

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

April 16, 2015

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Kevin Provencher, Chair
Andrew Shveda, Vice-Chair
Timothy McCann, Clerk
Randolph Bloom
Robyn Conroy
Karl Bjork

Commission Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Stephen S. Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Deborah Steele, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

3/5/2015 - Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of March 5, 2015.

3/19/2015 - Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Secretary McCann, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of March 19, 2015 with two edits.

4/2/2015 - Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Secretary McCann, the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the minutes of April 2, 2015.

OLD BUSINESS

1. 5-7 Ashland Street (HC-2015-002)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
Petitioner: Bullard Properties
Present Use: Multi Family Building
Year Built: Circa 1872
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, NRDIS (National Register District), NRMRA (National Register Multiple Resource Area) and located in the Crown Hill Local Historic District.
Petition Purpose: Retroactive approval to replace front step railings and supporting pillars

Attorney Jonathan Finkelstein appeared on behalf of the item. He stated that he would like to request a continuance in order to be able to present to the Commission a more detailed plan of the work and stated that in speaking with the contractor there may be a possible exemption for the handrail meeting the state building code requirements due to it being a historical property.

Mr. Rolle stated that he would need to contact Inspectional Services regarding that question.

Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Vice-Chair Shveda, the Commission voted 6-0 to continue the item until the April 30, 2015 Historical Commission meeting and to extend the constructive grant deadline until May 15, 2015.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness received December 23, 2014 and dated December 23, 2014

Exhibit B: Request to postpone form dated February 26, 2015 and received February 26, 2015.

Exhibit C: Request to continue form dated April 8, 2015 and received April 8, 2015.

NEW BUSINESS

2. 41 Greenwood Street (HC-2015-018)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: William Hamblin
Present Use: Single Family
Year Built: Circa 1880
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed.
Petition Purpose: Strip and reroof part of the roof with asphalt shingles

Doug Hobson from Home Depot appeared on behalf of the application. Mr. Hobson stated that they are only replacing the roof on the main front house at the street level.

Chair Provencher asked if the front portion was a standard gabled roof. Mr. Hobson stated it was and there a couple solar panels that will come off.

Secretary McCann asked if the shingles would be a three tab asphalt shingle. Mr. Hobson stated it was.

Chair Provencher asked if any re-flashing would be done on the chimney. Mr. Hobson stated there will be lead flashing.

Chair Provencher asked about the condition of the eaves and rakes. Mr. Hobson stated that they seemed to be in good condition and there were no plans to do any work on them.

Chair Provencher asked if there were any plans to replace the gutter and downspout. Mr. Hobson stated no as they are in good condition.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Shveda and seconded by Secretary McCann, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed Building Demolition Delay Waiver is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver dated March 3, 2015 and received March 16, 2015.

3. 102-104 Merrick Street (HC-2015-019)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Garrell J. Higgins
Present Use: Multi-Unit Apartment Building
Year Built: Circa 1895
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, fka William H. Burns House
Petition Purpose: Replace the former open exterior stairs and porches on the rear of a five apartment building

Garrell Higgins appeared on behalf of the application.

Chair Provencher stated that the application had a nice narrative provided by the applicant and renderings of proposed work.

Chair Provencher stated that he viewed the home on google earth and is not sure house is visible from the street. Commissioner Bloom stated that you can see the house from Elm Street. Mr. Higgins stated that during the winter you can but once leaves are on trees you cannot see it.

Chair Provencher stated that the images provided show stairs in rear of house and asked if the stairs were gone. Mr. Higgins stated that there was a porch but it has been gone for two years and only thing left is the two columns.

Chair Provencher asked if Mr. Higgins had received a notice from Inspectional Services to remove the porch due to safety conditions. Mr. Higgins stated that he had.

Mr. Higgins stated that he was unsure how his house became historically listed. Chair Provencher explained how the MACRIS listing inventory worked.

Chair Provencher asked if there would be any new openings. Mr. Higgins showed on photos the dormers that he did not planned to keep and the new proposed large dormer with proper doors and windows that would be installed.

Chair Provencher asked if the spaces on the second and third floor were porch spaces. Mr. Higgins stated that was an enclosed stairway that goes to the second and third floor.

