Working with the Worcester Historical Commission

Worcester Homeowner Summit

November 7, 2026

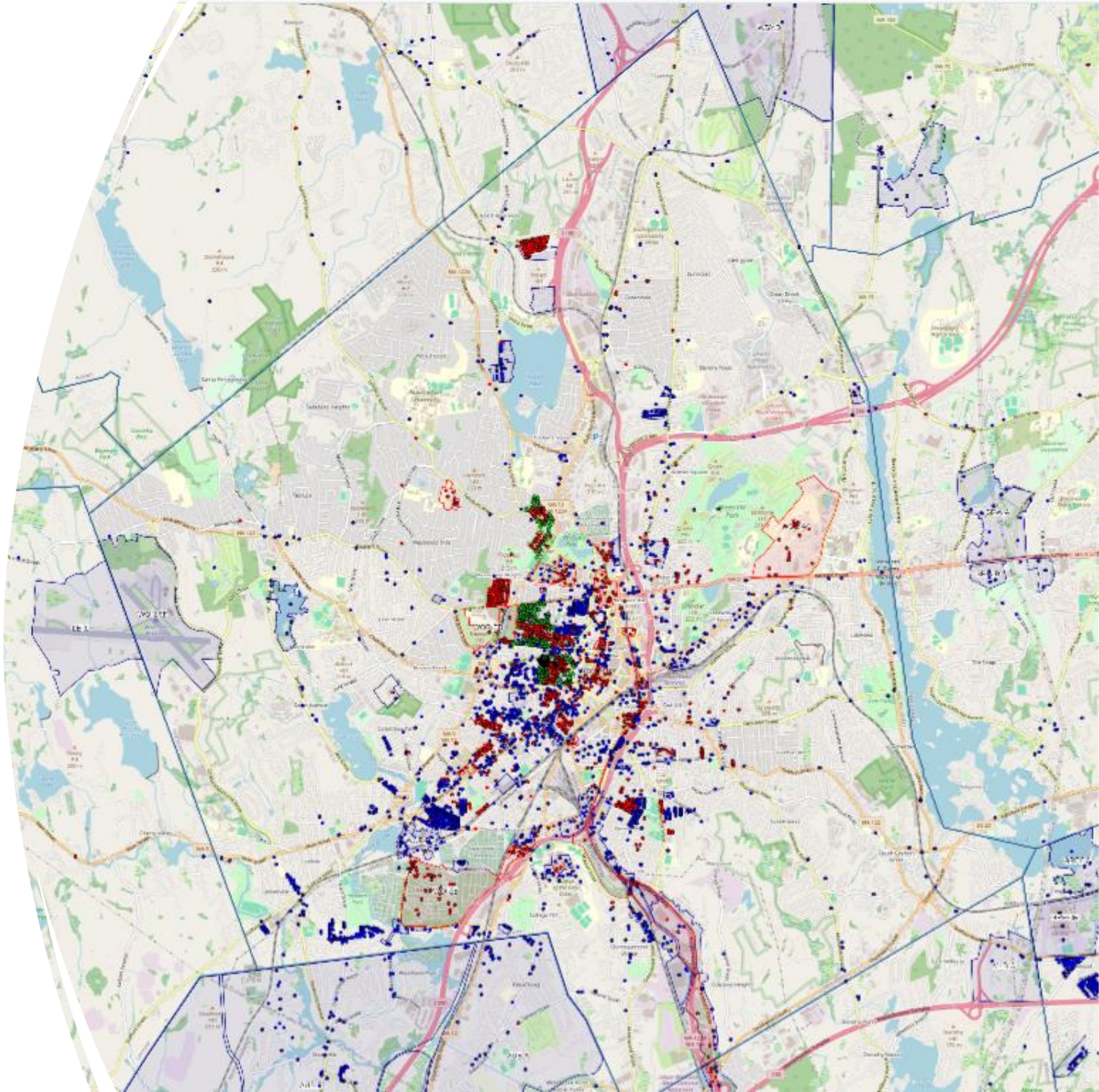


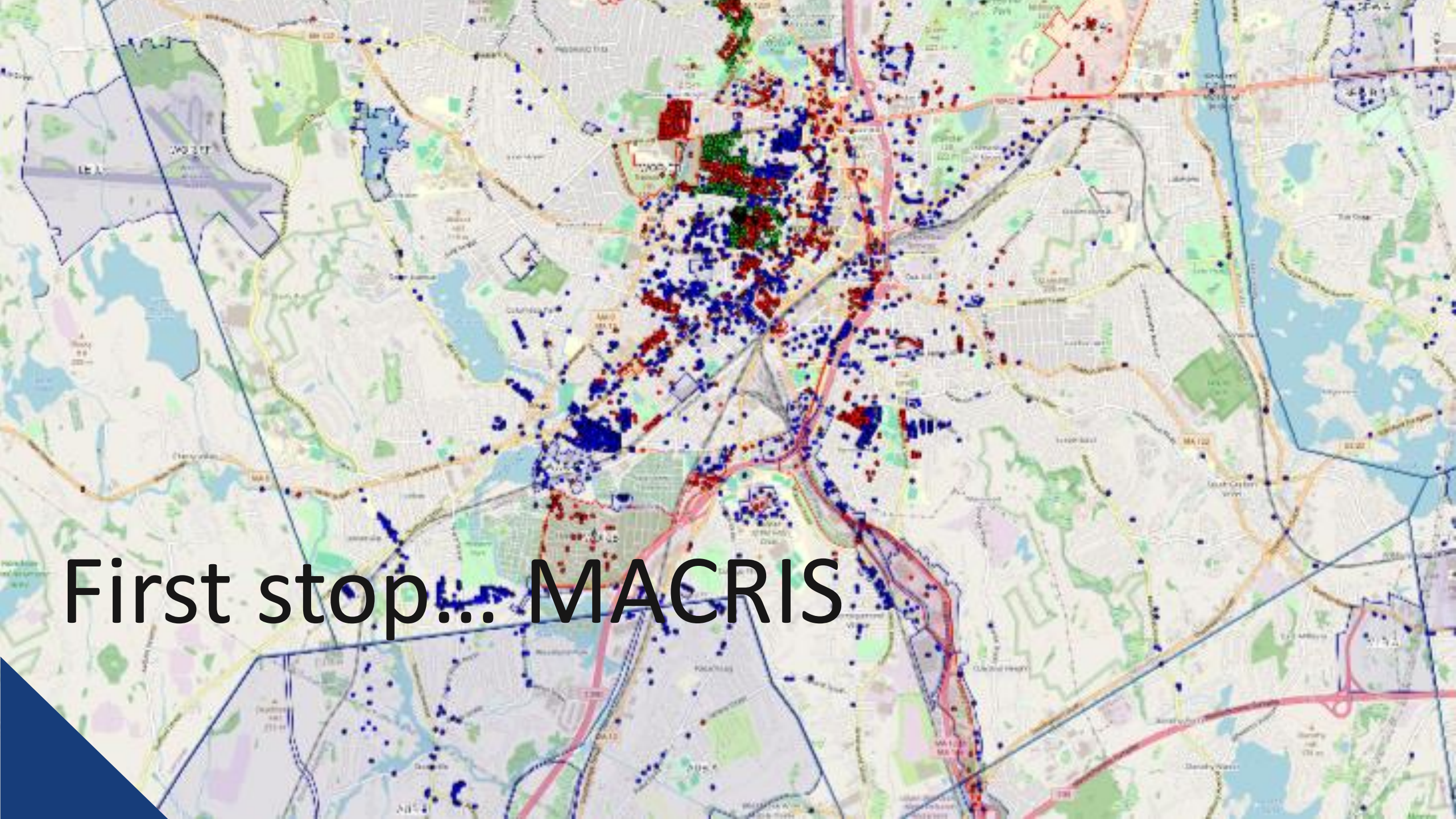
The Worcester Historical Commission:

- **Preserves, promotes, and develops the historic assets of the city.**
- **9 volunteer members** (7 regular, 2 alternate) interested in history and protecting Worcester's architectural and cultural heritage
- **Meets twice a month** to review construction projects that may impact historic buildings in Worcester:
  - Local Historic Districts (Elm Park Neighborhood, Montvale, Mass Ave, Crown Hill)
  - Building Demolition Delay Ordinance (one-year delay on exterior work proposed to listed historic buildings)
- **Conducts site visits** to historic buildings to evaluate their integrity
- **Certified Local Government**:
  - Letters of support for state and federal tax credit applications
  - Supports the creation of new National Register listings and districts
  - Studies and recommends potential new local historic districts

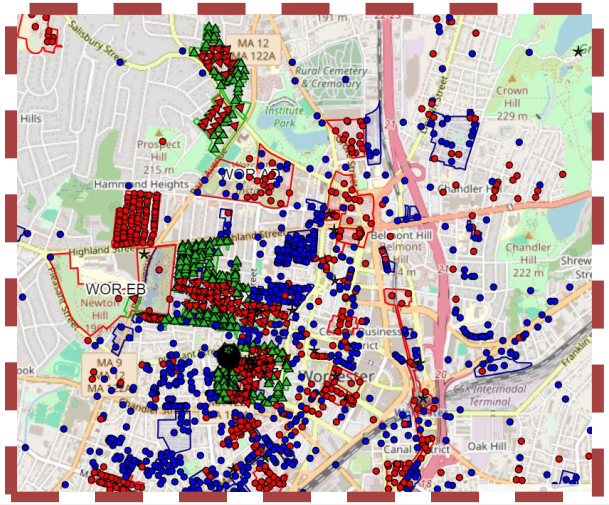


I own an old building… what do I need to do when exterior changes are needed?





First stop… MACRIS



Key to Symbology

	Historic district boundary (National Register and Form A) Building Demolition Delay Waiver(BDDW) required for properties within boundary
	Historic property (National Register and Form B) BDDW Required
	Local historic district property/boundary Certificate of Appropriateness (COA required), BDDW potentially required.
	Preservation restriction

Building Demolition Delay Waiver Process

***delay* – automatic** 12-month hold on projects that may detrimentally impact Worcester's historic buildings

***demolition* -** any act of pulling down, destroying, removing or razing a building or any designated historic portion thereof, or commencing the work of total or substantial destruction with the intent of completing the same.

TRIGGER SEQUENCE:

1. The property is a "designated historic building" (not in local historic district)

AND

2. The work constitutes "demolition"

- In order to require demolition delay review by the Worcester Historical Commission, the subject property must be an **historic building as defined by our ordinance,** and a **demolition** must be taking place.
- Buildings that the Commission might see include houses, businesses, factories, carriage houses, barns, and sheds.
- A demolition is defined as any act of pulling down, destroying, removing or razing a building or historic exterior portion of it.

***designated historic building* -** any building or portion thereof, including those within any historic district established by the city under the provisions of c. 40C of the General Laws and § 17(b) of Article 3 of Part II of these Revised Ordinances, and which is listed on, or within an area listed on, the National Register of Historic Places, or the State Register of Historic Places, or is the subject of a pending application for listing on said Registers, or is listed on the National Register Eligible List established by the commission pursuant to its designation as a certified local government by the Massachusetts Historical commission.



