

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

**August 13, 2009**

**WORCESTER CITY HALL, 455 MAIN STREET, WORCESTER  
LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER (3RD FLOOR, ROOM 309)**

**Commission Members Present:** Peter Schneider, Chair  
Thomas Constantine  
Timothy McCann  
James Crowley  
Janet Merrill  
Michael Theerman

**Staff Present:** Luba Zhaurova, Planning and Regulatory Services  
Edgar Luna, Planning and Regulatory Services

**REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the July 23, 2009 meeting were accepted as amended.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 1. 53 Elm Street (HC-2009-044)** – Building Demolition Delay Waiver: Steven Partridge, representative for Micozzi Management, petitioner, is seeking to remove 330 storm windows and replace them with “Low E tru-channel“ double-hung windows. Mr. Partridge stated that the storm windows will be a brown color, similar to the existing color, that the proposed window glass has a 20 year warranty, and the proposed window frame has a life-time warranty. Chair Schneider asked if the petitioner will keep the sash. Mr. Partridge answered yes. Chair Schneider asked if the installation of the storm windows could damage the original windows. Mr. Partridge answered no. Chair Schneider asked why the petitioner decided to replace storm windows rather than restoring existing sashes as other applicants had requested from time to time. Mr. Partridge responded that while energy efficiency improvements would be comparable, in his opinion it would be less work and less expensive to replace storm windows. Commissioner Merrill asked if the petitioner anticipates water condensation problems. Mr. Partridge responded that these are one-pane glass windows, and therefore there should not be any condensation.

Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner Merrill, the Commission voted 5-0 (Commissioner Crowley did not vote because he was not present for the whole hearing) that the proposed demolition to remove 330 storm windows and replace them with “Low E tru-channel“ double-hung windows would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

2. **40 Freeland Street (HC-2009-045)** – Building Demolition Delay Waiver: Michelle Nguyen, petitioner, is seeking to replace 39 windows, remove and replace asphalt shingles on the roof with same, and to install vinyl siding. Also present was Phung Huynh, petitioner’s representative. Chair Schneider asked if the existing windows are original to the structure. Mr. Huynh said yes. Chair Schneider asked why the petitioner decided to replace the windows, as opposed to repairing them. Mr. Huynh responded that the windows are in a poor condition (e.g. that some windows cannot be opened and that glass is broken in many of them) and that there is also a lead paint issue. He added that he will keep the stained-glass windows. Chair Schneider stated that the windows are part of the house’s historic fabric which is important to preserve if possible. He then added that window restoration might not be as expensive as window replacement. Mr. Huynh stated that vinyl window cost approximately \$140 each. Chair Schneider stated that vinyl windows and installation cost approximately \$300 per window, based on the evidence from other petitioners, and that the cost of window restoration could be comparable. Chair Schneider further stated that the Commission would need to see cost comparisons in order to make decision based on economic hardship, if the petitioner so chooses.

Commissioner Theerman asked whether the proposed vinyl siding would cover up architectural features of the house, such as a ledge at the top of the windows. Mr. Huynh agreed that most likely the siding would cover these features. Commissioner Constantine stated because the siding does not necessarily have to cover the ledges over the windows and that this work would depend on an installer. Commissioner Theerman expressed concern over the look of the house with the proposed vinyl siding. Chair Schneider asked why the applicant wants to install vinyl siding. Mr. Huynh responded that he wants to prevent damage to the wood siding from the elements and because cost estimates show him that it is twice as expensive to repair the siding as to the replace it. Commissioner McCann stated that the price comparison of repair v. replacement over a longer period of time might show that the costs are comparable. Chair Schneider acknowledged that the neighborhood has houses with both original and vinyl siding.

Commissioner Theerman stated that he had no objection to replacing the roof with like asphalt shingles. Chair Schneider concurred. He added that the applicant can come back in front of the Commission on the economic hardship basis if they provide cost estimates for siding and windows repair v. replacement.

Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition to replace asphalt shingles on the roof would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner Crowley, the Commission voted 1-5 (with Commissioner Constantine voting yes, and the rest voting no) that the proposed demolition to install vinyl siding and 39 windows would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester. The motion failed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was not approved.

Chair Schneider explained to the petitioner that she has an option to wait 12 months until the Demolition Delay Waiver expired, after which time she has 12 months to complete the proposed work. He added that the petitioner does not need to seek Commission's approval if she decides to repair any exterior features of the building, including glass in the windows.

3. **266 Park Avenue (HC-2009-046)** – Building Demolition Delay Waiver: Stephen Hopkins, petitioner, is seeking to remove and replace windows, install lighting, install chair lift, install new doors, repoint brick work and remove existing wall mounted kitchen exhaust fans. Also present was Donald Bray, architect and petitioner's representative. Mr. Bray stated that in researching the history of this 1926 building, he could not find an image of what it looked like originally. He stated that 1988 was the last year of major renovations in the building. In order to make the building handicap accessible, he added, a glass-enclosed elevator was proposed on the side of the building as an addition. Chair Schneider asked the petitioner to use matching mortar. Mr. Bray stated that he had already made these arrangements with the mason. Commissioner McCann stated that he did not have any objections to the project.

Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition to remove and replace windows, install lighting, install chair lift, install new doors, repoint brick work and remove existing wall mounted kitchen exhaust fans would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

4. **3 Brussels Street (HC-2009-047)** – Building Demolition Delay Waiver: Herbert Rasnick, petitioner, is seeking to demolish a 2-story wood-frame structure (known as Whittall Mill #1, labeled Building 4 on the Form B). Also present were Richard Hakala of TASC, Inc. and Lawrence Hardy, the petitioner's representatives. Chair Schneider pointed to the staff memo indicating that the petitioner is proposing to demolish three buildings on site, including a boiler, and stated that he believes the Commission has already approved a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for the two buildings (one of which is a boiler) at the previous meeting in the spring, so the matter in front of the

commission is only one of the buildings (a 2-story wood-frame structure). Chair Schneider asked if the petitioner had considered renovating the building. Mr. Rasnick distributed to the Commission scope and description of work and its cost for the entire site development (Exhibit B). He stated that it would cost him \$100 per square foot to rehabilitate the building, but that the fair market value is \$4-\$5 per square foot per year, making the building restoration economically unfeasible. Additionally, demolition of the building would provide space for parking, thus making rehabilitation of another 3-story historic mill building on the site into a 31-unit condominium more feasible. Commissioner Merrill asked if the petitioner has photographs of the interior of the building. Mr. Rasnick said no and said that on the inside the building is made of wood with brick fill-ins for fire resistance.

Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Crowley, the Commission voted 2-4 (with Commissioners Constantine and McCann voting yes, and Commissioners Schneider, Theerman, Crowley, and Merrill voting no) that the proposed demolition of a 2-story wood-frame structure (known as Whittal Mill #1, labeled Building 4 on the Form B) would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester. The motion failed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was not approved.

Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 6-0 that the petitioner had demonstrated undue economic hardship and approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for the proposed demolition of a 2-story wood-frame structure (known as Whittal Mill #1, labeled Building 4 on the Form B) based on the economic hardship.

5. **242 Salisbury Street (HC-2009-048)** – Certificate of Appropriateness: Sister Maria Rogeria and Carmine Zamarro, representatives for Xaverian Missionary Society of Mary, are seeking to remove and replace the existing roof with like asphalt shingles. Chair Schneider asked to clarify why the petitioner stated that removal of slate would be necessary. Mr. Zamarro responded that there are both wood and slate shingles underneath the existing asphalt shingles and that some will need to be removed when replacing the existing shingles. He stated that to replace the roof would cost between \$25,000 and \$40,000, but that restoration of slate roof would cost around \$100,000. Commissioner Crowley suggested that a condition of approval is placed where a petitioner would have to install architectural shingles, instead of asphalt shingles, in order to improve the look of the structure. Commissioner Constantine stated that he believes the Commission does not have the authority to require an applicant to upgrade a historic look of the structure, for example, by requiring installation of a slate roof in place of asphalt shingles. Commissioner Crowley expressed disagreement, stating that the vote reflects the Commission's opinion on whether or not the change would be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City, and, in his opinion, asphalt shingles would be detrimental to the neighborhood look. Commissioner Merrill stated that the Commission has jurisdiction over the use of the materials in the Local Historic Districts. Raymond Dow of 2 Military Road, an abutter, stated that he thinks the look of the

