

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

MAY 19, 2016

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Andrew Shveda, Chair
Timothy McCann, Vice-Chair
Randolph Bloom, Clerk
Robyn Conroy
Devon Kurtz
Karl Bjork, Alternate

Commission Members Absent: Cheryll Holley, Alternate

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

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair McCann, and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 6-0 to approve the minutes of April 28, 2016.

Old Business

1. 68 Gardner Street – HC-2016-021

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Simshabs Capital Partners, Ltd.
Present Use: Industrial Building
Year Built: 1900
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed
Petition Purpose: Demolish Building

William Breault spoke in opposition to the project and stated that the application was very vague and that he would be back for the June 9, 2016 meeting.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair McCann, and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 6-0 to continue the item until the June 9, 2106 Historical Commission meeting and to extend the constructive grant deadline until June 14, 2016.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver; received March 18, 2016 and dated March 15, 2016.

Exhibit B: WPI study received by Ms. Darwin at the April 7, 2016 Historical Commission meeting.

Exhibit C: Postponement request form received electronically May 18, 2016 and dated May 17, 2016.

New Business

Commissioner Bloom recused himself and left the meeting room.

2. 8-10 Crown Street – HC-2016-032

Petition:	Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
Petitioner:	Frank Zirpolo.
Present Use:	Single Family Residence
Year Built:	1848
Historic Status:	MACRIS Listed, National Register District (NRD), National Register DOE, and part of the Crown Hill Local Historic District

Petition Purpose:

- Remove and replace roof
- Touch up paint on trim of home
- Install garden fencing
- Replacement of cement
- Painting of Cement

Frank Zirpolo along with Steve Heal appeared on behalf of the petition. Mr. Zirpolo stated that he needs to replace the roof since it is leaking and that he has painted the trim of the house because it was peeling. He stated that he would also like to install three decorative fences and replace a cement slab.

Mr. Heal stated that they will strip the roof and replace with an Oyster Gray shingle and it matches the current shingle.

Chair Shveda asked if any work would be done to the fascia/soffits. Mr. Heal stated that if they are rotted they will replace in kind.

Chair Shveda asked if any of the decking would need to be replaced. Mr. Heal stated that if it was rotted they would replace it.

Chair Shveda asked what color the trim was painted. Mr. Zirpolo stated that it was exact same color as was there previously as it just normal upkeep and the cement block they replace in kind and painted the same color that was there previously.

Mr. Zirpolo stated that with regard to the fence, it is a three foot vinyl fence with an antique appearance.

Chair Shveda stated that he has fine with most of the work but has an issue with the material of the fence and they have had applicants in the past who have put up vinyl fences in the Crown Hill Historic District and they have asked them to take it down as they don't feel that vinyl is an appropriate material for an historic district. Mr. Zirpolo stated that he installed the vinyl fence since a wooden fence would get kicked down.

Commissioner Conroy stated that she went by the property and didn't feel that the fence looked antique and was appropriate for the District.

Vice-Chair McCann stated that the Commission is looking at whether the fence is appropriate for the District. Mr. Zirpolo stated that he thinks the fence looks beautiful and matches the neighborhood and it cost him a lot to install it.

Chair Shveda asked about the length of the fence and Mr. Zirpolo stated it was between 14-16 feet and it is just for a little section for his flowers. He believes he spent \$2,300 on material and with the labor it cost him \$6,000 to install it; he thinks it looks good and is appropriate since it has the same appearance as the fence across the street.

Commissioner Conroy stated that she saw the fence and it looks like vinyl.

Mr. Zirpolo asked if the Commission wanted him to tear fence down. Chair Shveda and Vice-Chair McCann stated yes as they have previously made decisions in the past that vinyl is not an appropriate material in the Crown Hill Local Historic District.

Vice-Chair McCann asked if the cement that was removed was replaced in kind. Mr. Zirpolo stated that he did everything the same accept the fence.

Deborah Packard, Preservation Worcester stated that she received a lot of calls from Crown Hill neighbors who were concerned because once you start allowing vinyl fences in an historic district then you have to allow others to do it and they shouldn't be allowed in a historic district.

