

# Working with the Worcester Historical Commission

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Worcester Landlord Summit  
January 10, 2026

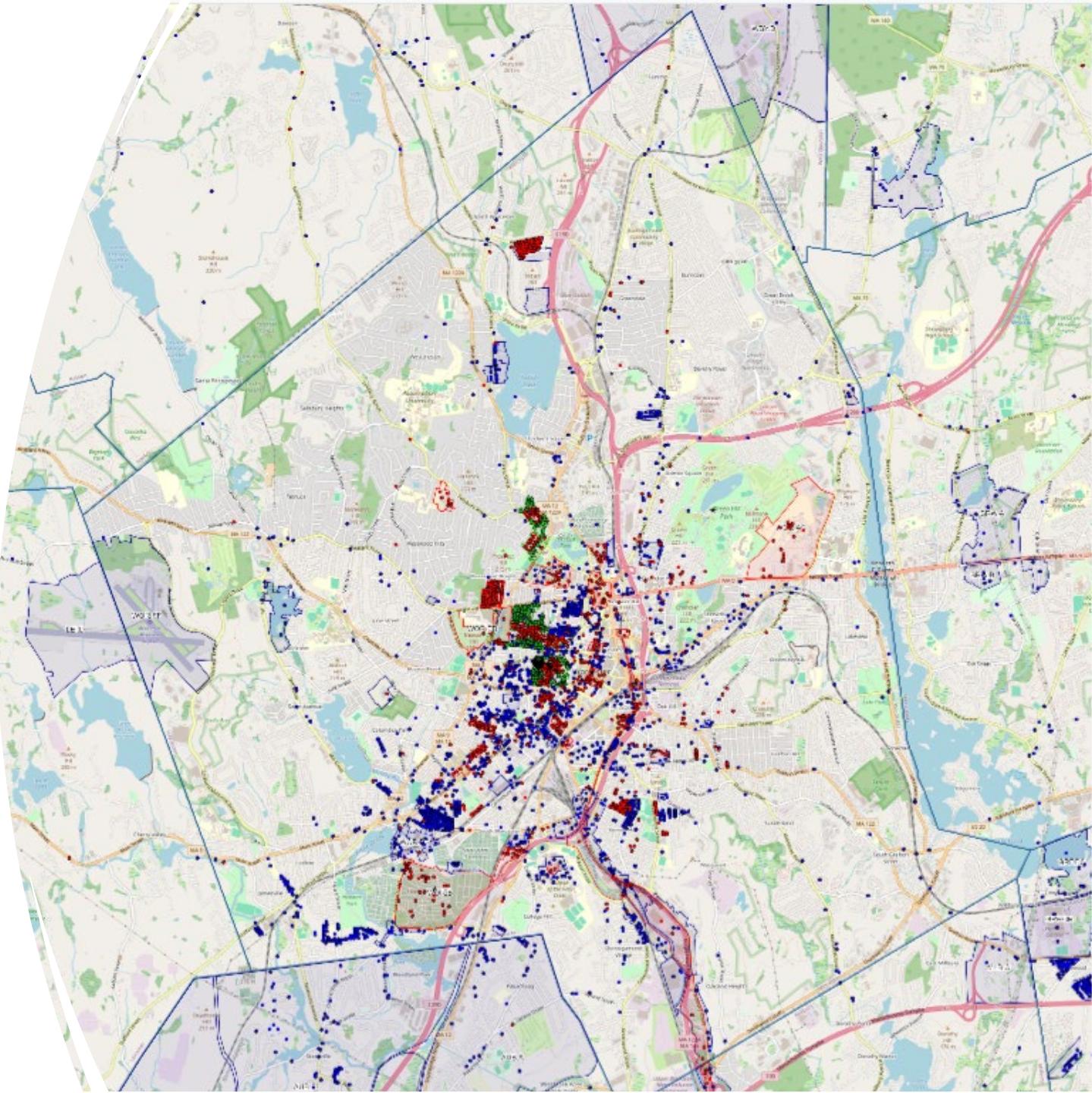


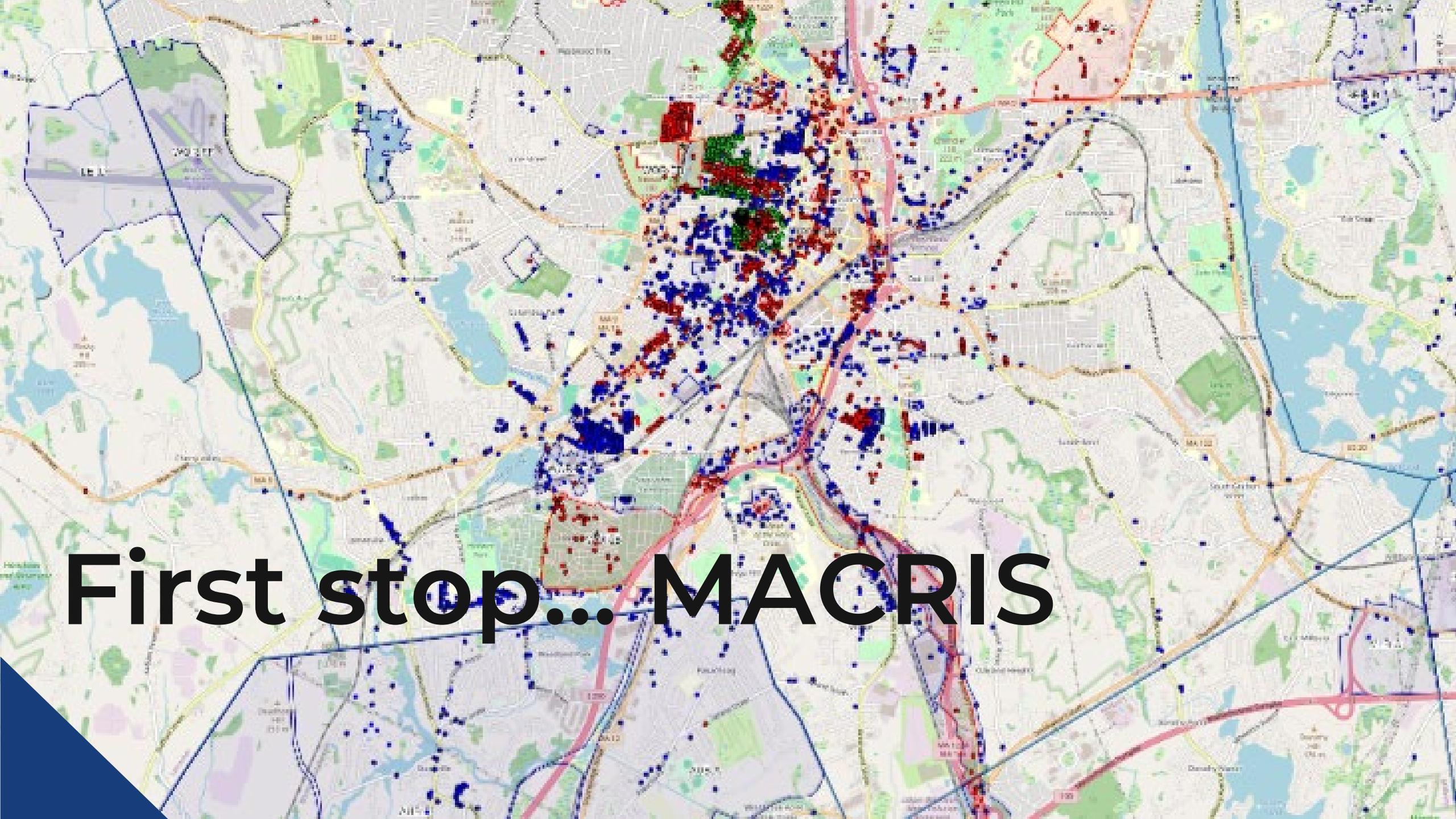
# The Worcester Historical Commission:

- 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

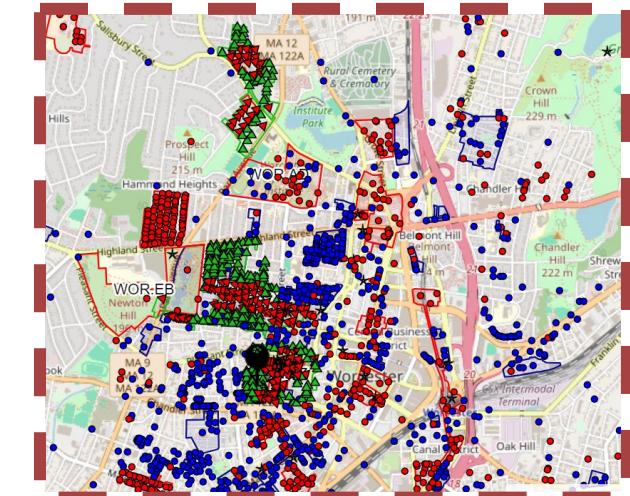
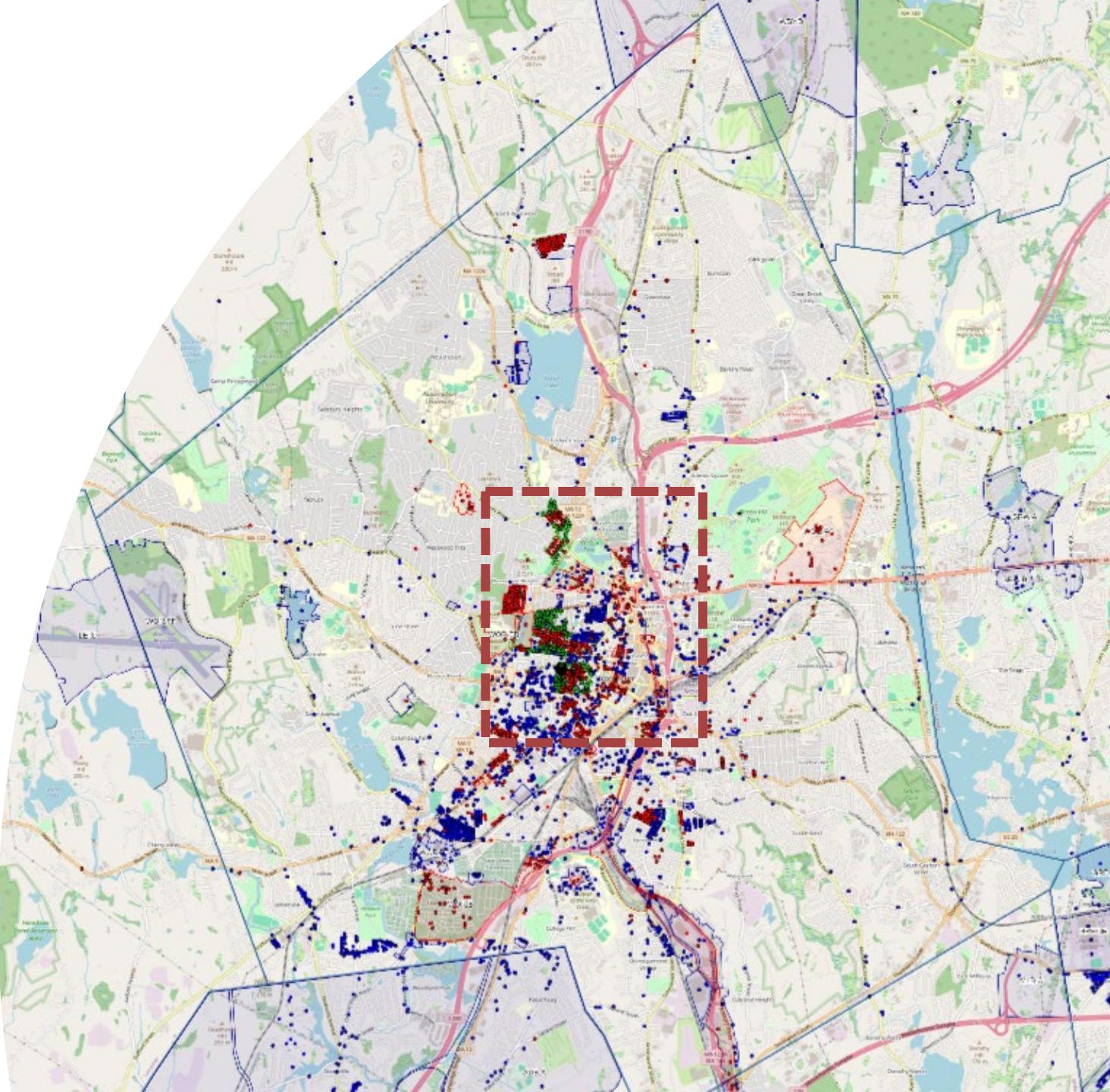


I own an old  
building...  
what do I  
need to do  
when exterior  
changes are  
needed?





