

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

July 6, 2017

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Andrew Shveda
Randolph Bloom
Robyn Conroy
Mark Wamback
Courtney Escobar, Alternate

Commission Members Absent: Devon Kurtz
Cheryll Holley, Alternate

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

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Shveda at 5:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Wamback the Commission voted 3-0 (Commissioners Shveda, Bloom, and Wamback voted) to approve the meeting minutes from May 17, 2017.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 3-0 (Commissioners Bloom, Conroy, and Wamback voted) to approve the meeting minutes from June 1, 2017.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 4-0 (Commissioners Shveda, Bloom, Conroy, and Escobar voted) to approve the meeting minutes from June 22, 2017.

Old Business

1. 12 Scott Street – HC-2017-035

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Robert Brackett
Present Use: Multi-Family Residence
Year Built: c1869
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka Bridget Butler Three-Decker
Petition Purpose:

- Install vinyl siding (economic hardship)
- Enclose front porch (economic hardship)

Robert Brackett, owner, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Brackett presented three quotes - \$26,333 for installing vinyl siding, \$88,000 for restoring siding in wood and duplicate the porch to match existing, and \$26,000 for removing and rebuilding the porch.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he had visited the property in person and agreed that the siding was in very poor condition and likely most of the clapboard would need to be replaced. The Commission felt that enough financial information was provided regarding the siding to vote on that item. Mr. Brackett expressed a desire to retain the roof of the porch, but believed the rest of it would need to be replaced as the wood elements are in poor condition. It was agreed that the approval of the roof replacement at the previous meeting extended to work on the porch roof as well. Under these terms, Mr. Brackett is allowed to do repair work on the porch roof to address water infiltration issues. The Commission requested additional information about the plan for the reconstruction and enclosure of the porch, specifically a quote that shows the price for enclosing the porch and drawings showing the intended design.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Wamback, the Commission voted 3-0 that the issuance of a demolition approval is necessary to avoid an undue economic hardship to the property owner and approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for the installation of vinyl siding.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Wamback, the Commission voted 3-0 to continue the enclosure of the porch to the July 20, 2017 meeting and to extend the Building Demolition Delay Waiver deadline to July 24, 2017.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated May 12, 2017 and received May 15, 2017.

2. 4 Congress Street – HC-2017-039

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
Petitioner: Emilio Mendez and Rukia Bilal
Present Use: Single-family Residence
Year Built: 1850
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, within Crown Hill Local Historic District and Oxford - Crown National Register Historic District, fka James Andrews House

Petition Purpose:

- Remove and replace six broken windows
- Replace walkway along the side of house

Emilio Mendez and Rukia Bilal, owners, appeared on behalf of the application.

The applicants brought a sample paver brick in grey, formed concrete. Mr. Mendez stated that the existing walkway is broken and uneven and does not extend to the rear entry. The proposed replacement would resolve these issues. The applicant briefly mentioned wanting to replace the asphalt driveway at some point, and Chair Shveda confirmed that that work would need to be reviewed by the Commission.

Regarding the windows, Mr. Mendez selected a 400 Andersen series double-hung wood window, clad on the exterior with Fibrex. In order to best match the existing windows the replacements will be 6-over-1, and Commissioners instructed the applicant to opt for the narrowest possible muntin. The applicant intends to eventually replace the rest of the windows, so particular attention was paid to selecting a replacement that would be appropriate for the house and financially manageable long-term. One missing window in the stairway was known to be decorative leaded glass. This item was noted by Chair Shveda as being significant and the applicant stated that he knows of a company who can replicate the window to match the one other remaining example. The Commission wished to hold off on voting on this item, requesting that the applicant provide a shop drawing of the proposed replacement.

Public comment:

- 1) Randy Bloom, neighbor at 2 Congress Street, clarified the extent and location of the macadam driveway, noting that the current location where a truck is parked was never paved. He also stated his approval that the broken walkway will be removed. Lastly, he inquired about the condition of the boarded windows, whether it was just the glass that was broken or if anything was salvageable. Mr. Mendez responded that there's nothing in the openings. Mr. Bloom expressed concern about having some windows that don't match, but conceded that the windows must be replaced.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Escobar, the Commission voted 3-0 that the proposed work, consisting of the replacement of five double-hung windows, was 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 Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Escobar, the Commission voted 3-0 that the changes proposed to 4 Congress Street, consisting of the replacement of five double-hung windows with Andersen 400 Series Fibrex 6-over-1 windows, with 3/4" muntins, in sandstone, and replacement of the walkway with grey paver bricks, are appropriate for the Crown Hill Local District and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Escobar, the Commission voted 3-0 to continue the discussion of the decorative leaded glass replacement, to the July 20, 2017 meeting and to extend the Building Demolition Delay Waiver and Certificate of Appropriateness deadline to July 24, 2017.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated May 17, 2017 and received May 19, 2017.

New Business

3. 4 Dix Street – HC-2017-044

Petition:	Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner:	Steven and Kimberly O'Leary
Present Use:	Single-family Residence
Year Built:	1849

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, fka W. H. Goulding House

Petition Purpose:

- Remove existing concrete porch steps and construct two inset steps at side of porch

Steven O’Leary, owner, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. O’Leary stated that the existing concrete steps are in poor condition, showing cracking in several areas, and will need to be removed. They are also very steep, making them somewhat inaccessible, and are rarely used. Due to these conditions, the applicant would like to remove the steps and construct inset steps on the right side of the porch from the driveway. Some potential code and safety issues were raised regarding the lack of railing on the porch should the steps be removed, but Chair Shveda noted that this is a discussion for Inspectional Services. A historic photo shows wooden steps in the same location as the concrete set, leading to a brief discussion about the aesthetic relevance of retaining them. Chair Shveda stated that the lack of stair in the front current location will change the appearance from the street; however, it is not necessarily a negative impact. Additionally, the proposed steps could be removed and the porch repaired in the future.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, 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.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated June 14, 2017 and received June 15, 2017.

