

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
October 18, 2012**

**5:30 P.M. at WORCESTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM
6:15 P.M. at LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL**

Commission Members Present: Tom Constantine, Chair
Tim McCann, Vice-Chair
Kevin Provencher, Clerk
James Crowley
Andrew Shveda
Meagan Mulherin

Staff Members Present: Joel Fontane, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Marlyn Feliciano, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Tom Constantine called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm at the Worcester Historical Museum, 30 Elm Street, Main Entrance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

No minutes were approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. 30 Elm Street (HC-2012-051)

Bill Wallace (Director of the Museum) introduced John Wadsworth (architect), Mark Shelton (Vice President of Museum) and Bob Smith (Chair of Building & Grounds Committee) and then proceeded to give an overview of the request to the Commission.

The request is to replace the two main set of doors with code compliant doors and repair the set on the far left with windows that mirror the new doors that will be installed. The purpose for this change will be to improve access. The set of doors on the far right needs to be compliant with handicapped accessibility regulations. Presently they are not complaint due to the size. Mr. Wallace stated that the other purpose was to improve visibility for both the customers entering and the ones exiting the building. This increased visibility is also meant to improve safety, as museum staff members are unable to see who is approaching the premises.

Mr. Wallace stated that the present doors don't close well and they would be improving the energy efficiency of their building by replacing the doors and therefore preserving the history within the museum better. Mr. Wallace argued the current doors are difficult to open and there have been occasions where someone exiting the building almost hits someone entering the building. Finally, Mr. Wallace stated that they want to change the doors to help re-brand the Museum as a vibrant place for the community.

Mr. Wallace presented to the Commission what the proposed doors will look like. They are black metal frame glass doors. He explained that nothing other than the doors is proposed to be changed. He also pointed out that the handicapped accessible door would have one side that's wider than the other to comply with AAB regulations.

John Wadsworth explained that the intent of the door design is to complete the circle that's already on the façade of the building. He stated that the look will remain consistent with all three doors even though one will be the main entrance, one will be a window, and one will be the handicapped entrance. Symmetry was a determining factor of the design chosen.

Mr. Wallace explained how keeping the doors, no matter how much restoration is done, wouldn't meet all of their goals (mentioned above). The new doors would communicate that the museum is a warm, welcoming, exciting environment while respecting the architecture and the current doors would still be non-compliant.

Mr. Wallace explained that the Museum's Building Committee and Board had spent much time discussing this change and that they were requesting the Building Demolition Delay Waiver to move forward with the project now rather than exhausting the delay period.

Mr. Fontane informed the Commission that a letter of opposition was submitted by Susan McDaniel Ceccacci on September 20, 2012, just before the last meeting on this matter and it had not been discussed at the last meeting due to time constraints.

Deborah Packard, Executive Director of Preservation Worcester, stated that the letter submitted by Ms. Ceccacci contain her thoughts as an architectural historian and not as a staff member for Preservation Worcester. Ms. Packard stated the mission of Preservation Worcester and that the organization recognizes the challenges of adapting historical buildings to meet changing needs and to remain compliant. They support adaptive reuse of buildings while maintaining architectural integrity and promote excellence in new design.

Ms. Packard stated that on October 12, 2012 Mr. Wallace was invited to Preservation Worcester's Board of Director's meeting to present the proposed design for the Worcester Historical Museum. After careful consideration, the Preservation Worcester's Board of Directors voted 7-1-2 (yes, no, abstain) that the design does not meet their concerns for the architectural integrity of the building. Ms. Packard stated that Preservation Worcester would like to see design options that focus on the central doors while leaving the side doors unchanged. She stated that since the doors are significant features of the structure and unique in the city strong efforts should be made to keep them while the Museum attempts to achieve their goals.

Ms. Packard offered a few suggestions: that the existing transom lights should be restored with the original grates. The museum can be made more welcoming through improved exterior lighting, dynamic signage, landscaping, exterior art, canopies, etc. and it can achieve some of its other goals by moving the receptionist desk to improve visibility and extending the handicap ramp to the main entrance. She stated that the proposal is not an emergency and that proper time should be given to look for an alternate solution.

Mr. Crowley asked what made the doors non-compliant with AAB regulations. Mr. Schveda responded that there needed to be at least 32 inches of clearance but that any building official would grandfather them in because of their historic nature. Mr. Wallace stated that they were grandfathered but they do not meet present building code and if the building needed to be re-

evaluated at some point for occupancy then the doors would not be approved. Mr. Wallace also stated that staff receives complaints from the patrons regarding the difficulty of opening the doors. Mr. Schveda reiterated that the doors were presently not in violation of code.

