

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

May 11, 2017

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Andrew Shveda
Randolph Bloom
Devon Kurtz
Mark Wamback
Cheryll Holley, Alternate
Courtney Escobar, Alternate

Commission Members Absent: Robyn Conroy

Staff Members Present: Stephen R. Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Susan Arena, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

Approval of Minutes

April 20, 2017

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the minutes of April 20, 2017.

Old Business

1. 21 Catherine Street – HC-2016-075

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Advocates, Inc.
Present Use: Rooming House
Year Built: 1848
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register Individual (NRIP), National Register (MRA), fka The Draper Ruggles House

Petition Purpose:

- Remove existing deteriorated front porch columns, including new concrete pier foundations. New columns to match existing corner boards.

No representative was present, so the item was held and returned to after Item 2.

Stephen McGrath, Director of Facilities for Advocates Inc., appeared on behalf of the application.

Chair Shveda reviewed the project's history, stating that most of the work had been approved at a much earlier meeting, but the column item was held. The Commission requested quotes for repairing the damaged portions of the columns. Mr. McGrath said he and his contractor spoke with millwork shops about having the columns recreated, and the estimate is \$40,000 for all four. The previous estimate for

replacements was about \$82,000, and the cost of square replacements is \$16,000. Mr. McGrath stated they are exploring some fundraising options. He stated that total cost of renovation for the property will be about \$1 million and that to date some roof repairs have been done. Chair Shveda noted the rarity of the column design and their importance to the history of the city. Mr. McGrath indicated they'd like to save the columns, but currently do not have the funding to move forward on the project, so the columns may not even be addressed for several more months. Chair Shveda stated that the proposed square replacements are not a terrible option, as they do play off other elements of the house, but that the preference is to retain the current appearance.

Public comment:

- 1) Susan Ceccacci, Preservation Worcester, noted that the design of the columns is very unusual, and though there is no record, the architect is likely Elias Carter as this column design was a trademark of his work. She noted it as a significant building, and that the columns should be preserved. She also suggested that the applicant explore the possibility of using a Preservation Projects Fund Grant from the state. She offered to assist the applicant if possible.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 0-3 that the proposed demolition, consisting of the replacement of the existing reeded columns with square columns, is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to deny the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 1-2 (Commissioners Shveda and Bloom against) that the replacement of columns at 21 Catharine Street would pose an undue economic hardship on the owner and the motion failed.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated October 5, 2016, and received October 18, 2016.

2. 27 John Street – HC-2017-024

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Wendy Wang
Present Use: Three-Family Residence
Year Built: c.1894
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register Individual (NRIP), fka Thomas F. Doran
Three-Decker

Petition Purpose:

- Remove wood windows and replace with vinyl
- Install vinyl siding

Mr. Huanchen Li, husband of the applicant/owner, appeared on behalf of the application. Property owner, Wendy Wang was also present.

This application had been continued from the April 20, 2017 meeting, at which the roof replacement had been approved. Mr. Li stated that the windows are in poor condition, and have lead paint, and need to be replaced to be energy efficient and so they can rent to tenants with children.

Chair Shveda noted that at the previous meeting the Commission had requested prices for restoration of the windows. This was not provided, and Mr. Li stated that he doesn't want to scrape them, and wants to replace them. Chair Shveda explained that the purpose of requesting costs estimates for repair is so that a comparison can be made to replacements, should economic hardship become a factor.

In response to Mr. Li's claim of lead paint being present, Chair Shveda asked whether the property had been tested, as there is an acceptable level. Mr. Li stated that testing isn't necessary, and that based on his visual inspection, there is lead present.

Returning to cost comparisons, Mr. Li stated that it will be \$15,000 to replace the windows with vinyl, but he could not provide an amount for restoration. Mr. Rolle stated that based on a cursory search online, one company quotes approximately \$1,500 per window for a rebuild. Conversation then moved to the decorative stained glass in the three front windows. Mr. Li stated that he intends to keep those panes.