Examples of “designated portions” of historic buildings – siding, walls, roofs/roof structures, windows, doors, gutters, porches, etc., and whole buildings











Building Demolition Delay Waiver Process

City of Worcester Historical Commission

Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application

Planning & Regulatory 455 Main Street - Room 404, Worcester, MA 01608
Phone 508-799-1400, x31440 - Fax 508-799-1406 - E-mail planning@worcesterma.gov

1. **Building Address/Location:** 15 Whitney Street Worcester, MA 01610 **Date:** February 12, 2024
2. **Year Originally Built:** 1886 **Source:** Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS)
3. **Description of Work:** (i.e. Scope of work. List and explain each proposed change separately. Include description of materials and condition of items to be impacted.)

Area of Work
Porch(es)

Describe "Other" Area of Work

Scope of Work - Describe Work to be Completed
Replace rotted corner trim

Describe the Condition of Existing Materials to be Removed
Wood trim with signs of rot

Describe Proposed Materials
In Kind

Area of Work
Porch(es)

Describe "Other" Area of Work

Scope of Work - Describe Work to be Completed
Replace railings and newel posts

Describe the Condition of Existing Materials to be Removed
Missing/deteriorated wood

Describe Proposed Materials
aluminum reinforced vinyl railings, pvc wrapped 4x4

Area of Work
Other

Describe "Other" Area of Work

Scope of Work - Describe Work to be Completed
Install bathroom vent/light combo and vent to outside

Describe the Condition of Existing Materials to be Removed
Not existing

Describe Proposed Materials
PVC vent cover

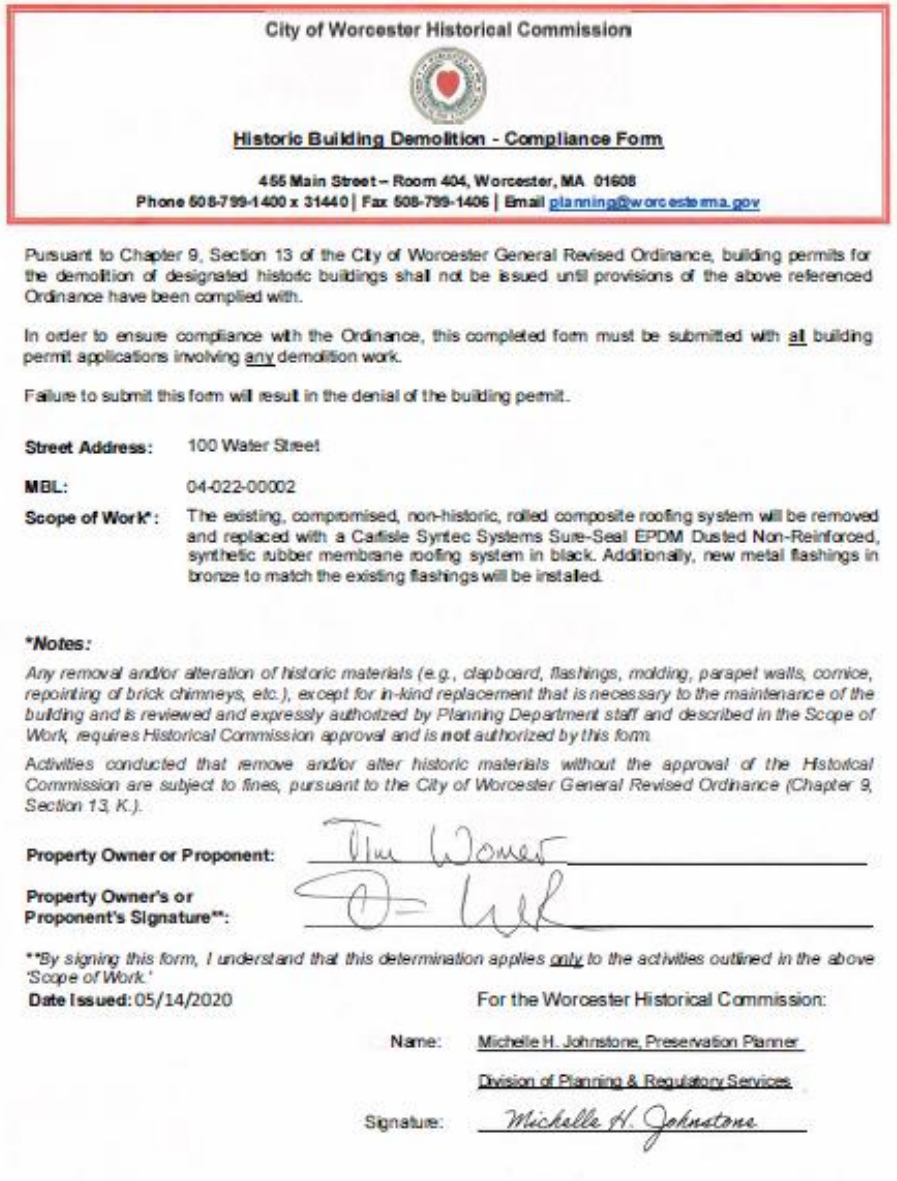
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4. **Reasons for Proposed Work:** (e.g. Renovation, maintenance, addition, new use, code violation, etc.)

Homeowner applied for ARPA Owner Occupied Rehab Program funding to address the code violations among other home repair needs.

5. **Applicant Name:** Ariel Lim





City of Worcester Historical Commission

Historic Building Demolition - Compliance Form

455 Main Street – Room 404, Worcester, MA 01608
Phone 508-799-1400 x 31440 | Fax 508-799-1406 | Email planning@worcesterma.gov

Pursuant to Chapter 9, Section 13 of the City of Worcester General Revised Ordinance, building permits for the demolition of designated historic buildings shall not be issued until provisions of the above referenced Ordinance have been complied with.