Mr. Constantine asked if having an automatic door opener open the pair of doors wouldn't resolve the accessibility issue. Mr. Wallace agreed but stated that that solution didn't address their other concerns (re-branding, environmental controls, security).

Mr. Shelton stated he has been on the Museum Board for almost a decade. Mr. Shelton stated he wanted to re-define access from just the legal regulations. The museum is always trying to gain people's interest and keep them coming in to take advantage of what the museum has to offer. Presently they are building a family gallery geared towards a more interactive experience to attract people who are looking for a more contemporary way of looking at history. Mr. Shelton stated he defined access as a child who comes to the doors, excited to visit the museum, and obstructed by these doors.

Mr. Crowley stated that if this request had been submitted by someone else the Historical Commission would educate that individual about the importance of preserving the architecture and history of the City. Mr. Crowley stated that the historical significance of the doors is not in question, economic hardship has not been presented as a reason, and the only thing that the Commission was being asked to do was to waive the delay.

Mr. Smith stated that this change wasn't being done impetuously. After the fire that destroyed the visitor center, the Board had various meetings and discussions over the course of a year on how to use the space they currently have; that's why they have been re-doing some of the galleries, replacing the HVAC system, adding the mural in the entryway, providing spaces for programs and changing the first impression people have of the museum.

Jo Hart, Worcester resident, stated that the discussion should be continued at City Hall.

Mr. Constantine called a recess at 6:05 p.m. and stated the Board will reconvene at 6:15 pm at City Hall, Levin Lincoln Chamber.

Mr. Constantine ended the recess at 6:17 pm.

Mr. Constantine stated that the Commission has to decide if the change proposed would be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City.

Mr. Fontane asked if he could present his report to the Commission. Mr. Fontane stated that as stated in the Form B, this building symbolizes an important period in American horticultural history. It is clear that preservation of the Elm and Chestnut Street facades would act as important documentation of the important period this building represents. However, to remain viable, historic buildings frequently need to be adapted to modern times through renovations that improve access and serve the current programmatic needs of tenants.

The Historical Museum carries on the tradition of this building being open to and used by the public. That is this buildings primary historical significance as indicated in the Form B for this building. This building also has architectural significance, particularly as it relates to its entrance. The applicant puts forth a case that the changes proposed need to be made to adapt this building to the needs of the Historical Museum. Additional information is needed to demonstrate whether undue hardship would be caused by not waiving the automatic delay.

Specifically, whether the applicant has sufficiently considered options for reuse of the existing doors and whether those options are not feasible.

The Commission should consider the balance between preserving this building's architectural features vs. enabling it to continue to serve its historical significance. In this case, the applicant makes a case that the architectural changes proposed will help ensure the success of the museum and through that this building can continue what makes it, in part, historically significant - its long tradition of being open to the public. Certainly supporting the ongoing use as a Historical Museum is fitting for this building. In making this decision the Commission should evaluate whether an additional 10 month delay (since the applicant filed 2 months ago) will serve to change the outcome of this matter.

In the absence of sufficient additional information for the Commission to approve a delay waiver or an alternative agreed upon reuse, I respectfully recommend that the Commission consider whether there is a reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore the doors under consideration.

If not, then I respectfully recommend that the Commission vote to approve a reduction of the twelve month delay based on a finding pursuant to Chapter 9, Section 13(h) of the general revised ordinances that there is "no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore the doors under consideration."

Mr. Fontane also stated that they have heard from several members of the Historical Museum regarding what they would like to do: improve the visual access to their building, improve accessibility for the elderly, etc. Maintaining the balance between the current programmatic needs, the architectural significance and ensuring that this building continues to be used is what is important. All the groups that have spoken care deeply about Worcester and its history and they all want to preserve it.

The Chair asked if there was anyone else that wanted to speak to this matter.

Diane, Worcester resident, stated that if you remove the doors from the building, you are also taking the architectural value off the building. She stated that she believed there are other options available to the museum. Presently there are seven grants available and those grants total \$500 million to \$700 million in available funds. Some of that money can be used to repair and restore the doors.

Jo Hart stated that she believed that any problem with the doors could be fixed with the correct hardware and that the museum should be required to look for other options as it was unthinkable to remove the doors.

Bonnie Prescott, Preservation Worcester Board member, asked the architect to clarify what they planned to do with the set of doors on the left hand side.

Mr. Wadsworth replied that above the baluster would be glass for a window and below would be an aluminum panel that matches the doors. The intent is to have it blend in with the other openings. Mr. Wallace stated that the purpose was to create usable, practical space in the interior in order to improve the lobby functions.