Discussion began about siding options. Mr. Li stated he intended to only cover the flat surfaces, and leave the decorative trim around the windows and under the cornice intact. He would add a layer of trim board over the horizontal bands to retain the look. Chair Shveda asked about keeping the front elevation in wood, and only siding the sides and the back, as the windows on the front would be very difficult to side around. Mr. Li was agreeable to this and felt it would save some money.

Returning to windows, Chair Shveda explained that the Commission has to determine whether the removal of the windows, regardless of condition, is detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city. The purpose in asking for restoration quotes is so that an additional assessment based on economic hardship may be made. Commissioner Bloom stated that he's not comfortable making that judgement without the availability of hard figures.

Public comment:

- 1) Jo Hart, Worcester, asked why the windows weren't on the agenda. It was clarified that Item 2 was being presented.
- 2) Susan Ceccacci, Preservation Worcester, noted that this is a very fine, unusual, and well finished example of a three decker. She appreciated the agreement to keep the front painted, and asked if there was a possibility of keeping all the windows on the front elevation.

Commissioner Bloom agreed with this suggestion, and restated his appreciation for the property. Chair Shveda presented this option to Mr. Li who reiterated his concerns about lead paint and renting to children.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition, consisting of the installation of vinyl siding on the clad surfaces only on the left, right, and rear sides, is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 0-4 that the proposed demolition, consisting of the replacement of windows except for the three decorative stained glass, is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to deny the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 2-2 (Commissioners Escobar and Bloom against) that the replacement of windows at 27 John Street would pose an undue economic hardship on the owner and the motion failed.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated March 8, 2017 and received March 13, 2017.

3. 16 Whitman Road – HC-2017-027

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
Petitioner: Tim Kelly and Kelly Bachand
Present Use: Single-Family Residence
Year Built: c1901
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, within Montvale Local Historic District, fka David Lovell House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace gutter system
- Replace cornice and dentil molding with Hardie brand material

This item was continued from the April 20, 2017 meeting. There was some confusion about what constituted quorum, so the item was held and returned to after Item 4.

Tim Kelly, owner, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Kelly presented several photos illustrating wood rot and water damage along the soffit and around the gutter system. Chair Shveda said that the reason they put this part of the project on hold was to further explore the gutters and try to identify the issues. Mr. Kelly now proposes to replace the dentil molding and fascia with composite material, then repair and replace as needed the gutters. He plans to scrape out the gutters and repaint the interior. Chair Shveda said the gutters probably would have been lined originally, and that approval for that work is not needed as it's considered maintenance.

Public comment:

- 1) Jo Hart, Worcester, asked about the use of cedar for gutters, and Chair Shveda explained the combination of cedar with copper lining.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Escobar, the Commission voted 3-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Escobar, the Commission voted 3-0 that the changes proposed to 16 Whitman Road are appropriate for the Montvale Local District and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated March 17, 2017 and received March 23, 2017.

New Business

4. 1023-1025 Southbridge Street – HC-2017-028

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: WPB Holdings, LLC
Present Use: Warehouse
Year Built: c1906
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka Leland – Gifford Machinery and Crank Shaft Manufacturing Company
Petition Purpose:

- Full demolition

Mark Foss appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Foss noted the multiple additions and alterations over the building's history as well as an architect's report claiming structural issues and the need for extensive systems upgrades, as evidence for the justification of full demolition. He stated that regardless of the Commission's decision, the building would eventually be torn down, whether it's now or after the delay period. In the meantime there is approximately \$250,000 worth of work to address fire code violations. Mr. Foss stated that this would be an undue economic hardship to complete this work only to be negated with the building's demolition if the petition were denied. In addition, the building occupies almost the entire lot, leaving limited reuse options. Chair Shveda and Commissioner Bloom noted the lack of a plan for the space, and some reluctance on this issue. However, they acknowledged the economic hardship aspect of the situation. Chair Shveda also commented on the lack of architectural integrity or significance due to years of alterations.