In order to ensure compliance with the Ordinance, this completed form must be submitted with all building permit applications involving any demolition work.

Failure to submit this form will result in the denial of the building permit.

Street Address: 100 Water Street

MBL: 04-022-00002

Scope of Work*: The existing, compromised, non-historic, rolled composite roofing system will be removed and replaced with a Carlisle Syntec Systems Sure-Seal EPDM Dusted Non-Reinforced, synthetic rubber membrane roofing system in black. Additionally, new metal flashings in bronze to match the existing flashings will be installed.

Notes:

*Any removal and/or alteration of historic materials (e.g., clapboard, flashings, molding, parapet walls, cornice, repointing of brick chimneys, etc.), except for in-kind replacement that is necessary to the maintenance of the building and is reviewed and expressly authorized by Planning Department staff and described in the Scope of Work, requires Historical Commission approval and is **not** authorized by this form.*

Activities conducted that remove and/or alter historic materials without the approval of the Historical Commission are subject to fines, pursuant to the City of Worcester General Revised Ordinance (Chapter 9, Section 13, K.).

Property Owner or Proponent: Tim Wones

Property Owner's or Proponent's Signature:**

***By signing this form, I understand that this determination applies only to the activities outlined in the above 'Scope of Work.'*

Date Issued: 05/14/2020

For the Worcester Historical Commission:

Name: Michelle H. Johnstone, Preservation Planner
Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

Signature: Michelle H. Johnstone

Compliance Forms

- Often, work proposed to historic buildings can be authorized through a Compliance Form, which is effectively an administrative approval that is issued by DPRS.
- Types of work that can be authorized by a Compliance Form includes removal and replacement of **non-historic** portions of historic buildings.
- Examples of this include removal and/or replacement of vinyl windows, rolled rubber roofs, aluminum doors, etc. that are not integral to maintaining the integrity of the building.

Local Historic Districts

Local Historic Districts (LHDs) are established through Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40C.

Worcester has four! They are Crown Hill; Elm Park Neighborhood; Montvale; and Massachusetts Avenue Local Historic Districts.

Their primary functions are to:

Preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth and its cities and towns; maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places; and encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district.