building facing Salisbury Street is more important than its rear, and that he would like to see architectural shingles on that Salisbury Street side. He stated that it would benefit property values and the neighborhood aesthetics.

Mr. Zamarro stated that there might be an economic hardship, since architectural shingles are more expensive than the asphalt shingles. He added that the Xaverian Missionary Society of Mary's mother-house in Italy needs to approve the changes to this house, and was concerned that the mother house might not be amenable to approving architectural shingle installation due to the price difference. Chair Schneider offered the petitioner the opportunity to continue the item until the petitioner receives an answer from the mother house. Mr. Zamarro indicated that he would like the Commission to vote that night. Commissioner Theerman stated that Mr. Luna's recommendations were also to replace the existing shingles with architectural shingles. Commissioner Crowley indicated that there are several religious institutions in the Montvale Local Historic District and that it would be good to receive the same level of commitment from them as individual property owners. Commissioner Merrill indicated that the description of work in the petition stated that architectural shingles would be installed. Mr. Zamarro said that this description was excerpted from the quote submission, and was not a true description of the proposed work.

Upon reviewing the petition submitted and all evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that removal and replacement of the existing roof with like asphalt shingles are appropriate and compatible with the preservation and protection of the Montvale Local Historic District as it relates to the historic and architectural value and significance of the site and structure with the condition that the roof shingles are replaced with architectural shingles.

Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition to remove and replace the existing roof with like asphalt would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Local Historic District Study Committee:** Ms. Zhaurova informed the Commission that a bid for consultant services to conduct a survey of historic properties in the Crown Hill Neighborhood of Worcester, MA has been posted on the City's website on August 10, 2009. An addendum to the bid will be posted shortly reflecting several changes to the dates, such as the bid closing date of September 11, 2009. She then distributed copies of the original bid to the Commissioners.

**4 Woodford Street – Former Stanley Kunitz House:** Chair Schneider informed Carol Stockmal, Judy Ferrara, and John Gaumont, who attended the meeting, that DPRS staff is working on the CLG opinion letter with regards to the eligibility for National Register.

He added that Commissioners would like to visit the house to see if it is architecturally intact. Commissioner Theerman stated that he has seen exterior and interior of the house and that in his opinion it is in a very good condition. Ms. Ferraro then made a small presentation to the Commission explaining the significance of the house from the architectural and historical standpoints. Chair Schneider requested that this item be put on the agenda for the next meeting where the Commission can vote on whether or not it supports the nomination.

**2 Grove Street (Worcester Vocational Technical High School):** Chair Schneider stated that the scope of proposed work is extensive and complex enough to justify asking the project manager to come and talk to the Commission about it, as well as to request an application of a Building Demolition Delay Waiver. Commissioner Theerman asked Ms. Zhaurova to let the contact know.

**184 Main Street:** The applicant, in his letter to the Commission's representative, stated that the scope of work has not changed since last year, but that he is required by the MHC to receive an updated letter of support as part of the Historic Preservation Certification Application re-submission. The Commission expressed its support for the project because it did not change from the last year.

**140 Eastern Avenue:** The Commission stated that it did not have enough detailed and definitive information on the proposed changes to the exterior of the building to make a determination on whether or not it supports the project. The Commission requested that Ms. Zhaurova contacts project manager and requests pictures, table specifications, and a better description of the proposed project.

**Conflict of Interest:** Chair Schneider informed the Commission that he has send a request to Christopher Skelly of the Massachusetts Historical Commission with respect to the issue discussed by the Commission on July 9, 2009. Mr. Skelly said that he needs time to think about it and to respond.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 P.M.