Public comment:

- 1) Susan Ceccacci, Preservation Worcester, stated that they generally don't support demolishing a building with no plan for the space. She also stated that since it stands in an area with other similar buildings, that maybe there is something to take into consideration in whether the building is removed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Wambach, the Commission voted 5-0 (Commissioner Holley voted) that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated March 31, 2017 and received April 4, 2017.

5. 58 Austin Street – HC-2017-029

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver

Petitioner: Nicholas Chaplain
Present Use: Three-Family Residence
Year Built: c1869
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, within Crown Hill Local Historic District, fka Charles S. Goddard House

Petition Purpose:

- Remove and replace the asphalt roof in-kind
- Replace areas of soffit and flashing as needed, due to damage
- Demolish two chimneys
- Repair, reinstall gutters

Dawid Ochocki, contractor, appeared on behalf of the application. Nicholas Chaplain, owner, was also present.

Mr. Ochocki stated that the current roof is in poor condition, with many shingles having torn loose. He stated that the shingles are not that old, but may have been poorly installed. They intend to reroof with new asphalt shingles, and remove two chimneys that are not in use. Chair Shveda stipulated that if any historic material is found underneath, that it be left untouched. Gutters will be salvaged and reinstalled. Soffit will be refastened or replaced in kind as needed.

Regarding the chimneys, Chair Shveda noted that they appear to be utilitarian and are not particularly decorative. In addition, they are difficult to see from the street. Due to these conditions, he felt they are not a significant loss. Mr. Ochocki discussed his intended use of lead for flashing and how it will impact the appearance. Chair Shveda expressed some concerns about the use of this material, but stated that the final decision on that is up to Inspectional Services.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 5-0 (Commissioner Escobar voted) that the changes proposed to 58 Austin Street, including the removal of chimneys, installation of lead flashing, and removal of the current roof to be replaced with GAF Timberline HG shingles in shake wood model, are appropriate for the Crown Hill Local District and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated March 29, 2017 and received April 5, 2017.

6. 507 Main Street – HC-2017-030 (Includes multiple addresses)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Main Five Zero Seven, Inc.
Present Use: Mixed-Use

a) 507 Main Street

Year Built: c1915

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register Individual (NRIP), fka Park Building

Petition Purpose:

- Replace all windows
- Construct trash enclosure
- Install banners

b) 50 Franklin Street

Year Built: c1912

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register Individual (NRIP), fka The Bancroft Hotel

Petition Purpose:

- Install banners

c) 56 Franklin Street (aka 60 Franklin)

Year Built: 1869

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register Individual (NRIP), Preservation Restriction, fka Bancroft Building

Petition Purpose:

- Install banners

d) 66 Franklin Street (aka 16 Portland Street and 8-12 Portland Street)

Year Built: c1922 (16 Portland), c1926 (8-12 Portland)

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, 16 Portland fka Hotel Portland – Hotel Capitol, 8-12 Portland fka Capitol Building

Petition Purpose:

- Install banners

e) 72 Franklin Street (aka 72-78 Franklin Street)

Year Built: c1904

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka New Park Hotel

Petition Purpose:

- Install banners

f) 80 Franklin Street (aka 80-84 Franklin Street)

Year Built: 1888

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka Houghton Building

Petition Purpose:

- Install banners

g) 26 Portland Street (aka 24 Portland Street and 36 Portland Street)

Year Built: c1926 (24 Portland), c1917 (36 Portland)

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, 24 Portland fka Bancroft Garage, 36 Portland fka Henshaw Motor Service Station

Petition Purpose:

- Install banners

Cindy Lee, EMBARC Studios, appeared on behalf of the application.

Ms. Lee provided an overview of the proposed work, to include repair and cleaning of the limestone, brick, copper, and cast iron elements at 507 Main Street. Specifications for this work were provided in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. She also reviewed the window survey, explaining the different types of windows currently present, their condition, and proposed replacements. They are a combination of wood and steel, single-hung, double-hung, and pivot; many show signs of rot and deterioration and are not operating properly. Proposed windows are aluminum and will match existing in grid pattern.

