

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

**April 20, 2017**

**LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL**

**Commission Members Present:** Andrew Shveda  
Randolph Bloom  
Robyn Conroy  
Devon Kurtz  
Courtney Escobar, Alternate

**Commission Members Absent:** Mark Wamback  
Cheryll Holley, Alternate

**Staff Members Present:** Stephen R. Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services  
Deborah Steele, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

**Approval of Minutes**

March 23, 2017

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the minutes of March 23, 2017.*

**Old Business**

**1. 272 Highland Street - HC-2016-080**

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver  
Petitioner: Melinda Pham  
Present Use: Single family residence  
Year Built: 1890  
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register Individual (NRIP), National Register (MRA), fka E.S. Pierce House

**Petition Purpose:**

- Close first floor window on left (north) side of home
- LTW on window replacement

This item had been continued from the previous meeting in order to allow time to review that all proper actions had been taken, as it had been continued several times. At the previous meeting the applicant decided to retain instead of replace their windows. They have requested a Leave to Withdraw regarding this portion. The petitioner would still like to close in one window on the north face of the house.

The Commission had no further discussion on either item.

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 3-0 to accept the Leave to Withdraw regarding the window replacement at 272 Highland Street.*

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 3-0 that the proposed demolition, as pertaining to the window closure on the north side of the home, is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.*

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated November 28, 2016, and received November 29, 2016.

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## **2. 49 Temple Street (aka 90 Harding Street) - HC-2017-019**

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver  
Petitioner: C&S Harding Street LLC  
Present Use: Warehouse  
Year Built: 1925  
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka Saint John's Roman Catholic High School  
Petition Purpose:

- Full demolition

Mark Donohue of Fletcher Tilton appeared on behalf of the applicant. Also present were Cliff Rucker and Scott Rouse, principals of Worcester Sports Center.

Mr. Donohue outlined the applicant's history in relation to the property. Mr. Rucker and Mr. Rouse purchased the property in 2016 as part of several parcels totalling 2.41 acres. The purpose of the acquisition of 49 Temple Street was to provide for overflow parking for the neighboring sports center. Mr. Donohue went on to review the building's history as a school and its historical relevance in relation to its association with St. John's parish. He noted that it has been vacant for over 40 years and has fallen into disrepair. Decorative elements and windows have been removed, leaving the interior exposed to the elements.

Mr. Donohue highlighted letters of support from neighborhood organizations including the Worcester Business Development Corporation, Father Madden at St. John's parish, and Preservation Worcester. He stated that the highest and best use it to incorporate the lot into the sports complex as parking, and not have a vacant building in the middle. In addition, he stated that cost of repair, due to the deteriorated state, would be economically unfeasible. This claim was supported by Father Madden's letter referencing previous exploration by the church to reuse the building. Mr. Donohue closed by stating that denial of the application would put a hardship on the applicant as they would need to work around the building.

Chair Shveda asked for clarification regarding the site plans provided, that the building removal allows for a net gain of 47 parking spaces. He also asked whether they parking requirements have already been met, without the removal of the building. Mr. Donohue responded that yes, parking requirements have been met per code, but they anticipate a need for more space with the volume of people using the center. Parking is not intended to be available to the public, but the applicant has a verbal agreement

with Father Madden that the parish may use the lot as needed as long as it does not interfere with the demands of the sports center.

Chair Shveda asked whether a structural analysis of the building has been completed. Mr. Rouse responded that he has been through the building with contractors and architects, but that the interior is literally crumbling. He believes the building would need to be taken down to the skeleton, starting from scratch to reuse it.

Chair Shveda stated his dislike to tearing down a building to create a parking lot, but acknowledged the deteriorated condition of the building. In addition he noted its relevance lies more in historic context rather than architectural integrity. Commissioner Conroy agreed that losing a building for a parking lot is never preferred, but recognized the public support and condition. Commissioner Bloom agreed that it has little aesthetic significance, though it is historically significant. He believes that the space used for parking would be more of an asset to the neighborhood around it.

