

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

April 9, 2009

**CHASE BUILDING, 44 FRONT STREET, WORCESTER
SUITE 300 – CONFERENCE ROOM**

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

Staff Present: 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

The minutes from the March 12, 2009 meeting were accepted as amended.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. 100 Water Street (HC-2009-005):** The Commission had received letters requesting continuation and an extension of the constructive grant deadline from Andrew K. Feldman, the applicant. Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Merrill, the Commission voted 5-0 to continue the hearing and the constructive grant deadline to April 30, 2009.

- 2. 12 Hitchcock Road (HC-2009-004):** Jacqueline Vachon-Jackson, Lead Abatement Program Manager in the city's Neighborhood and Housing Services Division, and representative for Francis Risolo, the applicant, stated that the petitioner sought to replace eleven windows for the purposes of lead paint abatement. She stated that six of the windows are in the rear of the building and are not visible from the street, while the other five are basement windows. The Commissioners agreed that the basement windows are barely visible from the street. Upon reviewing the petition submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner 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 was approved.

- 3. 3 Oxford Place (HC-2009-006):** Russell Haims, the petitioner, presented the petition to the Commission and stated that he was seeking to remove and replace the roofing with synthetic

architectural shingles that have a mixed-slate look; repair exterior siding where needed by preparing it for painting; and replace all 32 windows with six-over-six pane vinyl bronze windows. He stated that most of the windows are original six-over-six sash windows, and that many windows and most of the storm windows are in poor condition. Chair Schneider noted that research had shown that the statement about vinyl windows having a quicker payback than wood windows is not always true, because vinyl windows' life span is much shorter than that of the historic wood windows. Chair Schneider suggested that the applicant preserve the existing windows and use insulation and weather stripping to make them more air-tight. Mr. Haims responded that many homeowners have a perception that new windows are more economical and air-tight, and that weather-stripping is unsightly. He also added that while the investment of restoring the wood windows would be done by him, the maintenance costs would be passed on to the future homeowners. Commissioner Merrill responded that research has shown that prospective homebuyers of historic houses value and appreciate the original features of the house, including the windows.

Commissioner Crowley stated that window restoration has been an important issue for the Commission in the past, and that he would not like to set a precedent by allowing the applicant to install vinyl windows, especially given the fact that the area in the near future might become part of a Local Historic District. He further added that research has been showing that rehabilitated original windows are as energy-efficient as vinyl windows. Mr. Haims responded that some windows and majority of the storm windows are damaged beyond repair. He then asked what the Commission would recommend using as a substitute for storm windows if he decided to rehabilitate existing windows. Commissioner Merrill stated that the Commission has been less concerned with the look of the new storm windows. Chair Schneider asked if the applicant would be willing to restore the original windows on the house's façade and the side visible from the street. Mr. Haims indicated that he would be amenable to that.

Mr. Haims asked why 1 Oxford Place has vinyl windows despite being on the MACRIS list as well. Commissioner Merrill responded that the owner either did not apply for the DDW and risked getting a Cease and Desist order from the Inspectional Services, or the windows were replaced prior to a date when the Demolition Delay Waiver ordinance took effect.

Tom Johnson, former Historical Commission member, commended Mr. Haims for the work he has done at 5 Claremont Street, but also urged him to consider the Commission's recommendations. Chair Schneider asked if the trim around the windows would be preserved if the vinyl windows were to be installed, to which Mr. Haims responded yes. Chair Schneider asked if the applicant would keep the ginger-bread molding, to which Mr. Haims responded yes. Mr. Haims then stated that the porch in the back of the house serving as a second means of egress for this two-family dwelling is not part of the original structure. He stated that since it is not structurally sound, it will be replaced.

The Commission opted to vote separately on each proposed exterior change.

Upon reviewing the petition submitted to: (1) remove and replace roofing with synthetic architectural shingles; and (2) repair exterior siding where needed and all evidence provided,

and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, 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 was approved.

Upon reviewing the petition submitted to: (3) replace all 32 windows with six-over-six pane vinyl bronze windows and all evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 1-4 (Commissioner Constantine voted yes and Commissioners Schneider, Crowley, McCann, and Merrill voted no) that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester. The motion failed and it was denied.

The Commission considered a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for replacing the windows on the west side and in the rear (south) of the building with six-over-six pane vinyl bronze windows and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, 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 was approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Holy Name of Jesus Church Disposition: Deborah Packard of Preservation Worcester informed the Commission that she had contacted Bishop McManus of the Diocese of Worcester by letter in the summer of 2008 with regards to the four churches being closed by the Diocese, three of which are on the MACRIS list, for the purpose of disposition. In the letter, she explained the process of requesting a Building Demolition Delay Waiver. Ms. Packard stated that last week she was informed that stained-glass windows in the Holy Name of Jesus Church have been removed before the sale. When she contacted the parish, she was told that the parishioners paid for the stained-glass windows, which are worth \$1,500 per SF, and that the windows are now given back to the parishioners to be used to join other parishes. Commissioner Crowley stated that while he disapproves of what has happened, this is now an enforcement issue, and thus, is outside the Historical Commission's purview. Commissioner Constantine suggested that the Commission write a letter to the Diocese focusing on prevention of such violations during disposition of the other two churches (Saint Casimir and Notre Dame des Canadiens). Chair Schneider asked if the Diocese needed a Building Permit to remove windows. Ms. Packard answered that based on her phone conversation with the Diocese, the Building Permit was not obtained. Chair Schneider requested on behalf of the Commission that DPRS staff contact the Law Department and Inspectional Services Department with regards to violation of the Demolition Delay Waiver; as well as to draft a letter addressed to the Diocese which would serve as a reminder of the DDW procedure and purview of the Historical Commission.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 6:35 P.M.