Massachusetts Avenue & Montvale



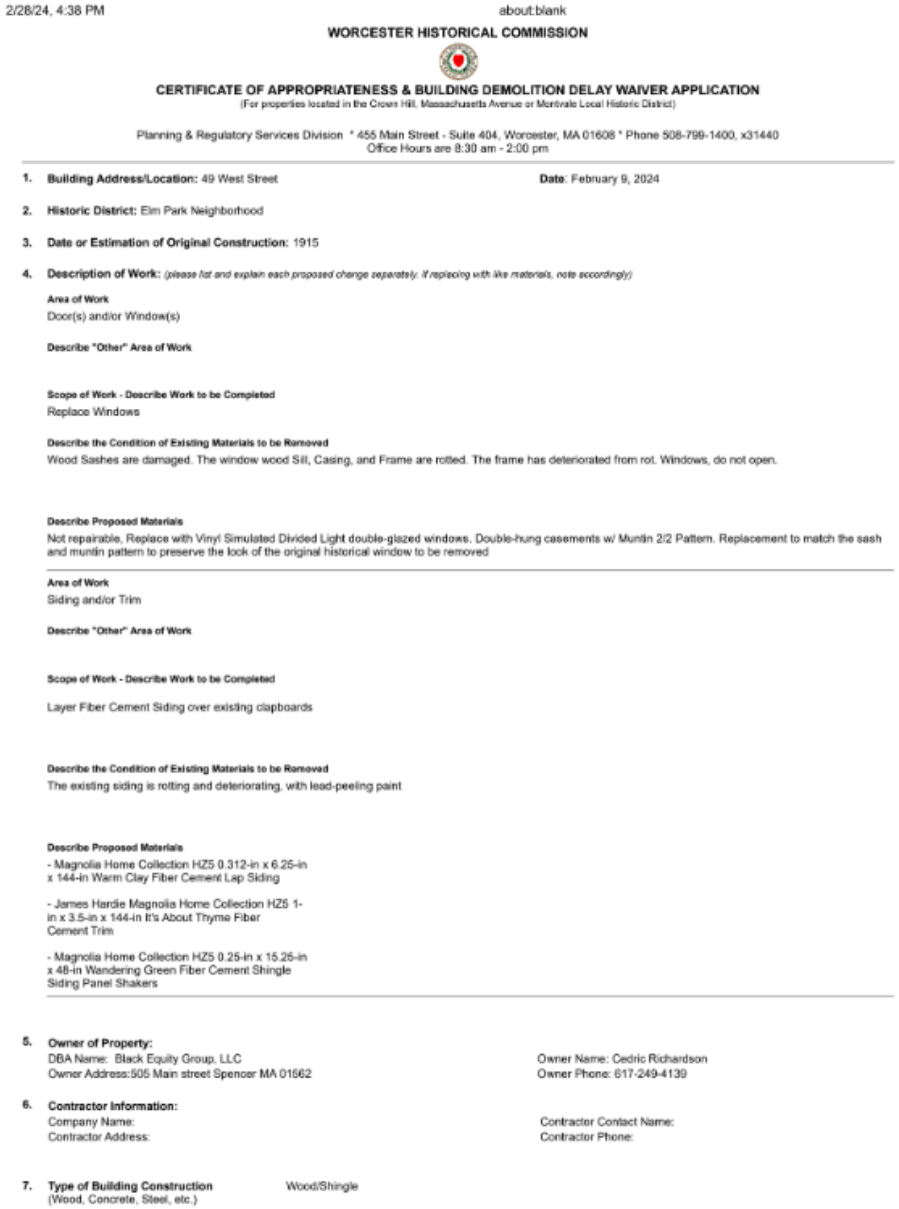
Crown Hill



Elm Park Neighborhood

LHD vs. Demolition Delay

	LHD	Demolition Delay
Period of protection offered from demolition or removal of historic fabric	Perpetual	12 months
Provides for design review of new construction within the boundaries of a historic district	✓	✗
Provides for review of non-buildings (fences, stone walls, new driveways, new walkways, etc.)	✓	✗
Regulates landscaping (flowers, bushes, trees, grass, etc.)	✗	✗
Regulates use of building	✗	✗
Allows for financial hardship consideration	✓	✓



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WORCESTER HISTORICAL COMMISSION

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & BUILDING DEMOLITION DELAY WAIVER APPLICATION

(For properties located in the Crown Hill, Massachusetts Avenue or Montvale Local Historic District)

Planning & Regulatory Services Division * 455 Main Street - Suite 404, Worcester, MA 01608 * Phone 508-799-1400, x31440
Office Hours are 8:30 am - 2:00 pm

1. **Building Address/Location:** 49 West Street **Date**: February 9, 2024
2. **Historic District:** Elm Park Neighborhood
3. **Date or Estimation of Original Construction:** 1915
4. **Description of Work:** *(please list and explain each proposed change separately. If replacing with like materials, note accordingly)*

Area of Work
Door(s) and/or Window(s)

Describe "Other" Area of Work

Scope of Work - Describe Work to be Completed
Replace Windows

Describe the Condition of Existing Materials to be Removed
Wood Sashes are damaged. The window wood Sill, Casing, and Frame are rotted. The frame has deteriorated from rot. Windows, do not open.

Describe Proposed Materials
Not repairable, Replace with Vinyl Simulated Divided Light double-glazed windows. Double-hung casements w/ Muntin 2/2 Pattern. Replacement to match the sash and muntin pattern to preserve the look of the original historical window to be removed

Area of Work
Siding and/or Trim

Describe "Other" Area of Work

Scope of Work - Describe Work to be Completed

Layer Fiber Cement Siding over existing clapboards

Describe the Condition of Existing Materials to be Removed
The existing siding is rotting and deteriorating, with lead-peeling paint

Describe Proposed Materials
- Magnolia Home Collection HZ5 0.312-in x 6.25-in x 144-in Warm Clay Fiber Cement Lap Siding

- James Hardie Magnolia Home Collection HZ5 1-in x 3.5-in x 144-in It's About Thyme Fiber Cement Trim

- Magnolia Home Collection HZ5 0.25-in x 15.25-in x 48-in Wandering Green Fiber Cement Shingle Siding Panel Shakers

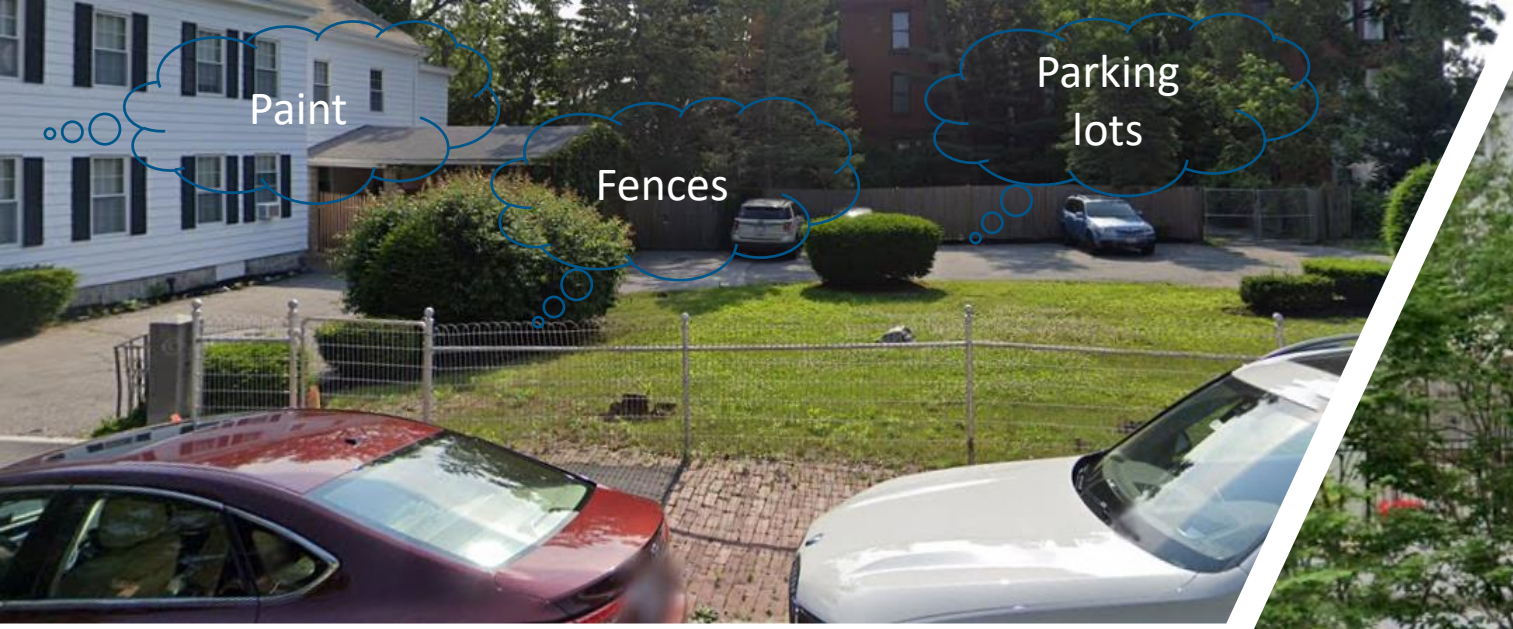
5. **Owner of Property:**
DBA Name: Black Equity Group, LLC
Owner Address:505 Main street Spencer MA 01662
Owner Name: Cedric Richardson
Owner Phone: 617-249-4139