Mr. Rolle asked the Chair to confirm that the applicant's plan was to remove the fence and not replace with anything. Mr. Zirpolo stated that he was not putting anything back.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair McCann, and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed construction of a new roof would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair McCann, and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 5-0 that the following are compatible with the preservation and protection of the Crown Hill Local Historic District as it relates to the historic and architectural value and significance of the site and structure and voted 5-0 to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness:

- Addition of roofing material from Timberlane in Color of Oyster Gray
- Painting of trim of home in same color
- Replacement of cement in kind
- Painting of foundation in same color

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair McCann, and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 0-5 that the following is not appropriate and compatible with the preservation and protection of the Crown Hill Local Historic District as it relates to the historic and architectural value and significance of the site and structure and denied the Certificate of Appropriateness:

- Installation of garden fencing.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver and Certificate of Appropriateness; received April 21, 2016 and dated April 13, 2016.

Commissioner Bloom returned to the meeting room

3. 100 Grove Street – HC-2016-029

Petition:	Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner:	Grove Street Family Properties, LLC
Present Use:	Office Building
Year Built:	1868
Historic Status:	MACRIS Listed (fka Washburn and Moen Manufacturing Company), National Register District (NRD), National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA)
Petition Purpose:	Enclose existing loading dock to create a new building lobby

Steve Fleshman and Sam Reqnstani appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Fleshman stated that original space was a loading deck and a lift and they would like to remove the lift and take out the loading dock and infill the opening with a store front glazing system and replicate the crown detail that extends across.

Chair Shveda stated that after looking at photos, it obvious that the building has been modified.

Mr. Fleshman stated that the main reasoning for doing the work is due to the fact that the building is not handicapped-accessible, except for the lift, and the goal with this work is to create a lobby with stairs and a new lift.

Chair Shveda stated that he doesn't see a lot of removal of historic material but it appears that the majority of the demolition is occurring inside the building and this project will increase the quality of the property tremendously.

Deborah Packard, Preservation Worcester stated that Preservation Worcester has reviewed the plans for the project and would be in support of it.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy, and seconded by Vice-Chair McCann, the Worcester Historical 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 for this project was approved.

List of Exhibits:

- Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver; received April 19, 2016 and dated April 11, 2016.
- Exhibit B: Photographs from Worcester Historical Museum; received at the May 19, 2016 Historical Commission meeting.

4. 100 Chatham Street – HC-2016-030

- Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
- Petitioner: Joan E. Smiley
- Present Use: Two Family Residence
- Year Built: 1887 (fka Berzalda Butler House #1)
- Historic Status: MACRIS Listed and part of the Crown Local Historic District
- Petition Purpose: Installation of gutters and downspouts

Joan Smiley appeared on behalf of the petition and stated that she needs to install gutters to the structure as she is getting water in the basement and over time the water damage will effect the roof and siding and she would like to install simple aluminum gutters and five downspouts.

Chair Shveda asked if the gutters were going to be white and asked if there were going to be a profile to the gutter. Ms. Smiley showed a photo from Home Depot of proposed gutters. Chair Shveda stated it was a standard OG profile gutter.

Chair Shveda asked what the color of the fascia is now. Ms. Smiley stated that the trim is all white and roof is black so the gutters would blend in.

Chair Shveda stated that if you went to the historic districts you would find a good amount of homes with this style gutter and a house without gutters is a house asking for trouble.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he thinks in this case that adding the gutter and downspouts could add some interest to the building.

Chair Shveda asked if any gutters would be put on the side entry. Ms. Smiley stated that would not be necessary.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair McCann, and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 6-0 that the following is compatible with the preservation and protection of the Crown Hill Local Historic District as it relates to the historic and architectural value and significance of the site and structure and voted 6-0 to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness:

- Installation of gutters and downspouts

List of Exhibits:

- Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver and Certificate of Appropriateness; received April 20, 2016 and dated April 14, 2016.

