



The City of **WORCESTER**

Historical Commission

Diane Long, Chair
Janet Theerman, Vice Chair
Steven Taylor, Clerk
Devon Kurtz
Donald Northway
Erika Helnarski
Tomi Stefani
Vanessa Andre, Alternate

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

Thursday, April 20, 2023

Worcester City Hall - Levi Lincoln Chamber,
with remote participation options available via Webex online at
<https://cow.webex.com/meet/historicalcommissionwebex> and
call-in number 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1608081191).

Commissioners Present: Diane Long, Chair
Janet Theerman, Vice-Chair (participated remotely)
Steve Taylor, Clerk
Donald Northway
Tomi Stefani (participated remotely)
Vanessa Andre, Alternate

Commissioners Absent: Erika Helnarski
Devon Kurtz

Staff Present: Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)

Call Commission to Order – 5:30 PM

Approval of Minutes – None

New Business

Certificate of Non-Applicability

1. 86 Austin Street (03-023-001-8) – CNA-23-16

Petition purpose: Replace roof

Kevin Jordan of Beacon Communities represented the project remotely. He stated that the proposal is to replace the ballasted roof at 86 Austin Street with a rubber roof. He stated that the same color drip edge would be used, so there would be no change in appearance.

No public comment.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted 6-0 to close public comment.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed roof work at 86 Austin Street, consisting of the replacement of the existing roof, is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the Certificate of Non-Applicability was approved.

Certificate of Appropriateness

2. 86 Austin Street (03-023-001-8) – COA-23-3

Petition purpose: Replace block retaining wall with stamped concrete wall & fence; replace ADA ramp

Kevin Jordan of Beacon Properties described the petition purpose, including the regrading and reconstruction of an existing ramp to accommodate an elevation change at the parking lot and the proposed replacement of existing retaining walls throughout 86 Austin Street and associated HOA properties.

Mr. Jordan stated that the color, design and materials of the ramp would be substantially the same, save for the fact that the ramp would be regraded.

Mr. Jordan additionally described the proposed color, design and location of the proposed concrete block retaining walls and the proposed material, color and design of the proposed new and replacement fencing.

Public Comment

None.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor the Commission voted six (6) to zero (0) to close the public hearing portion of the meeting.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed changes at 86 Austin Street, consisting of the replacement of a block retaining wall with a stamped concrete wall in either gray or brown, and replacing fencing as proposed so that all fencing will match, and extending a ramp to meet ADA compliance, are appropriate for the Crown Hill Historic District. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the Certificate of Appropriateness was approved.

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

3. 526 Main Street (03-19A-00022) – BDDW-23-8

Petition purpose: Replace roof; replace windows; install new stairway & elevator; mechanical, electrical & plumbing work

Bryon Wells from the Menkiti Group spoke, in person, regarding the application.

Mr. Wells described the existing conditions of the building, which is 100% vacant. He also described the plans for the building, which consist of using the building for office space on upper floor and retail on the ground floor, which is what the building has always been used for historically.

Mr. Wells then described the restoration work that is required at the building, including cleaning & repointing brick, scraping & repainting painted surfaces, replacing windows to match existing windows, and replacing storefronts in a slightly different configuration than what is existing. One existing door, which was originally a window, will be reverted to use as a window.

The Commission and Mr. Wells spoke about potential uses for the first floor, which may potentially be partially used for a restaurant space.

Commissioner Taylor asked about the existing billboard on the building. Mr. Wells stated that they are considering removing the solid surface of the billboard and installing a lighted sign.

Chair Long noted that while the Commission is considering the roof, it is flat and not visible from the street.

Public Comment

None.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor the Commission voted six (6) to zero (0) to close the public hearing portion of the meeting.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed work, consisting of replacing the roof and windows would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 526 Main Street was thus approved.

4. 204 Main Street (02-027-00017) – BDDW-23-9

Petition purpose: Repair and restore façade; replace windows; replace doors

Bryon Wells from the Menkiti Group spoke, in person, regarding the application. Architect Greg O'Connor was also present.

Mr. Wells briefly described the history of 204 Main Street, which historically had a retail use as the Kane Furniture Company building. He went on to describe the plans for the building, consisting of building out twenty apartment units on the upper three floors and retaining retail use on the first floor.

Mr. Wells then described the restoration work that is required at the building, including cleaning & repointing brick, replacing all windows with custom replicas, replacing the front door with a custom replica of the original, creating new window openings to allow for windows in each bedroom and living room, and intensive façade restoration work to remedy damage to the original façade from the mid-20th century.