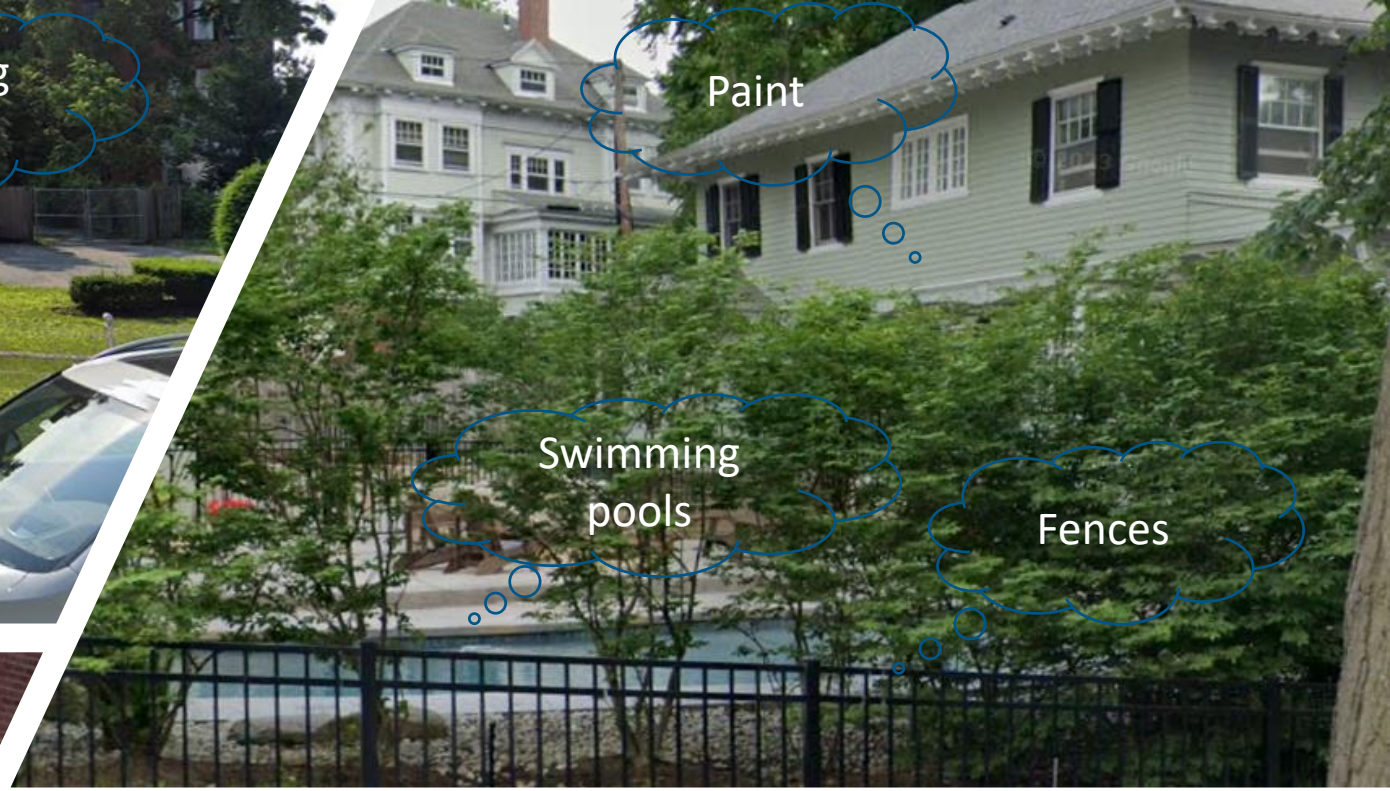
6. **Contractor Information:**
Company Name:
Contractor Address:
Contractor Contact Name:
Contractor Phone:

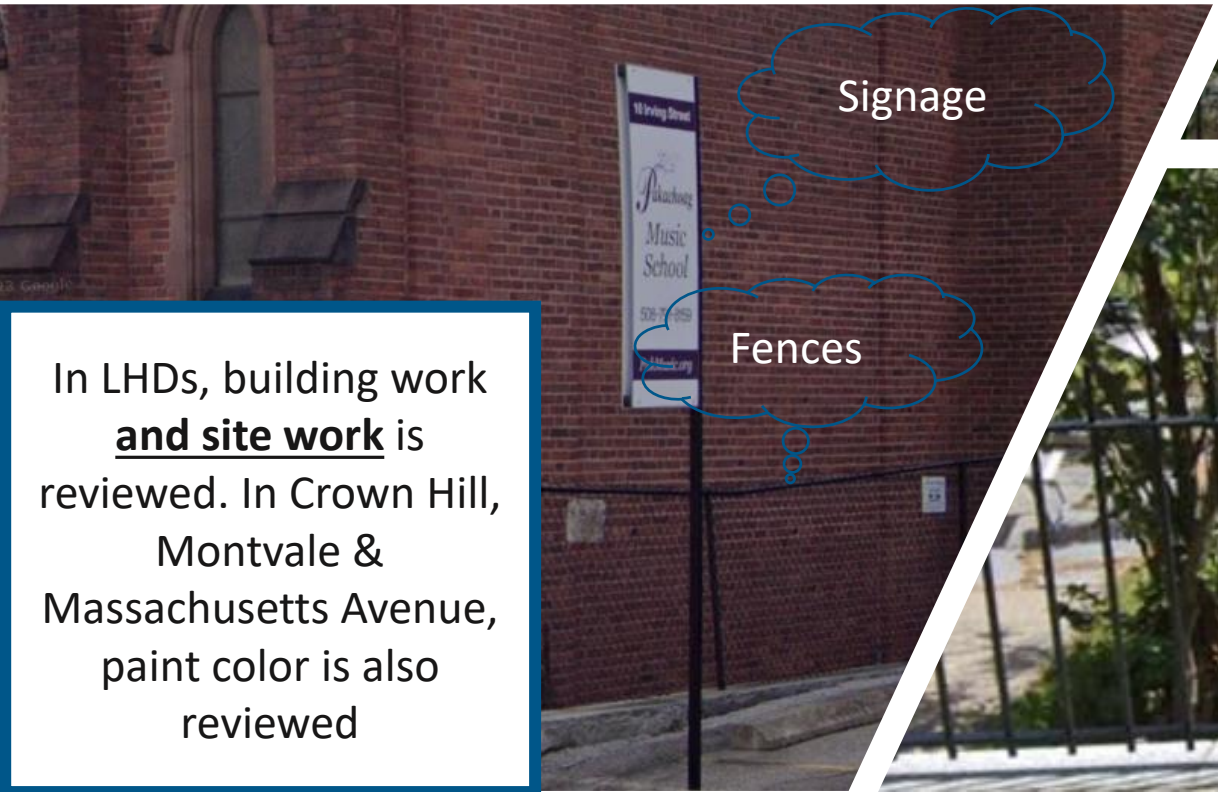
7. **Type of Building Construction** (Wood, Concrete, Steel, etc.) Wood/Shingle

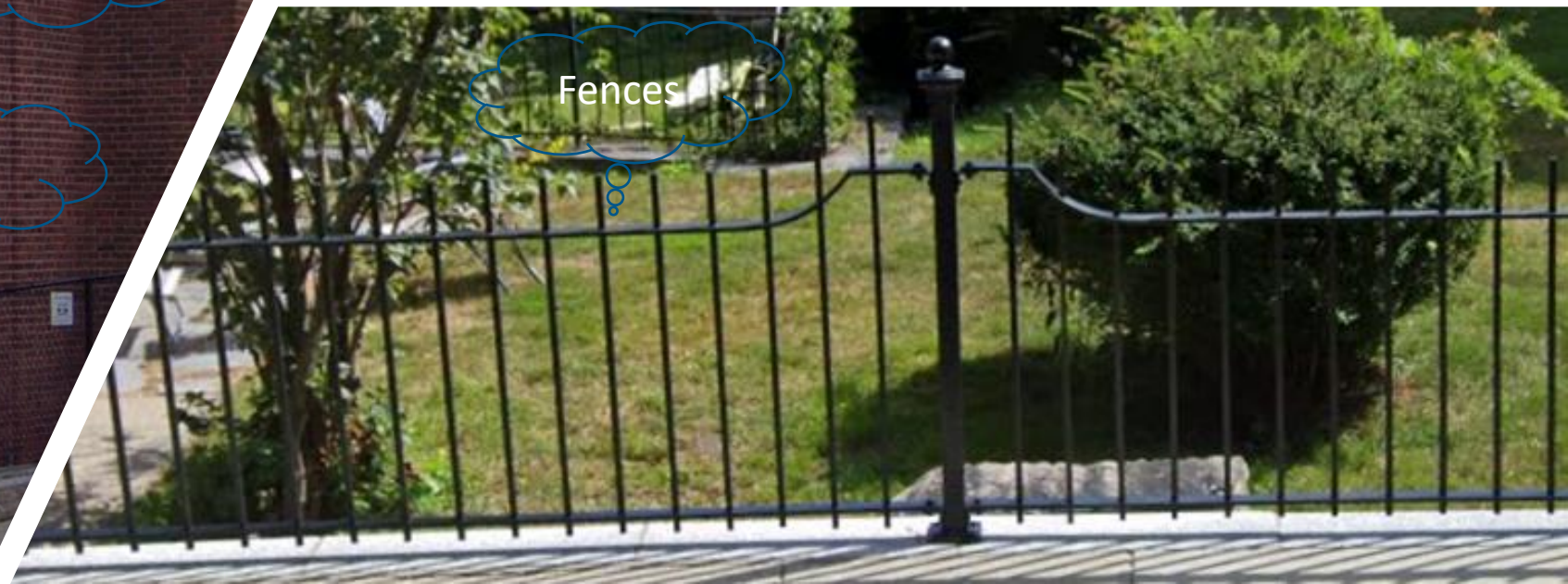
Certificate of Appropriateness/ Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver Process

- While the requirement of an approved Building Demolition Delay Waiver applies to all the resource types we just went through, Certificate of Appropriateness applications only apply to buildings in Local Historic Districts.
- Any time any work is proposed to any part of any property in a Local Historic District, including the parcel on which it is sited, a Certificate of Appropriateness must be issued before work may commence or a building permit may be issued.









