

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

**January 29, 2009**

**WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY, 2 SALEM SQUARE, SAXE ROOM**

**Commission Members Present:** Peter Schneider, Chair  
Thomas Constantine, Vice Chair  
James Crowley  
Timothy McCann  
Janet Merrill  
Michael Theerman

**Staff Present:** Joel Fontane, Planning and Regulatory Services  
Edgar Luna, Planning and Regulatory Services  
Luba Zhaurova, Planning and Regulatory Services

**REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)**

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the January 15, 2009 meetings were accepted.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **67 Catharine Street (HC-2008-101) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Steven W. Hart, representative for Worcester East Side Community Development Corporation, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Hart stated that the petitioner was seeking a Building Demolition Delay Waiver to implement the following changes: (1) Remove and replace the existing roofing material with synthetic architectural shingles (2) Remove and replace windows with synthetic windows of the same size as the originals in a style that is appropriate to the period of the house, (3) Remove and replace the front entry door with a door that matches the size and glazing pattern of the existing entry door; (4) Repair and paint the existing exterior siding and trim with materials that match the original period details of the Queen Anne style house at 67 Catharine Street (also known as the Charles Lundberg Three-Decker).

Commissioner Theerman asked Mr. Hart to describe the type of siding material currently in place and Mr. Hart stated that the siding was wood, and indicated that the petitioner plans to preserve it. Chair Schneider asked what was the color selected for the siding and Mr. Hart indicated that the color has not yet been selected. Chair Schneider stated that in his opinion, subdued colors would be more appropriate for the house due to its style and

also indicated that painting the exterior in white may may not look appropriate. In addition, Chair Schneider asked if the trim and window casings would be preserved and Mr. Hart responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Theerman stated that the style and details of front door were significant features to the period of the house; therefore, he asked the presenter to consider repairing the door instead of replacing it. Mr. Hart responded that the door is in bad condition and does not conserve the heat well, but that it is salvageable.

Chair Schneider indicated that the second floor windows did not appear to be original. Mr. Hart responded that he will make an effort to find and install matching windows.

Commissioner Theerman stated that the spindles on the porch baluster should match the spindles under the eave of the porch, which are turned.

Commissioner McCann asked if the applicant would consider replacing the metal railing in front of the house. Mr. Hart responded that he would consider it, especially due to safety reasons. Chair Schneider asked if a handicapped entrance was required and Mr. Hart responded that it was not a code requirement.

Upon reviewing the petition submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 6-0 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 was approved with the condition that the front entry door be repaired rather than replaced.

In a related matter, Mr. Hart asked if the Commission would be amenable to writing a letter of support to the Massachusetts Historical Commissions for the Massachusetts Preservation Fund Grant that the applicant is applying for. He said that the building is listed on numerous historic registries and is one of the few remaining triple-deckers with the original exterior materials and details intact. The Commission indicated that it would be willing to write a letter of support for 67 Catherine Street.

- 2. 48 Water Street (HC-2009-001) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Elizabeth Krupp, Taya Dixon, and Scott Maenpaa representatives for Winn Development - Canal Lofts Limited Partnership, the petitioner, presented the plan. Ms. Krupp stated that the petitioner was seeking a Building Demolition Delay Waiver to implement the following changes: (1) Remove and replace approximately 284 window assemblies, plywood, infill masonry, and equipment throughout the building, with windows of the same size and appearance as the original windows; (2) Re-open 8 original window openings that had been closed permanently (bricked up) and install new windows of the same size and appearance as the original windows; (3) Install new double leaf wood door with a glazed transom at existing entrance door; (4) Create opening in center of building on Water Street to serve as main entrance at street level and install new entrance door. A second egress door will be created at the Winter Street end of the building to provide adequate

gress from a new interior fire stair; (5) Remove and replace entire roof with roofing material that is similar in texture and color as the roofing materials in place. Install new roof insulation. (6) Repair and re-point exterior brick work throughout the building where needed; (7) New inoperable garage doors will be installed within the existing loading docks; however, several panels will be glazed rather than solid to provide natural light and air to the interior; (8) The overhead garage door on the third floor of the Harding Street elevation will be removed, and the original two window openings reconstructed and new windows installed; (9) Two deteriorated panel doors and a modern steel door will be removed, and three new sets of new double leaf doors with glazed transoms will be installed in the existing three doorways on the Harding Street elevation; (10) The existing concrete block in the ground floor opening of the Harding Street elevation will be replaced with a new overhead garage door; (11) Four new basement level window openings will be created on the Water Street elevation within existing light wells below the sidewalk; (12) 16 existing windows on the Winter Street elevation (in the alley between buildings) will be removed, openings in-filled and have replaced, and fire shutters left open on a fused link (this is reflected in total number of replaced windows above; the 16 windows are not included in the count).

Ms. Dixon stated that the conditions of the windows are beyond repair. She also stated that the National Park Service, who would be providing limited funding for the project, had indicated that they would prefer wood-framed windows, although they would also be amenable to aluminum-framed windows. In addition, Ms Dixon showed members of the Commission a sample of the proposed window which was a glass panel inserted in a wooden frame painted Hartford Green. Commissioner Crowley indicated that the proposed color would be appropriate to the style and period of the building. Chair Schneider asked if the main entrance door would be reconfigured. Mr. Maenpaa indicated that an existing window bay would be retrofitted and used as an entrance. Commissioner Theerman asked if the petitioner had considered installing mechanical systems in the in the building, and Mr. Maenpaa responded that the proposed project included a chiller and a fresh air unit, but no antennas. Commissioner Theerman and Commissioner Constantine expressed their support for the proposed project as presented.

