the building has been highly altered.

Commissioner Theerman agreed as well, noting that it appears as though the only original portion of the building are brackets along the cornice.

No Public Comment

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition at 7 Northampton Street is not subject to the Historic Building Demolition Ordinance because the structure has been heavily altered and is no longer potentially eligible for listing on the National Register, and granted a Leave to Withdraw without prejudice for the application.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver application dated and received January 15, 2021.

Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver

3. 7 Oxford Street – HC-2020-098 (MBL 03-025-00004)

Petitioner: Don & Helen Pham

Year Built: ca. 1846

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register District (NRDIS); Positive National Register Opinion of Eligibility; Crown Hill LHD, FKA Henry P. Howe House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace all windows on front and side elevations

Certificate of Non-Applicability

4. 7 Oxford Street – HC-2020-099 (MBL 03-025-00004)

Petitioner: Don & Helen Pham

Year Built: ca. 1846

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register District (NRDIS); Positive National Register Opinion of Eligibility; Crown Hill LHD, FKA Henry P. Howe House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace all windows on rear elevations
- Repave driveway
- Create new parking area for four cars behind house

Items 3 & 4 were taken together.

Don Pham, the building owner, spoke in regards to the application. He stated that he intends to replace all the windows in the house. He stated that there are 42 windows total, 7 of which are not clearly visible, or not visible at all, from the street. He stated that he would like to replace the not visible and not clearly visible windows with vinyl rather than aluminum-clad wood, which will be the product used for the visible windows.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he would be recusing himself on the item.

Ms. Johnstone gave an overview of the project, starting with the window work, which required a Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver. She stated that the visible windows on the front and sides of the building are proposed to be replaced with simulated divided light wood windows with aluminum cladding, which are proposed in the colors of white or ivory; all windows on the front and side elevations are proposed to be six-over-six except for those on the first floor of the façade, which will be six-over-nine. She also stated that the

windows on the rear of the building, which are partially visible from Pleasant Street, but are not as visible as the remainder of the windows on the building, are proposed to be replaced with vinyl replacement windows.

Then, Ms. Johnstone described the work being applied for as a Certificate of Non-Applicability. She stated that the applicant is proposing to repave the driveway and create a parking area in the rear of the property.

Commissioner Long asked for clarification on the color of the proposed windows. Ms. Johnstone stated that the windows are currently painted black with white surrounds. She stated that the existing black sash is appropriate for the time period of the house. Commissioner Long inquired as to whether it would be possible to have the replacement windows also be black.

Mr. Pham stated that the windows can be done in black or green.

Ms. Johnstone stated that Mr. Pham and she had a discussion about appropriate colors to use on the sash of the house. She stated that she let him know that appropriate colors include black or forest green.

Commissioner Kurtz stated that he would be more comfortable with a dark color replacement window.

Mr. Pham asked why his neighbor has installed windows different than what the Commission is requiring of him.

Ms. Johnstone stated that the house that Mr. Pham was referring to did receive a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work in question. The approval allowed for a white window, because the windows being removed were already white, and that the Commission did not specify that the grids needed to be simulated divided lights, which was a misstep. She also stated that the fact that the Commission was not specific in that case does not mean that it has set a precedent for all decisions.

Commissioner Stefani asked for clarification as to whether all the windows would be replaced with six-over-six windows, noting that some windows are currently two-over-two. Ms. Johnstone stated that that is what is proposed in the application.

Commissioner Long stated that since the windows in the rear are barely visible, she would be willing to approve black or dark color vinyl replacement windows in those openings.

Public Comment

Eric and Tomo Cruze Sakai submitted written comment, stating that members of their group [Historic Crown Hill Neighborhood Association] would like to suggest that the replacement windows at 7 Oxford Street be black simulated divided light windows with exterior grids.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0, with Commissioner Bloom having recused himself, to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Helnarski asked for clarification on that the color of the replacement windows would be, and stated that she would like to see black windows used. Mr. Pham stated that he had concerns over what would happen if he could not get black windows, but could get green. Commissioner Helnarski stated that she would be most comfortable with approving black replacement windows, especially considering the letter received in public comment.

Commissioner Kurtz stated that for the time period of the house, black or dark green would both be appropriate.

Ms. Johnstone gave clarification on the color green that is appropriate for the time period of the house, which is forest green; a very dark green color.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0, with Commissioner Bloom having recused himself, that the proposed changes to 7 Oxford Street consisting of the replacement of all visible windows with aluminum-clad wood, simulated divided light windows with exterior muntin profiles, all six-over-six except for those on the first floor of the façade, which will be six-over-nine, in the color black or forest green, and the replacement of the rear-facing windows with vinyl windows in a color to match the remainder of the replacement windows, would be appropriate to the Crown Hill Local Historic District.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0, with Commissioner Bloom having recused himself, that the proposed demolition at 7 Oxford Street, as described in the Certificate of Appropriateness, would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester.

Mr. Pham described the proposal for the driveway and parking area. He stated that in the back of the house, he is proposing to put a paved parking area to accommodate four cars.

Commissioner Stefani asked if the fence atop the retaining wall would be rebuilt. Mr. Pham stated that it would be.

Ms. Johnstone stated that a fence replacement was not proposed. She asked Mr. Pham if he planned on replacing the fence. He stated that he was.

Commissioner Kurtz let Mr. Pham know that any alterations to the fence would be a separate application. Staff concurred, letting him know that the driveway and parking area are the only things under consideration.

Commissioner Theerman asked for clarification on whether or not the proposed parking area would be visible from the street. Commissioner Kurtz stated that when he visited the property, he could not see the proposed location from the street. Ms. Johnstone stated that she had the same experience during her site visit.

No public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0, with Commissioner Bloom having recused himself, to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0, with Commissioner Bloom having recused himself, that the proposed changes consisting of repaving the asphalt driveway with like materials and creating a parking area that is not viewable from the street in the rear of the building at 7 Oxford Street is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission and is therefore not applicable, and thereby approved a Certificate of Non-Applicability.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver application dated December 17, 2020, and received December 30, 2020.

Exhibit B: Certificate of Non-Applicability application dated December 17, 2020, and received December 30, 2020.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Request from MacRostie Historic Advisors for new letters of support for Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit allocations for the P.E. Somers Manufacturing Company Building, 35 Lagrange Street; the L. Robbins Machine Shop, 42 Lagrange Street; the L.D. Thayer Manufacturing Company, 47 Lagrange Street; and the Harwood & Quincy Machine Company, 50 Lagrange Street.

Ms. Johnstone gave a background on the proposed tax credit projects.

On a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to issue letters of support for the above listed properties.

- B. Notification from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regarding a proposed antenna installation/upgrade at 160 Woodland Street, in compliance with Section 106.

The Commission did not have comment on this communication.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 PM.