4. 521 Main Street – HC-2017-045

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Mindy Jiang Realty Trust
Present Use: Mixed-use (vacant)
Year Built: c1851
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka Cheney-Laughter Building
Petition Purpose:

- Reconstruct the rear wall on Allen Court

Kiangtay Huang, architect, and Craig Ornell, attorney, appeared on behalf of the application.

Chair Shveda opened by stating that an emergency demolition had been ordered for safety reasons for the rear wall of the building, and that therefore the majority of historic material removal has already occurred. Due to this situation, the Commission has little purview over the planned work regarding replacement materials as the building is not in a Local Historic District. Commissioners expressed a wish to see the wall replaced with brick, but acknowledged the higher cost of that material and the importance of getting the building closed up as soon as possible. Commissioner Bloom stated that he’d hope that whatever is used is aesthetically compatible with the rest of Allen Court. Regarding reuse of the brick for reconstruction, Mr. Huang stated that DEP has advised that they contain asbestos and the bricks will need to be disposed of off-site and cannot be used.

Public comment:

- 1) Chair Shveda reviewed a letter of from WBDC, opposing approval of the proposal based on claims that the proposed wall reconstruction does not address other code issues with the building. Mr. Ornell stated that the applicant has been in discussion with the city regarding these other issues, though the main concern is to address the back wall. Chair Shveda stated that WBDC's concerns, though potentially valid, are not within the Commission's purview and cannot influence their decision regarding impact to historic materials.
- 2) An unnamed trustee for 531 Main Street, the neighboring condominiums, stated that the demolished rubble and fencing has blocked the rear entrance to their building and access to their trash dumpsters since the demolition. She stated this is a safety concern and the trash has not been able to be cleared, leading to rodent issues.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 5-0 that the demolition to the back wall and any subsequent demolition for reconstruction purposes 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 June 15, 2017 and received June 15, 2017.

5. 64 (aka 56) and 72 Franklin Street – HC-2017-046

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Worcester Franklin Holdings LLC
Present Use: Mixed-use
Year Built: 1882 and 1904
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, #64 is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, fka the Bancroft Building (#64) and the New Park Hotel (#72)

Petition Purpose:

- Install new signage at 72 Franklin
- Create new openings, install awnings and new signage at 64 Franklin

Cindy Lee, architect with EMBARC Studio, and Ian Fox with Alaris Construction, appeared on behalf of the application.

Ms. Lee reviewed the scope of work, which consists mostly of cleaning and repairing masonry, installing new signage and lighting on the Franklin Street elevation and creating new openings on the east elevation of 64 Franklin Street. Chair Shveda expressed some concern about drilling into limestone for the placement of signage. Ms. Lee stated that the intent is to keep all signage along the same horizontal band and that this is the best location aesthetically.

Regarding the new openings and awning installation, Chair Shveda asked about interference with the oriel window to which Ms. Lee responded that the awning will likely wrap around under the window.

Overall, the Commission had no major issues with the proposed plan and felt the applicants are creating a useful, attractive space.

Public comment:

- 1) Rob Para, Jr., board president with Preservation Worcester, mentioned the Preservation Restriction that Preservation Worcester holds, and stated that they had received clear plans and thanked the applicants. He stated that the alterations are consistent with the historic nature and architectural principles of the building. Preservation Worcester supports the application as presented, and would like to see the building come back to full use.
- 2) A letter of support from Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce was mentioned during Communications review.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, 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.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated June 16, 2017 and received June 16, 2017.

Communications

- a. *Communication from Preservation Worcester re: Request for updated CLG opinion for National Register eligibility for Stearns Tavern, received electronically June 9, 2017.
Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 5-0 to find the building to still be eligible for the National Register and concur with the opinion of staff.
- b. Communication from CBRE re: Public Outreach for Section 106 review for 44 Hammond Street, dated June 19, 2017 and received June 21, 2017.
No comment.
- c. Communication from MHC re: PNF request for additional information for 510 Cambridge Street and 4 McKeon Road, dated June 21, 2017 and received June 22, 2017.
No comment.
- d. Communication from DCAMM re: Worcester Recovery Center and Parking Lot, dated June 19, 2017 and received June 26, 2017.
No comment.
- e. Communication from Preservation Worcester re: invitation to Preservation Massachusetts' Cruising the Commonwealth, received electronically June 28, 2017.
No comment.
- f. Communication from WBDC re: opposition to application for 521 Main Street, dated July 6, 2017 and received July 3, 2017.
No comment.

- g. Communication from MHC re: interior painting and ramp improvement at Union Station, Washington Square, dated June 29, 2017 and received July 3, 2017.

No comment.

- h. Communication from Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce re: support for application for 64 & 72 Franklin Street, dated July 6, 2017 and received July 6, 2017.

No comment.

** Items requiring action*

Other Business

- I. Discussion of Local Historic District Rules & Regulations and Certificate application

Staff requested that Commissioners review the materials and prepare to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Upon a motion the Commission adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.