Chair Provencher asked if the exterior doors already in place. Mr. Higgins stated that they were.

Chair Provencher stated that it looks like a section of eaves would need to be removed to do the work. Mr. Higgins stated that it was removed years ago.

Chair Provencher asked why the second and third floor landings were being enclosed instead of leaving them open. Mr. Higgins stated that it the amount of snow clearing required it was an issue.

Chair Provencher stated that from his perspective the most significant alteration is the removal of the two dormers and the addition of a shed roof as it does change the roof line but it comes back to visibility and the sight line and doesn't know if this was significant enough since it is not on the front of the house and that is where all the character and value of the house is.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Secretary McCann, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed Building Demolition Delay Waiver is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver dated March 12, 2015 and received March 19, 2015.

4. 15 Kenwood Avenue (HC-2015-020)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Joseph & Lea Murphy
Present Use: Single Family
Year Built: Circa 1912
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed.
Petition Purpose: Remove two windows and install a door at rear of house

Joseph Murphy appeared on behalf of the petition.

Chair Provencher stated that on rear side of the house Mr. Murphy wants to remove two windows and make larger opening and install a three panel door and Mr. Murphy presented photos of what was proposed.

Chair Provencher asked how close the home was from the curb. Mr. Murphy responded about 30 feet and neighbors behind have garages, trees and bushes.

Commissioner Bloom stated that this house it is almost next to impossible to see the back of the house from the street behind it.

Chair Provencher stated that there is another lot behind it that faces Barnard Road and there was a brief discussion as to whether there was potential to view the back of the property from another street and whether that was the intent of the Demolition Delay Waiver.

Secretary McCann stated that it could be but in this case it would be nearly impossible to view it from Barnard Road.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that he did not think it was viewable.

Commissioner Bloom stated that the only concern he had is if what was proposed was in keeping with arts and craft style of the house.

Mr. Murphy stated that it would be similar and would use Marvin or similar product and would install a simulated glass light.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if the decking would be done. Mr. Murphy stated that he was not sure at this point but they would like to have full view of the back yard.

Mr. Murphy stated that at some point he may want to do a porch and asked if he needed to come back before Commission for that. Chair Provencher stated that would be a separate application as that was not advertised for the meeting as was not included in application request and only thing being voted on today was removal of the windows and installation of the door.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed Building Demolition Delay Waiver is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver dated March 19, 2015 and received March 19, 2015.

5. 155 Ararat Street (HC-2015-021)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: White Picket Fence LLC
Present Use: School Building
Year Built: Circa 1925
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, fka Indian Hill Schoolhouse

Petition Purpose:

- New windows in existing masonry openings where required
- Existing masonry repaired and repointed. Former masonry window opening that have been infilled will be reopened and new windows installed
- Repair wood soffits at roof eaves
- New roof on the rear of the building
- New gable roof ends will be installed on the sides and rear of building
- Skylights will be installed in sloped sections of roof
- Accessible entry at grade will be provided at rear, west side of building
- Chimney & Cupolas repaired as required

Daniel Stroe and Barry Ganett appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Ganett stated that they had received Planning Board approval to convert the building to residential and the main change to the exterior is to replicate the roof lines from the front elevation to the rear of the building replacing the flat roof section. There is no change to the footprint and no openings will be added, windows will be replaced with replacement windows. The main question is the roof and the material to be used due to cost; they are looking to install new asphalt shingles and they are adding skylights to provide daylight to the upper floor units.

Chair Provencher asked what was the material for the existing windows. Mr. Stroe stated vinyl.

Chair Provencher asked if all the vinyl windows were going to remain or were some going to be replaced. Mr. Gannett stated that some will be replaced to match existing.

Chair Provencher asked what would be material on replacement windows. Mr. Gannett stated that they would be white vinyl double hung windows.

Chair Provencher asked if any work would be done to the masonry such as repointing or repainting. Mr. Stroe stated that the masonry was in pretty good shape but will need some attention. Mr. Gannett stated that it generally in good shape but will be repointed and cleaned as required.