5. 96 Chatham Street – HC-2016-031

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness

Petitioner: Matthew 25, Inc.

Present Use: Two Family Residence

Year Built: 1870 (fka John D. Baldwin-John McIntosh House)

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed and part of the Crown Hill Local Historic District

Petition Purpose:

- Chimney Repair
- Remove and replace roof

Christopher Burke appeared on behalf of the application and stated that he would like to reroof as is and the front chimney is in need of repair and they want to replace from just below the roof.

Commissioner Bloom asked if it was a functioning chimney. Mr. Burke stated it is and he will match as existing.

Chair Shveda asked if where roof is rubber if it would be replaced with rubber. Mr. Burke stated that he not sure it is rubber now but that is what they are replacing it with since the roof is at the end of its useful life.

Mr. Burke stated that he believes the chimney does have a cap and they would replicate that.

Vice-Chair McCann stated that he thinks the new chimney will look better than what is there now.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair McCann, and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed addition of roofing material and the destruction and reconstruction of the chimney with matching red brick would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair McCann, and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 6-0 that the following is compatible with the preservation and protection of the Crown Hill Local Historic District as it relates to the historic and architectural value and significance of the site and structure and voted 6-0 to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness:

- Application of an architectural shingle by Certiny in the Landmark Series in the color of Cobblestone Gray
- Addition of red brick with matching mortar

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver and Certificate of Appropriateness; received April 21, 2016 and dated April 15, 2016.

6. 5 Salem Square – HC-2016-028

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: City Square II Development Co., LLC
Present Use: Church
Year Built: 1929
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, (fka Notre Dame des Canadiens Roman Catholic Church)

Petition Purpose:

- Demolish entire building

Donald Birch from Legatt MCall, the development manager for CitySquare, appeared on behalf of the application and stated that CitySquare II Development Co. LLC purchased the building in 2010 from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Worcester but it had been vacant since 2007. Mr. Birch stated that it was their intention when they purchase the property to seek alternative reuses of the church that would complement the CitySquare development project. He stated that they have spent more than \$700,000 on studies since they purchased the property and after five years they have not been able to find a partner due to the building's condition and many deficiencies; they have determined that the reuse of the church was not economically feasible and by demolishing the asset would be the only way to unlock the value of the property. They are seeking a waiver of the demolition delay waiver as they are seeking to avoid having the church being razed at the same time when the construction of the new hotel and residential are due to be completed.

Chair Shveda stated that in his opinion, the application submitted just provided him with more questions than answers and stated that the Commission had viewed the property and the thing he found troubling was the heating system and lack of building being heated for the past several years.

Mr. Birch stated that the church had an arrangement with the galleria mall to heat the church with steam but that arrangement ended when the mall closed.

Commissioner Conroy provided a photographic survey of the church when it closed.

Chair Shveda asked Mr. Birch if he had any photos of the church when the company purchased it in 2007. Mr. Birch stated that they did and it was significantly deteriorated and the nature of that deterioration existed when they purchased the building.

Chair Shveda asked if Mr. Birch could provide photos and Mr. Birch stated that he could but didn't have them at the meeting.

Chair Shveda asked if a heating system had been considered when they purchase the building. Mr. Birch stated that at that time, the deterioration was of cosmetic in nature and any rehabilitation at that time would have not worked since the building is uninsulated. It was determined that the cost of additional heat, the installation of equipment and maintaining the equipment and utilities cost would further contribute to the financial obstacle that they were attempting to overcome in repurposing the asset.

Commissioner Bjork asked if the applicant would be willing to share with the Commission any of the people who were interested in the building who determined it not useable. Mr. Birch stated that he could share the uses, but due to confidentially agreements, he cannot disclose the parties.

Commissioner Bjork stated that he was more interested in what type of uses had been considered. Mr. Birch stated that early on, they had wanted to incorporate the church into the hotel concept and discussed this with three hotel developers and each developer had concluded that it was not economically feasible.

Vice-Chair McCann stated that keeping the building without a heating system allowed the building to deteriorate and he understands from a business aspect how they wanted to control the asset but the Commission is having a hard time seeing where the applicant tried to maintain the building so it could be reused.