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 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

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

# Building Demolition Delay Waiver Process



**HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 29, 2024**



# Building Demolition Delay Waivers (City of Worcester Revised Ordinances of 2008)

*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 get to the proverbial desk of 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**



City of Worcester Historical Commission



Historic Building Demolition - Compliance Form

465 Main Street – Room 404, Worcester, MA 01608  
Phone 508-799-1400 x 31440 | Fax 508-799-1406 | Email [planning@worcester.ma.gov](mailto:planning@worcester.ma.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 Womes  
O. Womes

**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.

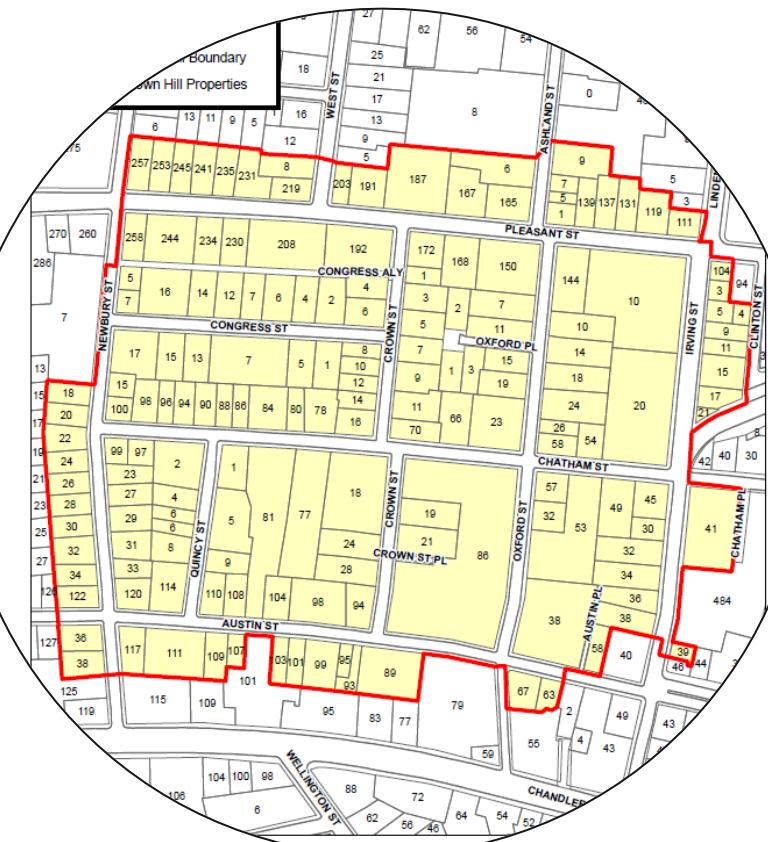


Their primary functions are to:

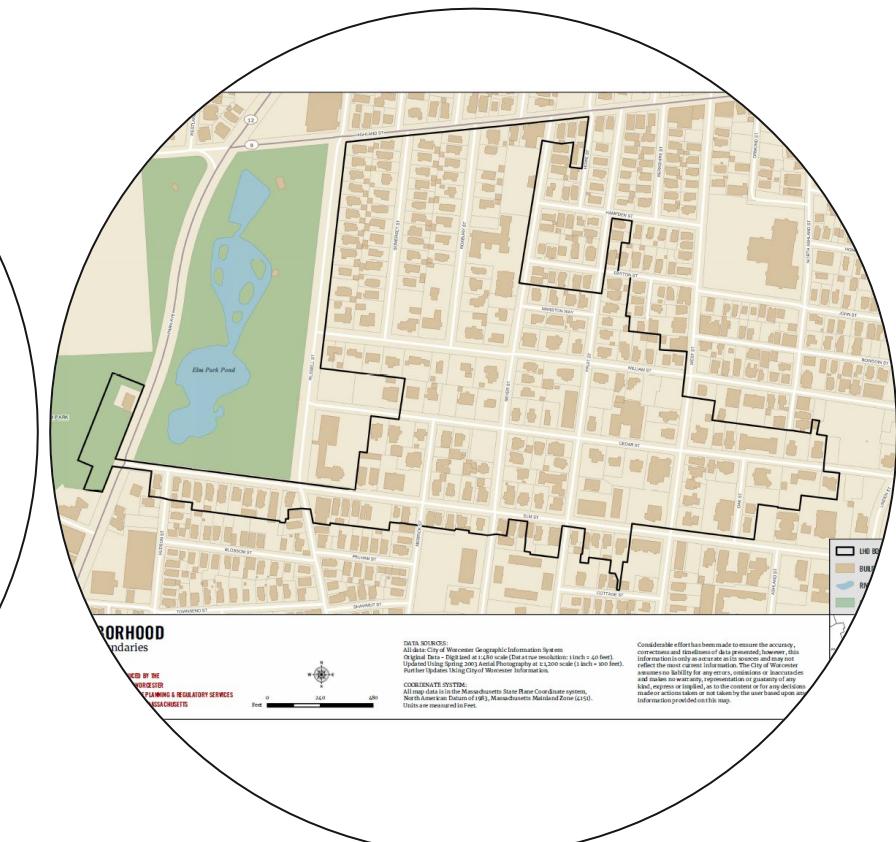
Preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth and its cities and towns; maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places; and encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district.



## Massachusetts Avenue & Montvale



# Crown Hill



## Elm Park Neighborhood



**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 of 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/ Mullion 2/2 Pattern. Replacement to match the sash and mullion 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:

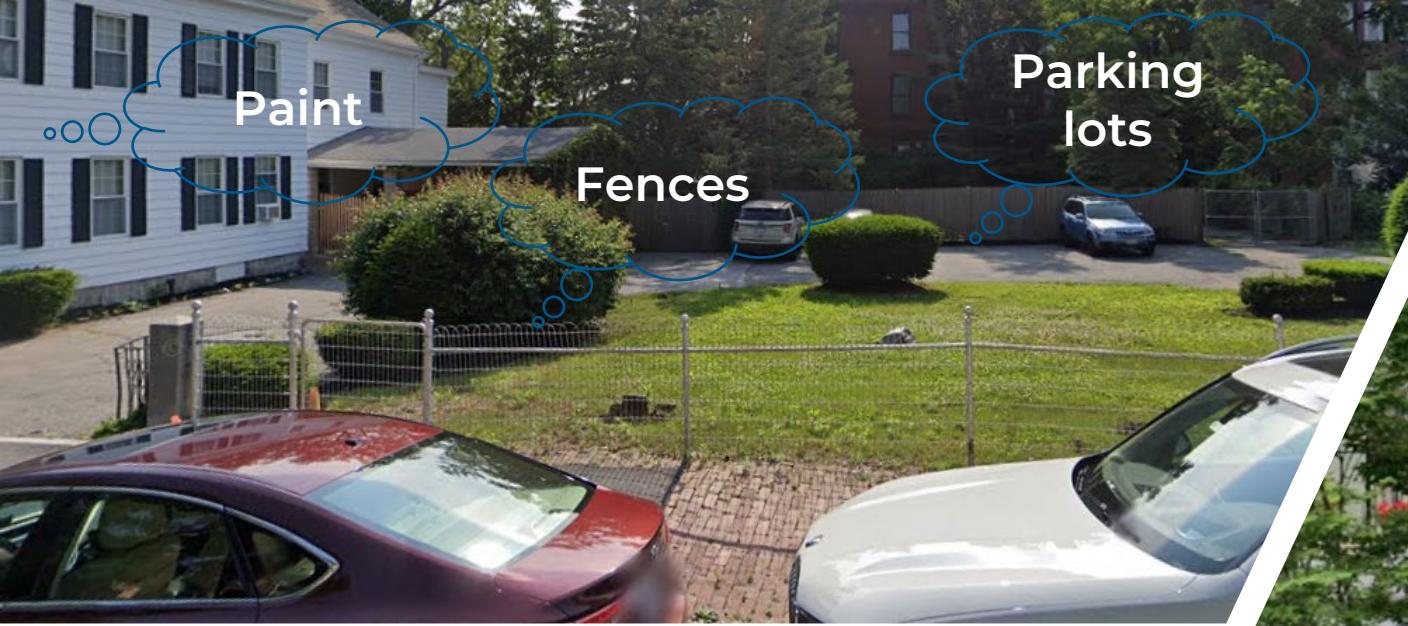
Contractor Contact Name:  
Contractor Phone:

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.
- In most cases, work to buildings in Local Historic Districts requires issuance of a Building Demolition Delay Waiver *and* a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- 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.



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 Address: 113 Ayer Road Harvard 01451

Owner Name: Robert Steele

6. Contractor Information:  
Company Name:  
Contractor Address:

Contractor Contact Name:  
Contractor Phone:

7. Type of Building Construction Wood, shingle style  
(Wood, Concrete, Steel, etc.)

8. List all the Uses of the Building Fraternity  
(Residence, Business, Industrial,  
etc.)

### 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.

Landscaping 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 ground.

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  
preservati  
on 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?

# Approaches to Preservation

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**Preservation**: focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.

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**Rehabilitation**: acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.

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**Restoration**: depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.

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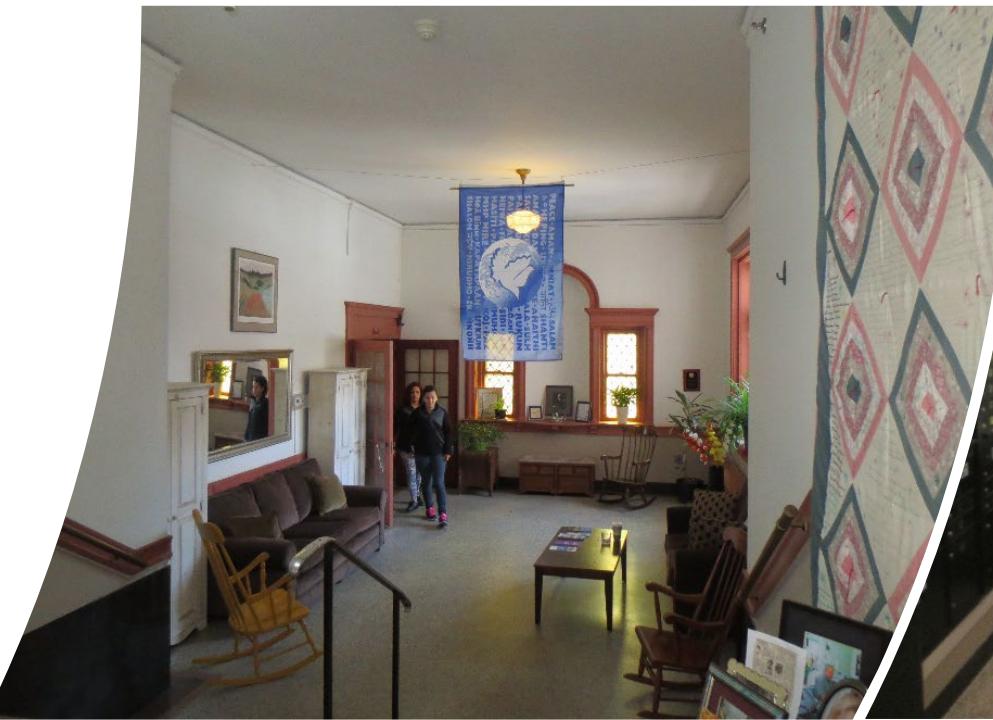
**Reconstruction**: re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