Chair Provencher asked when they repoint will they match the existing mortar. Mr. Stroe stated that they will.

Secretary McCann asked about the dormers as on the renderings it doesn't look like they intend to keep the half timbering. Mr. Gannett stated that these were progress renderings and the half timbering will remain and the detail will be there.

Secretary McCann asked if the new dormers would be replicated to match. Mr. Gannett stated that that is the intention.

Chair Provencher stated that he would like the record to reflect that as the renderings submitted don't show the half timbering in the details.

Chair Provencher stated that on the side of the building that faces the street there is a ridge line and gable dormer at either end of the ridge and they are proposing to mirror that ridge and gable dormer for the other half of the building so they will end up with two ridges with a flat roof in between and a matching dormer right next to original dormer.

Chair Provencher asked the applicant to elaborate on the proposed roof. Mr. Stroe stated that they would like to install asphalt shingles on the roof as the cost of installing new slate roofing would be cost prohibitive since it would cost about five times the cost of asphalt (\$425,000 vs \$85,000), which is potentially deal breaking to the cost of the project. Mr. Stroe presented the proposed material to the Commission.

Chair Provencher asked if there was a quote from the roofer for the slate work. Mr. Stroe stated that he did not have that.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that he has done home about this size and cost is consistent with what he has seen.

Commissioner Bloom asked how much money is going into the total project and what percentage is for the roof.

Mr. Stroe stated that the current budget is \$1.8 million and that is the limit for the building to make the project work.

Commissioner Bloom stated that this application is more challenging as they are losing a slate roof and the proposed skylights will dramatically alter the appearance of the building but on other hand if the building remains unused it will just deteriorate. He stated that he was having an issue coming to a decision.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if this was same number of skylights proposed when applicant had come before Commission for informational discussion on project. Mr. Gannett stated that it was the same.

Chair Provencher asked how many levels the building had. Mr. Gannett stated that there were four levels.

Commissioner Bjork asked what would be the total number of units. Mr. Stroe stated that the project is approved for 27.

Commissioner Bjork asked how many apartments are in the section where the skylights are proposed. Mr. Stroe stated it would be ten units between the third level and fourth level so it is significant number.

Chair Provencher stated that those ten units would be 40% of the project so without them there would be no project.

Chair Provencher asked what was the relationship of the skylight to the floor and whether there was direct visual access. Mr. Gannett stated that there was as it was typical window sill height.

Chair Provencher asked if they were venting the skylights. Mr. Gannett stated that they are venting some but not all of them.

Commissioner Bjork stated that the skylights will be very prominent and will change the building. Mr. Gannett stated that it would be a change.

Commissioner Bjork asked if there was some way to mitigate the change. Mr. Gannett stated that the color of the skylights will be similar to the roof material and during the day the glass is dark and at night it will be a different appearance and the building will no longer be a school and they are looking to do what is the least intrusive to the building.

Commissioner Bjork asked if the neighbors are familiar with the design. Mr. Stroe stated that they had met with neighbors and they are aware of the design.

Commissioner Conroy stated that she feels the same as Commissioner Bloom is and asked how long the school had been abandoned. Mr. Stroe stated that the building had been on the market for about three years and the price kept going down and a lot of windows are broken and there is graffiti and the building went into foreclosure as the bank said it was not worth paying the tax lien.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that the amount of skylights is a little excessive and there may be a glare problem and asked how they would be framed. Mr. Gannett stated they are straddling two bays and they will not cut two rafters in a row and they can adjust the position of the skylights and the slate is over 90 years old.

Commissioner Bjork stated that symmetry still needs to remain. Mr. Gannett stated they intend to do that.

Secretary McCann asked if the skylights were related to code requirements. Mr. Gannett stated that it's a combination of that, the amount of light into a space and the division of rooms that require an additional skylight.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that the inclusion of all the skylights has taken the form of the roof so it doesn't read as a roof and maybe they need look at a more forward addition to remove the skylights and maybe add dormers.

Mr. Gannett asked if fewer skylights would work. Vice-Chair Shveda asked if that had been looked at and if there was a way to mitigate the excessive sky lighting of the entire roof.