Upon reviewing the petition submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 6-0 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 was approved.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**230 Salisbury Street – Compliance Issue:** Upon reviewing the draft letter to 230 Salisbury Street inquiring about the status of the repairs to the deck at 230 Salisbury Street, the Commission voted 6-0 to authorized the Chair to sign the letter.

**Informational Session for Property Owners within the Proposed Local Historic District (LHD):** 15 neighborhood residents attended the meeting. Commissioner Merrill recused herself.

Mr. Fontane, Director of Planning and Regulatory Services, made a presentation of the project titled "Crown Hill Local Historic District Informational Session. January 29, 2009." He indicated that the Crown Hill area was a unique neighborhood, and emphasized its importance to the City from a planning perspective. In addition, he showed a map of the proposed district, presented a Local Historic District designation timeline, and listed and responded to some common questions that people might have with regards to the designation.

Marc Tumeinsky, representative for Crown Hill Neighborhood Association (CHNA), petitioner, presented the proposed project from the neighborhood's perspective. He stated that the Association has been active since 1977, striving to support, protect, and restore the architectural significance of the Crown Hill neighborhood to its original condition. In addition, he stated that CHNA is committed to preserving community and civic life in the neighborhood. He also stated that the Association was concerned that a quick development would overwhelm and change irrevocably the neighborhood. Mr. Tumeinsky stated that the organization was working to ensure that the area would become a healthy, enjoyable place to work, and visit. He also assured the public that there is flexibility in the process for low-income residents. He said that the CHNA will contribute \$1,200 to the City of Worcester toward LHD designation.

Mr. Fontane stated that City Manager had allocated \$6,800 towards the project and that if additional funds become available, more properties can be surveyed by an architectural historian.

One of the attendees asked whether or not he would need approval of the Commission if he needed to replace the windows. Chair Schneider responded that it depends on whether or not these windows are visible from the public way. If they are, then a Certificate of Appropriateness would be required.

Jim Savage of 54 Elm Street asked if he would need Commission's approval if he needed to replace a slate roof on his house which is leaking. Chair Schneider responded that he found that repair of slate roofs is often more economical in the long term than its replacement. He stated that if the part of the roof being replaced is not seen from a public way, then Mr. Savage would not need to seek the Commission's approval. Commissioner Crowley stated that residents can apply for hardship exemption as well. Mr. Savage asked how often the Commission grants an exemption. Commissioner Crowley responded that not many exemptions have been granted, but he believes it is due to the fact that the residents in the other two LHDs are generally of higher income than the residents of the Crown Hill.

Mr. Savage expressed his belief that the Crown Hill area neighborhood had the same potential for development future as a revival of downtown Washington, DC a few decades ago. He said that he has seen considerable improvements to the area in the past 15 years and believes that LHD designation might be a good thing for the neighborhood. He asked if it is possible to extend the proposed district even further. Mr. Fontane responded that the Historical Commission can not recommend to the City Council an area larger than the one petitioned by the CHNA. Chair Schneider added that the district can be expanded in the future through a different petition.

An attendee asked if solar panels will be allowed on the roofs. Chair Schneider responded that he does not yet know the answer to this question.

Candace Haddad of 18 and 24 Oxford Street, said that she is lamenting tearing down of the 16 Oxford Street house and asked if anyone knows of a historic house that can be moved to the now vacant lot. Mr. Luna suggested contacting Preservation Worcester for ideas.

Barbara Haller, District 4 City Councilor, asked if there is data that shows correlation between Local Historic District designation and gentrification. Chair Schneider responded that he is not aware of any research that specifically studied a possible link between gentrification and Local Historic Districts. Randy Bloom of 2 Congress Street echoed Ms. Haller's concern regarding gentrification and said that he is not sure that the residents can keep gentrification from the neighborhood. He then asked whether the residents are eligible for funds to subsidize building repairs. Mr. Fontane responded that he is not aware of funding for individual property owners, but that there might be funds available for commercial properties.

Chair Schneider asked how many people in the audience were from the blue area (1976 National Historic Register District). Approximately a third of the attendees raised their hands. There were approximately three people from the expanded 1980 National Historic Register District, and no one was present from the red hatched area (outside of the National Historic Register District) proposed for the LHD designation. Chair Schneider said that more work and outreach needs to be done in that part of the proposed district.

**266 Lincoln Street – Baptist Church.** Commissioner Merrill rejoined the Commission. Commissioner Crowley recused himself. Chair Schneider referred to a letter from ATC Associates, Inc. received by the Department of Planning and Regulatory Services regarding construction of a four panel antennae and associated power and telecommunication lines. Chair Schneider stated that since the antennae will be located on the inside of the building, he has no opposition to the project. Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 5-0 that it has no objection to the placement of a four panel antennae and associated power and telecommunication lines at 255 Lincoln Street.

**17 Southgate Place - Adriatic Mill Building:** Chair Schneider informed the Commission of a Notice of Project Change to the Mass Environmental Protection Agency Office that he has received. He said that the entire building will be demolished because the project engineer stated it is not structurally sound and that no part of the building can be preserved.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7:15 P.M.