

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

March 15, 2018

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Andrew Shveda
Randolph Bloom
Robyn Conroy
Devon Kurtz
Mark Wamback
Janet Theerman
Diane Long
Tomi Stefani, Alternate

Commission Members Absent: Courtney Ross Escobar, Alternate

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

Call Commission to Order

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

Approval of Minutes

Review of the January 25, 2018; February 1, 2018, and February 22, 2018 minutes.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz the Commission voted 6-0 to approve the minutes of January 25, 2018.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the minutes of February 1, 2018.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom the Commission voted 6-0 to approve the minutes of February 22, 2018.

Old Business

None

New Business

1. 30 Thorndyke Road – HC-2018-008 (MBL 22-021-001+2)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: City of Worcester
Present Use: School

Year Built: c1926

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka Thorndyke Road Schoolhouse

Petition Purpose:

- Replace windows and all doors
- Construct handicapped accessible ramp

Russell Adams, City of Worcester DPW & P; Rob Alger, project manager; Jose Paz and Francisco Ruela, HAKS Architects, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Adams noted that this group is seeking waivers for 30 Thorndyke and 549 Lincoln, both school buildings that are currently in use and occupied. The proposed projects are funded by the Massachusetts School Building Authority, through which the state covers 80% of the cost through a grant, and the remaining 20% is the responsibility of the city. MSBA projects include thermal requirements to meet energy code, to be awarded funding.

Mr. Paz reviewed the details of the proposed project. Window replacement will be mostly located in the rear of the building, and effort has been made to select a design that matches the original muntin pattern. Most of the other windows have already been replaced. Mr. Paz stated that the doors had previously been replaced, but they would like to replace them with energy efficient units, retaining the wood frame. The glass in side and transom lights will be replaced with thermal glass within the existing frame. The last item is the addition of a handicapped accessible ramp at the front entrance, running from the sidewalk to the atrium, as there is currently no accessible entrance on the building. The ramp will enter the landing through an existing opening, but the concrete steps will need to be cut back. One step still remains on the landing in front of the entrance, so a new concrete pad will be added with a ramp entering from each side. Materials will match or mimic what exists.

Commissioners Bloom and Conroy commented that the design appears to be thoughtful, particularly for a school building, noting how important it is to keep them functional and up to code.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 7-0 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 January 26, 2018 and received February 8, 2018.

2. 549 Lincoln Street – HC-2018-009 (MBL 39-027-00001)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver

Petitioner: City of Worcester

Present Use: School

Year Built: 1918

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka Lincoln Street Grammar School

Petition Purpose:

- Replace windows and all doors
- Replace roof
- Construct handicapped accessible ramp

Russell Adams, City of Worcester DPW & P; Rob Alger, project manager; Jose Paz and Francisco Ruela, HAKS Architects, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Paz stated that the scope is similar to that at Thorndyke Road, but in addition they are proposing to replace the slate roof with a synthetic slate. He stated that a thorough survey of the roof condition was completed and it was determined that the current 96 year old slate cannot be saved. Many tiles have come loose and are falling to the ground, and those that remain are prone to breakage. Replacement is less expensive and the tiles are aesthetically comparable when viewed from the ground. Also, the building currently lacks insulation so the roof replacement will include adding insulation. Valleys and snow guards will be copper.

The approach to window replacement and ramp installation is similar to the work at Thorndyke, where an effort is made to match design and material to existing conditions. The ramp will be pulled away from the building to allow light to penetrate the basement level windows and will enter the atrium through an existing opening.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 7-0 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 January 26, 2018 and received February 8, 2018.

3. 3 Roseland Road – HC-2018-010 (MBL 21-008-00066)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Michael Simmons
Present Use: Single-family residence
Year Built: c1921
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka the Parker-Zaeder House
Petition Purpose:

- Install rooftop solar panels

Craig Orn, Sun Run Solar, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Orn stated that they propose to install 10 solar panels on the east side of the roof, which is the left hand side. All equipment will be mounted on the backside of the house so it won't be visible from the street. Additionally, the panels will only be visible from Roseland coming up the hill.