Mr. Crowley stated that the Historical Commission's purpose is to preserve history and educate individuals on the architectural significance of their property. With that in mind we sometimes ask people to make sacrifices in order to keep the historical aspects of a building intact. Mr. Crowley stated that this request is not in the spirit of the commitment to preserve history. The doors are historical and it would be detrimental to replace them, the museum has not proven any undue hardship, and the only thing that was being asked of the Board was to exercise their discretion to reduce the delay period. Mr. Crowley stated that he couldn't believe that the Historical Museum would wait out ten months and not sit down with Preservation Worcester and find another solution.

Mr. Smith stressed that the Historical Museum Board (24 people) and staff discussed for a long time. It wasn't a casual or cavalier decision.

Diane, Worcester resident, thanked the museum director for the work that has been done to re-energize the museum. She stated that there is an energy efficient grant that can be used to work on the doors. She also mentioned an educational grant that may be used to build a handicapped ramp in a different area of the facility and a museum grant. The deadline for all these grants is October 30 and she advised that they apply right away.

Mr. Smith, Board of Trustees member for the Worcester Historical Society, stated that he is glad the public loves the building. He stated that the museum board members and the staff have a passion for what's in the building and for bringing people in to see the contents, which preserve Worcester's history. The current façade provides limited functionality and we can try to fix the doors but it doesn't make them code worthy or secure.

Mr. Wallace stated that he wanted to be clear that they did not want to impact the basic architecture of the facade just replace the most transient parts: doors, hinges, etc. They are not saving the doors but the hardware and frame will be preserved and the doors can be rebuilt at a later date.

Mr. Constantine stated he would entertain a motion.

Upon a motion by Mr. Schveda, seconded by Mr. McCann, the Board voted 0-5 (Mr. Crowley wasn't present at the first meeting therefore he couldn't vote) that the proposed will not be detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the City. The motion failed and therefore it was considered to be detrimental. Next the Commission considered the claim of undue economic hardship.

Upon a motion by Mr. McCann, seconded by Mr. Schveda, the Board voted 0-5 to approve the proposed because it would pose to undue economic hardship on the applicant. The motion failed and therefore it was considered not to be an undue hardship.

Upon a motion by Mr. McCann, seconded by Ms. Mulherin, the Board voted 0-5 to approve the reduction of the delay if there is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore the doors. The motion failed, therefore delay was not waived.

List of Exhibits.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Worcester Historical Museum; dated August 8, 2012.

- Exhibit B: Entrance Doors Plan prepared by Wadsworth & Associates Architects; dated February 6, 2012.
- Exhibit C: Memorandum to Commission from Joel Fontane, dated October 17, 2012.
- Exhibit D: Disclosure of Appearance of Conflict of Interest for Meagan Mulherin, signed September 20, 2012.
- Exhibit E: Letter of Opposition by Susan McDaniel Ceccacci, dated September 20, 2012.
- Exhibit F: Email Correspondence dated August 23, 2012.
- Exhibit G: Handouts given by William Wallace, October 18, 2012.

NEW BUSINESS:

2. 26 Millbury Street (HC-2012-056)

Victoria Mariano, new tenant for 26 Millbury Street, stated she is planning on opening a music venue, bar, and hookah lounge. The proposal is to replace the broken windows.

Mr. Constantine asked is the windows were made of aluminum.

Ms. Mariano answered that yes they were all aluminum frame windows and plans to replace them with safer, thicker windows. She stated she likes the art deco look of the building and wants to preserve it as much as possible. Ms. Mariano also stated that the only other proposal was to put on a brick or stone veneer that matches better on the parts that are aluminum on the bottom.

Mr. Constantine asked how many windows will be replaced and Ms. Mariano responded that they will be replacing all the front windows and the two doors.

Mr. McCann asked what other façade changes are planned. Ms. Mariano stated that the corner that was damaged will be replaced with brick or stone. Mr. Provencher asked the applicant if she was planning to in-fill any of the glazed areas. Ms. Mariano stated that the plan is to only replace the frame and the glass; there was an error on the plans.

Mr. Provencher asked the applicant to identify the material at the bottom of the windows. Ms. Mariano explained there was aluminum paneling covering brick and that her intention was to expose the brick and remove the aluminum paneling.

Mr. Schveda asked the applicant to explain what the façade will look like once the work is complete and the applicant replied that the bottom will be brick, then the aluminum windows, and the top will remain brick.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Constantine stated that he sees no historical significance to the materials that are there now and does not see a problem with the changes since she is replacing like with like.