Public Comment: Mullen Sawyer, Executive Director of CDC, and president of the Canal District Alliance spoke behalf of the latter to support the application. He stated they've worked closely with the city, the chamber, and the owners regarding the design of the site. He noted his long-term involvement with the site, and also noted the need for serious remediation which has prevented former owners from securing financing to move forward. He believes this development will be an active, vibrant part of the Canal District.

Ed Russo, vice-president of the Canal District Alliance, and owner of Lock 50 spoke in support of the application. He recognizes the reluctance to remove a building for parking, but feels that the additional space is needed to support to neighboring businesses.

Stuart Loosemore of the Chamber of Commerce spoke in support of the application. He noted the applicant's significant investment in the area, and that the proposal not only supplements his own development, but the growth of the district.

Jo Hart of Worcester spoke neither in support of nor against demolition or business, but stated that she is in favor of keeping things that are good to look at. She believes Worcester is headstrong in tearing down its past. She feels that the sports complex is in a bad location as the Canal District is small and intimate, and that they'll continue to tear down buildings to allow for more cars, and is therefore opposed to this application.

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.*

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated February 6, 2017, and received February 13, 2017.

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## New Business

### 3. 27 John Street - HC-2017-024

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver  
Petitioner: Wendy Wang  
Present Use: Three-Family Residence  
Year Built: c.1894  
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, National Register Individual (NRIP), fka Thomas F. Doran  
Three-Decker

Petition Purpose:

- Remove slate roof and replace with asphalt
- Remove wood windows and replace with vinyl
- Install vinyl siding

Huanchen Li, husband of the property owner, appeared on behalf of the application. Property owner, Wendy Wang was also present.

Mr. Li stated that the roof is leaking badly with water coming into the house. He said the wood sheathing under the slate roof is rotted. Their budget included roof replacement, but repairing the slate would be a hardship. He said that some of the windows are in very poor condition and cannot be opened, and also they have lead paint according to contractors he claimed to have spoken with. Mr. Li stated that this house looks like junk compared to others in the neighborhood, which is why they want to replace the windows and install vinyl siding. He said the siding is in terrible condition, and is rotted in some places. Their goal is to rent to Section 8 tenants and therefore want to make the requested changes so that can happen.

Chair Shveda first addressed the roof, stating it was an unusual building in that it is a triple decker with the slate still existing. He acknowledged the poor condition of the roof and also noted that due to the pitch, it is barely visible from the street. Commissioners Bloom and Conroy agreed that as it's not very visible, in poor condition, and a high cost to repair, replacement seemed acceptable.

Regarding windows, Mr. Li clarified that the window in the submitted photo was one of the worst and that there are maybe six others in similarly poor condition, and there are 25 or 30 windows in total. Chair Shveda noted that removing the windows would only address a portion of the lead paint and that the casings will likely have lead paint as well. Commissioner Kurtz expressed concern at the potential loss the decorative, leaded glass transom windows on the front elevation.

Regarding siding, Chair Shveda sought clarification on how it will be installed, asking whether they intend to wrap everything. He expressed concern about the potential loss of extensive decorative woodwork. He made suggestions to the applicant that would combine portions of vinyl siding while retaining trim around the windows, and on the front elevations, and recommended that Mr. Li speak with his contractor about this.

Commissioner Bloom noted that this is a rare three-decker and that it stands out as being particularly handsome. Commissioner Conroy followed up saying that she was struck by the windows as the first thing she sees, and therefore doesn't feel comfortable voting on the windows or siding until it is clearer

how they will be affected. Chair Shveda stated that in other similar cases the replacements may be granted, but with the condition that unique windows are retained; in this case, any window with leaded glass. Mr. Li stated that he has not gotten any estimates on repairing the windows. Chair Shveda stated that the Commission would need to see information about whether the paint is lead containing, along with cost comparisons of replacement versus repair before a decision could be made.