Commissioner Conroy thanked the applicant for working to minimize the visual impact of the facility.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 7-0 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 January 18, 2018 and received February 8, 2018.

4. 100 Institute Road – HC-2018-011 (MBL 02-044-01+02)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Present Use: Classroom/laboratory
Year Built: 1959
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, and located within the WPI National Register Historic District, fka WPI Olin Hall of Physics
Petition Purpose:

- Replace all windows

Steve Suska, Hoffman Architects, appeared on behalf of the application.

Olin Hall was constructed in 1959 and contains classrooms and laboratories. The windows are wood, single pane, double hung and are original to the building. Mr. Suska stated that they are deteriorated and beginning to rot, and are not efficient. Patterns are a combination of 6-over-6, 6-over-9, 4-over-4 in the dormers, and one round windows. He stated that their goal is to match the existing in appearance and opted for a Marvin brand double hung, aluminum clad wood window, double pane with simulated divided lights. The grid pattern will match the existing patterns. This is the same type of window that was used a few years earlier in the renovation of the Washburn Shops, another campus building. The stone sills will remain in place.

Chair Shveda noted that most of the windows have an air conditioning unit and asked whether those would still be incorporated. Mr. Suska responded that they will be.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 7-0 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 February 9, 2018 and received February 20, 2018.

5. 321 Main Street – HC-2018-012 (MBL 02-026-00012)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Worcester County Mechanics Association
Present Use: Auditorium
Year Built: c1855
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, and National Register listed, fka Mechanics Hall
Petition Purpose:

- Replace wooden panels with glass on the front doors
- Replace two poster marquees with digital signboards

Tricia Shea, Facilities Director; and Bob Kennedy and Cathy Gagney, appeared on behalf of the application.

Ms. Shea stated that they'd like to replace the third row of panels on their front doors with glass for two reasons. She stated it is currently unclear whether those doors are functional and the goal is to make the building more approachable; also that it's a safety concern as people entering and leaving cannot see each other. The panels can be replaced without removing the doors as they are just held in place by quarter-round trim. It is not clear whether there were previously glass panels at some point.

Additionally, they'd like to replace the two poster marquees that flank the entrance with electronic signboards of the same size. Chair Shveda inquired about the attachment method, which Ms. Shea confirmed will be similar to the existing. Commissioner Kurtz asked whether they will need to install new cabling. Ms. Shea replied yes, one additional hole will be drilled.

Commissioner Conroy observed that the change to glass will make the entrance more inviting, and safer. Commissioner Bloom agreed, saying that the proposed appearance is very balanced.

Public comment: Jo Hart, Worcester, asked what the height of the panels is. Ms. Shea replied that they begin approximately 3.5 feet from ground level and the top is at about 6 feet. Additionally, Ms. Hart stated that she did not think the digital look is appropriate for historic buildings, and that this change would be detrimental to the appearance.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Wamback, the Commission voted 7-0 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 February 15, 2018 and received February 20, 2018.

6. 6 Humboldt Ave – HC-2018-013 (MBL 01-01C-00024)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Massachusetts Chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon
Present Use: Rooming house/fraternity
Year Built: 1898
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka WPI Sigma Alpha Epsilon House
Petition Purpose:

- Construct an addition to connect the two buildings and provide elevator access

Darlene Allen, Amy Bloom Architecture; and Zach Telfern, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, appeared on behalf of the application.

Ms. Allen explained that there are two buildings on the site, the white building and the brown building. The brown building is a dormitory, while most common activities take place in the white building, which is currently not handicapped accessible. The goal of the proposed work is to make the white house more accessible, which will be accomplished by adding a lift within the connector that will provide access to the first floor. The addition will be on the rear of the white building and not visible from Humboldt Ave. Three windows will be removed to allow for the lift. The new entrance will face Faraday Street, and the design will take cues from the main entrance of the white building.