Upon a motion by Mr. Crowley and seconded by Ms. Mulherin, the Board voted 5-1 (Mr. Provencher voting no) to approve the petition.

List of Exhibits.

- Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Victoria Mariano; dated September 13, 2012.
- Exhibit B: Proposed Floor Plan, dated July 2012.
- Exhibit C: Pictures of 26 Millbury Street facade, submitted October 15, 2012.
- Exhibit D: Entrance Door Details Drawing, dated March 2012.

3. 56 Holden Street (HC-2012-057)

Mike Almonte, Project Manager at Kidd-Luukko Corporation, stated the proposal was to re-roof the property. There is currently two layers of asphalt shingles on it and propose to remove both layers and replace with asphalt shingles.

Mr. Schveda asked if this job included any replacement of gutters, trim work, etc. Mr. Almonte stated that none will be changed. The only thing that could be changed would be the decking underneath the shingles depending on what they find when the roof is removed. There is no reason to replace any trim or molding at this time.

There was no public comment.

Upon a motion by Mr. McCann and seconded by Mr. Provencher, the Board voted 6-0 to approve the petition.

List of Exhibits.

- Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Mike Almonte; dated September 4, 2012 and submitted September 14, 2012.

4. 10-12-14 East Worcester Street (HC-2012-058)

Paul Gauvin, from Cardinal Construction, the petition purpose: demolish the existing enclosed loading dock structure at the front of the building, add three new windows on the first floor of the brick façade, add two six panel aluminum tubing trim in place of the former loading dock door opening, remove the existing entry door, stairs and canopy, and install a new portico and entry door.

Mr. Gauvin stated the interior of the building is undergoing renovation and will be made into office space and some retail space.

Mr. McCann asked how the applicant proposes making the new windows. Mr. Gauvin responded that they will undo the in-fill from the areas that were previously windows. Mr. Provencher asked what they planned to do about the missing header over the windows. Mr. Gauvin stated that they will have a local mason form it with concrete and make it look like the others.

Mr. Schveda asked if there were plans to fix the larger window than the rest on the front elevation. Mr. Gauvin stated that the owner wasn't planning to fix that because it would be a financial hardship to make it the same size as the others and has elected not to change it. Mr.

Schveda suggested that the in-fill that is being removed to create the three windows could be used to fix the odd window on top.

Mr. Constantine asked if the loading dock was part of the original building and Mr. Gauvin responded that it was added at a later date.

Upon a motion by Mr. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Crowley, the board voted 6-0 to approve the petition.

List of Exhibits.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Paul Gauvin; dated September 19, 2012 and submitted September 21, 2012.

Exhibit B: Proposed Plans, dated September 7, 2012.

Exhibit C: Pictures of 10-14 East Worcester Street facade, submitted September 21, 2012.

5. 68-70 Canterbury Street (HC-2012-059)

Michael Gesualdi from MG Building & Remodeling, stated he is working on both the interior and the exterior of the building. The petition purpose is to add a canopy above the corner door, install brick veneer around new windows on the front of the building and repaint the brick work, install new lighting, replace and paint the wood trim with like materials, replace all fiberglass doors with like materials, remove and install new windows on the first floor, and retroactive approval for wood window trim recently replaced with PVC. Mr. Gesualdi stated that the grills in the drawings submitted have been eliminated because it was too expensive.

Mr. Gesualdi stated all the brick work and all the openings will remain the same. He is unsure what is original to the building but it looks like it has undergone work various times in the past.

Mr. Provencher asked if all the doors will be replaced. Mr. Gesualdi stated that all the doors will be replaced, including the loading dock door. The front will be a fiberglass front door although the owner hasn't decided on the style of the front door. All the wood work surrounding the front door will remain the same, only the door itself will be replaced.

Mr. Provencher stated that he did not see any work that involved original material. Upon a motion by Mr. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Schveda, the board voted 6-0 to approve the work proposed.

List of Exhibits.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Michael Gesualdi; dated and submitted on September 20, 2012.

Exhibit B: Front Elevation & Building Code Analysis Drawing and Left & Right Elevations Drawing dated July 26, 2011.

Exhibit C: Pictures of 68-70 Canterbury Street, submitted September 20, 2012.

6. 5-7 Ashland Street (HC-2012-060)

Attorney John Finkelstein, representing Mr. Blair from Bullard Properties Inc, stated that the petition purpose was to replace the slate roof with a fiberglass shingle roof. He prepared a packet and handed it out to the Board at the meeting. Atty. Finkelstein stated that Mr. Blair received a letter from Inspectional Services on August 22, 2012 stating the property at 5-7 Ashland Street was in imminent danger of collapse and ordered to make immediate repairs. Atty. Finkelstein stated that the walls were buckling due to the roof's disrepair and explained that Mr. Blair was the mortgagee of the property and had to take it back because the owner was not paying the mortgage.

