

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
March 7, 2013**

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Timothy McCann, Chair
Kevin Provencher, Vice-Chair
J. Thomas Constantine
James Crowley
Meagen Mulherin
Andrew Shveda

Commission Members Absent: Erika Dunn

Staff Members Present: Abigail McCabe, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Deborah Steele, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes for February 7, 2013 and February 21, 2013 (with three edits) were approved.

1. 332 Main Street (aka 322-332 Main Street) (HC-2012-079):

Gary Brackett, representing 332 Main Street Associates, stated that he had previously appeared before the Commission on January 10, 2013 on the request to demolish the commercial structure at 332 Main Street. The Commission members asked the applicant to provide more information regarding the following three categories and provided the following responses.

1. Are there any hazardous materials in the building? Mr. Brackett stated there is asbestos in the building which would be addressed as part of the demolition of the building.
2. What are the plans for the property after demolition of the building? Mr. Brackett stated at this time no specific plans have been developed for the proposed new use of the property.
3. Additional proof to demonstrate economic hardship. Mr. Brackett stated he had provided financial figures to Commission members and the Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS) staff. He noted that DPRS staff had disputed some of the figures but

the City was basing figures on the fiscal year while he had based the figures on the calendar year.

Chair McCann asked Mr. Brackett to give an overview of the expenses for past three years and asked why the 2010 figure for expenses was so high. Mr. Brackett responded that there were certain capital improvements made to the building during 2010 that accounted for higher expense.

Commission Shveda asked for more detail for the expenses for 2011 and 2012. Mr. Brackett stated that would include several categories of expenses including, electricity, heat, elevator maintenance and taxes but he did not have a specific breakdown. Commissioner Crowley stated that based on what is being presented he does not see an economic hardship. Chair McCann asked if Mr. Brackett had any figures for the cost of the demolition and asbestos removal and he is also not convinced of the undue economic hardship. Mr. Brackett responded that he asked the applicant for those figures and they were not provided to him. Commissioner Shveda noted that the letter presented to Commission did not provide much detail and he also did not feel that this was enough proof of an economic hardship.

Deborah Packard, President of Preservation Worcester, stated that she also did not believe economic hardship had been demonstrated and encouraged the Commission to deny the application.

Abigail McCabe, DPRS Chief Planner, stated that Joel Fontane, Director of the Division was unable to attend the meeting but had provided an updated March 6, 2013 memorandum that maintains the original recommendation that the application be denied as the applicant has not demonstrated that the demolition is necessary to avoid an undue hardship and all options for rehabilitation or adaptive reuse have not been explored.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner Shveda, the Commission voted 0-5-1 (Commissioner Provencher abstained) that the proposed demolition was not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion failed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was denied.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Mulherin, the Commission voted 0-5-1 (Commissioner Provencher abstained) that to deny the application would be an economic hardship on the applicant. The motion failed.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

- Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application; received June 27, 2012; prepared by 332 Main Street Associates.
- Exhibit B: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Historical Commission; re: 332 (aka 322-332) Main Street; dated January 9, 2012; Updated March 6, 2013.

- Exhibit C: Form B – Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System; re: WORC.454, Central Building, 332 (aka 322-332) Main St; accessed on January 8, 2013.
- Exhibit D: Request for postponement form to January 10, 2013 meeting, dated December 26, 2012.
- Exhibit E: request for continuance form to February 7, 2013 meeting dated January 10, 2013.
- Exhibit F: Letter from Attorney Gary Brackett, Brackett & Lucas; received February 27, 2013; dated February 27, 2013.

2. 80 William Street (HC-2013-001):

William J. Masiello, project architect, appeared on behalf of the applicant, Becker College. Mr. Masiello stated that Becker College had appeared before the Commission on February 7, 2013 and the Commission had continued the portion of the petition regarding the proposed replacement of all the first and second floor windows, doors, and shutters, including the original set of garage doors on the carriage house in order for the applicant to provide more information to the Commission regarding window replacement versus window restoration. The Commission had asked Becker College to come up with some budget numbers and potential for restoring the French doors versus replacing them. The Commission also asked Becker College to look at restoring the existing carriage house doors and consider providing three additional carriage house doors that would match existing doors.

Mr. Masiello stated they have explored the options and have come up with two options.

Option A: Restoring the windows which would include:

1. Replace all weight cords.
2. Reglaze existing glass throughout.
3. Replace cracked glass where damaged.
4. Scrape each window unit and paint.
5. Remove existing storm/screen, plug holes, scrape and paint.
6. Furnish and install interior liner unit

The total cost: Items (1-5) \$800-\$900 per unit + (Item 6) \$350=\$1150-\$1250 per unit.

Option B: Window replacement which would include:

1. Remove existing window unit.
2. Cut Chords, drop weight into pocket.
3. Install new window insert.
4. Scrape and paint trim.

Mr. Masiello presented a sample of this window to show the Commission members.

The total cost: Items 1, 2, 4 \$300 United Window \$900-1000 \$1200 \$1300 per unit.

When Becker College reviewed the two options they considered:

1. Will the solution be energy efficient?

2. Will the solution be low maintenance?
3. Will they operate easily over time?
4. What is the best long term solution for Becker College?
5. What are the aesthetic vs. historic implications?
6. Warranty issues?

Mr. Masiello stated with regard to the French door units they are in very poor condition so they would like to encapsulate with a new glass panel on the exterior or replace with something lower maintenance and more energy efficient.

Chair McCann asked how old the current windows were and Mr. Masiello responded they were from 1912 and it would cost \$120,000 to replace. The other options would be 20 to 30% less.

Chair McCann stated it would be hard to make an economic hardship argument when cost for repair is less than replacing. Kenneth Cameron from Becker College stated they were not looking to make an argument for an economic hardship but were looking for an energy efficient option.