Chair Shveda noted that this is the most appropriate location for an addition and that the impact, with the removal of the windows, is minimal. Commissioner Conroy added her approval stating that they won't lose the bay window, which is an important design feature.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 7-0 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 February 21, 2018 and received February 22, 2018.

7. 126 Chandler Street – HC-2018-014 (MBL 06-17A-0006A)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver

Petitioner: Worcester Common Ground

Present Use: Warehouse (vacant)

Year Built: 1919

Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka the J.R. Torrey Razor Strop Company

Petition Purpose:

- Replace existing, missing, and boarded up windows
- Create new window openings
- Replace storefront openings with windows
- Remove chimney, skylight, and one-story brick addition (non-historic)

Joel Fienberg, Worcester Common Ground; Maureen Cavanaugh, VHB; and Ross Spear, Davis Square Architects, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Fienberg presented an overview of the project, which will create 32 units of housing within the existing building and an addition. He stated that this project addresses several of Worcester Common Ground's programmatic goals, utilizing a historic building while providing affordable housing and bringing vibrancy to a section of Chandler Street.

Mr. Ross stated that a building on the adjoining parcel, as well as a 1-story addition to 126 Chandler, will be demolished to allow space for the addition. The addition will overlap approximately 2/3 of the east elevation of the historic building, which has always been mostly utilitarian. Decorative finishes were limited to the Chandler Street façade. Windows on that side will likely be vinyl replacements, but will match the historic grid pattern. Along the sides most windows were large, multi-pane steel units. Most have been boarded up or removed; those openings will be reduced to bring them to a more residential scale and be replaced with casement style units.

Commissioner Bloom noted Worcester Common Ground's history of renovating historic buildings in a sympathetic manner. Chair Shveda questioned the treatment of the panels within the decorative first bay on the east side return from Chandler Street. Mr. Ross replied that those will be infilled in place or incorporated into the interior design. Regarding the removal of the chimney, Chair Shveda and Commissioner Bloom observed that sometimes compromises have to be made in order to secure a reuse and future for a property. Masonry will be cleaned and repaired, and concrete recast where needed.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 7-0 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 February 22, 2018 and received February 22, 2018.

Exhibit B: Supplemental rendering

8. 479 Cambridge Street – HC-2018-015 (MBL 07-033-00022)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Michael Komenos
Present Use: Two-family residence (vacant)
Year Built: c1851
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka the Daniel G. Chase House
Petition Purpose:

- Demolish the entire building

Michael Komenos, owner, appeared on behalf of the application.

Chair Shveda noted that the building has been ordered to be demolished by the City, though not an emergency order, which would have superseded the authority of the Commission. He added that the Fire Department has deemed it, do not enter. He noted large holes in the roof, visible signs of neglect and a previous fire. Mr. Komenos stated that he has owned the building next door for 20 years and that 479 has been neglected for as long as he can remember. He confirmed that there had been a fire, there is no plumbing or electrical, and that homeless have been squatting there. He stated that he'd tried to buy the building earlier but it did not become available until a few years ago.

Mr. Bloom asked what his plans are for the parcel once the building is gone. Mr. Komenos stated that there is not currently any parking for his building so he'd like to provide parking for his tenants. Commissioner Bloom responded that surface parking is not ideally what the Commission likes to see but acknowledged the limitations of the parcel due to size and location. Commissioner Conroy noted that it's unfortunate that the property has been neglected for so long, but that it appears to have reached the point of no return.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 7-0 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 February 22, 2018 and received February 23, 2018.

Communications

- a. Communication from vhb re: National Register nomination for Duprey Building, 16 Norwich Street, dated February 20, 2018 and received February 22, 2018.

No comment.

- b. Communication from MHC re: National Register nomination for Duprey Building, 16 Norwich Street received, dated March 1, 2018 and received March 8, 2018.

No comment.

Other Business

- I. Discussion of nomination for the Chamber of Commerce Silver Hammer Award.

After a brief review of potential options the Commission agreed to put forth a nomination for The Queen's Cups for a 2018 Silver Hammer Award. Staff will prepare and submit the nomination materials.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 7-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.