Chair Shveda asked for clarification about a note on the presentation that the work had been approved by the National Park Service and Massachusetts Historical Commission. Ms. Lee, stated that yes, the shop drawings had been approved by those bodies as part of the tax credit application. She went on to discuss the proposed rear enclosure to contain dumpsters and generators in an effort to improve Allen Court. Lastly, for 507 Main Street, is new signage for 7-Eleven that will be contemporary with their current branding. All signage will be moved to live in the same horizontal band.

The second part of the application is a rebranding for The Grid District through the installation of banners to identify the individual buildings and the district as a whole. These will be installed on seven buildings, including 507 Main Street. Ms. Lee stated that design was done in accordance with the City of Worcester Urban Design Guidelines.

Chair Shveda commented on the scale of the proposed window replacement, over 400 in this project. He also referenced a 2009 demolition delay waiver application for 507 Main Street, for the replacement of windows. This project was approved, but the work was never completed. Mr. Rolle noted that this new application should be viewed independently.

Regarding the red granite facing on the street level of 507 Main Street, Ms. Lee stated that this item needs further exploration and will not be addressed at this time.

Regarding banner attachment method, Chair Shveda asked for confirmation that they will try to locate them in mortar joints. Ms. Lee said, yes, and this was possible on all buildings except 50 Franklin Street, which is limestone.

Chair Shveda noted that Preservation Worcester holds a Preservation Restriction on the Bancroft Building, 56 Franklin Street. He asked Susan Ceccacci to comment on this. She stated that they would require a written letter asking permission to attach the banners, and include the drawings provided.

Commissioner Bloom complimented the applicant's attention to making sensitive changes and improving the city. These comments were echoed by Chair Shveda, adding that the applicant has done a great job of retaining the architectural integrity of the area.

Public Comment:

- 1) Keven Ksen, Worcester Carpenter's Union, raised concerns about the owner's being in the news eight years ago regarding asbestos, and an indictment from the Attorney General at that time. He stated he recognizes the Commission's limited purview, but that it's our responsibility as residents to have a conversation about the building's history, and the mistreatment of residents.

He noted that he has visited the building and that work has begun, which he found disconcerting. He stated that he has initiated an inquiry through the Attorney General's office regarding these concerns. He asked that the Commission hold the item to allow for the completion of the Attorney General's review. He presented a letter from the Attorney General stating that there is an active review happening, and that this should be reason enough to hold the item. He went on to reference issues at Doherty High and Burncoat High regarding PCBs in windows being removed, and feels time should be allowed to further explore the situation at 507 Main.

Chair Shveda, reiterated that though the Commission is sympathetic to these concerns, this is not in their purview. Additionally, Ms. Lee stated that though she can't address what happened eight years ago, for the current window project they've done their due diligence and there are hazmat and remediation plans in place. Chair Shveda concluded by stating that voting on anything other than the merits of the application would be well overstepping the Commission's bounds, and that if there are issues, there are organizations in place to take care of that.

- 2) Susan Ceccacci, Preservation Worcester, said the project was looking good, but asked if the 7-Eleven sign could be smaller. Ms. Lee said the new sign is a bit shorter than the existing and will not have a backing so should be less impactful visually.
- 3) Julie Holstrom, WBDC, spoke in support of the application, and referenced a letter of support submitted by WBDC. She stated that as a neighbor, they have been working with MG2 to improve the area, in particular to clean up Allen Court and make it a pedestrian area.

Chair Shveda also noted that a letter of support had been received from Stu Loosemore at the Chamber of Commerce.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Wamback, the Commission voted 5-0 (Commissioner Holley voted) that the proposed demolition at 507 Main Street consisting of the replacement of all windows, construction of a trash/generator enclosure, and banner installation is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Holley, the Commission voted 5-0 (Commissioner Holley voted) that the proposed demolition consisting of banner installation at 50 Franklin Street, 56 Franklin Street, 66 Franklin Street, 72 Franklin Street, 80 Franklin Street, and 26 Portland Street, is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated April 10, 2017 and received April 11, 2017.