Commissioner Bjork stated that maybe the applicant could look at creating something unique. Mr. Gannett stated that they can look at another option but again the building is going to be for a different use.

Chair Provencher stated that he may have different view and doesn't see adding additional elements such as dormers as an improvement to the proposal.

Chair Provencher stated that the biggest issue is the skylights and he understands why they are necessary and would agree with Vice-Chair Shveda that there are too many of them and maybe the applicant could look at other options. Every effort should be made to make those skylights disappear and would recommend that the skylight color be as close to the shingles as possible so it will blend and if there are any options on the glass that could minimize reflection it will improve the appearance and he would recommend fewer openings.

Mr. Stroe stated that the skylights look black on the photos presented and don't do justice to the windows and if he changed the photos they would look different.

Secretary McCann stated that he would agree the renderings probably don't do it justice however some care should be taken to look at possibility to match the color to make them disappear.

Chair Provencher asked how high the curb is on the skylight unit. Mr. Gannett stated that they had not selected product yet but intent is to keep as low as possible.

Chair Provencher stated that there are two cupolas on the ridge line and what is the intent for them. Mr. Stroe stated that they will be kept and they are in need of a little repair.

Chair Provencher asked if the chimney would remain. Mr. Gannett stated that it will.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if slate on side of cupolas would remain. Mr. Gannett stated most likely not. Chair Provencher stated maybe a fiber cement siding or something that would last and match in color could be put in place.

Mr. Stroe stated that front door is metal which is not original and they would like to put in a nice wood door.

Chair Provencher asked about the number of entries. Mr. Stroe stated that there are five steel doors in total. Chair Provencher stated that he would not expect they were original and asked if the \$1.8 million cover door cost. Mr. Stroe stated that it did not.

Secretary McCann stated that they technically could add considering the large scope of work that was advertised. Mr. Rolle stated he would agree with that.

Chair Provencher stated that they would add the doors to the scope of work.

Secretary McCann asked if the Commission would like to separate roof portion of application and look at economic hardship and applicant could come back at another meeting with the financial data relative to the roof.

Chair Provencher stated that would be fair as they have asked other applicants to do that and would like applicant to come back with financials on that and they could vote tonight on other portions of the application as the Commission had discussed masonry repointing, removal of the slate on the cupolas, removal of the masonry on the existing openings, removal of the metal doors, which is something being added, and he suggested the Commission vote on those items and applicant can come back on the roof openings and design and he would recommend that a shingle selection and metal sample be brought and if possible a glass sample for the skylights and asked if the applicant would be agreeable to that.

Mr. Stroe stated that they want to work with the Commission and would like to do that.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he just wants to make sure they know what the applicant is expected to bring to the next meeting. Chair Provencher stated a revised design, elevations and three dimensional renderings showing revised roof. A sample of the asphalt shingle roof with color selected, a metal sample for the skylight and a glazing sample and they would like to see some cost data on a cost replacement.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he would like the financials for the whole project so they can relate it to the cost of the project. Chair Provencher stated that an order of magnitude would be helpful.

Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Commissioner Bjork the Commission voted 6-0 to continue the portion of the application with regard to the slate roof and the skylight roof openings to the April 30, 2015 meeting and to extend the constructive deadline to May 15, 2015.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Secretary McCann the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed Building Demolition Delay Waiver for

- Repointing of masonry
- Removal of slate from cupolas

- Removal of masonry for existing masonry openings
- Removal of existing metal doors

is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver dated March 19, 2015 and received March 20, 2015.

OTHER BUSINESS

Communications Received

- Letter from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; re: Demo Delay Workshop; dated April 1, 2015 and received April 6, 2015.
Mr. Rolle stated a member of staff will be attending.
- Letter from Massachusetts Historical Commission; re: Mechanics Hall Boundary; dated March 25, 2015 and received March 30, 2015.
Mr. Rolle stated he would follow up on item.
- Letter from Epsilon Associates, Inc., re: Voke Lofts Solar Array; dated March 23, 2015 and received March 30, 2015.
No comment.
- Letter from City Manager Edward Augustus, Jr. re: 2015 Survey & Planning Grant; dated April 3, 2015.
No comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion the meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.