Chair McCann stated the Commission can only vote on two items whether or not the loss of windows would be detrimental to the city or economic hardship.

Commissioner Crowley stated the college could still repair the windows and make them energy efficient as these windows are historically significant and asked if it possible to leave the original ones on the front. Mr. Masiello responded it is case by case basis so they don't want to do them one at a time.

Commissioner Shveda asked whether the wood shutters on building would be replaced and repaired and Mr. Masiello responded they would.

Commissioner Crowley addressed his support of the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

Mr. Masiello stated with regard to the carriage house they are proposing to match the window profile, roof, and stucco of the addition to the existing materials of the house to the three masonite doors will be removed and replaced with custom units that will match the existing design.

Chair McCann stated that the shutters were not voted on at the last meeting and that would be part of this petition. Commissioner Shveda pointed out that the applicant had stated they would be replaced in kind.

Deborah Packard, Executive Director, Preservation Worcester stated she would feel more comfortable if Becker College had someone come look at the windows and expressed her concern that Becker College owns other historical properties and would want to change the windows in them if this petition is approved.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Crowley, the Commission voted 2-3-1 (Chair McCann, Commissioner Mulherin, and Commissioner Provencher voting no, Commissioner Constantine abstained) that the proposed demolition was not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion failed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was denied.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Shveda the Commission voted 2-3-1 (Chair McCann, Commissioner Mulherin, and Commissioner Provencher voting no, Commissioner Constantine abstained) that the applicant has not demonstrated an economic hardship. The motion failed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Shveda, the Commission voted 5-0-1 (Commissioner Constantine abstained) that the proposal for the demolition of the carriage house doors behind the main home part of the petition that the demolition was not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion was approved.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Shveda the Commission voted 5-0-1 (Commissioner Constantine abstained) that the proposed demo for the replacement of all the window shutters on the main house part was not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The request was approved.

Commissioner Crowley suggested the Commission amend their original vote as they have now separated out the demolition work related to the carriage house doors and shutters. The Commission agreed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Shveda, (the Commission voted 2-3-1 (Commissioner Constantine abstained), (Chair McCann, Commissioner Mulherin, and Commissioner Provencher voting no, Commissioner Constantine abstained) that the proposed demolition and the replacement of all the windows and French doors on the main house was not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion failed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition for the windows was denied.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated January 9, 2013 and submitted January 10, 2013.

Exhibit B: Worcester Historical Commission Review Packet prepared by William J. Masiello, Architect Inc. and dated January 9, 2013.

Exhibit C: Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System Form B for 80 William Street.

Exhibit D: Letter prepared by William J. Masiello, Architect Inc. dated March 7, 2013 and presented to Commission members at March 7, 2013 meeting.

3. 81 Providence Street (HC-2013-003):

Joshua Lee Smith, attorney with Bowditch & Dewey with Peter Kleinder and Robert Silver from Schwartz/Silver Architects, Inc. appeared on behalf of the applicant, Worcester Academy.

Mr. Lee stated that Worcester Academy had appeared before the Historical Commission at the last meeting and received approval on part of their application but the Commission had requested applicant provide more information on the proposed changes to the Walker Hall elevator dormer portion of the application. The applicant felt that the Commission's suggestion of blind windows was suitable to the existing character of the existing building.

Mr. Silver stated the dormer is on the east side of the building where Walker Hall enjoins the Megaron Building and Adams Hall. The existing dormer would be removed and they would rebuild a slightly larger dormer to accommodate the elevator override. In order to accomplish these two alternatives were considered: The first alternative would be a slate dormer with three windows and windows that would match all other windows on the building. The second alternative for the dormer is brick.

Chair McCann stated he would support either option as it was an improvement over what was presented at the last meeting. Mr. Silver stated they would prefer the slate option to be more in character with the building.

Commissioner Constantine stated he liked the brick option but both options applicant presented by the applicant are good.

Commissioner Provencher asked if the roof surface and the sidewall of the dormer are actually set back from the brick façade and would that detail be replicated if they voted the brick proposal. Mr. Silver stated that would be correct.

Commissioner Mulherin stated she would prefer the brick option.

Commission Shveda asked if the Commission is voting on a particular proposal.

Chair McCann stated that it would be up to applicant which option they choose. Mr. Silver stated after getting the input from the Commission they would prefer to do the brick.

Commissioner Provencher stated they are not voting on options but on the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

Commissioner Constantine stated in the past the Commission has voted on items on comprises and that is what is being presented tonight.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner Provencher, the Commission voted 5-0-1 (Commissioner Mulherin abstained) that the proposed demolition was not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City with the condition that the dormer be brick as presented in option 2. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

- Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application; received January 24, 2013; prepared by Robert E. Longden, Esq, Bowditch & Dewey, LLP.
- Exhibit B: Form B – Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System; re: Worcester Academy, 81 Providence Street; accessed on February 1, 2013.
- Exhibit C: Specifications for windows; received at the February 21, 2013 Historical Commission meeting.
- Exhibit D: Appendix A from Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth; received January 24, 2013; prepared by Robert E. Longden, Esq. Bowditch & Dewey, LLP.
- Exhibit E: Proposed Revision for dormer, received via email March 4, 2013, prepared by Peter Kleiner, Schwartz/Silver Architects, Inc.

Communications

Communication Item – Letter from Brona Simon – Massachusetts Historical Commission to Troy Siebels Hanover Theater for the Performing Arts re: HVAC upgrades to the Worcester Center for Performing Arts, Poli’s Palace Theater, 2 Southbridge Street, Worcester, MA; MHC#RC.53707; dated February 21, 2013, received February 25, 2013.

The Commission had no comments.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion by Chair McCann and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m.