Mr. Birch stated that it was a cost-based decision analysis and not knowing if a system was installed would be compatible with any future use; the decision was not made without consulting their consultants and over the past several years they have engaged with three separate architects, a structural engineer, an environmental engineer and a mechanical engineer.

Chair Shveda stated that the architect and the mechanical engineer should have told them that they were compromising the structural integrity of the building by not heating it.

Mr. Birch stated that they were aware of that and it was a decision based on the nature of the deterioration at the time and in 2011. In 2012, they determined that the base cost of rehabilitation of the building would be \$800 million dollars and today they know more about the asset and the amount is even more.

Chair Shveda stated that the application does not include any studies and from any architects or any structural studies to show that the work has been undertaken and asked if Mr. Birch could provide that. Mr. Birch stated that they have made an informed decision to not make that information public as it involves other parties as a lot of work was done in conjunction with other projects and he didn't have the right to release that information. Vice-Chair McCann stated that this make the Commission's job harder.

Chair Shveda stated that on other applications ,they receive reports but on this application they do not have that and he feels the people of the City of Worcester deserve better and deserve to see what work was done.

Mr. Birch stated that he is happy to walk through the reports with the Commission but is not authorized to release it into the public record and his client may only want a portion submitted. Chair Shveda stated that the public has the right to know that due diligence was done.

Commissioner Bloom stated that with far less significant projects and buildings they have been given far more information and this is a very significant building to the Worcester skyline and the Commission doesn't have the facts about making a decision about tearing the building down.

Vice-Chair McCann stated that part of their process is physically getting information and the Commission gets structural reports as Commissioner Bloom mentioned on lesser buildings so he doesn't understand why these items could not be entered into the record and it up to the applicant's client whether they want to submit into the record.

Chair Shveda stated that Preservation Worcester has provided the Commission with a list of adaptive re-uses for churches. Mr. Birch stated that they have also done research on re-uses on the church.

Commissioner Conroy stated that she sympathizes with the applicant but the applicant should be aware that the Commission needs to review the studies that have been done.

Vice-Chair McCann stated that he would question how concerted an effort the applicant made to find a reuse for the church when they do so little to maintain the building and allowed it to deteriorate so he have to question if an effort was truly made to find an adaptive reuse for it.

Mr. Birch stated that they have discussed with brokers who have told them that the church being on the property is an encumbrance to value and they have gone out independently to perspective users and they have engaged a residential developer and they were willing to make that effort and their goal was for a reuse alternative and they were the only ones willing to make the effort and it has been over five years since the asset has been purchased and they did reach out to nonprofit and cultural entities.

Chair Shveda asked Mr. Birch if and when he had discussions with Preservation Worcester. Mr. Birch stated he only had discussion with the organization a month ago but Preservation Worcester had not reach out to them and he didn't know they were a resource.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he did not have enough information to make an informed decision on the proposal. Vice-Chair McCann stated that he would agree and asked Mr. Birch that after the discussion just held does he understand what the Commission needs in order to render a decision.

Mr. Birch stated that he would want to know specifically what the Commission is looking for and he would have to sanitize the information he has so people who do not want to be disclosed aren't but could provide the information that would be needed to complete the process.

Chair Shveda stated that the Commission would like to see the following:

- All studies done by architects
- Any cost estimates done
- Cost benefit analysis
- Structural Report
- Environmental Report
- Any other reports that would help Commission render a decision
- Photographs of condition of the building when applicant took ownership of it
- Anything regarding the decision not to heat the building
- Any letters/correspondence with local cultural/non-profit entities regarding any potential reuse
- Any marketing material
- Any correspondence between the applicant and Epsilon Associates or anyone else they spoke with regarding historical tax credit
- What ideas as to what would replace the building

Chair Shveda asked if Mr. Birch would be willing to do that. Mr. Birch stated he would be willing to work on providing that information.