# Preservation

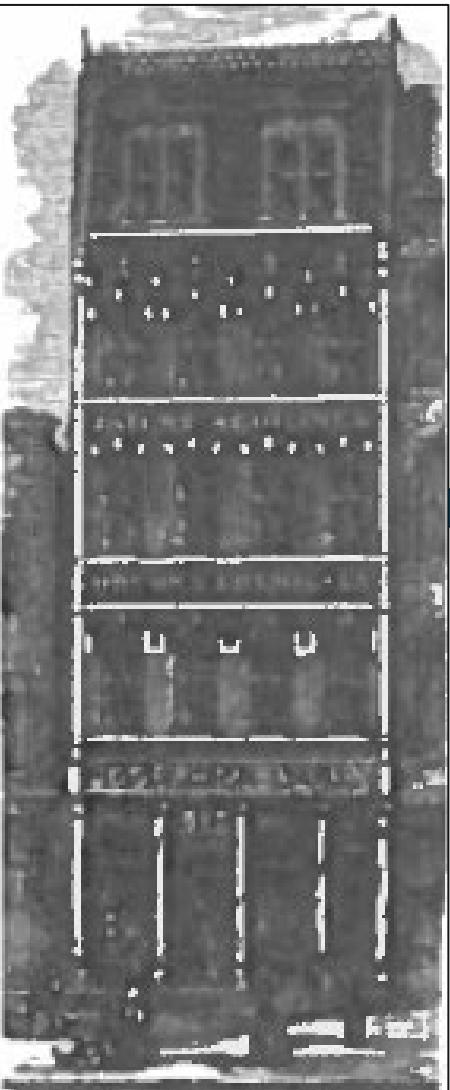


## **Rehabilitation**

**St. Joseph's Home for  
Working Girls, 52 High  
Street, 1924**



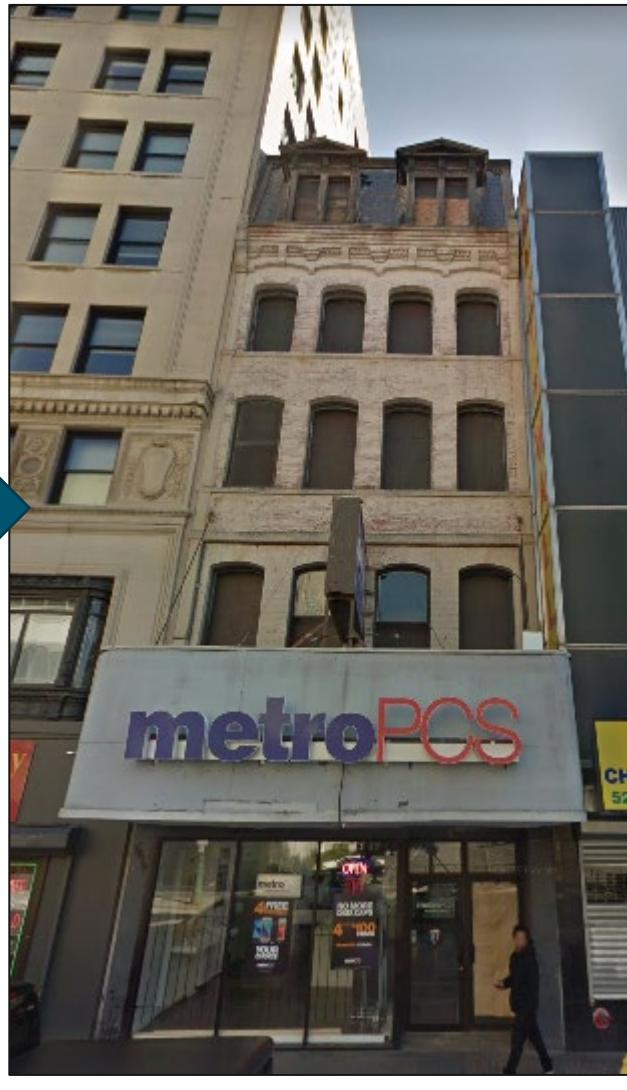
# Rehabilitation: Cheney-Ballard Building, 517 Main Street, ca. 1870



1880 😊



1915 😊



2017 😰



2023 😊



# Restoration: Union Station, 1911

## **Reconstruction:** Worcester State Hospital Main Building, Belmont Street Campus



Building constructed 1874–1877,  
demolished.



Clock tower, reconstructed in 2015!



WORCESTER, MASS. STATE INSANE HOSPITAL.

May 12, 1905

A. P. Lundborg, Worcester, Mass.

# Questions?

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