In LHDs, building work **and site work** is reviewed. In Crown Hill, Montvale & Massachusetts Avenue, paint color is also reviewed

Certificate of Non-Applicability Process

WORCESTER HISTORICAL COMMISSION

CERTIFICATE OF NON-APPLICABILITY APPLICATION
(For properties located in the Crown Hill, Massachusetts Avenue or Montvale Local Historic District)

Planning & Regulatory Services Division * 455 Main Street - Suite 404, Worcester, MA 01608 * Phone 508-799-1400, x31440
Office Hours are 8:30 am - 2:00 pm

1. **Building Address/Location:** 10 Regent Street **Record #:** CNA-25-17 **Date:** November 26, 2025
2. **Historic District:** Massachusetts Avenue
3. **Date or Estimation of Original Construction:** 1900
4. **Description of Work:** *(please list and explain each proposed change separately. If replacing with like materials, note accordingly)*

Area of Work
Door(s) and/or Window(s)

Describe "Other" Area of Work

Scope of Work - Describe Work to be Completed
Replacement of existing Vinyl windows

Describe the Condition of Existing Materials to be Removed
Nearing end of useful life

Describe Proposed Materials

Total windows: estimate approximately 45+

Window type: Double Hung Vinyl Replacements with Grilles Between Glass (GBG), Adobe Exterior Finish.

Street Visibility: 28 of the remaining windows are visible from the street while the remainder are not.

To be replaced: Windows & Frames

What remains: All exterior wood trim/casing and surround, no change to paint.

Deviation from current appearance: None, all windows will repeat the same pane patterns as current windows.

5. **Owner of Property:**
DBA name: (If Provided): Owner Name: Robert Steele
Owner Address: 113 Ayer Road Harvard 01451
6. **Contractor Information:**
Company Name: Contractor Contact Name:
Contractor Address: Contractor Phone:
7. **Type of Building Construction** (Wood, Concrete, Steel, etc.) Wood, shingle style
8. **List all the Uses of the Building** (Residence, Business, Industrial, etc.) Fraternity

for Exemption from Commission Approval (check all that apply):
Ordinary maintenance or repair of exterior architectural features that does not affect a change in design, color, material or outward appearance.
Interior work that does not affect the exterior of the building.
andscaping with trees and plants, provided that any tree removed does not have a trunk of 12 inches or greater in diameter measured 4 1/2 feet above the ound.
f work is not visible from a public way.

A Certificate of Non-Applicability is issued when proposed work will not change the design, color, or outward appearance in any way.



For example: The owner of 12 Crown Street needed to replace the rear sliding windows on his house (L) with a similar window (below). Since they are not visible from the street, this work was authorized through a Certificate of Non-Applicability.

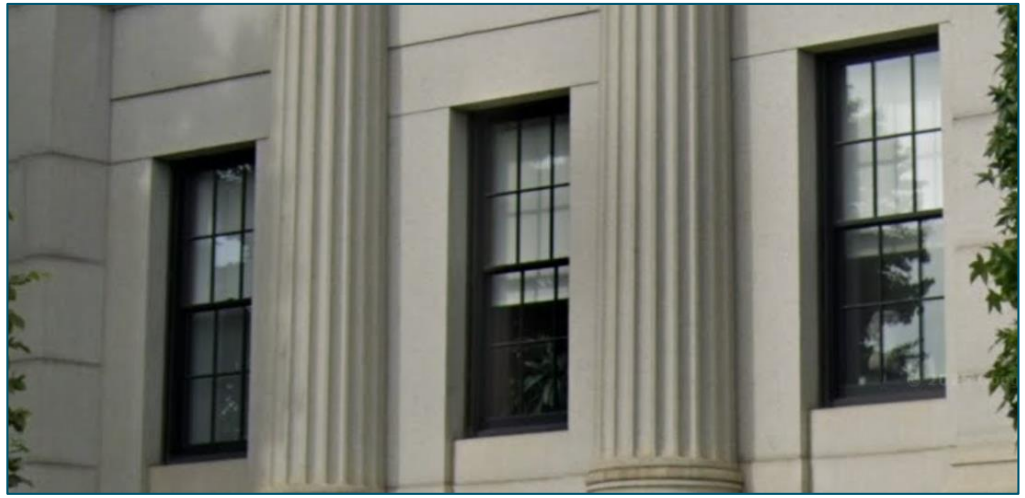


But this is expensive!

- Oftentimes, options that are less intrusive than typical modern materials, but more cost-effective than traditional historical materials, may be used, depending on the situation.
- For example:
  - A homeowner needs to replace their wood clapboard siding!
    - They could repair it, or investigate use of fiber cement, which offers a closer match to wood than, say, vinyl.
  - A homeowner would like to replace their wood windows!
    - They could repair the windows or use simulated divided lite, double-glazed, aluminum-clad wood windows more in character with the appearance of their home but less expensive than true divided lite sash
  - A homeowner would like to replace their slate roof!
    - They could repair the roof or potentially use simulated slate, especially in cases where the roof is not character-defining to the property.



Example of a synthetic slate roof on Pleasant Street



Example of a historically appropriate replacement windows on Main Street

When preservation work is a true economic burden…

A **Certificate of Hardship** may be issued after a Certificate of Appropriateness request is denied and where a bona fide hardship is demonstrated.

Financial hardship may be considered to mitigate the delay period when demolition delay would pose an undue economic hardship on the owner.

What historically appropriate alternatives to demolition have been considered?

If the subject property is income producing, have any attempts been made to obtain Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits (MHRTC) or Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives?

What is the nature of your undue financial hardship? What evidence can you provide of an inability to finance preservation work through private financing?

If a full or substantial demolition is proposed, have any attempts been made to locate a potential buyer to purchase and preserve the building in lieu of demolition?

Questions?