The applicant requested to continue the application with regards to the windows and siding to the next meeting.

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 5-0 to continue the discussion regarding windows and siding to the May 11, 2017 Historical Commission meeting, and to extend the constructive deadline to May 15, 2017.*

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 5-0 that the demolition of the slate roof and replacement with asphalt shingles is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.*

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated March 8, 2017 and received March 13, 2017.

Exhibit B: Request for Continuance Form, dated April 20, 2017.

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#### **4. 30 Waconah Road - HC-2017-025**

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness  
Petitioner: Tim Hastings  
Present Use: Single-Family Residence  
Year Built: c1900  
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, within Montvale Local Historic District, fka Everett Harrington House  
Petition Purpose:

- Replace a wooden fence in-kind

Timothy Hastings, owner, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Hastings stated that the fence predated his ownership and has deteriorated over the last few years, finally collapsing in areas this past winter. Regarding the proposed replacement, Mr. Hastings stated that it will be replaced to match the existing, by the same contractor that installed the original. Chair Shveda noted that the fence is not historical and replacement would be appropriate.

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.*

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 5-0 that the changes proposed to 30 Waconah Road are appropriate for the Montvale Local District and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness.*

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated March 9, 2017 and received March 25, 2017.

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#### **5. 88 Sagamore Road - HC-2017-026**

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness  
Petitioner: Sean and Pam Farren  
Present Use: Single-Family Residence  
Year Built: c1906  
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, within Montvale Local Historic District, fka Joseph P. Cheney House  
Petition Purpose:

- Repair two stone entry staircases
- Restore wooden gutters

Sean Farren, owner, appeared on behalf of the application.

Commissioner Kurtz recused himself from this item as the applicant is a neighbor.

Mr. Farren stated that the proposed work is mostly repair. The previous owner removed the front gutters, leading to water running off the eave onto the front stairways, deteriorating the mortar. He would like to have the stairs taken apart, then rebuilt using a new mortar foundation with the existing limestone with new granite caps. The front steps to the street are currently capped in bluestone, but the underlying mortar has failed. He proposed to rebuild the steps with new mortar and epoxy, using the existing stone. As noted previously, almost all of the wooden gutters had been removed by a previous owner. Mr. Farren has contacted Wood Gutters in Somerville, who can produce matching gutters in the same profile, in cedar to be clear coated.

Chair Shveda noted no historic material is being removed and what is proposed to be added is historically appropriate. Commissioner Conroy noted that the proposed work looks very nice.

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.*

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 4-0 that the changes proposed to 88 Sagamore Road are appropriate for the Montvale Local District and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness.*

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated March 14, 2017 and received March 16, 2017.

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## 6. 16 Whitman Road - HC-2017-027

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness  
Petitioner: Tim Kelly and Kelly Bachand  
Present Use: Single-Family Residence  
Year Built: c1901  
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, within Montvale Local Historic District, fka David Lovell House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace wood siding, trim, and molding with Hardie brand siding, trim, and molding

Tim Crowley, former Commission member, appeared on behalf of the application.

Commissioner Kurtz recused himself from this item as the applicant is a neighbor.

Mr. Crowley stated that the previous owner stripped the woodwork and repainted the house, but that the integrated gutters appear to be failing, and paint has flaked in large sections. Therefore, Mr. Kelly has opted to remove all the siding, trim around the windows, and cornice trim including dentil molding, and replace it with Hardie product. Mr. Crowley stated that all neighbors are in support of this proposed work. He noted that the Hardie product cannot be butted end to end, and therefore vertical trim pieces would need to be installed at all corners. He said that a similar corner board is currently present on the garage. The intent is to have the final appearance match the existing as closely as possible.