Public Comment

Commissioner Long read a public comment letter from Preservation Worcester into the record. The letter was in enthusiastic support of the project.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor the Commission voted six (6) to zero (0) to close the public hearing portion of the meeting.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed work, consisting of cleaning, repairing and restoring the front façade, replacing windows with replicas, and replacing the front door with a replica of the original front door would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 204 Main Street was thus approved.

5. 100 Chandler Street (06-17A-00008) – BDDW-23-11

Petition purpose: Replace windows (retroactive)

Patrick Sullivan, owner, appeared in person to represent the project.

Mr. Sullivan described that he hired a contractor to perform work at the building and stated that the contractor had told him that all the proper steps were taken prior to work commencing. However, no permits were ever pulled.

Chair Long stated that windows that have been installed are not appropriate for the building. Mr. Sullivan described that the windows that were in the building when he bought it were in severe disrepair and that many had been boarded up since the 1950s. Ms. Johnstone described which windows had been boarded up prior to work commencing. She then described what the Commission is considering, which consists of the removal and replacement of the second-floor window frames.

Mr. Sullivan noted that he had originally investigated replacing the windows to match the original windows, and that he was quoted at \$5,000 per window.

Commissioner Andre asked Mr. Sullivan if he had ever had a window restoration company inspect the windows to see if they could be repaired. Mr. Sullivan stated that the building was in an advanced state of disrepair and that the windows were very rotted. He stated that custom windows would be cost prohibitive, and that it is the pointed arch that makes them so expensive. Chair Long stated that the arch is what makes the windows historically significant.

Mr. Sullivan stated that the end goal would be to put framing around the replacement windows to make it look like they are arched. Chair Long asked how he planned to do that. He stated that his intention is to use UV resistant printouts to fill out the space.

Commissioner Stefani stated that the windows are the essence of the building, and that he would be interested in another solution to restore what was lost rather than installing printouts around the already installed windows. He asked Mr. Sullivan if he had checked with Preservation Worcester to see if they could be of assistance in locating someone to make custom windows. He stated he had not.

Commissioner Taylor stated that he would need to see what the different choices are before making a decision.

Ms. Johnstone suggested coming up with several different quotes for windows of different materials to fit the arched openings. She also stated that he may consider purchasing appropriate windows for the façade and taking a different approach on the side and rear elevations. Chair Long reiterated getting quotes for at least the front windows and producing a drawing of the printout treatment that was described.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to continue the meeting to June 1, 2023, and to extend the constructive grant deadline to June 16, 2023.

Communications

A. Request from Ryan LLC for updated letters of support for Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax credit allocations for:

- i. Waldo Street Police Station, District Court & Insurance Fire Patrol, 1 Exchange Place
- ii. P.E. Somers Manufacturing Company, 35 Lagrange Street
- iii. L. Robbins Machine Shop, 42 Lagrange Street
- iv. L.D. Thayer Manufacturing Company, 47 Lagrange Street
- v. Harwood & Quincy Machine Company, 50 Lagrange Street
- vi. Washburn & Moen North Works Cotton Mill, 90 Grove Street
- vii. J.A. Calvin Lofts, 98 Beacon Street
- viii. The Hotel Aurora, 660 Main Street
- ix. Worcester Boys' Club, 2 Ionic Avenue
- x. The Worcester Art Museum (WAM), 50 Salisbury Street
- xi. Whitcomb Manufacturing Co. Factory, 134 Gold Street

B. Request from Epsilon Associates, Inc. for updated letters of support for Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax credit allocations for:

- i. Walker Shoe Factory, 28 Water Street
- ii. Second State Mutual Company, 340 Main Street
- iii. Worcester County Institution for Savings, 365 Main Street
- iv. Ransom Taylor Block, 526 Main Street
- v. Kane Building, 204 Main Street
- vi. Saint Mary's School, 50 Richland Street

- vii. Sargent Card Clothing Company Building, 300 Southbridge Street
- C. Request from PAL, Inc. for updated letters of support for Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax credit allocations for:
- i. Mission Chapel, 205 Summer Street
 - ii. Paul B. & Lessie M. Morgan House, 21 Cedar Street
 - iii. Worcester Boys' Club, 16 Salisbury Street
 - iv. Taylor & Farley Organ Factory, 15-21 Hermon Street

On a motion by Chair Long and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to issue updated letters of support for the aforementioned projects.

Other Business

- A. Status update – Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historic District

Ms. Johnstone stated that she transmitted the Elm Park Local Historic District study report to City Council, and that it would be taken up at their next meeting. She stated that she anticipated that the report will be referred to the Economic Development Committee.

- B. Elm Park Neighborhood walking tour

Ms. Johnstone stated that she would be leading a walking tour of the neighborhood on May 2. She described the overall format for the tour.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Chair Long, the Commission voted six (6) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:33 p.m.