Atty. Finkelstein included quotes for the slate roof and for fiberglass shingles and he stated it would cost \$45,000 to do the roof in slate while it would be \$6,000 to do it in fiberglass shingles. He also stated that the value of 7 Ashland is \$136,000 and 5 Ashland is assessed at \$104,000. The cost of doing the slate roof would constitute a hardship. Also, the building has been vacant for at least 5 years.

Atty. Finkelstein stated that the historical nature of the building (1-7 Ashland) has already been compromised because 1 & 3 Ashland Street (half of the building) installed have vinyl siding over the brick and nothing can be done to remedy that since Mr. Blair doesn't own that portion of the building.

Mr. Provencher asked if the quotes provided included the cost of staging and Atty. Finkelstein stated that it did not include staging, which would be cost at least \$8,000. Mr. Blair stated that the structural issues inside the house were caused by the roof leaking and water getting in between the inner and outer brick walls, thus pushing out the walls. Atty. Finkelstein stated that there are portions of the roof on the side and the back of the property that have come off completely.

Mr. Constantine asked is slate has fallen to the ground. Mr. Blair responded that slate is falling and that he is under order to demolish it or repair it. Mr. Provencher asked if any of the slate was salvageable. Atty. Finkelstein stated that most of it was gone and the rest is not salvageable.

Upon a motion by Ms. Mulherin and seconded by Mr. Schveda, the board voted 5-1 (Kevin Provencher voting no) to approve the project.

List of Exhibits.

- Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Bullard Properties, Inc.; dated September 20, 2012 and submitted September 21, 2012.
- Exhibit B: Letter by Department of Inspectional Services dated August 22, 2012.
- Exhibit C: Letter from Michael Burke dated October 3, 2012.
- Exhibit D: Contractor quote for slate roof prepared by Barros Roofing dated October 15, 2012.
- Exhibit E: Contractor quote for fiberglass shingle roof prepared by Barros Roofing dated October 15, 2012.
- Exhibit F: MACRIS Inventory Listing for 1-7 Ashland Street.
- Exhibit G: Title Deed for 5-7 Ashland Street.

Exhibit H: Assessor's data for 5 Ashland and for 7 Ashland as of October 18, 2012.

Exhibit I: Picture of proposed fiberglass shingle product.

7. 128 Vernon Street (HC-2012-061)

Charles Wilmot is the contractor working on the property. The petition purpose is to remove and replace the three-story porch in the back, railings, decking and balusters with a pressure treated system frame. Mr. Wilmot stated the porch is not visible from Vernon Street and barely visible from Euclid Street. The porch is original to the house but has become dilapidated and is pulling away from the roof.

Mr. Crowley asked if there were any pictures accompanying the application. Mr. Wilmot replied that there were no pictures. Mr. Constantine asked if the porch was made of wood. Mr. Wilmot replied that it was and that the two design choices before the board were to put plywood on it and put cedar siding back on it or put pressure treated rails. The cost for the rails (leaving it open frame is \$3,000 and for doing it with the cedar siding is \$5,000.

Mr. Schveda produced an aerial view of the property from Google on his tablet.

Mr. Wilmot stated the owner's main concern is to replace the porch as soon as possible. He stated that they could make a condition to reconstruct it to match the existing look. The Commission offered to continue the petition to allow the contractor to discuss the added cost with the owner. Mr. Wilmot stated that he had advised the owner of both options and it depended on what the Commission decided. This project has been lagging for a while and the owner wants to get this done as soon as possible.

Upon a motion by Mr. McCann and seconded by Mr. Provencher the Commission voted 6-0 to approve the petition with the condition that it is built to match the existing look.

List of Exhibits.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Charles Wilmot; dated September 18, 2012 and submitted September 21, 2012.

OTHER BUSINESS:

8. Received Communication:

- Re: Blackstone Canal District Streetscape Improvement Project, MassDOT project Number 606888; from Vanesse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. dated 09/20/2012

The Board had no comment on this project. Mr. Schveda stated that he hopes no more bicycle-shaped bike racks are installed in the City.

- Re: Fiscal Year 2013 Survey and Planning Grant; from Massachusetts Historical Commission; dated 09/26/12

The Board was informed that there were no matching funds this year.

Other Comments:

Mr. Schveda commented that no minutes have been approved in a while. Mr. Provencher stated that he would like to receive the MACRIS Form B for the properties that will be brought before the Commission.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 PM.