Philip Palmieri, city resident, spoke in opposition to the demolition of the building stating that the church is an iconic structure with a rich history and that it is important to have structures like this in the core of the downtown area and believes that this structure could have many other uses.

Susan St. Pierre spoke in opposition to the demolition of the building. She stated that Notre Dame is right on the Worcester Common and to tear it down would ruin the symmetry of the Common and each time they destroy a historical building they destroy part of history and hopes an alternative use can be found.

Deborah Packard from Preservation Worcester spoke in opposition to the demolition and stated that she is glad that everyone is calling the building an asset and stated that this is the last church remaining on the Common. She stated that there used to be five on the Common and now there is just one. Ms. Packard stated that their organization worked on two church rehabilitations and found reuses for them. Ms. Packard stated that they were aware the church was empty but had read that the plan was to reuse the church and they would like to spend a year working with the applicant on what can be done to repurpose the church.

Sherry Pitcher from the Chamber of Commerce spoke in favor of the demolition and stated that she had brought several developers on tours of downtown Worcester and they have the church as a development opportunity and they have been told over and over again that the cost to acquire the building and rehab the building no one has the resources to do it unless someone philanthropic comes in and is not willing to get a return on their investment but the economics of it does not work as there has been so much damage done to the building.

Julie Darwin spoke in opposition to the demolition and stated that Mr. Birch discussed how they had done \$700,000 worth of studies but nothing had been provided to the Commission and she thinks it is an insult to everyone who showed up not to come with the information and they shouldn't support people who don't care for a building and this is an asset to the City of Worcester.

Gary Rosen, City Councilor, spoke in opposition to the demolition of the building and stated that you can't put a price on Worcester's past and years ago the same comments had been made about Union Station and would implore the developer of CitySquare to keep the building as it should be saved as it is part of Worcester's history.

Dottie Hargrove stated years ago people had said Mechanics Hall could not be saved but look at it today and she would plead with the developer to keep the asset and would ask for time before they said it is not possible to keep.

Brian Beaty stated that he would like the Commission to deny the demolition as there has been a church there for over 200 years and it is part of the history of Worcester and once the building is gone it is gone and not all the possibilities for re-use have been exhausted.

Amy Skersit stated that she recently completed her master's in historic preservation and contacted Preservation Worcester early this year about writing a national register nomination and they suggested Notre Dame as one of them. She completed the nomination and could provide a copy to Mr. Birch and stated that she believes that Worcester has lost enough landmarks.

Jo Hart spoke in opposition to the demolition of the building and stated that art is in church and there are a million uses for the building but it is cheaper to tear it down and stated that if it is an asset then utilize it as a destination and there all types of ways to reuse the building.

Shorano (no last name provided) stated that this is a public issue and you will push people away from Worcester as you will have torn down a beautiful historic landmark and how will that stand in the public eye.

Susan Cececcadi stated that she heard talk about cost benefit and the cost benefit should place the cultural benefit at high point and this building is significant to the City of Worcester and is one of the few buildings that survived the demolition when the Worcester Galleria was built and it represents the French Canadian community.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair McCann, and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted to continue the meeting to the June 30, 2016 and to extended the constructive grant deadline until July 5, 2016 and requested that the application provide the requested information by June 23, 2016.

List of Exhibits:

- Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver; received April 15, 2016 and dated April 15, 2016.
- Exhibit B: Photographic survey of Notre Dame Church provided at the May 19, 2016 Historical Commission meeting.

7. Preservation Plan Update

Mr. Rolle stated that the Preservation Plan update meeting was held on May 12, 2016 at the Community Bank at Spencer Bank was very well attended and the consultant for the plan will provide feedback from the surveys passed out at meeting.

8. Communications

- a. Communication from MHC re: 8 Grafton Street, received April 22, 2016 and dated April 19, 2016. No comment.
- b. Communication from AquaAeter re: 200 Harrington Street received May 3, 2016 and dated May 2, 2016. No comment.
- c. Communication from MHC re: Rebuild Worcester Together Rehabilitation received May 2, 2016 and dated April 28, 2016. No comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion the Commission voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.