Commissioner Bloom requested more information regarding the proposed replacement gutter system, as he felt this item would greatly change the aesthetic of the house. Chair Shveda agreed, and noted that it is unclear where the current gutter system is failing. Both expressed concern about addressing the gutter failure issue more thoroughly as it appeared that not only is the paint flaking, but also the clapboards are rotting in areas. The gutter replacement was not included in the application, and therefore not advertised. However, Mr. Rolle stated that the gutters could be construed as part of the trim replacement, and regarding notification, were someone concerned enough about the project as advertised, they likely would have already been heard, and that the additional item of the gutters would not make a significant difference.

Chair Shveda's largest concern was that the applicant may make a large investment on the siding, without fully assessing the underlying problem, and would like to see more information regarding the current gutter system. Discussion continued regarding the properties and aesthetic of the Hardie product. Mr. Rolle suggested the vertical boards across the front bays be painted the same as the body color so as to be as inconspicuous as possible.

Mr. Crowley, on behalf of Mr. Kelly, asked that the record reflect the clarification on the application that the gutters and downspouts are proposed to be replaced. He also requested a continuance regarding that issue.

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 4-0 to continue the discussion regarding the gutter replacement to the May 11, 2017 Historical Commission meeting, and to extend the constructive deadline for the Building Demolition Delay Waiver to May 15, 2017.*

Discussion continued about the detail of the proposed Hardie trim and how it will match the existing woodwork. Chair Shveda and Commissioner Bloom inquired why the fascia and dentil molding under the eave is being replaced. Chair Shveda felt the dentil work looked in good condition, and that it appears to be more integral to the gutter system. Mr. Crowley proposed that anything above the window trim be rolled into the gutter discussion and therefore be continued. This was agreeable to the Commission.

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed siding, and window and door trim replacement is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.*

*Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 4-0 that the changes proposed to the siding, window and door trim at 16 Whitman Road are appropriate for the Montvale Local District and approved the Certificate of Appropriateness.*

*Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 4-0 to continue all other work, not addressed in previous approvals, to the May 11, 2017 Historical Commission meeting.*

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated March 17, 2017 and received March 23, 2017.

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### **Communications**

- a. Communication from Massachusetts Office for Administration and Finance re: draft MOA for Worcester State Hospital Conveyance to Worcester Business Development Corporation, dated February 27, 2017 and received March 21, 2017. *(See Item g)*

*Taken with Item g.*

- b. Communication from WBDC re: support for 49 Temple Street application, dated March 9, 2017 and received March 10, 2017. *(See Item 2)*

*No action required.*

- c. Communication from Howard Stein Hudson Engineers & Planner re: Mass DOT District 3 ADA Retrofits, dated March 20, 2017 and received March 22, 2017.

*Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz the Commission voted 5-0 to issue a letter stating “no comment”.*

- d. Communication from Massachusetts Historical Commission re: Hadwen Park Renovation Project, dated March 30, 2017 and received April 3, 2017.

*No action required.*

- e. Communications from Massachusetts Historical Commission re: National Register nomination for Dale and Ethan Allen Streets Historic District by Epsilon Associates, dated March 23, 2017 and received March 23, 2017, and National Register nomination for Saint Joseph's Home for Working Girls by Epsilon Associates, dated April 6, 2017 and received April 14, 2017. (*See Item f*)

*No action required.*

- f. Communications from Brian Lever, Epsilon Associates re: draft National Register nominations for Dale and Ethan Allen Streets District, and Saint Joseph's Home for Working Girls, dated March 23, 2017 and March 30, 2017 and received April 4, 2017.

*No action required.*

- g. Communication from Massachusetts Historical Commission re: final MOA for Worcester State Hospital Conveyance to Worcester Business Development Corporation, dated April 4, 2017 and received April 13, 2017.

*Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 5-0 to concur with, and sign, the Memorandum of Agreement as provided.*

- h. Communication received from Fr. John Madden, Saint John's Church re: support for 49 Temple Street application, dated April 10, 2017 and received April 18, 2017. (*See Item 2*)

*No action required.*

### **Adjournment**

Upon a motion the Commission adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.