7. 6 Euclid Street – HC-2017-031

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Huong Le
Present Use: Multi-Family Residence

Year Built: c1869
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register listed within Euclid Avenue –
Montrose Street Historic District, fka Foley – Lukason Three-
Decker

Petition Purpose:

- Scrape or cap trim, windows and door jambs (Lead abatement)

Tim Hansen, City of Worcester Housing Division – Lead Paint Program, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Hansen stated that the proposed work is part of a deleading project and will consist of scraping and repainting the front door jamb; covering a rear cellar window with aluminum; and make trim intact paint on rear porch and front porch floor.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Wamback, the Commission voted 5-0 (Commissioner Escobar voted) that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated April 12, 2017 and received April 12, 2017.

Communications

- a. *Communication from VHB re: Request for **updated letters** of support for tax credit applications for: Bancroft Hotel, 50 Franklin Street; Duprey Building, 16 Norwich Street; Houghton Building, 82 Franklin Street; Indian Hill School, 155 Ararat Street; Park Building, 507 Main Street; and a **new letter** of support for Melville Shoe Corporation Warehouse, 44 Hammond Street, dated March 30, 2017, and received March 30, 2017.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Bloom the Commission voted 5-0 (Commissioner Holley voted) to provide letters of support for Bancroft Hotel, 50 Franklin Street; Duprey Building, 16 Norwich Street; Houghton Building, 82 Franklin Street; Indian Hill School, 155 Ararat Street; Park Building, 507 Main Street; and a new letter of support for Melville Shoe Corporation Warehouse, 44 Hammond Street.

- b. *Communications from MacRostie Historic Advisors re: Request for **updated letters** of support for tax credit applications for: Paul Revere Life Insurance Building, 18 Chestnut Street; Worcester Boys' Club, 2 Ionic Avenue; and Worcester Boys' Club, Lincoln Square, dated April 6, 2017, and received April 6, 2017; and **new letters** of support for Quinsigamond Firehouse, 15 Blackstone River Road; and Swedish Lutheran Home for the Aged, 26 Harvard Street, dated May 3, 2017 and received May 3, 2017.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Bloom the Commission voted 5-0 (Commissioner Holley voted) to provide letters of support for Paul Revere Life Insurance Building, 18 Chestnut Street; Worcester Boys' Club, 2 Ionic Avenue; and Worcester Boys' Club, Lincoln Square, dated April 6, 2017, and received April 6, 2017; and new letters of support for Quinsigamond Firehouse, 15 Blackstone River Road; and Swedish Lutheran Home for the Aged, 26 Harvard Street.

- c. Communication from EBI Consulting re: Section 106 filing at 19 McKeon Road, dated April 3, 2017 and received April 5, 2017. *(See Item d)*
- d. Communication from FCC re: Section 106 filing for 19 McKeon Road, dated April 26, 2017 and received May 2, 2017.
No comment.
- e. Communication from MHC re: Project Notification Form for Mechanics Hall, 321 Main Street, dated April 7, 2017 and received April 14, 2017.
No comment.
- f. Communication from MHC re: proposed project at Gerald Creamer Center, 120 Granite Street, dated April 19, 2017 and received April 24, 2017.
No comment.
- g. Event notice from Mass Humanities re: History Conference, received April 25, 2017.
No action required. Chair Shveda suggested that at least one person attend.
- h. Communication from MHC re: PNF for demolition of cottages and maintenance building at Worcester State Hospital, dated April 27, 2017 and received May 3, 2017. *(See item j)*
- i. Invitation from Worcester Chamber of Commerce re: Annual Awards Ceremony, received May 5, 2017.
No action required.
- j. Communication from WBDC re: PNF for demolition of cottages and maintenance building at Worcester State Hospital, and MOA, dated May 3, 2017 and received May 8, 2017.
No comment. Chair Shveda requested that a statement to that effect be sent to MHC.
**Items requiring action*

Adjournment

Upon a motion the Commission adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.